

# The Atlanta-Southeastern Puppetry Guild Newsletter

Chartered by the Puppeteer's of America, Inc.

Free to All Members

Spring 2000

## What's Inside

by Evy Berman

Just in time for the next guild meeting, this issue comes to you full of useful information, important news, and really neat stuff!

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Thanks to everyone who contributed to this edition of the newsletter. Remember, I can't do it alone, so please send articles to me at home or at [evygirl@snakebite.com](mailto:evygirl@snakebite.com). If you're stuck for an idea, call me, or just let me know what you've been doing lately for the *Buzz*. And feel free to send pictures, too!



## Meeting Information

The next meeting is coming up fast. The program will be on how to set up your home studio. Be sure not to miss it!

♦ Sunday, June 11, 2000; 4-7 pm; at the home of Reay Kaplan, 2302 Northlake Circle, Atlanta, 30345

Directions: Reay's apartment is off of LaVista Rd., near Northlake Mall, in the Echelon At Northlake apartments. **Reay's phone: (770)414-0665.**

From eastend 285: Take exit #37 LaVista Rd. and head west, which is inside the perimeter and towards the mall. Stay in the right lane, and turn right at the First Union bank onto Ranchwood. Go straight ahead and you'll see the apartment complex. Dial 306 at the call box, which is also listed under Schloss in the directory. The gate to your right will open. Drive through the gate and around to the other side of the parking lot, just next to the Macy's parking lot. It is the first building on the left, and there will be a sign at the bottom of the stairs. Apartment on top floor.

From intown: Take LaVista Rd. east, towards the mall. Go just past Northlake mall and turn left onto Ranchwood at the First Union bank. Follow directions above.

- ♦ Sunday September 10, 2000; 4-7 pm
- ♦ Sunday November 12, 2000; 4-7 pm

As usual, all meetings are potluck socials. We are looking for members to host upcoming meetings. Please contact Susan Kinney if you are able to host any of this year's meetings.

## **Southeast Regional Puppetry Festival is Almost Here!!**

It's almost here, but it's still not too late to sign up for the southeast regional Puppet Festival of the Americas. The festival will be held at the Broward Center for the Performing Arts in Fort Lauderdale, FL from June 22-25, 2000. Information on how to sign up is on the orange cover of this newsletter. Don't miss out on this great festival!

## Minutes from the Meeting



Our last meeting took place on March 13 at the new home of Evy Berman. A total of 13 members attended. After our usual socializing and a tour of the grounds, Bob Abdou presented a program about Walk Around Puppetry. Some highlights:

Bob reminds us that as walk around entertainers, our main purpose is to entertain rather than to preach or present "great art." Still, it is important to leave a positive impression for the benefit of all puppeteers. Bob suggests asking people if it is alright to approach them with a puppet, to make your audience smile or laugh and quickly move on so as not to become a nuisance, and to bring more than one puppet when you will be entertaining in a small room. Even though Bob is a ventriloquist, he does not use his vent skills while doing walk around so that he can better be heard. Finally, Bob advises us to be careful about letting people touch our puppets so that they will stay clean and in good working order.

After Bob presented his program, we were treated to a second program on Organizing Your Workshop by Betsy Berns Stark. Betsy gave us information on the topic which is reprinted here on page 6.

## Welcome New Member!

Our newest honorary guild member is the baby girl of Darren and Jessica Casteel, Brinkley. Brinkley is now six months old. Welcome, Brinkley!!

## Getting Started... by Betsy Berns Stark

I got started in puppetry when my older sister got pregnant with her first daughter. (My brother in law had some Pelham puppets when he was a kid and did some performing.) I took a class at the Puppetry Center from Alan Sugar in basic puppet making. I learned that there are two rules in puppetry - 1. the puppet has to function and 2. the puppet must be exaggerated, otherwise it won't be "read" from an audience. As an urban planner who deals with many rules, it was a delight to have only two rules to follow. Also I discovered there was a name for what I do: make things from "found objects." So my hobby for a lifetime was started. That was 1984, and I was so very lucky in 1993 when I met Walter through the puppetry guild. We've been married since 1994.

And that is my story.

## What's the Buzz?

★ **Bob Hintz** has truckloads, literally, of 4 foot, sturdy, cardboard tubes. Call Bob at (770) 457-1723 if you want some!

