

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hey Everybody!

**W**ell, it's official: the next National Festival, PuppetFest (R) Evolution will be held August 5-10, 2013 at Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania. Our Festival Director is Robert Smythe and he has assembled a fine team. Thanks to all for stepping up!

And, thanks to the Puppetry Store staff for putting together a beautiful 2013 Calender, featuring puppet places around the country. Go on the website and click on Store and order one today; all proceeds go to PofA. Also check out the new DVD's and books. The season of giving is upon us and you'll find some great gifts.

## REUM - ... with a view

M'El Reum

**T**he sun is shining brightly and it is freezing cold outside. What a wonderful world we live in. I don't mind it at all because I'm never sure what the weather will be in Denver. Actually I'm getting so I am just glad to wake up to another day to see what nonsense fills our world. I just think just about everyone is crazy. Except PUPPETEERS! We are saner than most. It is the childlike qualities inside us that give us hope and joy.

I am always thrilled when a puppeteer comes in from out of town. **Joe Cashore of Colmar, Pennsylvania** was in town two weeks ago and his performance was a joy to behold. His marionettes are beyond belief. Three of us Denver puppeteers sat in up-front seats and were able to see well. I love that I have good friends - marionettists - all absolutely outstanding and yet all very different in their own performances. I never stop being amazed.

**Tracey Conner of Orlando, Florida** has just celebrated 25 years as **MicheLee Puppets**. In February she will be hosting a hands on puppetry retreat on "Puppetry in Education and Therapy" in Orlando.

St Louis Guild is on the move. They had a puppet fest in November with shows by **Ginny Weiss of St. Louis, Missouri** and **Pat Breithaupt of St. Clair**. At the busy **Puppetry Arts Institute in Independence, Missouri**, **Emma McLean** performed "Peter and the Wolf" using the classic marionettes of **Robert Leroy Smith**.

**Nancy Henk, Clinton Township, Michigan** and **Brad Lowe, Clarkston, Michigan** added another notch to their puppet lives as they worked on giant puppet heads for the Mount Clemens Thanksgiving Day Parade.

**Peggy Melchior** and her **Peewinkle Puppets** of **Greenwood, Indiana** had a "Holiday Cabaret" featuring festivals around the world. They taught everyone about lots of holidays including Chinese New Year, Diwali, Hanukkah and Kwanzaa, as well as Christmas.

**The Czechoslovak-American Theatre, New York** offered as a feature presentation for its 50th anniversary Season, "Golem" an ancient Jewish myth. Congratulations to **Vit Horejs!**

I want to give a shout out to Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM) and the Henson Foundation for co-sponsoring a fabulous two weekends of puppet films. These included feature length films, shorts and documentaries, over 40 films in all, including our own Puppet Rampage. I was thrilled that our Festival documentary could be shown to a wider audience and in such prestigious company.

**I**want to wish you all a very happy holiday season and may all your holiday shows be brite!

Always a pleasure,

Anna Vargas

**Angela Beasley** and **The Puppet People, Savannah, Georgia**, have a new website that says - fun. They have shows and puppet making to keep everyone busy. Notes from **Nancy Staub** and **Vince Anthony** let us know that **Luis Barroso of New Orleans, Louisiana**, received a Community Arts Award from the New Orleans Arts Council in September. Congratulations, Luis!

**Heart of the Beast, Minneapolis Minnesota** always has fantastic things happening. They hosted distinguished dalang (puppet master) **Midiyanto** from the University of California and presented the play "Three Princes, One Blessing". The audience was awed and delighted.

My friend and fellow *Playboard* writer from **Minneapolis, Minnesota**, **Kurt Hunter** had a fascinating trip to China and returned home with several puppet items that he shared with the Minnesota Puppeteers.

New York puppeteers were treated to an unusual puppet presentation, "Deathscape." I don't quite understand, but music waves reflect impact on the audience and the puppets (of all sorts) are involved. It sounds different - that's for sure. [Ed. note: 'Deathscape' was written by **Misha Shulman** and shown at **Theater For The New City**. A multi-media 'dream play' of sorts, using two actors and four puppeteers.]

