



P·L·A·Y·B·O·A·R·D

The NEWSLETTER OF THE PUPPETEERS OF AMERICA

Editor: Fred Thompson • 26 Howard Avenue • New Haven, CT • 06519-2809

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Well Hey, Everybody!

The weather is getting warmer and summer is coming! I hope all of you are checking out this year's regional festivals. The organizers are hard at work preparing a wonderful summer for you.

By now all of you should have received your new Directory, thanks to the efforts of the Membership Office. One idea that the board has been kicking around is the possibility of putting the Directory on-line, password protected. This is in addition to the printed volume and the password would probably change yearly. If anyone has any thoughts or suggestions on the matter, I would love to hear from you. Just email me at: anadpuppet@yahoo.com. Just put DIRECTORY in the subject line, or snail mail me at 39 Besen Parkway Airmont, NY 10952.

The election results are in and will be announced at the annual meeting, to be held in Seattle in July. We had a smaller than usual number of votes cast, 14% of the total membership returned ballots. I don't know what that means, but there it is.

A word: Yes, these are tough times, yes, we are all feeling the pinch, but as artists, and artists of a unique breed, we need each other for support, inspiration and sometimes a kick in the rear. Please consider attending a festival this summer for your own artistic health and that of your fellow puppeteers. After a festival, without fail, I feel energized, inspired, filled with joy and glad to be part of this odd fraternity (sorority?), is there a word for both? Who knows? To be able to share this unique art form with the others of our clan is an experience worth having. If you were thinking of not going for whatever reason, please think again. We'd miss you.

If you have not seen the Festival 09 DVD, check out the Puppetry Store and get one. It is awesome!

Till Fall.

Anna Vargas, President

REGIONAL FESTIVALS SUMMER 2010

**SOUTHEAST REGIONAL FESTIVAL -
JULY 15 - 18, 2010**

University of North Carolina /Wilmington
Festival Director – Gina Gambony
ginagambony@gmail.com
www.portcitypuppet.org
Contact: Susan VanDeWeigh
P.O. Box 8
Cedar Mountain, NC 28718
Phone: (828) 862-8122

**GREAT LAKES REGIONAL FESTIVAL -
JULY 29 - AUGUST 1, 2010**

President Abraham Lincoln Hotel,
Springfield, Illinois
Festival Director – Bridget DePriest
bridgetdp@cs.com
www.puppetryinlandoflincoln.com
Contact: Bridget DePriest
2333 Lowell Avenue
Springfield, IL 62704
Phone: (217) 789-1219

**NORTHWEST REGIONAL FESTIVAL -
JULY 30 - AUGUST 2, 2010**

Seattle University, Seattle, Washington
Festival Director – Tony DeFilipps,
tonydefilipps@comcast.net
www.puppet-o-rama.org
Contact: Debbie DeFilipps
21119 SE 135th Street
Issaquah, WA. 98027
Phone: (206) 940-0889

**GREAT PLAINS REGIONAL FESTIVAL
August 20 - August 22, 2010**

Saint Charles, Missouri
Festival Co-Directors -
Michelle O'Donnell & Tom Bonham
Tom@PuppetFestival.info
www.PuppetFestival.info
Contact: Tom Bonham
1815 Elm Tree Street
Saint Peters, MO 63376-6610

It is suddenly summer, but outside the window my world is covered with snow. Denver has had one of its famous snowstorms in May. It will melt by tomorrow and the air will be clear. I will be grateful that school will soon be out and Festivals filled with puppetry will be revving up. I love summer because I get a puppet transfusion and it sets me up for new ideas and offers me new shows I haven't seen.

