



-dedicated to the art of puppetry

# Handbook for Guilds

***A Guide to Care and Maintenance***

**© 2009 Puppeteers of America, Inc. All Rights Reserved**

## ***Statement of Purpose***

The Puppeteers of America, Inc., is a national nonprofit corporation founded in 1937. Its purpose is to encourage and promote puppetry as a means of communication, an extension of human expression, and a performing Art; to enhance the proficiency of the Art of Puppetry, both professional and amateur, by publications, workshops, conventions or festivals, lectures, advisory services and any and all other mean and methods.

## ***The Guild***

“The Puppeteers of America, Inc. encourages its members to form local chapters to be known as Guilds. The Board of Trustees shall issue charters for these Guilds. Chartered Guilds are expected to support the Statement of Purpose of Puppeteers of America.”  
(Puppeteers of America, Inc., Procedures, p. 35)

The Puppeteers of America, Inc. charters Guilds in eight regions across North America. Guilds are communities of people with a common love and interest in the Art of Puppetry. The Guilds provide opportunities for puppet professionals and enthusiasts to meet regularly, enjoy performances, and learn puppet technique.

We hope this handbook will be of use to you, not only to form a Guild but to allow the Guild to prosper. Even though this is addressed to the President, please share the information with the Guild. You may have things that would be important to add or change. If this is the case, please contact the Board. We would be happy to hear from you.

The contributions of many members made this handbook possible. You know who you are—

Thank you, each and every one

2009 Revised Edition

# Contents

1.	<a href="#"><u>Creating a New Guild</u></a>	4
2.	<a href="#"><u>Guild Officers</u></a>	7
3.	<a href="#"><u>The Newsletter and Editor</u></a>	10
4.	<a href="#"><u>The Care and Feeding of the Guild</u></a>	13
5.	<a href="#"><u>Non-Profit or Not-</u></a>	16
6.	<a href="#"><u>Insurance</u></a>	17
 <b><u>Appendices</u></b>		
	<a href="#"><u>Belonging to the Puppeteers of America</u></a>	18
	<a href="#"><u>Sample Constitution</u></a>	20
	<a href="#"><u>Guild Reporting Form</u></a>	24
	<a href="#"><u>Some Ideas for Guild meetings and projects</u></a>	26
	<a href="#"><u>Email and the World-Wide-Web</u></a>	28

## ***Creating a new Guild***

So you want to have a puppetry Guild!

Why a local Guild? The basic reasons are: community and communication around our Art. The Guild is the local face of the [Puppeteers of America](#).

Guilds are an ancient tradition where young or novice enthusiasts can learn from more practiced crafts people, performers, and artists. Guilds offer local opportunities to meet others who share your love and interests. The easiest way to get started is to first form a club. Get some people together who are interested in puppetry. Gather on a regular basis (some Guilds meet monthly). Give yourself a name. Choose someone to be a contact person.

Now you can be listed as an Associated Club of the Puppeteers of America, Inc. which is the largest North American network of artists, educators, craftspeople, eccentrics, professionals, and rank amateurs who have at least one thing in common: they love puppets and puppet theater. The Puppeteers of America helps increase the visibility of this wonderful art and helps puppeteers grow as artists. These happy folk get together every two years for a big national party, called the National Puppetry Festival—a week of shows, workshops, and opportunities to peek backstage and see the seamy underside of this ancient secret society ( which is not really that ancient, that seamy and not at all secret). At other times there are shorter regional festivals that are usually closer to home. You can also be a part of a National Day of Puppetry that is held every year.

By now you've probably had a couple of get-togethers. Your connections with others may have given you different ideas of what a puppet is, and how you can use this art form in many different ways. Maybe some of you have already individually joined the Puppeteers of America, or attended a puppetry festival. Maybe your group is ready to become a Guild of the Puppeteers of America, and join the network of about 35 other Guilds scattered through different regions of the continent.

Through this network you can meet and talk to not only local and regional artists, but also nationally and internationally known puppeteers. A local group offers you the chance to learn from others, share what you have learned, find a mentor, be a mentor, and have even more fun with the art you love. In the same way, your connection with the Puppeteers of America can help all of this happen with new friends from all across the country.

### ***How to become a Guild***

One of the first steps to success is setting up an organizational structure, which is usually defined by a [constitution and a set of bylaws](#). Not as difficult or intimidating as it may sound. You can download samples from the Puppeteers of America web site, and there's a real person you can talk to by phone who can guide you through the steps. The guidelines are basic. For example, Guilds usually have at least four meetings a year. They usually have a [newsletter](#) (electronic or paper) to inform and unite the group. Eventually ten members of your Guild will need to be members of Puppeteers of America. Then it's a matter of following a few easy application steps. Again, a real person is available to help.

Good luck, and welcome to this large and lively family of puppeteers, the Puppeteers of America.

## ***Steps for establishing a Guild***

How does a group of puppeteers actually become a “Chartered Guild” of the Puppeteers of America? The following steps provide a checklist which our Guilds and Regions Liaison can help you complete.

Ten or more members of the Guild wishing to be chartered must be members in good standing of the Puppeteers of America, Inc., and reside in the same geographic area.

After becoming chartered, to retain a Guild Charter at least ten (10) Guild members must be members in good standing of the Puppeteers of America, Inc.

The [President and all other officers](#) of the Guild must be members in good-standing of the Puppeteers of America, Inc.

All members of the Guild are strongly encouraged to be members of the Puppeteers of America, Inc.

The group seeking a charter needs to write a [Guild Constitution](#), by laws (and articles of incorporation if applicable) which follows the model of the Puppeteers of America, especially with regard to Guild membership voting for Guild officers.

