



To make the most of Paris,
the cultural center of the world

Annual Review

October 2010



Annual General Assembly

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President's Report

The annual AGA is an excellent occasion to reflect on the purpose and successes of WICE, an organization devoted to *LIFELONG LEARNING AND VIE CULTURELLE*. Our raison d'être is to provide a welcoming environment for our members and volunteers to learn, enjoy and celebrate art and culture. This is an important and enduring objective. Art and culture are the witnesses of the times we live in and have always had a major influence on education, taste, and politics. They make a major contribution to society. Against this background, I am pleased to report that in the past fiscal year WICE successfully pursued its original mission, to serve a microcosm of the international community in Paris providing activities and courses in lifestyle and culture, art history, literature and creative writing, visual arts and languages: a mission as relevant and exciting today as ever.

As most of our members know, we are a 1901 non-profit association: we charge fees to give us the

resources to sustain and grow our activities. Keeping our finances in balance is not an easy task. At our previous AGA, held in May 2009, the outgoing president Jill Bourdais described WICE as being at the beginning of a recovery from intensive surgery. Jill, as a WICE veteran of 30 years who has brilliantly served WICE as a volunteer and a board member through 28 years of growth followed by 2 years of difficult but necessary retrenchment, was well aware of the realities of the organization.

As I took over as president, having been thoroughly briefed by Jill, I was acutely aware of the challenges we had to overcome to get WICE to full recovery in the face of a global economic recession, an ever declining dollar, and elusive consumer confidence. The biggest challenge has been, and continues to be, how to offer a new, engaging and competitive program of quality courses in education and culture while remaining affordable and attractive to a well-educated, and

increasingly multicultural membership.

Back in June 2009, my first duty as President was to report to a newly elected WICE Board including five brand new Board members, three re-elected Board members, and three returning board members in the second year of their term. I soon realized that the Board included a number of members who had been heavily involved in WICE operations for many years, and new Board members with highly relevant experience from a range of professional activities. To keep WICE focused on addressing our challenges in a changing world, my task has been to harness the talents of the “doers” and the “thinkers” to form a progressive Working Board. Because they are intelligent and dedicated volunteers, they have all learned to integrate strategic views with tactical ones. I am pleased to say that the WICE Board functions today on the principles of the global village of “Thinking globally, acting locally.”

During the year, we also benefited from the help of a dynamic advertising agency, the Big Idea, (with offices in New York, London, Paris) who volunteered their management team to work with us to strengthen the WICE image with a strategic and tactical advertising campaign. The Big Idea also designed our new logo, the Wise Owl, which we all fell in love with and now use on all WICE marketing documents to enhance a consistent message of genial wisdom.

Furthermore, in the summer of

2009, we hired two creative website designers who have completely revamped the WICE website. As a result we are now equipped with finely tuned marketing tools (that also include WICE Direct, our bi-weekly newsletter) which make the eyes of Ed Canady, our chief financial officer, light up as he sees course enrollments and new memberships streaming in. Earlier this year, to keep WICE in the vanguard of the digital generation, our webmaster linked WICE on Facebook enabling the WICE community to create a social network and to exchange views 7/7 across the globe. I recently received a wonderful testimonial over this network from a Korean former WICE volunteer who had just moved to Hong Kong and e-mailed us to say how much his stay with us had helped him sharpen his skills and understand a multicultural society.

The Board also decided to reinstate the WICE program catalogue in the Fall of 2009, which we put together with a skillful international team of volunteers from America, Britain, France and Russia. Their collective labour of love involved producing, printing and mailing 450 copies of an eye catching season catalogue. As the 150 extra copies available in the office barely lasted a week, we recently decided to post the WICE season catalogue on the website to make it available to all members and stakeholders and to keep printing costs down.

Moving on to another important Board task during the fiscal year, last

Spring I set up a WICE Rules and Regulations Committee (including doers and thinkers) to update the WICE charter. The Committee has presented us with a very good first draft of the revised charter and will continue its work for presentation to the new Board in the new year. Members who are interested in consulting this document may contact Sherry Reckas, our very able Board Secretary.

In addition to a supportive and dynamic Board, WICE also has a strong, creative and dynamic team of volunteers, led by our energetic program director Elina Iroulart, whose combined talents and ideas produced the successful program of activities during the past year. Throughout the seasons, WICE teams take great pride in producing events and programs that attract a growing attendance, sometimes filling courses very quickly, other times not so quickly. But thanks to Elina's rigorous program strategy -- supported by our very dynamic marketing team -- we are proud to report that in 2009/10 new membership fees increased by over 100%. And all WICE's major Departments substantially covered their costs.