This year I will be teaching a class in soft-bodied marionettes at Puppet Fest Mid-west in Missouri. It offers a week of concentrated time spent in learning what you want to learn. It is a pay it back time for me. I once took a class in at Scarret college at a Festival in Tenn. The class was about soft bodied marionettes and was taught by **Jerry Hartnett of Lanark, Florida**. In our class was a very young man named **Phillip Huber of Cookeville, Tennessee**. There are great advantages of meeting people at festivals. You end up with life long friendships. We have always said, it was great seeing each other every year, sharing our love of puppets together. The best thing is you never know each other well enough to know each other's faults.

Wake up friends, this summer there is Puppet Fest Midwest in Missouri, Puppet-O-rama in Seattle, Washington and Port City Fest in Wilmington North Carolina, the Great Lakes Region-Land of Lincoln, in Springfield Illinois, the O'Neill National Puppetry Conference in Connecticut and the Sandglass Theater Festival in Putney, Vermont. Choose one! Choose All! You will never regret it.

Before I begin my column I need my soapbox for a few words. As I was reading the last issue of the *Puppetry Journal* and while writing my column (most of the information I have comes from Newsletters) I discovered that many of the talented and inventive puppeteers that we write about are NOT members of the Puppeteers of America, I find this really disheartening. There are loyal members out there that are never mentioned in the columns or articles and I can't quite figure it out. Why write about people who won't read about their own activities because they won't even join the national organization? I want then to be a part of the organization. If you recognize any of these names that do not appear in our directory, bug them to join.

I received some great Punch and Judy material concerning a P&J festival in Liandudno in Wales. The family has been doing the show for generations and this year celebrated it's 150 year. The puppets originally were carved from sticks found on the beach, the company even survived a freak storm that washed the stage away one night and it survived, losing only a piece of the proscenium. It is true Punch lives on.

Speaking of Punch - The Drama of Works in Brooklyn, NY continues to have its Puppet slams. The group is working on "Leakey's Ladies". **James Walton** recently visited the zoo in DC to study movements of gorillas and orangutans to be sure the movements were correct. Puppeteers really do their homework. The group has received a grant from the Henson Foundation and the Puffin Foundation.

David Simpich is doing "Portraits" at his theatre in **Colorado Springs, Colorado**. It is a wonderful show about people that left an impression in David's life. Lincoln, the elephant man, David's great grandmother and many interesting personalities.

Jerry Bickel's Bits 'N Pieces, Puppet Theater of Tampa Bay, Florida is presenting their newest show, "The Adventures of Robin Hood!"

Monica Leo and Eli Portugal of Independence, Iowa stopped by the **Puppet Arts Institute in Kansas City** and performed two classic Mexican animal tales, "The Rabbit in the Moon" and "the Musical Ant." They performed in both English and Spanish. They have a busy summer at the PAI. **Clement-McCrae Puppet Co, Kansas City, Missouri** will be performing their "Puppets on a String" and **Rosalie Perryman of Marshfield Missouri** will be doing "Taking a Trip Around the World."

The Minneapolis puppeteers celebrated their 36th May Day parade this year.

Wonderful news and congratulations to **Spencer Lott, Lawrence Kansas** He not only graduated from college but produced a wonderful puppet show: "The House of Atreus." Based on Greek tragedies, Spencer uses

pop-culture to appeal to young adults. Actors are the Gods manipulating the puppets who represent the lowly pathetic humans. The show had rave reviews.

Pinocchio is also making the rounds this summer. **Lee Bryan, of Atlanta Georgia** is doing his one man puppet show "Pinocchio" and the **Pinocchio's Marionette Theatre, Orlando Florida** is doing - guess what "Pinocchio".

Who has more fun than **Angela Beasley, Savannah Georgia?** She started spring off this year with Mad Hatter Parties and Earth Day parties.

Bob Baker in Los Angeles, California has opened a new show called "Musical World".

Creative minds are at work. **Diane Raines, Hudson, Wisconsin** has made a reversible faced snowman for her Hans Christian Anderson story of love between a snowman and a pot bellied stove. That's one I have never heard before, sounds interesting.

Marta Mozelle Macrostie (an O'Neill grad) has an articulated hand, that is a marionette. Now that's different.