★ **Lee Bryan** will be working for four weeks at Roswell Cultural Arts Center with a different show each week as part of their puppetry programming. Lee and **Gregg Wallace** are writing and rehearsing two new shows - "Traveler's Tales" and "Aesop's Fables" - as commissioned pieces.

★ **Tim Koeller** has volunteered to make the nametags for the SE Regional Festival. Thanks, Tim!

★ **Betsy Berns Stark** built a dragonfly hand and rod puppet for the Fulton Co. Adopt a Stream program. She is also building a dog for Fulton Co. Public Library's summer reading series.

★ **Reay Kaplan** and **Evy Berman** recently performed two puppet shows, "A Grand Expedition" and "The Dragon Whistle" in Orlando Florida as part of their National Day of Puppetry celebration.

★ **Bob Abdou** performed in Columbus Ohio in mid May at a huge Clown convention, Clowntown 2000, last year's attendance was over 350, and they liked him so much they brought him back.

## Puppeteers of America Information

### Raffle Items Needed

by Suzy Holloway

June 22, the opening date for Southeast Region's Puppet Festival of the Americas, will be here before we know it. That means we should begin thinking RAFFLE, and that means we are asking for your support. WE WILL NEED DONATED ITEMS. The money made will be used to partially underwrite travel expenses for our performing artists from throughout the region and the world.

We are hopeful that each guild will be able to make one substantial donation. Smaller donations, as well, are greatly appreciated.

We are asking that you please get this information out to your members. We would appreciate hearing from you before June 1. If items appear without notification, they will be appreciated and accepted. However, for less confusion, it would be better to be prepared and know what to expect.

Be assured, The Puppet Festival of the Americas will be thankful for every donation.

Remember your support helps underwrite the performers of OUR REGIONAL FESTIVAL.

So, we'll be waiting to hear.

THANKS! THANKS! THANKS!

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### Volunteers Needed

by Susan Kinney

The registration desk at the Southeast Regional Festival (Festival of the Americas) will need help at the registration desk. The more people volunteer to help, the less time will be spent working since the time can be divided up more. If you are going to the festival and would like to donate some time to this worthy cause, please contact Alice Rhodes at:

alicerhodes@mindspring.com  
(404) 296-7288

### A Note from the P of A

Dear Guilds,

Puppeteers of America is collecting information on colleges that offer puppetry courses. If people in your guild teach or have information about courses in your area, we would really appreciate hearing from you. Puppetry courses sometimes appear on an irregular basis. In addition to theatre and art departments the occasional course can show up under education, library science, independent study.

Dorlis Grubidge is the chair of this committee. She is in Madison Wisconsin at [dordan@northnet.net](mailto:dordan@northnet.net). Please send any information to her.

Thanks,  
Steve Abrams

### It's Time to Join the P of A!

It's May again, and membership is due for the Puppeteers of America. To find out about the many benefits of membership, go to [www.puppeteers.org](http://www.puppeteers.org). If you haven't received your membership form, you can get one online or you can contact:

The Puppeteers of America, Inc., Joyce & Chuck Berty,  
PO BOX 29417, Parma, OH, 44129-0417  
[PofAjoin@aol.com](mailto:PofAjoin@aol.com) PH: 888 568-6235



## The True Story Of How I Became A Puppeteer

by Andrew Periale

*Editor's note: Continuing our series of articles by guest authors from other guilds, we have the following from Andrew Periale of Strafford, NH. Along with wife, Bonnie, Andrew runs the award winning Perry Alley Theatre. They will be at Atlanta's Center for Puppetry Arts performing "Little Red Riding Hood and More" from July 24-Aug 5. Any mistakes in punctuation or accent marks in this essay are the fault of the editor. - eb*

My early influences were, I think, pretty typical for a kid from the Northeast born into the so-called "Golden Age of Television": Bill Baird, the Roses, the Ritz Puppets, "Birdy the Bunyip," and later the "supermarionation" of "Supercar" and "Fireball XL5." Still, I didn't do any performing until I entered High School.

