



# Newsletter

March 2021



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*Newsletter Co-Editor*

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## From the ICWP President

### ICWP Celebrating Women's History Month

The history of the International Centre for Women Playwrights began in 1988 as 200 women playwrights from more than 30 countries attended the First International Women Playwrights Conference in Buffalo, New York, USA.

The membership of ICWP and our Connect List continue to increase each year. Our evolving stories are what make this collection of women playwrights so significant.

ICWP has a long history of championing women in theater, hosting play readings and playwright retreats, publishing the work of women playwrights, and providing grants. As we continuously advocate for parity in all spheres of theater, our voice is unrelenting.

We recognize that women playwrights are making achievements 12 months of the year. We hope you too will celebrate your own bravery as a human, making your voice heard and advocating for women around the globe.

**Sharon Wallace**

President, ICWP

## Celebrating Women ~ Our Stories

The following stories appear in their original form and have not been edited, by the request of the authors.

### From Safiya Bandele

#### *Celebrating FriendGirls*

I grew up in 1950's small town North Carolina where, we - my parents and my two siblings - lived harmoniously in a big house with my maternal Grandmother, my aunts, and cousins surrounded by neighbors in our tight-knit community. Although my mother had sisters and sisters-in-law, she was also close to women friends who she referred to as her "friendgirls". Like her, these were young married women with children. Miss Eva Mae, Miss Beulah, Miss Clara - my mother's friendgirls - modeled what we call today "GirlFriends" or "Sister Friends".

Their relationships included caring for and about each other and each other's children. Not as in childcare or babysitting, but as in the time Miss Eva Mae bought matching white dresses for my sister and me. A photo from that warm Saturday afternoon shows two pretty black girls ages 6 and 7 years, freshly bathed and oiled, hair combed, smiling in our pristine white outfits while my Mother and her friendgirl Miss Eva stood nearby smiling. Why would Miss Eva Mae buy us outfits? (Our families were far from wealthy!) Simply, it was a demonstration of loving sisterhood. It showed how women could be friends, caring about each other and each others children. My Mother and her friendgirls demonstrated authenticity in their relationships which spanned decades - truly an example of Celebrating Women.

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**From Laura Pfizenmayer**

*[Untitled]*

When we talk about Women's history, we think of our mothers and grandmothers, not so much about ourselves. I'm 66 now, not exactly elderly but in my younger days, I made some history and kicked some butt. I made a number of small "firsts". When I was 16 I got a job as a shipping and receiving clerk at an automotive warehouse. I was the first female hired there and by the end of the summer, I could lift and carry a 50lb box. At 5'2" and a 100 pounds that was a pretty amazing accomplishment. When I graduated from college at 20, I got a job as Public Relations Director at a fast food chain. I was the first woman in management there. I remember it was quite the scandal when I wouldn't wash the coffee cups in the kitchen. When I married my husband, we started an environmental clean-up company and I handled all sales. Wearing my hard hat I became a familiar face at steel mills, paper mills and power plants, one of the very few women in my industry. My daughters tell me that I am their inspiration as they go about making their own history.

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**From Christine Emmert**

*What's in a Gender?*

I grew up in a family with lots of aunts who took several different paths in life. My learning curve was a wide one. Only my mother went to College. The others were self-taught or improvised a future. I learned more about Eleanor Roosevelt than I did about Franklin. My central goal was not marriage or childbearing.

Gender limited salaries and status, but not dreams. I wanted to be an actress and read "The Doll's House" while young. I made mistakes as I went, but I always progressed knowing I was the product of women who did not beg a "second class" future. I knew who Marian Anderson was, who to call when I was ill -- my female doctor. I learned poetry of women poets and martyrdom of women activists like Jane Adams.

What's in a gender? Whatever you want it to be.

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## Summary of President's Report



It has been an honor to serve as Board President with the Board of Directors. The Board had discussions on responding to the sudden change worldwide because of the pandemic.

The past year has been an active and unprecedented one for our organization. The past months have been challenging for our members. The COVID-19 crisis influenced the Board to consider new paths to support our members during the lockdown's earlier days. We did so successfully by scheduling workshops where members shared their work. Solidarity on the Board of Directors and membership made it happen.

The Board was busy in 2020, with efforts to strengthen our organization, as the newly elected ICWP President, the Executives, and the Board made decisions in the organization's best interest. On behalf of the Connect List and the Board, I wrote a letter to the President of Women Playwrights International (WPI) in response to Ana Carneiro's resignation from WPI.