Before application, the Guild shall submit its written constitution and by-laws plus a list of Officers for careful review by the Regional Director of the area. (Copies of acceptable constitutions and by-laws may be obtained from the Puppeteers of America’s Guilds and Regions Liaison, officers, and/or Regional Directors). The Regional Director shall review and submit the Constitution and by-laws to the Vice President.

After any necessary revisions, formal application for a charter shall be made to the Board of Trustees of the Puppeteers of America, Inc. Current Guild constitutions and by-laws will be kept on file by the Vice President of Puppeteers of America and reviewed periodically.

Guilds that intend to become [non-profit corporations](#) should send proposed articles of incorporation to the Vice President of Puppeteers of America for review.

The Guild President will provide a list of Charter Members (Guild members in good standing) to the Guild and Regions Liaison and Regional Director for the Charter.

After a Guild applies for a charter it shall meet the qualifying requirements for a minimum period of one year before a charter is granted.

Chartered Guilds will be reviewed by the Board of Trustees to determine if the Guild continues to meet charter requirements.

### ***For what is the Guild responsible?***

A “Chartered Guild” of the Puppeteers of America does many things, really depending upon the energy and resourcefulness of its membership and their

elected leaders. The Puppeteers of America has a few “benchmarks” that Guilds are required to maintain.

Chartering requirements need to be sustained (i.e. minimum 10 Puppeteers of America members, all officers members, and so on). The Guild is responsible to monitor this charter requirement.

Each Guild shall hold at least four [meetings](#) a year.

An [annual written report](#) (in the form of a short questionnaire sent to the Guild President) is submitted. This includes current Guild membership, summary of Guild activities, the number of meetings and average attendance, newsletter information, current officers, a summary of Guild’s finances, and other information about Guild functions.

In order to keep their membership informed and involved, each Guild should publish a [newsletter](#) and submit copies of the newsletter (as they are financially able to do) to the President and Vice-President of the Puppeteers of America, Inc., the Newsletter Consultant, the Regional Director, and the current keeper of Guild news for a Puppeteers of America, Inc. publication.

On all paper, electronic, online, and other communications from the Guild, the following statement should follow the Guild’s name: “Chartered by The Puppeteers of America, Inc.”

As a member of the Regional Board of Directors, a Guild President must attend the Annual Meeting of the Puppeteers of America at the designated festival, or assign a representative. They should attend all regional meetings, and any specified business or Board Meetings of the Puppeteers of America, Inc. Many meetings are now done through teleconferencing.

The Guild should inform the Regional Director and the Guilds/Regions Liaison of Puppeteers of America, Inc. of any change in the officers of the Guild immediately. The Guild will give the President, the web master of the Puppeteers of America web site, and the editor of the Membership Directory, up-dated, accurate contact information for the Guild president and Guild newsletter editor.

Each Guild shall engage in Public Relations for the Art of the Puppet Theater and the Puppeteers of America, Inc. They shall actively promote membership in, the .Guild and The Puppeteers of America, Inc.

A Guild may change its name if the members in good standing of that Guild vote to do so and the Board of Trustees of the Puppeteers of America has no objections.

A “Chartered Guild” can jeopardize its status by not following through on its responsibilities. The Guild, if it becomes inactive, may be re-activated through action by the Board of Trustees if qualifying requirements are met.

## ***Guild Officers***

Although a Guild can have a number of officers, to share the responsibilities of the group, there are at least five positions which the Guild should have: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Newsletter Editor.

### **Officers and Job Descriptions**

Careful consideration must be given to the Officers and their Job Descriptions as a Guild prepares its [Constitution and By-laws](#) for consideration by the Board of Trustees of the Puppeteers of America, Inc. No matter the titles and responsibilities, it is important to remember that all Guild Officers must be members in good standing of the Puppeteers of America.

**The President** of a Guild has the primary responsibility of seeing that the Guild functions in accordance with the P of A Guidelines. She/he must provide the leadership in the Guild to promote the art of puppetry to Guild members and to the public at large. The President by the nature of the office is a member of the Regional Executive Board and is expected to participate in the business of the Region that requires a vote of that Board. An Annual Report to the Vice President of Puppeteers of America is an important function of the Guild President. That report, which takes the form of a questionnaire sent by the Puppeteers of America, must include a listing of the current officers, a complete listing of names and addresses of all Guild Members, the number of the Guild who are Puppeteers of America members, a survey of Guild activities, the number of meetings and the average attendance, information about the Guild newsletter with current information as to who the newsletter editor is, a summary of Guild finances, and any other information about Guild functions that may be deemed appropriate.

**The Vice President** of the Guild works closely with the President and is there to fill the breach whenever the President is unable to preside over Guild activities. The Vice President may help the President to accomplish the many duties pertaining to Puppeteers of America. Some Guilds may want to assign the Vice President the job of Program Chair, but you will want to give careful consideration as to whether or not this will have an impact on finding candidates to fill the office.

**The Secretary** of the Guild has as his or her primary responsibility the preparation of the minutes for Guild and Board Meetings. It has been the recommendation of Puppeteers of America that Guild minutes be published in the Guild Newsletter, in which case the Secretary will have to work closely with the Newsletter Editor. Some Guilds may want to have two Secretaries—a Recording Secretary to take care of the minutes, and a Corresponding Secretary to answer any mail that may be necessary. Since most correspondence to the Guild will probably be addressed to the President, a Corresponding Secretary may be more cumbersome than helpful. This is something each Guild will have to consider carefully as they prepare their By-laws.

**The Treasurer** has the fiscal responsibility for the Guild and needs to make deposits and prepare checks to cover expenses in a timely manner. A basic understanding of keeping a

ledger sheet is vital, as reports should be made on a regular basis to the Guild Board and the Membership. An Annual Financial Report or Summary is expected to be part of the Guild's Annual Report to Puppeteers of America. If a Guild has or is anticipating seeking 501 c3, Non-Profit Status, the need for a clean and accurate reporting system is vital. Some Guilds have instituted an Audit Committee to oversee the Guild's financial records.