**The Theater For The New City** also presented "Sixth Voice 4 Vision" " Puppet Festival. They are a creative group working with puppets and presented a wide variety of performances for all to enjoy.

I took a quick jaunt to **Colorado Springs** to see **David Simpich's** production of 'Oliver Twist'. Dickens seems to take so long to get into the story. David made it simple and real and I thoroughly enjoyed it. It was beautiful.

**M**ey-mail and snail mail needs to know what you are doing. If you have read this far, make a New Year resolution to write and let me know what you are doing. I hope the year 2012 is a year of success for all of you. M'El

**M'EL REUM**  
827 Milwaukee Street  
Denver, CO 80206  
puppetreum@estreet.com  
FAX (303) 393 - 1367

# THE GUILD CONNECTION

KURT HUNTER

My guild, the **Twin Cities Puppeteers**, has a meeting coming up in a little over a week and I don't think we know what we are doing yet. We've got a great VP, Ben Peterson, who arranges the meeting programs, but a couple of plans have fallen through.

- We're not alone. Plans change. For the September meeting of the **National Capital Puppetry Guild**, Heidi Rugg was planning to perform a work-in-progress, "Little by Little", but she had to delay that. Ingrid Crepeau of DinoRock Productions volunteered to step in with a performance of "Amelia and her Big Red Plane," but that didn't quite happen either so Ingrid filled in for herself with a workshop on Glue, Tape and Foam, the sticky stuff that holds things together. They still had a great workshop, but plans change.

- Of course lots of things change over time. People come and go. Interests change. Situations change. At their September meeting the **Connecticut Guild of Puppetry** addressed change head on with a forum on "The Direction of the Guild in the Next Decade."

- **The Florida Suncoast Puppet Guild** took a more dramatic approach to the same question announcing on the cover of their newsletter "This could be our Final Guild Meeting ...". Jody Wren listed reasons to attend the meeting ranging from "I've really missed you" to "There will be food and you don't have to bring it." That would have gotten me to the meeting. I hope they had productive discussions about the future of the guild.

- **The Wisconsin Guild of Puppetry** had a planning meeting in September. Because of the distances between members they don't get together frequently, but that doesn't stop them from looking ahead. They are planning on an April 2012 meeting in Madison and a September meeting in Oshkosh. They also decided that they should start collecting dues again.

- Jean Enticknap reminded the members of the **Puppeteers of Puget Sound** that dues are due in September. She also listed the benefits of membership including workshops and events, a link to your website on the guild website, and access to scholarships.

- **The Southeast Region** of the PofA has also been offering scholarships and grants. One grant went to Beau Brown for the Puppet Slam at DragonCon in Atlanta, which was a very successful promotion of puppetry.

- **The Puppet Guild of Greater St. Louis** continues to do their part to promote puppetry. In September they had a successful joint project with the Carousel House at Faust Park. Peppy Puppet Troupe (Michelle O'Donnell and Stan Gulick) performed "The Three Bears" and Pat Breithaupt, Ginny Weiss, and Jackie Wright led workshops.

- September also saw the annual Houston Puppetry Festival presented by the **Greater Houston Puppetry Guild**. They really know what they are doing. The cost is \$60 for adults (\$70 at the door) and \$40 for youth (\$50 at the door) plus a group rate for 5 or more and receive \$10 off each.

The four workshop sessions had three workshop choices each

session. This year's event included a performance of "Puppet Commotion" by Nitsana Lazerus, plus a store and Puppet Parade.

- **The San Francisco Bay Area Puppeteers Guild** had a big event in September to celebrate their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. They started with a social hour with cocktails and pre-dinner entertainment by Tinker's Coin Productions, followed by a catered meal, and performances by Oregon Shadow Theatre and Bob Hartman.

- **The Detroit Puppeteers Guild** also hit a milestone this year. They celebrated their 65<sup>th</sup> birthday with dinner at the Polish American Century Club (their favorite birthday place) and a performance of "The Magic Fish" by Dave Rozmarynowski.

- **The Puppetry Guild of Greater New York** looked at two works-in-progress at their November meeting. Penny Jones showed the puppets and stage for a new shadow puppet show and talked about the creative process and Ken Solway read passages from his new play "When the Devil Met Death".

