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MAPW Alumni Profile: Joellen Kubiak-Woodall

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Joellen Kubiak-Woodall



Joellen Kubiak-Woodall

One of the models for SHORE was Joellen Kubiak-Woodall's ('09) Marietta Square-based Play Pen [Open Mic](#) series. The mission of the monthly series, according to Joellen is two-fold: It supports the local artists and involves the community. The performers who share their work learn to audibly edit the work based on audience involvement. They develop a performance personas, build confidence, and hopefully gain a following. Because we hold Play Pen at Johnnie McCracken's Celtic Pub, we attract an audience not normally found at a book signing, gallery, or poetry reading and cultivate an appreciation of the written word and writers."

Joellen founded the reading series as an outreach of her online journal, [The Write Room](#). "I started the magazine because I wanted to provide a none intimidating environment for my fellow students to submit their work. Once the magazine site was live, I started receiving submissions from all over the world." The reading series includes a variety of literary artists from slam poets to playwrights and story-tellers. "Performing is fun and anybody can participate," Joellen says, but also notes the benefits of participating go beyond writing. "Learning to overcome rejection, to control an audience is an essential skill for life as well as art. Job interviewing, networking and social skills are greatly improved from participation in a project like Play Pen."

Q&A

Do you have any special stories to share about your MAPW experience?

As a non-traditional student, my biggest challenge was learning to type and to use a computer. In my first class I was asked to open a Word document

and free write. The student next to me helped me get started. The professor asked what the problem was and I had to explain. She said, I guess you can just use paper then. I said, Nope, I got myself into this and I have to learn sometime. I learned to choose my words carefully because there was going to be very few of them.

Tell us about your writing projects, either those you pursue independently or those you pursue as a part of your job

Currently I am an editor and business owner. I run an online vintage and thrift store called Cicadas and I am the editor of [The Write Room](#), an online literary magazine that I founded when I was in the MAPW program. Additionally, I host and perform at our monthly open mic, Play Pen. I went back to KSU as a continuing education student and earned a certificate in Web Design and Development.

I am the web master for [The Write Room](#) and [Cicadas](#). I switch between the more literary challenges of editing and writing sales copy. I use my writing and research skills daily. I also have to locate, edit or create images and graphics, the magazine, the shop, and Play Pen. I try to keep up with all the social media associated with my multiple projects. I am also on the cusp of joining IATSE the entertainment union to pursue a career as a buyer or costumer in the film industry.

As for hobbies, I upcycle clothing and handbags for resale. I like the idea of green fashion. Lucky me, I've managed to turn my hobbies into my profession. When you are in school your job is making time to write. Once you are out and in the workforce it takes discipline and commitment to continue to grow as a writer. I read my original work every month at Play Pen. I know as that date approaches I better have something new to perform or rework a previous piece. In a sense, I'm still assigning myself writing and workshopping time by performing. Most of the stories I read are part of two in-progress memoir projects, Clay Pit Road, based on growing up in South Carolina in the 60's, or Ridge Riders, my teen years living between South Carolina and Southern California in the 70's.

What advice would you offer to current or prospective MAPW students?

Make and maintain the relationships you form with other MAPW students and your professors. Those relationships with other creatives are hard to come by once you enter the workforce.

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