The [Newsletter Editor](#) should be a member in good standing in the Puppeteers of America, Inc. Each newsletter published by a Chartered Guild should carry the statement "Chartered by the Puppeteers of America, Inc." Even though the Puppeteers of America is not responsible for the contents of the Guild's newsletter, it is viewed as the local voice for the organization and as such it is expected to maintain high standards for design and content. Contact information for joining Puppeteers of America should be included. Newsletter editors will publish announcements and information from the Puppeteers of America as requested including information on scholarships, grants, awards and festivals. For Guild elections and for election of Regional Directors, Guild newsletter editors are expected to present candidate information in a fair, neutral and unbiased manner. Each newsletter will carry contact information for at least one officer of the Guild.

Under the Puppeteers of America Guild Charter, the President and Newsletter Editor have a few specific requirements:

### ***Responsibilities of Guild President to Puppeteers of America***

Abide by the Constitution and By-Laws of the Guild.

Be a member in good standing of Puppeteers of America

Submit the annual written report sent by Puppeteers of America. The Guild's annual report to Puppeteers of America will include a complete list of names and addresses of current Guild members. This information will assure that Guild members who are not members of Puppeteers of America will receive festival mailings

Serve as a member of the Regional Board of Directors, which oversees regional funds and regional festivals.

Attend the Annual Regional Meeting and all other regional meetings and board meetings or assign a representative to attend.

Attend specified meetings of the Puppeteers of America or assign a representative to attend.

Maintain close communications with the Regional Director, and the Guilds/Regions Liaison of Puppeteers of America

### ***Responsibilities of Guild Newsletter Editor to Puppeteers of America***

Each Newsletter shall carry the statement "Chartered by the Puppeteers of America Inc", and include contact information for joining Puppeteers of America.

Abide by the Constitution and By-Laws of the Guild.

Be a member in good standing of Puppeteers of America.

Newsletter Editors will publish announcements and information from the Puppeteers of America, as requested including information on scholarships, grants, awards and festivals.

Editors are encouraged to publish an accurate membership form for the Puppeteers of America.

Editors are strongly encouraged to promote the activities of the Puppeteers of America.

As editor of the newsletter of a Chartered Guild, the editor is viewed by many as the local voice of Puppeteers of America. While the Puppeteers of America is not responsible for the contents of a Guild newsletter, the editor is expected to maintain high standards for the design and content of the publication.

For Guild elections and for election of Regional Directors Guild newsletter editors are expected to be present candidate information in a fair, neutral and unbiased manner.

## ***The Newsletter and Editor***

The newsletter is the single most important service produced by a Guild for it provides communication from officers to members and between members. All the members of any given Guild rarely (if ever) get to every meeting. How else can information be as effectively and completely disseminated?

The most active Guilds usually have a well-edited newsletter. There are Guilds without newsletters and a few newsletters are little more than instructions on how to get to the next meeting. The best newsletters can be read and enjoyed by anyone anywhere interested in puppetry when they are filled with information—articles, reviews, calendars, tips on equipment and new materials, tips on performing, and how-to pieces on construction.

A word about calendars. Each calendar should include dates for the next month and a half. The calendar should include the date, time and place of the next Guild meeting with particulars about the program planned for the meeting.

The newsletter should also include information about the activities of the members of the Guild. The most common complaint is that members do not send information to the editors. It would be wonderful if everyone in the Guild who performed or did workshops would put the newsletter editor first on the list to be notified. It would be great if every member of the Guild felt it was his/her own responsibility to let the editor know when they discover that puppets are going to be on television, or that someone is touring a show that is coming within driving distance of your membership. It is very depressing to find out (after the fact) that someone in the Guild played a nearby mall or school.

Therefore, someone, usually the newsletter editor or an assistant must be aggressive about button-holing the regular performers or presenters for calendar dates and information. A self-addressed postcard could be given to regular performers or workshop leaders so that it could be mailed to the editor. Phone calls need to be made periodically to check on the activities of members. Someone could be delegated to comb all kinds of periodicals for puppet information. Exchanging newsletters with other Guilds can be helpful in gathering interesting news.

If the duties of writing, editing, printing and mailing the newsletter are too difficult for one person, perhaps a second Guild member could take over the work of folding, labeling, stamping and mailing.

Now that [e-mail](#) is so widely used, it may be possible to send the newsletter on-line to those that request it. There are a number of Guilds that are already sending their newsletter out to most of their members, with only a small percentage of the membership asking for hard copies to be sent to them. Sending the newsletter on-line is a huge savings in time, energy and money and should certainly be considered.

### ***Care and feeding of the newsletter***

Finding material for the newsletter can be vexing at times. Looking for something new,

interesting, or at least different from the usual fare to stimulate the curiosity of the members can pose a dilemma. How do you keep a newsletter fresh? How to “keep them reading?” Everyone like to see their name in print, but what else? Here are a few thoughts from former Puppeteers of America consultant, Lettie Connell Schubert (1985/6).

### ***Some ideas for items***

A biographical piece on the founding members still active in the guild. Get one of the newest members to do the interview and you’ll build mutual friendships.

Welcome new members by publishing a short biography. Ask someone who has been in the guild for some time to do the interview; it will make the newcomer feel welcomed.

Ask members to submit short pieces on “how you got started in puppetry”, “the worst moment while performing”, “the most touching thing that ever happened in your puppetry career”, and run several of the best together. Everyone has a funny, inspiring, gruesome or touching story to tell.

Puppeteers tend to work in isolation and “invent the wheel” for themselves. Ask everyone for a construction tip they learned from someone else (giving credit please) or that they discovered by accident or through experimentation.