So did WICE's two flagships events this fiscal year, first Money Matters for Women, held a year ago, in October 2009, organized by Naida Kendrick Culshaw, a former WICE president. MMFW 09 attracted a strong following as it covered topics for globally mobile women who want to intelligently plan for their futures.

More recently, last June, Marcia Lebre, a long time and very talented senior figure at WICE, organized the much acclaimed Paris Writers Workshop, a series of lectures and readings presented by well-known English-language writers. Paris Writers Workshop was again a great success. Special thanks and applause to these two wonderful women, whose events organized with WICE enthusiastic volunteer teams, are jewels in WICE crown.

WICE currently has between 450 and 500 members served by 75 seriously dedicated volunteers. But while course and event attendances are rising, there is still plenty of room for new and existing members to participate in classes, as well as benefiting from our excellent free activities such as the conversation and bilingual book groups, WICE World Watch and Upstairs at Duroc. We need to continue to boost course attendance to keep WICE growing.

I recently heard an interesting comment by Tony Blair—although I am not a fan of his—who states in his recent book that to stay healthy, institutions have to keep changing and adjusting all the time. In other words, when institutions don't keep up with the times, they eventually start to stagnate and decline. So we are focused on offering new and exciting courses and events to a more diversified membership while keeping a sharp eye on balancing our finances.

To conclude I should say a few words about the WICE office. As

most of you know, WICE is currently operating from a tiny office, where a growing and revolving group of enthusiastic and energetic volunteers pile in daily. Within these confined quarters, WICE operates like a combination of a beehive and a melting pot, with volunteers performing amazing tasks day in and day out to help run our operations smoothly while maintaining a good ambiance and creating strong bonds. To help ensure that this unique, informal organization can continue to work effectively, in the early Spring of 2010, the Board approved a WICE Volunteer Policy clarifying Volunteers' roles and responsibilities. The purpose of this Policy is to describe how WICE should work to produce a win win situation for both the association and volunteers because the success of this partnership is automatically reflected in our image and our reputation and finally in the benefits we give to our Members.

And to keep WICE daily business

going well and smoothly the Board also approved a recommendation to move to more spacious quarters—since our finances are in good order. We have started looking for a new office—about double the size of our 22sqm2 cubby hole—at an affordable rent.

After a year in the job as WICE president, I recall the words of wisdom a former WICE President told me when I took up the job: "Remember in most voluntary associations the best that a dedicated management may be able to achieve is controlled chaos. But that's okay with me, we can live with that so long as we don't rest on our laurels."

Thank you to all members, instructors and volunteers. Your interest and participation are the strongest testimonial that WICE should continue its mission to ensure you all make the most of Paris, the world capital of culture.

Monique Amaudry-Jordan, President

Programs Report

We are proud to report that WICE Programs had a 67.31% increase in revenue in Y 2009-2010 compared with Y 2008-2009. The range of activities attracted many new people to WICE, resulting in a 117.17% increase in new membership fees.

Despite the heavier workload from the increase in activities across all departments, the Program Directors managed their departments successfully

and made them profitable with the help, hard work and commitment of both instructors and volunteers.

The 33% profitability of all programs is a real success, considering the difficulties WICE has encountered during the last few years of this economic crisis. The strong financial showing can ensure a stable outlook for the continued growth of WICE Programs.

The Departments

The **Studio Arts** department ran 37% of the courses and generated 42% of the total revenue and 44% of the income. The photography courses were very popular, filling up the day they were advertised on the website. Surveys showed that students are very happy with the expertise of the instructors and the diversity of the Studio Arts Program. The department still faces the challenge of finding a stable team of volunteers to help the department run smoothly.

The **Living in France** department brought the most students into WICE and contributed 23% of the income. This lower percentage of revenue is due to the nature of the activities, which are mostly one-time classes and therefore low in price. The department itself has a profitability of 38%. The volunteer instructors and some visits that are free from direct expenses contribute to this solid profit margin. Cooking Courses were offered again this year and the Wine Tasting program continued to be very well attended.

This department is the way into WICE for many students so it is important that it continues to offer a varied range of activities.

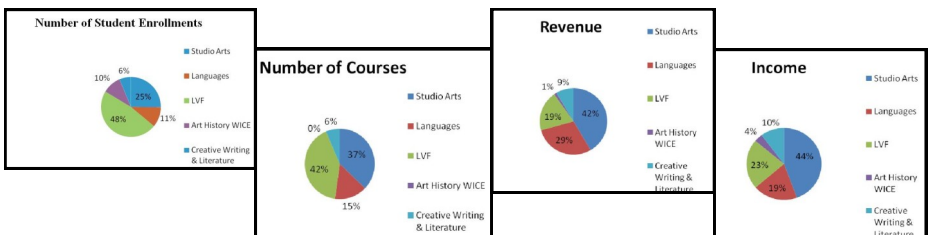
Creative Writing is a relatively small part of the WICE program, just re-emerging last year. But, it quickly gained a lot of interest, with a very loyal following. "*Writing the Migrant Soul*" was a real hit with three editions throughout the year.

