



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

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hey Everybody!

Thanks go out to all of you who attended a festival this summer. We are grateful for your support. I was in Seattle and it was great. I heard that Port City went very well also. Although Great Lakes put on a wonderful festival, they were unable to get the attendance they needed to break even.

A heartfelt Thank you to all of the Festival Directors and their Staff for all your hard work. It is truly appreciated!

FYI: I discovered an interesting fact about PofA. Our membership increases in years when we have Regional Festivals and decreases in National Festival years. Clearly, we need to keep those Regionals coming.

The Board agreed to an update of our Website, to roll out on or about January 2011. The new website will be easier to negotiate, have lots of new features to better serve our membership. One such feature will be our new - password protected - Membership Directory on line. Posting the membership lists online will allow it to be updated regularly. The Board of Trustees agreed that this is a more fiscally responsible way of managing our finances.

There will be more details coming, including information about requesting a printed Directory for those who do not have internet access.

As many of you are knee deep in your holiday shows, I wish you all much success over the next few months.

Keep watching for the National Festival Website; it should be up by the time you read this letter.

Best wishes to all,

_____ Anna Vargas - President

NATIONAL DAY OF PUPPETRY Carol Fijan's dream lives on.

The Puppeteers of America has a mission statement, part of which is to spread the word about puppetry as an art form. National and regional festivals held every other year do attract some new members, but which are usually attended by existing members of PofA. 'Preaching to the choir' more or less. The general public, for logistical and other reasons were more often than not, excluded.

About ten years ago, at the suggestion of long time PofA member **Carol Fijan**, now of **Saugerties, New York**, a day was set aside to promote a kind of 'grass roots' effort to bring puppetry to the local community. Thus, the National Day of Puppetry was established.

Puppetry Guilds were encouraged to create and host local events that would include adults and children alike to participate in puppet-related activities that for some were understood only from an audience perspective, if that.

Simple puppet making, impromptu performances, exhibits and workshops that help unmask the 'mysteries' often associated with puppetry were featured. Performances by established puppeteers were also presented. And, as with most 'social' activities, the availability of refreshments made for a more welcoming atmosphere.

This singular innovative idea has grown into a successful collective effort with most of the Puppetry Guilds located around the country participating and sharing their love of this fascinating Art form.

The Festivals and Events page on the PofA website features some photos of past Day of Puppetry events. www.puppeteers.org

For more information please contact:

John Scollon, Coordinator - National Day of Puppetry
Columbia Marionette Theatre
410 Laurel Street
Columbia, SC 29201
(803) 252-7366
puppetgnomes@msn.com

The GUILD CONNECTION

KURT HUNTER

How do you keep a puppetry guild alive let alone thriving? Sometimes it seems like a near impossible task. Other times the guild seems to have a life of its own. We try to plan interesting programs to draw people in, but the unplanned stuff that just happens when puppet enthusiasts gather together is the real spark that keeps me coming back.

The advent of all of the on-line social networking communities (pupcrit, Puppet Hub, Facebook, etc.) has certainly changed the game. The local puppet guild is no longer my only option for asking questions, getting feedback or showing off. I love keeping up with what my puppetry friends in distant corners are doing via Facebook.

The interaction that can happen at the keyboard, however, doesn't hold a candle to puppeteers coming together face to face. No matter how high the resolution is on your photos it's not the same as seeing the puppet in person. Video is great, but seeing a work in progress live and discussing where it's going and where it came from with the creators is much better.

- Of course, it is not just one or the other. Many guilds use email groups through services like Yahoo. It is almost required for a guild to have a website. Kevin Hedgepeth recently updated the website for the **Phoenix Guild of Puppetry** (<http://phxpuppetguild.weebly.com>). The Orange County Puppetry Guild and the Phoenix Guild of Puppetry are both on Facebook. It's a great way to share information, photos, etc. By all accounts the Great Lakes Region's annual Potlatch gathering is the ultimate face to face community event, but much of the communication is handled electronically.

- One of the keys to the continued good health of Potlatch is how the jobs are rotated between the guilds. This year the **Detroit Puppeteers Guild** lined up the performances and organized the auctions (Scotch, regular, and silent). The **Wisconsin Puppetry Guild** was in charge of the Flea Market. The ice breaker, "Wearable Puppet Art," was handled by the **Cincinnati Area Puppetry Guild**. That's reason enough to show up right there.