Debbie Costine of Southborough, Massachusetts is working on a new environmental show that includes a turtle and a beaver. Debbie, true to the professional puppet standards has been studying the life and habits of the two animals. (I find myself wishing that people understood how much time energy and talent it takes to build a quality show like Deb's.)

REUM-

...with a view.

M'El Reum

REUM...with a view (Continued on page 4.)

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Denver, CO 80206
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The GUILD CONNECTION

KURT HUNTER

This April the National Day of Puppetry celebrated twelve years. Just shy of those teenage years, the event hasn't become moody and unresponsive yet. In fact the NDOP celebrations across the country are as active and exciting as ever.

- **The Puppetry Guild of Greater New York** invaded the 42nd Street Library in Manhattan for an afternoon of puppetry in their auditorium. Bruce Cannon took on the MC duties to introduce performances by Penny and Geoffrey Jones, Artie Poore, Marshall Katzman, Guenevere Dean and Roy Chang, Bernice Silver, Lindsey "Z" Briggs and Chad Williams.

- A Tampa library was the site for NDOP performances from the **Florida Suncoast Puppet Guild**. Their audiences were treated to "Mariposa Martinez and More Tales from Latin America" by Katie Adams' Make Believe Theater and "A Tale is Told" by Frank Lakus plus Puppet Karaoke with Mike Pierson.

- The Houston Children's Museum was the site for performances by the **Greater Houston Puppetry Guild** on two days in April.

- **The Detroit Puppeteers Guild** held their NDOP event at the PuppetART Theater. The day featured a performance of "The Crane Maiden" plus two workshops for adults and two for kids.

- **The Wisconsin Guild of Puppetry** is waiting until June for their NDOP event to be held at Chuck and Sandye Voight's hazel Green Opera House. The event is scheduled to include performances by Monica Leo, Steve Mark, and Pam Corcoran.

- Combining forces for a big event, the **Los Angeles Guild of Puppetry**, the **Orange County Puppetry Guild** and the **International Puppetry Museum** hosted their Day of Puppetry at Descanso Gardens. It sounds like it was a great location for an Earth Day / Puppetry Day combination. The day featured performances of "Jack Rabbit and the Bean Stalk" by the Douglas Seymore Marionettes, "Martina's Undersea Adventure" by Michael Dowell of MooDoo Puppets and "Guardians of the Earth" by Penelope Torribio plus workshops lead by Beth Fernandez, Lois Harmeyer, Christine Papalexis and Thom Fountain.

- Great meeting locations can do a lot for a guild. My own guild, the **Twin Cities Puppeteers**, is very fortunate to be able to meet in the workshop space of In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theater. A creative space just sets the tone.

- **The Phoenix Guild of Puppetry** meets at and is supported by the Great Arizona Puppet Theater. In May their meeting followed a performance of "The True Story of the Three Little Pigs by A. Wolf" by Paul Mesner. Guild members got into the show for free and also got a look backstage.

- The Puppet Company at Glen Echo Park provides similar support for **The National Capital Puppetry Guild**. In March, their guild meeting followed The Puppet Company's performance of 'Beauty and the Beast.'

- Tim Reed's Marionettes presented the featured performance for the event sponsored by the **Chicagoland Puppetry Guild**.

- **The Indiana Puppetry Guild** calls Peewinkle's Puppet Studio in Indianapolis home. Their circus themed meeting in March included a performance of "Peewinkle Joins the Circus."

- **The Puppet Guild of South Florida** met at the Puppet Network Studio in May for a hands-on mask making workshop led by Dave Goboff. They used recycled materials to make "Eco-faces." The guild also put together a large puppet exhibit at the Broward Southwest Regional Library.

- **The Connecticut Guild of Puppetry** headed over to the University of Connecticut Puppetry Complex for their April meeting. They took in three films by UConn M.F.A. students, "Parrot Island" by Rebekah Eyre, "The Epileptic Bicycle" by Lauren Horoszewski and "The Tell Tale Heart" by Lyn Cohen.

