

EACH ONE GET ONE

I recall Rod Young's wonderful, quirky and informative newsletter he put together for the Puppetry Guild of Greater New York.

He called it 'INVOLVEMENT!'

I suggested at the time of Rod's passing that perhaps his choice of name wasn't casual, but deliberate. Not just a name but a *challenge!*

Part of belonging to any organization, (aside from the social, professional or technical benefits one hopes to derive,) come the rewards of participating in the activities of that organization. It's been said that one also has a responsibility to any organization to give back in kind.

This idea of 'passing it forward' can take many forms. Some members get involved volunteering at a festival as many of you recently have. Some help out with Guild functions while others serve as officers or teach at our National Days of Puppetry.

There is another way that members can take an active role in the organization and that is to encourage folks, especially our younger friends, to join our ranks as members of the Puppeteers of America.

This is a great time to join. We are at the threshold of a new membership year. If you are aware of a person in your Guild who is not currently a member of PofA, won't you talk it up and let them know why you belong? If you know of someone who has an interest in theater or puppetry why not introduce them to the Puppeteers of America?

Why not take up Rod's challenge and get INVOLVED?

Let's **Each One Get One!**

Get someone to join PofA today! You'll be glad you did.

_____ Thanks. F.T.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings to all,

I want to give a heartfelt THANKS to Jeff Cornett, Lee Bryan and the entire National Festival Staff for a wonderful 75th Anniversary Festival in Atlanta. Wonderful shows and great workshops, including our Day for the Teaching Artist. A truly good time was had by all.

Our "Calling of the Guilds" consisted of 19 (HooRay!) guilds bearing their banners. It was a real treat to see so many represented. I hope we can do that again. A great photo op to be sure.

At the Annual Meeting, the members divided into four groups to discuss PofA in terms of a SWOT analysis, that is its Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. It was a very productive discussion. The Board with the Executive Committee will take this information to a Mid-Winter Retreat where we hope to form a vision of and plan for the future of PofA.

Thank you all who participated!

Our website continues to evolve. At this time, everything that was on the old site is now on the new one. And more is coming. Check in regularly and give us your feedback. We are here to serve you.

Always a pleasure,

_____ Anna Vargas

THE GUILD CONNECTION

KURT HUNTER

It seems like it has been an especially fast summer. The excitement and anticipation before the National Festival in Atlanta have been replaced by sweet memories. Sitting on my table are the half completed mechanical drawings for a Santa Claus marionette. Although summer has been fast it hasn't given up its grasp quite yet. The **Twin Cities Puppeteers** summer picnic is still a couple of weeks away. It's always a wonderful time. I believe the entertainment for this gathering is scheduled to be Diane Rains' new puppet show about a snowman. Winter is never too far from our thoughts here in Minnesota.

- Picnics, potlucks, and banquets seem to be the ways that most guilds catch their breath in the summer. The members of the **Detroit Puppeteers Guild** had their summer picnic at the end of July. It was hosted by Diane and Marty Boatman. The entertainment included a performance by Natasha Khusid and Ramona Lucius presenting a Bantu tale from Zimbabwe about a turtle and a lizard.

- The **Boston Area Guild of Puppetry** had a summer meeting at the end of August with a potluck and pot pourri on Gail Kearn's spacious screened-in back porch. Sounds more like a party than a meeting to me. Hiking in the Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge behind Gail's house is an option if you come early.

- The **Connecticut Guild of Puppetry** got together in August too. They met at the home of Lu Bria for an afternoon potluck. The guild supplied the burgers and hot dogs and the pool was available for swimming. The afternoon of fun was followed by an evening trip to see the National Marionette Theatre's production of "Pinocchio." A summer day doesn't get much better than that.

- The **Orange County Puppetry Guild** had their officers' installation banquet in June. The group was treated to a performance of "Shadows of Japanese Folktales" by Sunny Seki.

- The board installation dinner for the **Los Angeles Guild of Puppetry** took place at the end of July. Entertainment was provided by Vegas headliner, comedian, puppeteer and ventriloquist Michael Ziegfeld, who brought 'howls of laughter' from the group.