The **Language** department expanded its activities this year offering English, French, Spanish and German courses, plus Conversation groups in all four languages. It brought in 29% of the revenue with 11% of the students, but contributed less to the income due to the instructor salaries and room costs. However, it contributed almost the same percentage to the total revenue as Living in France (19% to 22%), which has 48% of the students. This result is a welcome improvement compared with last year, when the Language department operated at a deficit.

WICE was involved in the organization of the prestigious seminar **Money Matters for Women** and **Paris Writers Workshop** that attracted a wide following.

We look forward a continued strength and diversity in our programs in 2010/2011.

Elina Iroulart, Programs Coordinator



WICE Board Slate

Monique Amaudry-Jordan, Barbara Beck, Jill Bourdais, Elina Iroulart, Christian Lebreton, Patricia Palmer, and Sherry Reckas are returning Board members in the second year of their term.

Borad members for re-election

Edwin Canady

Ed came to WICE in 2007 as a student in WICE/Rutgers State University TEFL Program and has been Treasurer of WICE since June 2008. He enjoyed a long business career in auditing and resource management with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Transportation, and the Defense Department, before retiring in 2004 as a U.S. income tax consultant. He received a BA from Georgia State University and an MS from Boston University in Business Administration. In a renewal term, Ed plans to continue to improve WICE financial accounting and management capabilities by further adoption of sound business practices.

New Nominees

Thomas Boothe

Currently the instructor of WICE wine classes, Tom has pursued a dual career in wine and film-making for 20 years. His passion for wines and in-depth knowledge of wine-making history led him to study in the UK, US, and France. He has been employed as

a sommelier, a wine buyer, and a leader of wine educational tours. After earning a BA in film-making at Antioch College in 1991 he taught film-making, as well as writing, directing, and photographing a number of films. Tom wants to expand the WICE community by offering programs that will attract new members of all ages.

Gillian Mortimer

Currently the WICE Programs Coordinator Deputy Director, Gillian is relatively new to WICE but has a history of working with volunteer and charity organizations in the UK. Her volunteer bent is characterized by a keen interest in the environment, nature and heritage. Her private sector career has centered on property investment management. Gillian earned an MA in Geography from St Catherine's College in Cambridge, UK and an MSc in Estate Management from South Bank University in London, UK. She wants to further WICE's growth and reputation as a can-do organization.

Mary O'Leary

Mary joined WICE this year as the WICE Cooking Course Director. She came to Paris from Honolulu Hawaii where she worked as a professional planning consultant. Her experience covers a wide range of large project management responsibilities in city and land planning, including running her own company *Land Planning Consultants*. Her most recent contract

was as Senior Planner for a \$1 million Marine Corp Base master plan. Mary wants to contribute her experience to develop WICE presence in the community through the use of Internet and course-related blogs.

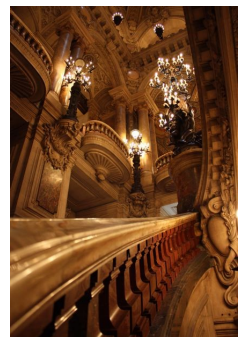
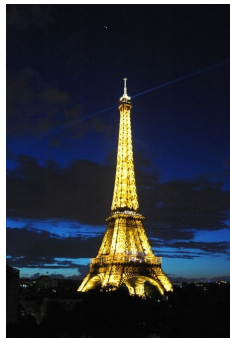
Agnes Seugnet-Holzapfel

Currently Director of the WICE Language Department and former Director of Visual Arts, Agnes has long and broad trilingual experience as interpreter/ translator/ instructor in

German, French, and English. She is also fluent in Spanish. She taught at the Inlingua School of Languages in Princeton NJ and at IFG-Langues in Paris. Agnes earned a BA at the University of Lyon and an MA in German education at the Sorbonne in Paris. Agnes believes there is a continuing demand for language courses that WICE can offer and wants to help by leading a profitable expansion of the language program linked to other WICE activities.



We thank the following WICE photographers for their photographs: Eileen Ebin, Lauren Gezurian-Amlani, Judith Manion, René Martinez, Meredith Mullins, Sophia Pagan, Wanne Sinternklaas, Jane Swaby and Catherine Taylor.



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