Review the past. See what the founding members can remember about what was happening in puppetry in your area when the guild was chartered.

Give your readers something interesting to read!

The guild probably has a number of talented artists in the membership who would be willing to do some illustrations for the newsletter. Ask as many artists as you can and build a stockpile of illustrations. Diagrams, quickie sketches of puppet and puppeteer, illustrated tips on construction, manipulation and staging, impressions of performances all would add interest to the newsletter. The inclusion of photos of Guild activities and members makes any newsletter much more appealing.

### ***Checklist for editing a newsletter for a Guild of Puppeteers of America, Inc.***

Is the phrase “a chartered guild of Puppeteers of America, Inc.” on the masthead or somewhere obvious on the newsletter?

Is there a return address on the envelope or mailing face of the newsletter?

Are the officers’ names, addresses, (complete with zip code), telephone (with area code) and e-mail address listed on every issue?

Are the newsletter editor’s name, complete address, telephone number and e-mail printed on every issue?

Is information on how to join your guild (dues categories, to whom to make the check, to whom and where to send the check, how the dues year is set up. (anniversary of joining or fiscal year) in every issue?

Do you ever print information on how to join Puppeteers of America, Inc.? Or UNIMA-USA?

Does anyone proof-read the copy for spelling, grammar and accuracy of reporting?

If you report minutes of meetings or report happenings at meetings, do you use titles and full names?

If you use material from other sources, DO YOU GET PERMISSION? And are you sure the other source is using original material or if reprinted, has permission from originator?

If you use material from other sources, DO YOU GIVE CREDIT?

If you use artwork or cartoons, do you have permission to reprint it?

If you reprint newspaper or magazine articles, have you written and received permission to use copyrighted material?

## ***The Care and Feeding of the Guild***

Once the Guild is “up and running”, [how do you keep it that way?](#) You know the requirements for an “active” Guild: at least 10 members (and at least 10 members who are Puppeteers of America members), at least four meetings a year, and a newsletter. Sustaining that initial energy can sometimes be difficult and frustrating (when a handful of local puppeteers won’t even join the Guild or when you can’t get some members to come to meetings).

Once you have a Guild and some members, how do you keep them and increase their numbers? Hopefully your programming and newsletter will keep them eager and coming back for more. There will be those who decide after a year or two that the Guild is not for them and drop out. Keep four areas in mind to maintain the health of your Guild, along with a few suggestions:

### [Meetings and programs](#)

In this day and age where people seem to be in a state of perpetual motion and have difficulty attending to all the many demands on their time, participation in Guild meetings and activities by the members may suffer. One key bit of communication at the beginning of the membership year is necessary if you are going to have a chance in the competition for people’s time. You need to establish a calendar for the year and be ready to post dates for membership meetings for the year.

Try to let folks know WAY in advance when you plan to meet. Post dates in your calendar early so as to avoid conflicts with late announcement of meetings or events. While it would be ideal to be able to publicize not only the dates, but meeting topics as well, don’t let the lack of definite meeting topics deter you from posting the year’s meeting dates.

Try to keep the business portion of you Guild Meetings as short as possible. Many of the decisions of the business aspects of the Guild can be handled by the Board and reported quickly and concisely at a meeting. This does not mean that you should give short shrift to issues that need to be discussed and decided on by the membership.

Sometimes a gimmick can entice people to attend; the idea of awarding a door price is one such idea. Tying a meeting into a performance by an out of town troupe with a reception for the performer can provide a stimulating meeting and attract high attendance. A telephone tree might be a means of reminding and giving reluctant members a gentle nudge that it would be great if they would attend the next meeting. Performances by members, whether it’s an established show, or one that is in development most often will spark interest. Workshops that will teach new skills, be it construction, manipulation, voice techniques, scriptwriting, the business end of performing, etc. will pique interest. Offering assistance to members who may have difficulty getting to meetings because of transportation difficulties may result in increased participation.

You will find that a few people seem to be doing EVERYTHING. Respect their time/ talents, and don’t ask for too much! There are probably some people in the membership who would

LOVE to be in charge of small duties, but they often won't do it unless you ask!

ASK THEM!

Assess each member's unique strengths (that small business owner has great input on budgets, the marketing expert can do some simple PR for you, the teacher can invite teacher pals, etc.), and praise them for these skills!

Some more ideas for meetings are in the [Appendix](#).

### **Outreach**

Guilds are encouraged to be active participants in the communities of the areas they serve. A well-designed brochure that spells out the benefits, membership categories, and dues is an important tool to have available whenever the general public is invited to participate in Guild functions. Press releases are an important vehicle to promote awareness of the Guild to those outside the Guild. Be sure to respond to any requests that come in for information about puppetry or the Guild; send membership brochures for the Guild and Puppeteers of America as a follow up.

[Online communication](#) will increasingly become the norm, if it hasn't already for you and your Guild. If you do not have a Guild Web Page, give some consideration to establishing your presence through this medium. Many Guilds are finding an increasing number of new memberships coming from people who have discovered the Guild through a Web Page. Of course the creation of a Web Page means you will need to have someone responsible for keeping the information current and up to date.

Email is a widespread, useful tool for any organization. It's quick and cost-effective; use it! Seek out arts and/or theatre group list-serves (such as puptrcrit) to spread the word about your Guild.

To find potential members and support systems: contact teacher groups, university theatre departments, libraries (librarians), park boards/recreation and community centers, and art schools in your area. They might be useful venues for an event (workshops, performances, etc). Put notices in the newspapers: not classified ads, as these cost money, but meeting notices, usually free for not-for-profit-type organizations

The National Day of Puppetry is a GREAT high-profile way to announce to folks that there is a Puppetry Guild!