- Not everyone takes off the summer though. The **Willamette Valley Puppeteers** met in July for a marionette making workshop. The event was free with all the materials provided. From the photos on their website it looks like it was a great time.

- The **San Francisco Bay Area Puppeteers' Guild** had a late August Day of Puppetry at Children's Fairyland followed by an after hours guild meeting. The Day of Puppetry was scheduled to feature "Peter and the Wolf" by the Fratello Marionettes, a magic puppet show by the 4H Puppeteers under the direction of Sharon Clay and "Young King Arthur" by Randal Metz.

- Clay Martin led a June workshop for the **Puppeteers of Puget Sound**. The workshop focused on hand puppets and included Clay's wonderful Rag Ballet using puppets of bandanas and rubber bands, which he also performed at the national festival. While I'm on the topic they also have a great website. (www.puppeteersofpugetsound.org) Their webmaster is Alyssa McFarland.

- The **Phoenix Guild of Puppetry** is meeting at the end of August at the Great Arizona Puppet Theater to do planning for the coming year. Everyone is invited to bring their ideas for activities, workshops and the like. Which reminds me, we need to get some planning going for our guild.

- The **Puppet Guild of Greater St. Louis** already has a lot planned for the 2011/2012 guild year. In October and November they are presenting "Fun Fridays" Puppet Performances at Faust Park. They have a one day Puppet Fest scheduled for November. In April they'll have their National Day of Puppetry event at the Missouri History Museum. They had 500 people at their DOP this year. In June they'll have their yearly fundraiser. All of that is in addition to their monthly performance and workshop meetings. Makes me tired just writing about it.

- The **Columbus Guild of Puppetry** is having a Day of Puppetry in September in conjunction with Cops and Kids Day in Westerville, Ohio. They'll be making pool noodle puppets and presenting a safety show. A week later they'll have a guild meeting where they'll be making scarf marionettes.

- It sounds like the **Puppetry Guild of Greater New York** had a very interesting field trip in April. They got a tour of the Metropolitan Opera's paint shop.

- The members of the **Los Angeles Guild of Puppetry** had an especially inspiring field trip. They got to tour the exhibition "Three Fragments of a Lost Tale" at The Huntington in San Marino, California led by the artist John Frame. Since 2006, Frame has been working on a stop-motion animated drama with a cast of intricately articulated characters. The exhibit featured sculptural figures, multiple stage settings, still photographs and animated film vignettes.

Well, that's it for my thin selection of summer news. I'll look forward to hearing more as workshops, performances, field trips and other puppetry guild events are planned in the months to come. As always I'm waiting to hear from you.

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MEMBERSHIP OFFICE

Thanks for letting us know of any change of address or email addresses.
Much Appreciated.

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REUM- ...with a view. M'EL REUM

What a great summer. I had two puppet transfusions this summer. I had the privilege of attending the **Puppet Fest Mid West** and the **Puppeteers of America National Fest** in Atlanta. I'm ready to get back to puppet work and I hope that none of the wild thoughts go away. I don't have a great deal of news so I will fill my column with why I love festivals. My experience at Puppet Fest Mid West was amazing. I took a class my friend **Paul Messner** of **Kansas City, Missouri** taught. For years I have had a story in my mind that I wanted to do with puppets,

Paul and the class listened with patience to the story and Paul checked it out on his laptop and away we went. At the end of the week I discovered, one,- there are different ways of doing the show and two, - perhaps it wasn't as good a story as I originally thought. For the first time in years I have been content to think maybe I don't have to do this show after all. If I do great that's OK. If I don't that's OK too. I was so glad to realize that it was not something I am driven to do. I ended up feeling relieved. At the Atlanta festival, Paul performed his delightful "Martha Speaks," a story about a dog that eats alphabet soup and guess what? After eating the alphabet - Martha the dog speaks.

It is wonderful to see the faces of friends and fellow puppeteers, as well as new rising stars in the puppet field. At Puppet Fest Mid West, **Peter** and **Debbie Allen**, **Jamesport, Missouri** make everyone feel like family. We always have new comers and old familiar faces. It is easy to get to know people and we become bonded. We are all crazy puppeteers.