- **The Orange County Puppetry Guild** also got a look at the creative process at their September meeting. Shaun McNamara and Danny Montooth gave them a look at the making of their show "Hamlet Has No Legs."

- **The Puppet Guild of Long Island** uses email to send out updates between issues of their newsletter, Punchline. Eventually they plan to have Punchline solely online. In April they had a workshop on ventriloquism lead by Steve Petruzella.

- **The Indiana Puppetry Guild** kicked off the fall with a meeting of burgers, hotdogs, and show and tell. Everyone was encouraged to bring something new... something old... something odd. Also encouraged to bring a spouse, which presumably could have covered one of the earlier categories.

- **The Puppet Guild of South Florida** had a hands-on Toy Theatre Workshop lead by Dave Goboff in September. It was an opportunity to make your own theatre for a minimal fee.

- In October the **Willamette Valley Puppeteers in Oregon** viewed the documentary "I'm No Dummy."

- **The Phoenix Guild of Puppetry** covered "What Works with Kids?" in an October workshop lead by Glenda Bonin.

- **The Los Angeles Guild of Puppetry** took a field trip in September to the LA County Museum of Art to see the Tim Burton exhibit. They are also planning a field trip to see the new Muppet movie. The Greater Houston Puppetry Guild is planning a field trip to see the movie too. Our TCP VP Ben has suggested we do that too. It should be fun.

Well, I've squeezed all the news I can into this column. Please keep the news coming.

**KURT HUNTER**  
5918 W. 39th Street  
St. Lois Park, MN 55416  
HunterMarionettes@earthlink.net

# EUREKA!!!

**NANCY H. SANDER**

1250 GRANGER AVENUE

LAKEWOOD, OH 44107

puppetmaster@puppetswithpizazz.com

Greetings, Puppet Survivors...

Survivors of the country clubs, the lodges, the tippy parents, the raucous rush of the holiday season.

As I write this in mid November, I am staring bleakly at my December bookings. Am I the only one? Are the rest of you down as well? For Christmas shows I think this is the worst season in forty years. I remember the bang-up business I did in the schools, back in the eighties. Now, as Steve Abrams says, "No child left behind" means "Every puppeteer left behind!"

**INCREASING BOOKINGS:** How can we, as struggling puppeteers, manage to increase our chances of getting bookings? What are some tricks of the trade that we can share? I was at the Great Lakes Potlatch and this was a hot topic of discussion.

Postage costs. **Dave Herzog**, of **Chicago**, sends out a large flashy postcard to a huge data base four times a year. He says that even if he has to spend eight hundred dollars on postage, and it brings him thousands of dollars in business, it's worth it.

**MAILINGS:** **Rick Morse**, of **Flushing, Michigan**, suggests that when calling, do not send out more flyers than you can follow up within several weeks. Generally, after two weeks, the potential client has no memory of receiving your material.

**CALLBACKS:** Rick also said that callbacks are the way to bookings. If you say, "I'll call you in a week," have a calendar, whether on Outlook, smart phone or notebook, and make a notation. This person should be the first person you will call that day. Keeping a phone appointment tells the client that you will also keep your performance appointment.

**LIBRARY CALLING:** In my own experience, I try not to call children's librarians the half hour right after school gets out. There is just no time to talk, and we are perceived at that time more of an annoyance than anything.

**CLOSING THE DEAL:** **THE Zig Zigar**, famous for closing the deal (and my personal favorite), says in his lectures to never hang up without asking for the booking. The request brings your product from the abstract to the concrete. You don't have to be as blunt as: "So, do you want to book a show?" Sometimes I suggest setting up a tentative date, especially around Christmas, emphasizing that "there is no obligation, but I will keep the date for two weeks, and if anyone calls for that date, I will call you first." Having to back out of even a tentative booking is a high anxiety chore for anyone.