### **Newsletter**

Use your [newsletter](#) to keep the membership updated on the workings of the Board and the reporting of routine items. If your minutes are printed in the newsletter, the approval can be done without the need to have a time consuming reading.

Your newsletter doesn't have to be fancy. It is a communication tool with the basics: meeting info (dates, times, directions), contact info (your officers), local puppetry performances and/or performers, simple puppetry tips and/or essays, lists of puppet books

to read, etc. Name it something fun, too! Sending it as an e-mail attachment, or posting it on your website, can save money (especially at first when funds are scarce).

### **Renewals**

Be aggressive in promoting renewals-one reminder in the newsletter is not going to be enough to get a full return. It might be a good idea to include a separate renewal form within the newsletter.

A method for renewals that has proven successful for a number of Guilds:

- 1) Reminder that it is time to renew goes out with the last newsletter in May; a membership renewal is tucked inside the newsletter.
- 2) First newsletter of the new membership year goes to all including those who haven't renewed. Those who have not renewed get another renewal form with a warning that this will be their last newsletter if they do not renew.
- 3) Only the front page of the second newsletter of the new membership year is sent those who have not responded to the first two appeals; once again a renewal form is enclosed.
- 4) If after these three attempts, a member has not renewed, a tracking letter is sent. In this letter, we ask them to let us know the reason why they are not renewing, such as meetings not convenient, moved away, financial considerations, etc. A checklist is provided to make the completion of the form as easy as possible. While not everyone will respond, the bottom line is that you get some renewals from those who have just forgotten and/or you receive information that may help you understand why someone has chosen not to rejoin.

Remember that you are an affiliate of the Puppeteers of America, Inc.! Use their knowledge and resources to help your Guild grow.

## ***Non-profit or Not?***

The decision whether or not to seek a non-profit status as a Guild has been debated for some time. There are good arguments on both sides and the matter really comes down to the needs of the individual local Guild and its members.

To become a non-profit (501 (c) (3) ), the mission for an organization changes focus. The main focus will be directed outward to the general public rather than totally geared to your membership. This means that you will be serving both the public and your members.

It might mean that the Guild's Constitution needs to be amended in order to receive the 501 ( c )(3) status. That was true for Puppeteers of America. Before any non-profit documents are filed, it is vital that the Amended Constitution be submitted to the Board of Trustees of the Puppeteers of America, Inc to ensure that the amended Constitution is still in compliance with the Procedures of Puppeteers of America, Inc.

### ***Major Advantages:***

Protection under the law for an organization and your Board members can be a big advantage. This is a good idea even for small organizations. If you are a non-profit and operating according to all the non-profit rules and regulations in your particular state, you are better protected than if you are not.

As a non-profit, you may be able to obtain cheaper insurance than you can get otherwise. Any special event open to the public would make guild insurance a very necessary thing to have for your guild.

ALL GUILDS MUST PAY TAX ON THEIR INCOME. If you become a non-profit organization, you do not have to pay income tax. However, you still must file IRS and local tax forms each year. You can apply for grants.

### ***Major Disadvantages:***

It is a lot of work to go through all the paper work. The initial non-profit filing is easy. The filing forms are available for your state. Take the template form they provide and fill in the blanks. After you receive your state non-profit status, then you must file for federal. But this is only the beginning. Everything must be accurately recorded. Annual income tax forms (such as 990s) are required to be filed.

A lawyer for the Arts would be a good person to consult. The Puppeteers of America has a consultant who can also be of help in becoming a non-profit organization. It also may be helpful to contact a Guild in your state that already has non-profit status.

You must be in compliance with all state and federal rules and regulations. This means a good deal of research in order to meet all the criteria necessary. If you apply for grants and are lucky enough to get them, filling out the required paperwork takes a lot of time and energy. And you need to do it right.

## ***Insurance***

Any guild that has special events open to the public such as Days of Puppetry, National Day of Puppetry, Workshops, Performances, Retreats or Festivals should investigate insurance. Many of the individual members of Puppeteers of America have obtained insurance through the organization. All performers should have insurance. A Guild can be just as vulnerable and should seriously consider getting insurance for their group.

If your guild has a non-profit status it may obtain coverage in your state. Not all states have this available.

The American Association of Community Theaters offers group coverage.

If the Guild joins Puppeteers of America as a company, it is possible that they could obtain coverage for their Guild. Contact Fred Sauers, the Insurance Officer for Puppeteers of America, Inc. at 11731 87<sup>th</sup> Street, Burr Ridge, IL 60527-6403 E-mail: [sauersfw@prodigy.net](mailto:sauersfw@prodigy.net)

## ***Appendix I***

### ***Belonging to Puppeteers of America, Inc***

As Guild President, and a member of the Puppeteers of America, you know the benefits of belonging to the organization as an individual (some of them are reviewed below). But the Guild can also expect assistance from the Puppeteers of America, Inc.: aid in organizing for their charter, help in writing a newsletter, tips for interesting meetings, encouragement in maintaining membership, and any other available resources. Their direct contact and liaison with The Puppeteers of America, Inc. are: locally the Regional Director of their Region and nationally the Guilds and Regions Liaison.

Guilds on the local level are helped by the Regional Director who is a non-voting member of the Executive Committee of the Puppeteers of America, Inc. The Regional Director facilitates communication between guilds and Puppeteers of America members within a region. On the National level, the Guilds and Regions Liaison completes the communication "circuit" across North America and overseas.

In addition to membership in a local Guild, membership at the National level is extremely valuable and should be encouraged whenever possible. Puppeteers of America is the glue that holds us all together.

How would we find and build a community of people who love puppet theater? Through this wonderful organization, you can make friends from around the world. The National and Regional festivals are a paramount benefit of membership. Through planning and work of dedicated volunteers, festivals happen and puppeteers and novices have the opportunity to learn the art of puppetry. The festivals, National and Regional, provide workshops for learning, and puppet theater performances in many styles performed by outstanding artists and newly discovered talent. Exhibits of contemporary and historic puppets are usually a part of every festival. Without these festivals, where would we go to learn?