Traveling on to Atlanta I found more familiar faces (I still wish we had National Festivals every year) and more great shows. I love being proven that I don't know everything. I sat back as **CORBIAN Arts**, with **Ian Carney** and **Corbin Popp** of **New Orleans, Louisiana** started their show "Darwin the Dinosaur" and I thought to myself, I really like seeing black light. It has been a while since I have seen anyone use it. I was amazed that suddenly the black light dimmed and faded away and on other occasions went off and then back on. My mind was shouting they can't do that. Well they did it and it was sensational. It wasn't black light after all. Their costumes glowed with LED lights and each person had his own control and did his own off, on and dimming. It was genius.

Art Grueneberger, with his **PuppetArts of Sacramento, California** did his show "Goldilocks and the Three Sharks" in Black Light so I was pleased, satisfied and found the show much fun.

Certainly a festival favorite was "The Ghastly Dreadfuls" presented by **The Center For Puppetry Arts in Atlanta**. They captivated the audience from the beginning. The cast obviously loved what they were doing and the audience fell in love with the performers and couldn't help but have fun with them. I could go on with words like delightful, rollicking, gleeful, vitality etc, etc. FUN is the word. I love the festivals, they always offer new vitality and new ideas.

Moving on across the country, **The Rogue Artists** group in Los Angeles presented "D is for Dog." The show featured human-sized puppets, to take a close look at our daily lives. They received great reviews from the LA Times.

Pedro Reyes from **Mexico** opened a new exhibit at the **Walker Art Center in Minneapolis**, featuring puppets used in the "Baby Marx" production of a pilot episode in Japan.

The Dream Up Festival in New York City's Theatre for the New City is offering two puppet shows: "Buried Alive! A "Matchbox Theatre" production by **Deborah Kaufmann**. The show (adult) is about the fear of being buried alive. Strange fare for puppets. The second show is "The Invisible Draft" written by **Clair Moodey** with design by **Lotte Marie Allen** The show has puppets and animation combined.

Pictures of **Bernice Silver** of **New York City**, are posted in the Bernice Silver Appreciation Society on Facebook. Bernice captivated the audience with the opening performance of Potporri in Atlanta.

George and Ann Neff, **Monroeville, New Jersey** sent me two wonderful articles about their Toy Theatre adventures. The first is an article about their adventures in Holland. The second article is about their teaching workshops in the grade schools. A Thank You to George and Ann, and to all of you who gladly share your puppet knowledge with young people.

The **Center for Puppetry in Kenya** is gathering 100 puppets for the gallery in the Kenya Cultural center. Their hope is to bring together puppets from all over the world.

Randel McGee of **Hanford, California** has started a very funny thing for all of us to think about. What do you say when people say "You do what?" I always get "Are you still doing puppets" like it's a disease. Randel says when he is looking for some piece of hardware or special fabric he ends up saying "Its for an art project." Got any great answers? - I bet you do.

I was searching the **Puppet Hub** the other day and found a number of wonderful letters about **David Herzog** from **Chicago, Illinois**. David was in Atlanta and spread his smile and friendly attitude with his fellow puppeteers. When I read parents writing about David as one who took time to advice and answer questions it make me feel good to know puppet people.

I attended a workshop on **SLAMS**. It was interesting to me for a number of reasons. Denver only has sports and they do not seem to appreciate the better things of life. I discovered that slams are events made up of quick, short puppet bits. It brought to mind having lunch with Jim Henson early on in his career. Someone at the table asked, "Isn't it hard to do short puppet bits? How do you end them, there's not enough time to build a story," Jim just smiled and answered, " We either eat them up or blow them up." He had a great sense of humor.

Let's all be grateful we made it through the hot summer. I'm back to school Monday so my summer is over. My year starts in September so I hope you have a great year ahead. There is an old show biz phrase " Write if you get work". M'El

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Eureka!!!

Greetings, all you parboiled and poached summer survivors, GAs I contemplate this column I am winding up a very hot, very energy-draining summer season; only three to go and then I take September off. Whew!