- Although technically not a puppetry center, the home of Nancy and Eric Sanders has to be pretty close. They hosted the **Puppetry Guild of Northeastern Ohio** in February to show off Nancy's whole collection of puppets gathered over the years.

- Performances are always a great source of inspiration. In February the **Cincinnati Area Puppetry Guild** caught a performance of Hobey Ford's "Anamalia." That same month the **Western Michigan Puppetry Guild** took in a performance by marionette master Joseph Cashore.

- **The Puppet Guild of Greater St. Louis** had their annual membership drive in March. The event featured a wide range of puppetry workshops lead by Pat Breithaupt, Ginny Weiss, Daniel Romano, Daniel Breithaupt and Papa Wright.

- **The San Francisco Bay Area Puppetry Guild** had a huge meeting in March. It featured two performances, Judy Gregory's "Peter and the Wolf" and Robin Stevens' "The Gnome Show" and two workshops, "Using Puppets in the Classroom" by Lee Armstrong and "Making and Using Puppets with Young Children" by Elisheva Hart and Tia Smirnoff. Randal Metz has also recently updated their on-line guild history (originally put together by Lettie Schubert). It is ridiculously long and full of pictures. Check it out at www.sfbapg.org.

- **The Willamette Valley Puppeteers** are also thinking about their website. They are planning to video some puppetry demonstrations to put on-line. The idea started at a meeting where guild VP Dave Wagner demonstrated his vent figure Winkle.

Well, once again I'm out of space. Let me know what you're guild is doing and we'll fill the space next issue.

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EUREKA!!!

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Greetings, Summer Schleppers,
Summer! How delightful! What we yearned for as we slogged through slush and snow. Festivals, summer reading clubs, parties, fairs: all ripe for the picking... But summer work isn't easy for us puppeteers. Who hasn't been assigned a playing time at the same time as the tractor pull? Who hasn't been assigned a playing area right next to the heavy metal band?

SELF PRESERVATION: One gig many years ago placed me in front of eastern-facing bleachers. I found myself at 2:00 PM staring directly into the blazing July sun for forty-five minutes. I could just feel my corneas frying. I was not happy. Three weeks later, I am facing east. Same sun. Same frying. But this time it was the children being fried. The wide-eyed little kids were getting their corneas fried and it was my fault. That night, I rewrote my contract, inserting the following clause: "For outdoor venues, safety against eye damage due to sun is essential. The site must not have either the puppeteer or the audience staring directly into the sun. Shade trees and park pavilions are excellent sites. If there is no such shelter, the audience must face either north or south, never east or west."

OUTDOOR PROBLEM: Again, who hasn't taken a bathroom break, only to return to find little rugrats inside your booth, playing with your puppets? And the parents standing there, smiling encouragingly! Smile back. How do you know the mother isn't your client's sister? Melanie Zimmer, of Vernon, New York, knows exactly what I mean about stage barging. She said that she finally made a sign that says (oh, guess!), "Keep Out" which she velcros across the entrance of her fitup. You wouldn't think that it would help, but surprisingly, it does. Who would have thought...

BRIBES ARE GOOD: At one fair lasting eleven days, I became plagued with the children who traveled with the carnival. They had nothing to do, so attended the puppet show for every performance. After memorizing the script, the responses and the jokes, boredom set in until one of them thought of throwing a pebble at the puppets. Have you ever been stoned? I mean, with stones? Of course I, being behind the curtain, couldn't identify the culprits. I solved the problem by letting it be known that, if the stoning stopped, each child would get a state fair baseball cap on the last day. The way I looked at it was that hats were cheaper than stitches. And it is my policy to never complain to the administration unless it is absolutely necessary. I don't want to be remembered as a complainer.