Consultants who are experts share their knowledge of puppetry when members request information.

The Puppetry Store makes available a wealth of books, puppets, and puppet related items such as scripts, patterns, and videotapes. Beginning puppeteers and professionals will find books on puppet stages, play writing, puppet history, puppetry in education and religious puppetry. Orders from the Puppetry Store catalog can be placed by telephone, mail or e-mail. The store also sends books and other materials to the festivals to be sold in the festival exchange. The festival exchange (store) offers all kinds of puppets, and puppet related items for sale to festival registrants.

The Audiovisual Library provides a rare opportunity to study the scope of puppetry around the world. Over 450 videos may be borrowed for a small user fee. The catalog is on the Puppeteers of America website or may be requested by writing to the address in the

Membership Directory. The newly established partnership with the University of Connecticut provides even more opportunity and resources to make titles available.

Job Referral and Puppet makers Referral: Networking opportunities for our membership include a list of companies that employ puppeteers and puppet builders, and a list of people who make puppets or costumes for other puppeteers. Recent National Festivals have included "Job Fairs" for companies seeking puppeteers and puppet related skills.

Insurance is available to members in good standing of Puppeteers of America, Inc. For a very reasonable fee a member has the access to a million dollar policy. Fred Sauers is the insurance officer for PofA.

Publications include the Puppetry Journal, the magazine of Puppeteers of America, Inc. that appears four times a year. Each issue is filled with articles and photographs featuring puppeteers, puppet theaters, exhibitions, touring companies, guilds, technical tips, new books, films, television, and puppet festivals. Individuals or companies may place an ad very inexpensively.

Playboard, our newsletter, is published 6 times a year and contains current information on puppet festivals, organizational news, reviews, and technical advice.

Membership Directory helps you contact guilds, puppetry centers, and 2,000 puppetry enthusiasts. The directory includes the addresses of the Puppetry Store and the Audiovisual Library. It also includes a very good brief history of puppetry in the United States.

## **Appendix II Constitutions**

A sample constitution and bylaws for Chartered Guilds of the PUPPETEERS OF AMERICA, INC.

Proposed to the Guilds "as a model and guide in connection with the framing and later alteration of their several constitutions, and to be used by the Regions and their proper officers as the norm to which such constitutions and alterations are to be compared when referred to them for approval or certification that the provisions of the material submitted are not in conflict with the constitution and bylaws or the Puppeteers of America, Inc.."

### NOTE:

Words within brackets [ ] constitute acceptable alternate forms or additions. Words within parentheses (), except citations, constitute blanks to be filled in by individual Guilds.

### ARTICLE I

#### Section 1..

The name of this organization shall be ( \_\_\_\_\_ ), a chartered Guild of the Puppeteers of America, Inc.

#### Section 2.

The purpose of this Guild shall be (your Guild's aim or purpose).

### ARTICLE II Membership

#### Section 1.

Membership in their Guild shall be open to any person or group of persons interested in promoting the Guild's purposes, subject to payment of annual dues. There shall be ( # ) classes of membership: (for example—Adult, Family, Junior, Senior, Life; it is best not to state dues amounts as that will take Constitutional amendment to change).

#### Section 2.

All regular members in good standing shall receive all official publications and notices of the Guild; shall have the right to voice and vote at all meetings of the Guild; the right to seek and hold office; the right to serve on committee; and shall enjoy all current and future rights and privileges of the Guild.

#### Section 3.

This section and any following should define any membership classes established and any qualifications or limitations. The "usual" categories include Basic (individual) membership, Group/Family membership, and Student/Senior membership. Some have a "newsletter only" membership, too.

### ARTICLE III Officers

#### Section 1.

The Executive Board made up of the elected officers of this Guild shall be: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Newsletter Editor (other officers may be listed as necessary).

#### Section 2.

All officers must be members in good standing of the Puppeteers of America, Inc.

### Section 3.

All officers shall be adult members of the Guild. If any of them ceases to be such, that office shall be declared vacant by the executive board, which shall fill the vacancy for the unexpired term.

## ARTICLE IV Duties of Officers

The duties of the officers include but are not limited to the following prescribed activities. Duties of officers may be changed, modified, and expanded by, and at the direction of the executive board of the Guild.

### Section 1.

The President of the Guild shall be chief executive officer. The President shall direct the affairs of the Guild; shall preside at all meetings; shall receive and review all reports in advance of each meeting and shall report this information to the membership at each meeting. The President may create special standing committees as the need arises and shall be ex-officio to all committees of the Guild. The President shall see that all matters of Guild business and/or resolutions passed by the membership and executive board are implemented.

### Section 2.

The Vice President shall, in the absence of the President, perform the duties and exercise the powers of the President. In case of a vacancy in the office of President, the Vice President shall become the President for the unexpired term. In addition, the Vice President shall perform such other duties as may be assigned by the President and the executive board.

### Section 3.

The Secretary shall perform all the usual duties of secretary which shall include keeping the official minutes of all regular meetings of the Guild. The Secretary shall report on any communications received by the Guild. This officer shall duplicate and distribute copies of minutes and other official documents to the officers and to the membership as from time to time may be deemed necessary by the executive board. The Secretary shall receive, preserve, and file all documents and papers relating to the business of the Guild, and shall keep a register of officers and members.

### Section 4.

The Treasurer shall perform all the usual duties of treasurer which shall include collecting dues and all monies pertaining to Guild business or Guild sponsored events. The Treasurer shall be authorized to reimburse legitimate expenses incurred by the Guild, shall keep an accurate account of all money received and paid out, and shall make a treasury report at each of the regular meetings of the organization. The Treasurer will present a comprehensive breakdown of all collections and expenditures at the annual meeting of the Guild.