- The **Los Angeles Guild of Puppetry** and **The Orange County Puppetry Guild** also have a long history of working together. In September they joined forces for a Celebration of Puppetry Festival at Rio Hondo College.

- Getting involved with existing events is also a great way to get out into the community. The **Puppet Guild of South Florida** hosted a Finger Puppet Make-It / Take-It table at the Aventura Curtain Up event.

- Another big fall event is the Annual Houston Puppetry Festival put on by **The Greater Houston Puppetry Guild**. This year's event featured about twenty workshops to choose from: a Puppet Parade, a Puppet Store, and a performance of "Hansel and Gretel" by Carranza Puppets. The flier for their event always looks so good.

- **The Puppetry Guild of Greater New York** had a mini-event at their September meeting. They got a preview of the "Puppet Pandemic" fundraiser for the O'Neill Puppetry Conference. Curated by Honey Goodenough and emceed by Bruce Cannon it featured performances by Z. Briggs, Carole D'Agostino, Honey Goodenough, Alissa Hunnicut, and Artie Poore,

- **The San Francisco Bay Area Puppetry Guild** had their big Day of Puppetry at Children's Fairyland in August with performances by Randal Metz, Fratello Marionettes, and Blake Maxam. In October, they got together to see Larry Schmidt's non-commercial, residential Driveway Follies Halloween Show.

- My own **Twin Cities Puppeteers** took a field trip in October to see Barebones Productions annual Halloween extravaganza. We caught the Sunday evening performance following our Sunday afternoon meeting, so we had a full day of puppetry. Our September meeting was a busy one too. The afternoon started off with a sale of puppet stuff as Claire Uldrich had been doing some downsizing. Karen Backes contributed sale items too. They both generously shared their profits with the guild. After the shopping had settled down puppeteer and historical reenactor Wayne Krefting talked to us about how he had gone about researching and creating a historically accurate Punch and Judy show.

- **The National Capital Puppetry Guild** had a September meeting that I would have loved to attend. Judy Barry Brown talked about finding and using music with puppetry. Their newsletter included a great article on the topic by Judy to whet the appetite.

- September found the members of the **Florida Suncoast Puppet Guild** at the Creative Arts Theatre workshop. The Creative Arts staff talked about how they were rebuilding and updating their show "Wild Florida Alive."

- **The Puppeteers of Puget Sound** met in October to see Thistle Theatre's production of Little Red Riding Hood.

- The August issue of Punchline, the newsletter of **The Puppet Guild of Long Island** was dedicated to the memories of Dr. Frank Ballard and Adah Ruth Ballard, Carroll Moth, and Shirley Roman. Carol Fijan's regular column, "Carol's Corner," was extended to include tributes to Adah Ruth and Frank Ballard.

- Closing on a brighter note, after several years of inactivity, **The Puppetry Guild of Upstate New York** is getting rejuvenated. Eighteen members met for a picnic at the summer home of Nancy Sander. Nancy Hardy who relocated from the Washington, D.C. area has taken on the presidency. For their November meeting Melanie Zimmer is previewing her new show, definitely something best done in person.

That's the news for this time. Let me know what is happening in your guild puppetry community and I'll pass it along.

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

REUM~ ...with a view. M'El Reum

I can't believe the year is nearly over. Our fall season is over and it was one of the most beautiful autumns we have ever had. The color of the leaves this year was fantastic. A tree that yesterday was red was totally striped of it leaves and this morning the entire ground was pink with fallen leaves. An amazing color spectacular. It's always nice to get a wake up call about how beautiful the world about us is.

It has been a year of wonder. Wonder if shows will pick up? Wonder if people will ever appreciate all the work that goes into a puppet show? Here, in Colorado, as I have often pointed out, sports will over power puppetry every time. Thank heaven for **Annie Zook's Denver Puppet Theatre**. I'm not sure there are any other shows happening in our area.

I thought I'd take a trip back again 50 years... turn back the clock to 1960. There was an article on puppet collections and guess whose name appears there? None other then our own **Alan Cook**. There was a short Religious Education article indicating that in 1954, only five people were at the religious education workshops and one woman only came because her sister was there. In 1960 fifty people registered for the same workshop. **Burr Tillstrom** took the Kuklapolitans on the road to the Aster Hotel and was a huge success.