The year was 1967. America was still recovering from the shock of JFK's assassination. The war in Viet Nam was gaining momentum, and race relations were in the toilet. I was in the 10th grade and consumed by several crises of my own-- acne and French class. I soon learned that the power to triumph over pimples was out of my hands. Surviving Mme Zephir's French class, however, required strategy. Though I now have an advanced degree in German, and a reputation-- however ill-deserved-- as a polyglot, there was something about this French class and I which, as they say, didn't "click." The worst part of it was "the filmstrip"-- that early pitiful attempt at multi-media language instruction (Je m'appelle Andre duPont. "PING" Je vais a la bibliotheque. "PING.") The horror. To keep awake, I cut the image of a little man out of a notebook cover, mounted him on the end of a ruler, and, when Mme. Zephir's back was turned, marched him in front of the projector, causing his shadow image to gently goose Andre duPont. These impromptu interludes were met with such gales of laughter from my classmates that my subterfuge was soon discovered; I found myself in the guidance counselor's office and threatened with suspension. I never held this (nor the months of afterschool time it required me to spend with a private tutor) against Mme. Z., but a more imaginative teacher might have recognized that my impulse to create guerilla shadow theatre could have been channeled into a means of learning French more engaging by far than "PING" the filmstrip "PING." Nonetheless, the effect of this crude theatre upon an audience of my peers was not lost on me.

My next performance took place later that year in Biology class. I had been keeping crawdads and tropical fish for awhile, and had had plenty of opportunity to observe breeding behavior in both species. I gave a presentation in class in which I recreated their sexual acts, using a variety of dowels, socks and other simple props. I can say in all modesty that my performance "brought down the house." My teacher, Mr. Thompson,

was very supportive of the whole concept. Though I didn't learn until decades later that I had been doing "Object Theatre," the results were nonetheless dramatic: I got and "A" in Biology and went on to test out of eight hours of college credit in Zoology and Botany, while I got a "D" in French and didn't speak another word of it until a decade later when I moved to France for a while and learned it with relative ease. Who says teachers don't make a difference?

Still, not every teacher, not even a really gifted one, connects with every student. In my experience, it can be enough for a child to have one teacher who is effective as a mentor, role-model or guru. Mine was Jack Boyle - my Speech teacher. It was Mr. Boyle, or "B" as he came to be known, who got me involved in my third performance that year-- a major role in a real play. He directed me in many subsequent plays, and it would not be overstating things to say that the dynamic environment he created for and with his students changed my life.

Another of B's students at that time was Bill Auperlee. Bill was our set designer, and one of those prodigies who can seemingly do anything-- portraiture, sculpture, graphic design, architecture . . . He got a summer internship with Disney in which he drew an animated sequence for the film Rascal (all of which ended up on the cutting room floor, but "that's Show Biz," ain't it?). He even produced, directed and shot a full-length version of The Ten Commandments on 8mm film! Anyway, at one point Bill turned his attention to puppetry, building an entire marionette production of The Wizard of Oz, which, I'll wager, would have dazzled Bill Baird. He only needed one other puppeteer and he picked Marysue Moses (a choice with which no one could reasonably have argued). Still, as I sat in the audience, a seething broth of envy, I came to realize on some level that I was a puppet guy. All that I was lacking was an opportunity-- a way to begin.

I must have begun to radiate an aura of puppet potential, because eventually Dr. Colbath, my directing class teacher in college, assigned me Peter Schumann as a subject for a research paper. Bread and Puppet was an epiphany for me. I mean, Bill Baird and his ilk delighted me, but in Schumann I saw my primitive aesthetic, my radical politics and his Grotowskian sensibilities shining forth as from a burning bush (no, really-- this was a religious conversion!)

So at last I began to do puppetry. As I grow into a puppeteer, my style and goals evolve, particularly through the influence of my partner, Bonnie. The others, though-- the Bairds and Roses, Auperlee and Schumann as well as The Hensons, Roccoberton, Bass, Niculescu, Paska, Genty and the many other teachers and colleagues-- they are all inside me; they encourage, they prod, they ask the tough questions and make their voices heard. About the best we can hope for, I suppose, is to try and be worthy of all we've been given, and to give whatever we can to those who come after us.