### Section 5.

The newsletter Editor shall publish a [monthly, bi-monthly, quarterly] newsletter and mail it to the membership in good standing of the Guild. The newsletter must include an announcement of the up-coming regular meeting and will be sent no later than two (2) weeks in advance of said meeting.

The Newsletter Editor shall submit copies of their newsletters (as they are financially able to do) to the President and Vice-President of the Puppeteers of America, Inc., The Newsletter Consultant, the Regional Director, and the current keeper of Guild news for a Puppeteers of

America, Inc. publication.

Each newsletter will include the statement, "a chartered Guild of the Puppeteers of America, Inc. and a listing of officers with contact information.

#### ARTICLE V Term of Office

This article defines the term of office between elections and related matters.

#### ARTICLE VI Election of Officers

##### Section 1.

The nominating committee will nominate and present one (1) slate of officers for candidacy at a designated regular meeting of the Guild. At this meeting, other nominations may be made from the floor by members provided nominated persons are present or have submitted written permission for their nomination and are members in good standing of the Guild. If more than one) 1) nomination is made per office, the vote will take place by secret ballot.

##### Section 2.

Elected officers will be installed and begin their duties at the first regular meeting of the Guild following the election.

#### ARTICLE VII Meetings

##### Section 1

A minimum of four (4)\* regular meetings of the Guild shall take place annually. Each meeting shall include reports from the officers, discussion, and handling of any important business matters pertaining to the Guild, and a program or workshop. These meeting dates shall be set by the executive board and will be announced at prior meetings with particulars in the Guild Newsletter.

[\* One meeting is permitted where Guild members must travel long distances in order to meet.]

##### Section 2.

Special meetings and programs may be held at the request of the executive board provided reasonable notification of membership is possible.

#### ARTICLE VIII Committees

##### Section 1.

The Guild may have such standing committees and ad hoc committees as may be determined from time to time by the executive board to be necessary to the operation of the Guild. The President shall act as an ex-officio member of all committees.

##### Section 2.

A Budget and Finance Committee consisting of four (4) members shall be formed at the beginning of each new Guild year. The members shall be: the President, the Treasurer, and two (2) regular members of the Guild appointed by the President from the membership at large. The chairperson shall also be appointed by the President. It shall be the function of this committee to establish a budget for the duration of the up-coming Guild year. This budget shall be presented to the membership in the newsletter prior to the second regular meeting of the year.

Approval by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present at the meeting will render the budget official and legitimate. The committee shall also review any expenditures in excess

of the current approved budget before payment or reimbursement by the Treasurer can be authorized. The budget may be amended by a majority vote of the membership.

#### Section 3.

The Nominating Committee, consisting of three (3) to five (5) people, shall be selected by the members present at the last regular meeting of the year. The committee shall appoint its own chairperson. The slate of candidates shall then be announced in the Guild newsletter one (1) month prior to the election.

#### ARTICLE IX Amendments to the Constitution

Amendments may be initiated by at least two (2) members of the Guild. The proposed changes shall be read at the regular meeting preceding the meeting at which voting will take place, and must be published by mail to all members in good standing at least fourteen (14) days before the voting date. The amendment must be passed by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present.

### **BYLAWS**

#### ARTICLE I

##### Dues

The annual dues of this Guild for each class of membership shall be set by the executive board and shall be reviewed annually. The dues recommended shall be approved by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present.

#### ARTICLE II

##### Quorum

A quorum shall consist of one-fourth (1/4) of the total membership, or whatever number is set by the executive board of the Guild plus (+) at least three (3) officers.

#### ARTICLE III

##### Amendments to the Bylaws

The bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of members present at any regular meeting of the Guild. Any amendment will then be announced in the Guild newsletter.

## **Appendix III**

### **Guild reporting form Puppeteers of America for year \_\_\_\_\_**

This form should be completed and returned to the Guild and Regions Liaison by June 1<sup>st</sup>.  
You may attach any other information you would like to showcase.

Guild Name:

Guild President:

PoA#:

Address:

City

State:

Zip:

Phone:

Eve Phone:

Email:

Guild Vice President:

PoA#:

Guild Treasurer:

PoA#:

Email contact for the Guild, if not President:

Please send any change of officers or email contacts during the year to the Guilds and Regions Liaison as soon as possible.

Month your Guild changes officers:

Do you publish a newsletter? Y/N

Number of issues per year:

Do you exchange newsletters with other guilds?

How many?

Does your newsletter editor regularly send a copy to the PofA President and Vice President? Y/N  
(If not, please do)

Name of newsletter:

Newsletter Editor:

Address:

City:

State:

Zip:

Phone:

Email:

Guild reporting form continued, page 2 of 2

Membership

Total number of Guild members (using your membership categories)

Adults/Srs:                  Couples:                  Youth:                  Family/Group:

Dues for your membership categories

Adults/Srs:                  Couples:                  Youth:                  Family/Group:

Balance in Guild treasury—end of year \_\_\_\_\_ (information appreciated)

Did your Guild hold a National Day of Puppetry (NDoP) this year? Y/N

What suggestions do you have for the NDoP Coordinator?

How were NDoP materials used?

Please add any comments to the Board of Trustees:

**Return this form to:**

**Puppeteers of America  
Guilds/Regions Liaison  
Karen Backes  
7500 Babcock Trail  
Inver Grove Heights MN 55077**

## ***Appendix IV***

### ***Some Ideas for Guild Meetings and Projects***

Many of the most popular meetings are those that have a Performance, puppeteers love to watch shows. It can be a performance to enjoy or it may be a critique session. The performer makes the choice. Members may simply offer suggestions, depending on the group. Critiques must be carefully handled. Option-write suggestions and turn them in at the end of the show.