I thought it was such fun to go back in time so lets see what we were doing 25 years ago. Here is what was happening in 1985. It was the year **Burr Tillstrom** died. There was a wonderful write up on the **Swedish Cottage Marionette Theatre**, nestled just one block into Central park is the 110-year-old marionette theatre, which is still in existence in 2011! **Ron Herrick** was writing a series on marionette construction. **Bruce Chesse** and **Susan Barthel** had an interesting article on Hexcelite - whatever that is. I don't know if it even exists anymore. **Larry Smith** was doing a TV show called "Uncle Al" **Christopher Hudert** was traveling as a clown with Ringling Brothers - Barnum and Bailey Circus, and there was a cover story on my good friend **Allynn Gooen**. **Carroll Spinney** was beginning his seventeenth season as Big Bird, and **Chad Harkins** had taped his first program for cable-vision. There was an article on WPA's puppetry project in 1935-1939. It is of historical importance for those who are way too young to know about this. It was a boon to puppeteers. Maybe we can bring it back in a bad economy? There was an article about "Building Character." and technical drawings on **Bil Baird's** Puppet hip joints.

Back to the present: I saw a clip of **Paul Zaloom's** Toy Theatre piece "The adventures of White Man" is the title and it is wonderful.

I read a wonderful review of Len Piper's "Pinocchio" at the Glen Echo Puppet Company. **Allen Stevens** plays Gepetto and the puppeteers are **Christopher Piper, Mayfield Piper, and Eric Brooks**. The sea scene got a wonderful write up "These "backlight puppets" come in stunning colors and their "glow" effect along with their expert manipulation are captivating." Now that's the sort of review you love to read.

In the Heart of the Beast Puppet Theatre was hosting "Z Puppets Rosenschnoz" performing "The Amazing Gnip Gnop Circus." In December they are treating puppet lovers to "Hershel and the Hanukkah Goblins" performed by the **Minnesota Jewish Theatre Company**. Puppets are by **Chris Griffith**.

Peewinkle's Puppet Studio with **Peggy Pearson** and **Debbie Smith** in Indianapolis, Indiana offered their "Holiday Cabaret" for the holidays.

Heidi Rugg's Barefoot Puppets had a busy season performing "Little Red" and "The Gingerbread Man." They traveled the east doing Richmond, Virginia. Washington, D.C. and the Puppet Showplace, Brookline, Massachusetts. **Christopher Hudert** and **Applause Unlimited** in Richmond, Virginia, doing "The Frog Prince."

Every now and then you read something you laugh about and can't forget. **Brett Roberts** share this one. "I love it when kids come up after a show and tell me what the puppets did. I guess they forget I was there." That makes it all worthwhile.

Jean Burn has moved to Seattle Washington. Jean helps provide puppets for "Toys for the Troops" who then distribute them to Iraqi children. Her son, **Sgt. Bruce Burn**, stationed in Iraq, conceived the idea a few years back.

Michael Earl is teaching a puppet class in NYC.

I found it interesting to hear there is a lawsuit over who owns Madame, **Wayland Flowers** delightful puppet. Anyone who ever saw Madame knows that no one owns Madame. She is her own person.

Kudos to the **Puppet Co.** who held a showcase and raised funds for the O'Neill National Puppetry Conference.

That's all folks.

_____ M'El

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

ADDRESS CHANGES?

Please remember to let us know of any address or email changes. *Thanks!*

Puppeteers of America Membership
26 Howard Avenue
New Haven, CT 06519-2809
membership@puppeteers.org
(888) 568-6235

EUREKA!!!

NANCY SANDER

NANCY H. SANDER
1250 Granger Avenue
Lakewood, OH 44107

puppetmaster@puppetswithpizzazz.com

Greetings again to all the snow-challenged puppeteers:

Have you ever performed "Rumplestiltskin?" Are you looking for the next show to do? Well, my friends, haul that baby out, or start thinking of Rumpel as the show of the year. Why? Because the new Shrek movie is out and the villain is... (ta-dah!) Rumpelstiltskin. And in this movie, Rumpel says that he can't "pull that old name game again..." But guess what! He could have, because this generation of children doesn't know that story! I have just spent the summer playing Rumpel and have discovered that ninety-five percent of my audiences have never heard it! I am amazed...

STRAW FOR PUPPETS: If you do decide to do Rumpel, or if you need any straw in any play you do, use raffia instead. Straw is brittle and sheds like a demon, but raffia is soft, bendable and flexible. It also comes in other colors, a plus.