**ENOUGH IS ENOUGH:** **Ollie De Priest**, of **Springfield, Illinois**, once told us that when cold calling, if you have called three times and still haven't gotten to the person in charge, forget it; call someone else. I had to give Ollie a imaginary pat on the back when I read the very same thing in a book I am reading called, *Cold Calling Techniques (That Really Work)*, by **Stephan Schiffman** (Adams Media, Avon, Massachusetts). This little book is now in its sixth printing, and is very exciting.

**HAD TO LAUGH:** I came across a book that I just had to have: *Ice to Eskimos: How To Market A Product Nobody Wants* by **Jon Spoelstra** (Harper Business, New York, 1997). Just up my alley! Even bought one for another puppeteer friend...Actually, it has some good ideas. Which brings me to the point. Don't be parochial in your business or your reading. You have to be not only a good performer, but also a good business person and a good sales person in order to succeed in this job.

**FEEDBACK:** We would all like to know how we are doing, but asking a paid client for feedback is risky business. Handing out questionnaires to a group of teachers at the school is spelling disaster. Most everyone wants to be a one-up-man-ship critic, proving to the higher-ups how brilliant he or she is. You are a paid professional. Did Sinatra ask for feedback? No!

**Judy Brown**, of **Alexandria, Virginia**, says, and rightly so, that rebooking is your feedback. But peer review is invaluable. Ask for a guild critique, or volunteer a show and invite a few friends. And this important point: no matter how wrong your critic is (and you know he or she is!), don't get defensive. Don't argue back. Listen carefully. Go home and lick your wounds. And then, when you've had a glass of wine and have stopped shaking, thoughtfully think of all that you remember. Your critics see your show from a completely different angle. What they have experienced is valid and should be thoughtfully considered. Keep what you want and chuck the rest...and then forget about it.

**CARVING WOOD:** I went to an auction and got a set of **Warther** whittling knives. These are the **Rolls Royce** of whittling knives, and come in eight different blades. You can get the large sized handle (\$52.00) or the small handle (\$34.00). For more information, log onto their website: [www.wathercutlery.com](http://www.wathercutlery.com). Landed folks can write to: **Wather Museum**: 331 Karl Avenue, Dover, OH 44722. 330-343-7513. And may I strongly suggest you purchase a leather apron to go with them. I have a four inch scar on my leg to back this up suggestion ...

**WOOD CHOICE:** But what kind of wood is best? Traditionally, bass wood is an easy carve for puppets, but getting it in large enough chunks is hard. **Dave Herzog**, of **Chicago**, uses jelutong wood from Indonesia. The English refer to it as lime wood. Although I had never heard of it, Dave says that it is in good supply at most hardwood suppliers since it is used for moldings in buildings. He purchases his from **Owl Hardwood Lumber**, 926 S. Graceland, Des Plaines, IL 60016. 847-824-5025. [www.owlhardwood.com/contact-us/](http://www.owlhardwood.com/contact-us/) Dave says they ship to all US states.

**WOODEN NOSES:** When carving a head (the grain runs vertically), don't include the nose. Instead, carve the nose separately, with the grain running horizontally. If the nose grain runs vertically, the first whack and off goes the nose. This is especially essential when carving that special lifetime dream of your own set of exquisite, museum-quality Punch puppets. This nose block should be pegged in before you start carving .

**COSTUMING:** I was at the **Goodwill** (as usual) and saw an **XS** dog tee shirt with rhinestones. Oh, yeah, a must-have! What was nice about it is that, even though the neck is larger and needs a dart, the sleeves are more forward than the regular child's shirt. This shirt was only a happy experiment because the rhinestones said "Sexy B----," and I knew that wouldn't fly in the preschool...

**MAN'S SUIT JACKET:** Have you ever struggled, and I do mean struggled, with trying to make a man's suit jacket? Those lapels! I heard from **Marge Thomas**, of **Bernards Bay, New York**, who solved my problem. She looks in the **Goodwill** for a pattern for a man's sport coat. She takes out, not the pattern itself, but the directions where there is a picture of how the pieces are to be laid out on the material. She cuts out the pictures of the pieces and enlarges them to the right size for her puppet.

Good heavens, how I do go on! I'm out of room, but can always use some more of your great ideas. E-mail me, write me, phone me. Hope to hear from you soon! \_\_\_\_\_ Nancy