If a member has presented workshops at festivals, ask them to do their workshop for the Guild. Many members have expertise in particular areas and just need to be asked. At the beginning of the year, you can ask if anyone would like to do a workshop. Consider workshops on business-creativity-producing brochures-publicity and etc. Don't hesitate to call in the experts. Offer them a stipend.

Hands-on-workshops seem to always be a good experience. One or two sessions seem to work best.

Many Guilds always have a Show and Tell at their meetings. This gives everyone a great opportunity to get involved.

#### Themes

CLINIC: Everyone brings a problem puppet, script or idea. We help each other solve a problem.

STAGE NIGHT: Bring a stage-set it up-explain how it works Set up: lights, curtains, etc.

VARIETY NIGHT: Everyone brings a trick puppet. Explain how it works.

SCRIPT NIGHT: Talk about what a good script needs. Read a script and critique the script. Have a writer speak about good scripts

RELIGIOUS NIGHT: Good plays, kinds of puppets to use, kinds of puppets to make, demos

FILM FESTIVAL: Have films people own- check the public library- rent a film from the PofA Audio-Visual Library. Be sure to have popcorn.

MUSIC NIGHT: Discuss and listen to music for puppets. Music for moods.

RENAISSANCE NIGHT: Have older members talk about the history of the Guild.

COSTUMING NIGHT: Information on local stores that sell cloth and trim. Methods of costuming-simple and complex

BOOK NIGHT: Have members bring their favorite book and tell why they like it best.

MAGIC, CLOWNS, STORYTELLERS: Have a joint meeting with local performers. They can share what they do and how their group works.

YOUNG PERFORMERS: Many schools do shows- Invite them to perform at a meeting.

OTHER TOPIC IDEAS:

Puppets from the kitchen, gourds, pop up puppets, quick and easy finger, puppets, giant puppets

Do a show as a Guild. Get everyone involved. This doesn't always work out and sometimes we find out things we would rather not know. Often creative people have trouble working together. Be sure to establish who is in charge.

Be in a parade together. ... carry a banner and puppets.

Create a banner for your Guild if you don't have one.

Have a contest and design a logo.

Pick a topic-build a hand puppet, costume a puppet and have a contest with ribbons and all.

An evening of toy theater. Build one or just talk about them. Have a demonstration.

Pick a group (church-hospital-overseas children) and make hand puppets for them.

***Projects for the city you live in:***

Have a Day of Puppetry

Exhibits.

Sponsor a professional puppeteer from out of town.

Get a local TV station to interview your Guild.

Be sure you have a National Day of Puppetry.

Many Guilds combine talents and have "Potlatches"-joint meeting-just plain old get together and good fun with nearby fellow puppeteers.

## **Appendix V**

### ***E-mail and the World Wide Web***

People join puppet organizations to feel connected to other puppeteers. E-mail is an amazing and simple way to keep puppeteers connected. No printing, no stamp, no phone bills, and instant results.

For our local Guild, there are two e-mail address books, one for dues paying members and the other is labeled "other puppeteers." It costs absolutely nothing to send e-mails to puppeteers who are not a member of a guild or PofA.

If you find names of local puppeteers in the PofA directory or the UNIMA directory, add them to your e-mail list and send them news unless they ask to be removed. If someone does ask to be removed from the list, honor that request and take them off.

Be patient and persistent. E-mail addresses change frequently. If an e-mail bounces back with a wrong address, it is a good excuse to call up that puppeteer and chat and perhaps remind them about the guild and ask for their new e-mail address.

It is much easier for many people to e-mail announcements about workshops and performances than to call people. Because it is easier, the e-mail can become a great source of news for the Newsletter. Any information, no matter if it is about a school show or a theater performance, experimental or mainstream, can be great to pass along to the people in your address book.

The more news you can send out the better. WHY? News about local puppet events creates a feeling of vitality and energy. And if there is a "lively scene", people with an interest in puppetry will want to be connected to it. If there isn't much going on, look to puppet books, videotapes, DVDs and puppet web sites for information to pass along.

Will giving away the puppet news undercut guild membership? It might. A few people might not pay guild dues if they are getting free puppet news on the internet. Very often, however, sending out e-mail news builds membership and also reminds many "lapsed" guild members to pay their dues again.

A guild is not an exclusive club of insiders. The idea of a guild is to share with all who have an interest in puppetry. The Philadelphia Guild has made a deliberate choice to be inclusive. The dues are not a subscription to a newsletter but rather a way of supporting the idea of building a community of puppeteers. The Guild has used Public TV or Public Radio as a model, broadcasting the news for free but every so often asking the public for support.

It is vital that members without e-mail be included. A choice must be offered to the membership. And even members with e-mail sometimes like to have a printed newsletter in regular mail. This choice must be honored.

A few guilds around the country have created e-mail groups (often on Yahoo). In an e-mail group, all the members who sign get every notice, and if they respond, everyone on the list sees the response. It is similar to having a conversation or dialog. Washington, Boston, Miami and a few other guilds have "list serves" or e-mail groups.

### ***Web Site***

About 18 guilds now have their own web sites with their own web masters. The quality varies just as it does with Newsletters. Information on the web sites should be changed regularly and brought up to date. If a guild is going to establish a web site, it is essential to update the web site with current information at least once a year, but updating every 3 or 6 months would be even better. One of the best web sites for design and content is the Twin Cities Puppeteers.

### ***Newsletter***

Some guilds now post their newsletter on the guild web site. The current way to do this is to use the Adobe Acrobat Reader (also called a PDF file) The newsletter can be posted on the web site AND sent by e-mail to members. Posting a newsletter changes the web site and keeps information up to date,