IT'S TIME: Rick Morse, of Flushing, Michigan, called to remind me to remind me that it's time to order your year's supply of neoprene. It cannot be shipped in temperatures below fifty degrees. Neoprene, for those just starting, is a latex casting product that is beautifully durable, lightweight and nontoxic. Use it for heads and limbs. Don Morrison, of Columbia Station, Ohio, wanted to know which type he should get. There are three: #501: this is rigid (It can be sanded, tapped, drilled and sawed), #521 (semi-rigid) and #613 (flexible). The marvel of neoprene is how lightweight it is. The company suggests that you let it sit in the mold overnight, but I have never let it sit for more than a few hours. Another nice thing about neoprene is that, when it comes out of the mold, it is still semi-flexible so that minor undercuts are not a problem. There is slight shrinkage, but nothing significant. You can get neoprene in one gallon jars from Spartan Adhesives and Coatings Company, 345 Terra Cotta Avenue, Crystal Lake, IL 60039. It costs about \$60.00 a gallon.

BACK SAFETY: Dr. Thomas Green, my friend of Cazenovia, New York cautioned me on how I carry my stuff. He says that the nature of the job requires schlepping but you can cut the strain on your back by half. By habit, you carry all your stuff on one side. Train yourself to carry half the trips on the left and half on the right. That way, the muscles on each side are being rested half the time. Melanie Zimmer saves her back by dividing all her things into lighter containers with as many things on wheels as possible. Only the absolute essentials go to the site. All those "just in case" items are in their own case and stay in the van until needed.

WORKING ALONE: To those who have a "real" job, it is very difficult for them to understand that, just because you are at home and have a cup of coffee in your hand, you are still "at work." How do you tactfully hang up on a friend who wants to have an extended chat on the phone? My very organized friend, Gloria Van Peeren, also of Lakewood, Ohio gave me a way to solve the problem. She has a loud timer by her phone. Then, when the conversation must (and it must) wind down, she sets the timer to one minute. When the timer goes off, the friend on the line hears it. "Oops!" say you. "There goes the timer. Gotta Go!" Make your graceful exit. And now I am worried, because a lot of my friends read this column...

HAIR DRYER: Summer is a time of garage sales. Bob Brown, of Alexandria, Virginia, says to pick up a spare hair dryer for your workbench. Use it to dry paint, neoprene and papier mache. I also use it to blow neoprene dust off my shirt. But when buying a used hair dryer, look down the nozzle. If there is white anything, pass it by. The old dryers used to have asbestos to shield the heat.

HAD TO LAUGH: Ray daSalva, of England, e-mailed me to tell me he got a kick about how, in the last column, I had "(Jim Rose) pours the slurry on his head." Leave it to the English to catch the grammar! I'm still smiling.

So long for now. Keep in touch. Stay out of the sun when possible (especially if you're a shadow puppeteer) and send me a tip when you can

REUM...with a View. (Continued)

The National Heritage Museum in Lexington, MA is hosting "Jim Henson's Fantastic World." If you have ever seen a Henson exhibit, you know what fun they can be. They offer puppets, imagination, fun and laughter. I had so much fun checking back in the 50 year old Journals that I thought I'd take another look. I discovered that "Mr. and Mrs. Jim Henson's Muppets were featured on "Sam and Friends." That's exactly the way it reads.

MORE PUNCH AND JUDY: The Ballard Institute and Museum in Storrs Connecticut has several Punch and Judy sets from the 19th and early 20th century. They are also featuring modern sets of P&J by Elaine and Jordan Miller, Al Fosso, and Rufus and Margo Rose. The general theme of the exhibit is "puppets politics and humor."

There is a new artistic director at the **Puppet Showplace Theatre in Brookline Massachusetts. Roxie Myhrum** will take over the duties. She has an impressive background in drama and puppetry.

That's about it for now. Hope the summer is productive for everyone and I hope you all get to a festival of some sort. **DROP ME A NOTE !!!!! M'EI**