



Newsletter

August 2020



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From the ICWP President

Social justice is a concept that humanity struggles with when it comes to Black and Brown, indigenous, and disenfranchised groups of people. The deaths of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and a long list of others have awakened the masses to the unbalanced scales of justice and the absence of social equality in the ideology of social justice. As playwrights, we are storytellers creating stories about multi-complex and diverse communities worldwide. We each have a different experience with and perspective on social justice and its influence on our work as playwrights.

In this special edition of the August Newsletter, our members share their perspectives on social justice through a playwright's lens.

Sharon Wallace
President, ICWP

SOCIAL JUSTICE



From **Julia Pascal**, London Playwright

The Black Lives Movement that downed statues in England provoked me to research England's slave history. I discovered how slavery was part of Royal Assent in the seventeenth century. I understood how English and British wealth amassed through the sweat and suffering of slaves. Monotheism did not have the monopoly on slavery. The Roman and Greek empires thrived on it.

Slavery is in the Bible. Christians, Muslims, and Jews have been slaves and slave owners.

Jews and Christians were enslaved by Tatars in the seventeenth century. Young women were sold for sex. I remember meeting Andrea Dworkin and valuing her critical analysis of the enslavement of women today. As women writers we are challenging this world of slavery that happened/is happening within patriarchy.

Writing critically about postcolonial society is a small act of vengeance on behalf of all whose lives were hidden, restricted, enslaved. I try to create rich texts that empower the slaves of tyrannical parents, husbands, brothers, and sons. They are the Medeas seeking retribution against patriarchy.

From **Mahasin D. Shamsid-Deen**, Playwright, *Woven Orbits*

From March to June 2020, David McAtee, George Floyd, Dreasjon Reed, Michael Ramos, Breonna Taylor, and Manuel Ellis lost their lives not to COVID-19, but to police brutality. Their murders and those of thousands of other African Americans advance the collective trauma of an ethnic group whose anguish and demands for due process or even victim advocacy have been ignored for generations.

Our oft-repeated dehumanization is marginalized and co-opted by vogue demonstrations of solidarity without delivering legislative or cultural change, or worse, politically correct statements that abbreviate and analyze the horrors yet still absolve other Americans of responding to actuality. BLM is met with chants of who else's life matters. Yet these—"all" or "blue" lives—have never been subjected to communal systematic brutalization as an ethnic group.

Blacks don't want others to join our cause for equity at the expense of quality. The quality of justice demands to be definitive and an elemental expectation held by all Americans that Black lives are substantial and deserve continuance.

From **Tita Anntares**

Teenage Life

Hi.

I found you on Facebook.

I see your teenage life. Outfits. Dancing. Boys. Girlfriends. Music. Moments of Darnella.

I had to find you. You caused Americans of all races and ages to flow from their covid19 [sic] isolation, filling the streets, the parks, bridges to say: No more! Millions risking suffocating disease to demand we live the American dream: equal value and respect for each human being.

You have reason to fear me—anyone—typing into your “Write a comment” space. But I had to find you. To ask how I—and everyone I know—can help you turn your dreams into a full life? Overcome the nightmare of profound trauma.

How many unarmed people of color shot or suffocated monthly, every year, for decades? How quickly did we let our rage and grief subside?

Your presence of mind to hit “record” and your courage to stay steady and keep recording when the police could see you... Almost 9 close-up-smack-on-our-screen minutes of the suffocating. You are 17. You changed the world. Our souls.

Thank you.

Tita

From **Tavi Juárez**

Why Snail Mail Submission Policies are Discriminatory

If I cannot source the materials below, is my work not worthy of your consideration?

- Three hard-copies (not double-sided)
- Secured with hard-fasteners (not spiral-bound or stapled)
- Binders
- Envelopes
- Stamps
- Printing fee

We as an industry need to take a hard look at our submission policies and ask: How can we do this better? How can we make this more equal for everyone? In an era where the PDF reigns supreme, I dare to say that how you read my work is no longer my problem to solve.

Overly strict mail-in submission guidelines are discriminatory to people less privileged. Aside from an administrative fee, it's insulting to require a playwright to spend money printing materials when we all know that you can read a PDF practically anywhere.

It's time we acknowledge how this antiquated process stops people from lower socio-economic classes from submitting their work. We are silencing entire communities by clinging to these practises. It is time we embrace technology and the freedom of opportunity it can provide for anyone with an internet connection.

From **Christine Emmert**

Looking to an Equal Future for All

The future may be a wide meadow with the sky above opening up like a fan. Or it may be thicketed, dark, heavily overgrown forest. There is a choice of landscape. We need to choose a path and a destination. In fairy tales we are cautioned that the woods are dangerous, but the path is clear.

The meadow is clear. We can build and grow and dream of what we need. Meanwhile there are the woods with temptations of more selfish pleasures. To get to the meadow of tomorrow we must transverse the path that has been cleared. Trust, and step carefully. It is Choice that plans our route.

The views expressed are those of the contributor and not ICWP as an organisation.