At that time, the country was in turmoil over the televised police killing of an unarmed Black man, George Floyd. The Board of Directors and I felt that it was our responsibility to provide a statement on our website addressing that action.

After discussion with the Execs and Board, I drafted an anti-racism statement, sent it out to the Connect List, and followed up with a letter stating our ICWP anti-racist practice that refers to our anti-discrimination clause in the ICWP Regulations. The Board decided to create initiatives inclusive for Black female playwrights, People of Color, and Indigenous people on society's margin.

**Karen Williams**, Co-Vice President, reported an encouraging increase in membership by 6%. Fundraising for 2021 can begin, now that the development grants for 2020 have been allocated.

**Lisa Randall**, Co-Vice President, reports that the organization's commitment to support Black playwrights, Indigenous playwrights, and plays written by People of Color was put into action as nine grants were awarded to qualifying members.

"Voices from Isolation," the online Zoom workshops led by **Lisa Randall** and **Karin Williams**, were greatly appreciated by participating members. The Communication Manager's report showed a large number of online Zoom chats. (I am so proud that ICWP was able to respond with these closer connections with our members during the pandemic restrictions.)

**Caeli Barnes**, Volunteer Staff member, was engaged to take on the Social Media Team's management. The Team is gearing up to improve its reach with the help of **Tavi Juarez** and **Jenny Lynn Bader**.

The Script Feedback Group is continuing under a new facilitator, **Tavi Juarez**. We look forward to seeing this expansion and activity within the group of approximately 30 members.

I look forward to my second term to work together as a team to achieve the Board's goals. We aim to give the best to the organization and our members. We are putting ICWP on the frontlines as an activist advocating for parity and non-discriminatory practices in any form throughout the theater industry and related companies. As we continue to create spaces where our members can share their work, use their voices, create, and shine.

**Sharon Wallace**

President, ICWP, Board of Directors

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2021-2022 Board of Directors

President, **Sharon Wallace**

Vice Presidents, **Karen Williams, Lisa Randall**

Secretary, **Karen Serrano**

Treasurer, **Mie Mie Thein**

Other roles, **Sarah Bewley, Eliza Wyatt, Tavi Juarez**

## Social Media and Podcasts

**Don't forget to connect with us on Social Media!**

**Twitter:** @ICWP

<https://twitter.com/ICWP>

**Instagram:** @ICWPlaywrights

<https://www.instagram.com/ICWPlaywrights>

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/WomenPlaywrights>

**LinkedIn:** <https://www.linkedin.com/company/international-centre-for-women-playwrights/?viewAsMember=true>

**YouTube:** <https://www.youtube.com/user/ICWomenPlaywrights>

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Interested in joining our social media squad?

Contact [admin@womenplaywrights.org](mailto:admin@womenplaywrights.org)

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### ICWP Podcast Selected as One of the Top Playwriting Podcasts on the Web

The [ICWP Women Playwrights Podcast](#) was selected by Feedspot panelists as one of the Top 20 Playwriting Podcasts on the web. Check out the complete [list of the top 20 podcasts](#).

Big thanks to Jenni Munday for her work producing the podcast and the playwrights who give their time and energy to take part.

## Opportunities

### Script Feedback Group

Are you looking for quick feedback on your work? Join the ICWP Script Feedback Group! Regular participation is not required, and we are always accepting new group members. Each week, three short works will be selected in order of submission but favored to participants who have not shared pieces in the previous week. Learn more about what this means and how you can join our group in the Member's Area menu on our website. All group activity is online with no Zoom sessions!

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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](mailto:admin@womenplaywrights.org).

## Welcome to New Members



**Patty Kim Hamilton**, Berlin, Germany

**Joslyn Housley**, Cherbourg-en-Contentin, France

**Hilary Kaiser**, Paris, France

**Josephine Lawson**, Sunnyvale, USA

**Janice Liddell**, Atlanta, USA

**Joanna Pickering**, Los Angeles, USA

**Jennifer Schaupp**, Pittsburgh, USA

**Zoë Bowen Smith**, Stamford, USA

**Maura Stephens**, Barbacoas Puriscal, Costa Rica

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

For general questions, contact Margaret McSeveney, Communications Manager:

[admin@womenplaywrights.org](mailto:admin@womenplaywrights.org)

For the Board of Directors, contact Board President:

[board@womenplaywrights.org](mailto:board@womenplaywrights.org)