## **New Additions to the Video Library**

by Susan Kinney

Have you ever longed for the "good ole days," the "Golden Days" of puppetry? Well if you ever want to see how the old masters performed the icons of today you can visit the Center's library and study their technique! The newest additions to the Center's video collection of "Rootie Kazootie," "Howdy Doody," "The Great Foodini," and "Beany the Sea Serpent" (forerunner of the cartoon) will entertain and educate you to the early styles of Puppet TV. While entertaining, these films sometimes reveal the problems of live television. For instance, once when "Howdy" begins talking the cameraman is a bit slow on moving away from Buffalo Bob. Thus making the boys and girls wonder if "Howdy" is a great ventriloquist! So make an appointment to come in and stroll down memory lane!

Center for Puppetry Arts Library hours are 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday. Appointments are subject to availability of the library, so call ahead. The number is (404) 873-3089 x 130 or 135.

## **The Literary Puppet**

by Reay Kaplan

Reprinted with permission from *The Central Florida Puppet Guild Journal*, Oct/Nov 1999



Every artist is constantly in search of the inspiration that will spark the creative drive for their next piece. Inspiration comes in many forms, from artwork to music, nature or even dreams! In this issue, I have included several "literary" tidbits that have provided me with much inspiration for my work.

**Prelutsky, Jack: THE DRAGONS ARE SINGING TONIGHT, New York, NY: Greenwillow Books, 1993. ISBN: 0-688-09645-X** A book of poetry for children by prolific writer, Jack Prelutsky. Each poem is about different types of dragons and the folks that come across them. Coupled with vibrant illustrations by Peter Sis, this book continues to provide me with countless ideas of text and image.

**Froud, Brian and Lee, Alan: FAERIES, New York, NY: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1978. ISBN: 0-553-34634-2** This is an encyclopedia on all types of faeries, goblins, pixies and the like. Many magical beings are described in full detail and stunningly illustrated by the artist who developed the look of *The Dark Crystal*. Many puppet artists have used this book as a resource for developing the look and personalities of various extraordinary characters.

**Rowling, J.K.: HARRY POTTER AND THE SORCERER'S STONE, New York, NY: Scholastic Press, 1997. ISBN: 0-590-35340-3** The first in a series, this is a novel about Harry Potter, a young wizard who attends the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, and about the adventures he has there. The story is jam packed with magic spells, fantastic creatures and exciting adventures.

## **Puppetlove**

by Gail McKay

Ahhhhhhh! PUPPETS! I was ecstatic the day I found them! I had been searching my whole life for someone, something to love; someone with whom I could express the deepest parts of me, and who would be there for me whenever I needed them . . . and there, in the middle of a creative dramatics workshop, I found PUPPETS. And even tho' I had been through many relationships, (of varying description) I knew I had finally found my life long partner(s).

I began as I did with most of my passions, by jumping in and committing to undying loyalty, regardless of how tortured I became. At first, simple critters emerged from my creative efforts, which were childlike and pure, maybe even self-portraits, (well, the child-like part, anyway). I have often been accused of being a three-year old in an adult body, so this is no surprise. Soon I was seeing puppets in everything, from the spoons I cooked with to the toilet paper rolls I wiped . . . , to the paint brushes I held in my (real) job. Nothing was trash any longer, but only a potential puppet part, which must be saved and stored. Then I began taking workshops to learn all I could about my obsession, hanging around other obsessed lovers of puppets, and picking the brains and experience of all I met, even becoming a "festy freak." But I still could not get enough of those "altered egos" so I began making them a daily habit, giving up all other necessities of life in order to get a "puppet-fix."

My addiction has grown and prospered, and I have admitted that I have no control over my need to see, hear, touch, feel, make, and play with puppets. My family knows I have gone off the deep end, but they are there for me, enabling my habit in every way they can, as true co-dependents do. (They "have no choice.") I expect it to be a long-term relationship, even tho' I began late in life, compared to some other puppet freaks I have met along the way. But I anticipate an exciting adventure.