NEWS AND HAPPENINGS

The **ICWP Board** is excited about the successful participation of the Zoom programs. Please join us if you haven't already.

If you have advice for our members or would like to write on a burning issue for a blog posting, please contact **ICWP** at admin@womenplaywrights.org.

SOCIAL MEDIA UPDATE

From **Patricia L. Morin**

Hello all,

We have an announcement to make about our Social Media Team. As you know, the Social Media team has grown over the past couple of years spanning the media avenues of Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram. We have also added a blog and podcasts under the title “Centre Stage.”

With growth came the need for a more progressive Social Media Chair, and thankfully, we have found someone. More and more changes have occurred in the media world, and we needed a media-wise lady to handle all those changes.

I want to introduce and welcome **Caeli Barnes**, graduate of The Ohio State University, as our new Chairperson. She was a Social Media and Outreach specialist for the Ohio Latin Affairs commission in Columbus, Ohio, and collaborated with FLOW—Friends of the Lower Olentangy Watershed—which included updating all of its social media. She has also worked to create compelling short-form promotional media—primarily video and audio. I am confident that her knowledge and warmth, coupled with her desire to help ICWP, will aid in advancing the Social Media Team into the future and expand the visibility of members’ works across each continent.

At the same time, we sought more volunteers for the expansion and to replace those who retired. I would like to introduce to you your new Social Media Team.

Caeli Barnes, our new Chair

Sarah Bewley and Jeanette Hill, Facebook

Jeanette Hill, Jenny Lyn Bader, Hera Cook, Eliza Gull, and Sarah Bewley,
Twitter

Rita Anderson and Jenny Lyn Bader, Instagram

Jenni Munday, Centre Stage, mainly blogs

Jenny Lyn Bader, LinkedIn

We are seeking someone to help with podcasts and LinkedIn. Interested volunteers should email **Caeli Barnes** at caeli.barnes@womenplaywrights.org.

Thank you, each member of our team, for all of your help.

Thanks, Mags, for technical assistance.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Cristina Bejan, Denver, USA

Judy Cook, Waxhaw, USA

Camelia Finley, Albuquerque, USA

Lisa Grunberger, Philadelphia, USA

Samira Husseini Nejad, Madhhad, Iran

Tavi Juarez, New York, USA

Rachel Ladutke, Nutley, USA

Alaina Messineo, Webster, USA

Wahida Mohamed, London, UK

LaurA! Scruggs, Chicago, USA

Jessica Swanson, Birmingham, UK

Krys Yuan, Vancouver, Canada

Cheryl Zeeb, Truth or Consequences, USA

Caeli Barnes, Columbus, USA, *new Volunteer Social Media Manager*

Kaitlyn Shouse, Amelia, USA, *new Volunteer Events Manager*

3-MINUTE PLAY CONTEST WINNERS



Here are the winners of the July 2020 contest in alphabetical order.
The theme was Trap/Escape. Congratulations!



Our Bushmaster by **Sandra Dempsey**

With a keen sense of drama and a formidable wit, Sandra Dempsey writes complex plays inhabited by articulate, richly drawn, and emotional characters. Her work is as poignant and instinctive as it is wide-ranging and authoritative in subject, and many award-winning pieces comprise her theatrical legacy. She is also a popular, dynamic performance-reader, always delighted to accept invitations to read for audiences.



Alice in the Rabbit Hole by **Donna Gordon**

Donna Gordon has produced five plays in San Diego. Two plays were produced at the Tenth Avenue Theater, and two at her church. In two of the plays, she played leading roles. Her most recent production was a reading of her murder mystery *Out of the Bookstore*, staged at the Performance Annex in City Heights. Her play *The Ribbon* was read at Scripteasers in San Diego, via Zoom. Her play *Reaching the Mansion* was read by Zoom, in a program sponsored by ICWP.



Where English Lives by **Debbie Miller**

Brooklyn-based playwright Debbie L. Miller's first play, *Tea Leaves*, premiered in Oak Ridge, Tennessee in 1996. Her plays have been produced Off-Off-Broadway and around the United States and have appeared in the Samuel French Short Play Festival. Debbie has a background in improvisation that has helped her write plays and monologues. She has received grants from the Puffin Foundation and the Ludwig Vogelstein Foundation.



Our July judge, **Namrata Jain**

Namrata comes to us with more than a decade of theater practice and research, with a focus on women and representation in South Asia. She has taught literature and gender at the University of Delhi. Her research, teaching, and community work form a continuum of theory and praxis aimed at creating inclusive, intersectional, diverse, and equitable environments.

Namrata holds a PhD in Literature with a focus on contemporary Indian theater from Jawaharlal Nehru University, India, as well as a master's in Asian Studies and a Graduate Certificate in Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies from Ohio University where she was also a Fulbright FLTA. In addition to her academic credits, Namrata has created and performed devised work with Pandies' Theatre, an activist theatre group based in Delhi, India.

ICWP is a 501-c-3 Non Profit Organization, incorporated in the State of Ohio, USA

For general questions, contact Margaret McSeveney, Communications Manager:

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For the Board of Directors, contact Board President:

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