SOCK PUPPET EYES: The Puppetry Guild of Upstate New York has become active again and at the reinvention meeting the talk turned to what puppeteers always do: swapping tips and treasures. **Pam Johnson, of Syracuse, New York**, showed us a really nice sock puppet that had blinking eyes. The sock was as usual except there were two "gumdrops" in the eye position. The index and middle fingers were inserted into those gumdrops. By lowering the fingers the gumdrops bent over and the eyes closed. So simple. So effective. The front half of the gumdrop was a darker color; the back was a continuation of the body. Eyelashes emphasized the look.

A MUST-HAVE CATALOGUE: **Nancy Hardy, of West Winfield, New York**, told us that we must write for the catalogue of "American Science and Surplus." She said that this is the "Big Lots of Schools." You never know what weird material you will find. There are eyes, sculpting materials, molding materials, you-name-it. Even though you can google American Science and Surplus, Nancy says it's so much more fun to get the catalogue in the mail.

ROYALTY FREE MUSIC: At the meeting, the same old question came up about royalty free music. What to do? One suggestion was to google "royalty free music" on the internet. **Jai maran-Kailen, of West Winfield, New York**, suggested one approach a music school student (avoid going through the department) and work out a deal where you might pay a small royalty fee for just the duration of that performance, and many times you can get it free just for mention in your promo material.

NATURAL HAND GESTURES: Jai showed us a nice mouth-moving hand puppet cat. When using these puppets it's nice to have two operating rods, but that is not always possible. Rather than having arms that hang dead, attach a piece of black fish line from the thumb of the puppet to the puppet's ear. Then shorten the line so the hand is in a natural waist-high position. Every time the head nods or turns, the hand swings and appears to be making natural gestures.

PAPER PUNCHES: The highlight of my autumn was heading to the Great Lakes Regional Potlatch at Angola, Indiana. Over a hundred puppeteers spent the weekend, attending six top notch shows and many workshops. **Peggy Pearson, of Greenwood, Indiana**, talked about handouts, cutouts and anything paper. She said that there are deep-throated paper punches that reach in two inches and are available at Staples. These deeper punching punches are great for punching holes for masks. Another punch now available is the small-hole punch (1/8th inch), good for making shadow puppet holes.

SHADOW CONTROLS: Cheap and functional: that's our goal when making shadow puppets with children. Peggy uses the method taught by long-deceased **Elsie Dunnington, of Columbus, Ohio**. Cut a flexible straw one inch above and below the bend. Tape the straw onto the back of the puppet and bend out. Insert kabob skewers (tips cut off) for rods. You may have to tape several together, depending on the thickness of the skewers, to make a tight fit.

WORKING WITH TRANSLATORS: **Melanie Zimmer, of Vernon, New York**, shared several tips on working with a translator. First, she says to meet briefly with the translator before the show. Explain the plot of the story and review some of the more esoteric words that the translator might have trouble with. Then, during the performance, speak in short chunks, allowing the translator to translate. Soon a rhythm develops between the two of you. If, however there's a snag that develops, go back and reword the chunk in simpler words. And (this I never thought of) when the translator is translating, have the puppets look at the translator.

GREAT BEARD: Cut long strips of felt. Take small elastic and, after coloring it to match, start two or three stitches; stretch it out as much as you can, holding the felt to keep the needle from breaking. Sew along the stretched elastic. When the elastic is released it snaps back to its original length and creates very nice sausage curls in the felt.

REAL FELT: Remember the great old felt that was the mainstay of every puppeteer? The stuff that was (OMG) made of real wool? You young'uns, who know only the felt from JoAnn's, have no idea how versatile, flexible and durable the old felt was. **Rick Morse, of Flushing, Michigan**, has found a source that sells felt that is 100% (yes, 100%!) wool felt. Central Shippee has all kinds of felt and will send you a swatch card. If you explain that you are a puppeteer they will allow you to purchase "sample" yards. The yards are 72" long, so they go a long way. Log onto: www.centralshippee.com.

Do you have a goodie to share? I know that most of you take for granted all the shortcuts and sources you use, thinking that everybody knows that. But there is a whole bunch of young folks coming up that don't. It is one of the main purposes of PofA to nurture these newbies and to pass on our wisdom. So send a tip along to "Eureka!"

Thanks, Nancy.