- Organizing is a skill.** This skill allows you to be able to find things when you need them. The key concept is: **"Everything Needs A Home"**. In addition to everything having a home, organize your things by neighborhood, too (I'm also an urban planner). Group like things together: paperwork like finances and taxes; family memories and photographs, etc. Today's topic is concentrating on the home workshop. Here are some ideas:
- Inventory All Your Stuff**
  - Dirty workshop space: all tools, materials (wood, foam, metal, plastic), supplies (paint, lacquer, icky stuff with fumes, paint brushes, cleaning supplies, etc.), furniture (work table, chairs, shelves, cabinets, trash bins, etc.).
  - Clean workshop space: books, sewing supplies, material, thread, sewing machine, tables, lights, chairs, trash baskets.
- Group Like Stuff Together** and measure so you know how much room they need.
  - Sewing needles, thread, scissors, tape measures.
  - Wood carving tools
  - Paint and lacquer supplies.
  - Books, manuals, articles, and workshop notes.
  - Wood, foam, paint brushes, paint tarps, etc.
  - Brooms, fans, cleaning supplies.
- Find the best home and neighborhood for your stuff**
  - Long planks of wood need to lie down, so long shelving is needed.
  - Smaller pieces of wood need to be placed in taller, shallower shelves so they can be found easier.
  - I group like colored materials in clear plastic keepers and store on a wall to wall shelf so that I can find my material at a glance.
  - Work tables need to be located where there is plenty of light and electrical outlets.
  - Some materials need to be in portable boxes so you can take them outside to use, such as materials which exude fumes, paint and paint supplies.
- Get exactly what you need** Once you've identified what you have and the space you need, you can get exactly what you need.
- Process.** One must continuously sort and group like materials. It takes time to organize but if it takes you a long time to find things, it's worth integrating this process into your work habits.
  - What works? I have baskets and bags to put things in that I'm working on so that I can work on things elsewhere in the house or outside the home. (Let's hear from other people what works for them).
  - What doesn't work: My lust for fabric is bigger than my ability to create and complete projects. I have too much stuff! Maybe puppetry guild members should swap stuff? (Let's hear from other people what doesn't work for you.)

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<sup>1</sup>Source: Julie Morganstern, "Organizing From the Inside Out".



## **Puppets on the Net: Educational Sites, part two in a series**

by **Chuck Robinson**

This is the second edition in our series of lists of web sites with information about puppets. In this installment, I'm planning to concentrate on educational sites, sites that are either associated with educational facilities, or teach us in some way about puppets. I'll also include some official websites, as they often have very useful information as well.

### **Rose Sage's Page, <http://www.sagecraft.com/puppetry/>**

No list can be complete without Rose's page. This page is in their own words "a free resource for the puppetry community and is a volunteer effort on our part .. We do the Puppetry Home Page together because we love the art form and because it was puppetry that brought us together."

### **University of Connecticut, <http://www.sfa.uconn.edu/Drama/Puppetry/HOMEPAGE.HTML>**

The University of Connecticut has the only program in the United States where students can work toward their BA, MA or MFA in the Puppet Arts. This makes it a great resource for more advanced puppeteers and puppet makers. This page is extremely rich with information, so browse around.

### **International Puppet Institute of Charleville-Mezieres, <http://www.marionnette.com/>**

Together with its National School of Puppetry (ESNAM), both with a world-wide concern, it represents an unparalleled set of means and activities dedicated to puppetry and its promotion. The Institute deals with many fields: education, vocational and continuous training, courses, meetings, publishing, research and documentation, exhibitions.

### **UNIMA (USA/France/Australia), <http://www.unima-usa.org/>,**

**<http://marionnettes.ifrance.com/marionnettes/>, <http://www.ozemail.com.au/~unima/>**  
Union Internationale de la Marionette is a global organization, and is the oldest international theater association. There are chapters in forty-three countries. Their international scope makes them a great resource for learning about puppetry.

### **Puppeteers of America, <http://www.puppeteers.org/>**

You're probably a member, but have you visited their great web page? This is a must see page with information on everything, calendars, awards, jobs, you name it. This page has my personal award for the winner of the longest one sentence mission statement in puppetry.

In case you want to save your typing finger, all of these links can be found at <http://www.puppet.org/potn.html> (thanks to **The Center for Puppetry Arts** <http://www.puppet.org/> for the space). Happy Surfing!

*Chuck Robinson is the official Webmaster at the Center for Puppetry Arts. He can frequently be found surfing the web.*

## **Guild Officers:**

### **Vice President**

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**Got a problem? Need information? Got suggestions?**