Each summer, instead of compiling your contributions, I share some ideas of my own. Several years ago I put together a list of "do's and don't's" of our business. I received so many comments on that column that I have decided that, for the first time, I want to rerun this column. We all have Journals on our library shelves; we leaf through them for some article from the past. I feel that this article is important to be saved in the Journal.

And besides, it's a good review!

SOME DON'TS:

DON'T work without a contract. With no contract, your client will be convinced that any foul-up is your fault.

DON'T forget to ask the parent the name and the age of the child whose birthday it is. Embarrassing, to say the least, to arrive and say, "Hi...uh...uh..."

DON'T have onions, garlic or alcohol on your breath when you say "Hi" to your audience.

DON'T park on the grass upon arrival, unless instructed to do so.

DON'T hit the wall or cut the corner in the house where you are hauling stuff to the "lovely little spot in the basement." It is better for your business if you take twice as many smaller loads than to chip one little edge off the stairwell wall. And don't you just hate those new steep, narrow basement stairs?

DON'T use duct tape to tape down your cords on a client's Persian carpet. If you must anchor chords on a carpet, use Velcro hook...and remove it as quietly as you can.

DON'T help yourself to the buffet without an invitation.

DON'T put a glass of water on the floor beside you in the booth. It just might get kicked during the performance and ruin the rug. If you must have a drink available (and who has time anyway?), rig up a holder and use a bottle with a spout.

DON'T try new unrehearsed routines at a paid performance. No matter how inspired you feel, you could get yourself into a corner with no logical way out. And if you're working with someone else, it is just plain unfair.

DON'T let your puppets become shabby. The very day you say to yourself, "Someday I gotta spruce this thing up;" that's the day to do it. And that goes for you, too. Never come to a gig dressed like you really don't care. People pay for an entertainer to take them to a different, more colorful, enchanting world. Jeans and a T-shirt are neither.

DON'T become locked into a script, even if it is on tape. No show is perfect the first time it's played. Take the time to go back, alter the music, recut the tape, revise, rework and push yourself to the limit to find the perfect performance.

DON'T ever apologize for a mistake in your play. Never say, "Gee, I hate it when my flashpot doesn't go off," or "Man, I really messed up the second act." Your client doesn't know how the play was supposed to go, and furthermore, if they did notice, they would have forgotten until you brought it up again.

DON'T ever, ever badmouth a previous client, a previous audience, or another performer. That perfectly awful magician may be your client's brother-in-law; that little monster could be a sister's child; your client's child could have been in that horrid audience, and maybe he was that heckler in the second row.

ON THE OTHER HAND:...

DO call your clients sometime during the week before the performance to assure them that you haven't forgotten them.

DO read directions back to your client. You would be amazed at how often they amend them.

DO arrive on time. Three minutes late can cause some clients to hyperventilate. Carry a cell phone. If you are delayed, call your client to reassure them that you are on your way. Earlier is better than later. I have never in my life seen a disgruntled face when I arrive ten minutes early. Smiles abound. Generally, though, if I am several minutes early, I park down the street and arrive exactly on the minute. I feel that this somehow makes me appear more professional. But that's just me.

DO remember that the client, not you, is the most important person at your gig. Be gracious, courteous and accommodating. Bending over backward for your client will assure you of a good word-of-mouth reference that will span the years.

DO perform the very best show you can, each and every time. Even though it is the ten thousandth time you've done it, to the child this performance is the very most special thing that could happen on his or her birthday.

DO pick up every little feather, confetti or thread from the place where you performed. You can never tell what your client considers "a mess." Some would need oxygen if they saw your workshop.

DO take time to say goodbye to the birthday child when you are leaving, even if he or she is really into something else. Thank him or her for inviting you to his or her party. I always send a thank you postcard to the child after, saying that I had a wonderful time. Of course, my phone number is on the card.

DO make sure that every grownup at the party has your name and address, whether it is a business card that you gave them, or a coloring sheet in the children's goody bag.

There. Didn't I tell you it was a good review? Keep these in the back of your mind, and you will have a lot of very happy and satisfied clients who will send business your way.

So then, do you have some do's and don'ts to add to the list? Let me know!

Here's smilin' atcha.

_____ Nancy

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