

The Atlanta Puppetry Guild Newsletter

Chartered by the Puppeteer's of America, Inc.

Free to All Members

Winter 2000

What's Inside

by Evy Berman

Just in time for the new year, 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 ebberman@bellsouth.net. 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 Atlanta Puppetry Guild will host a pot luck social for the Southeast Region's president's retreat on **Saturday January 20, 2001** at 6:30 pm. The event will be held at Atlanta's Center for Puppetry Arts. Guild members who would like to volunteer are asked to bring a side dish for a dinner social. To coordinate what to bring, please contact Evy Berman at (404) 377-8141.

The next official guild meeting will be held on:
➔ **Sunday, February 18, 2001; 5-7 pm; at the home of Rosemary Glenn.**

3637 Vanet Road
Chamblee, GA 30341
(770) 457-3482

Please note the time change from our standard meeting times. Since guild meetings will now cover business and socializing, but will not include programs, they have been shortened to two hours. So don't be late—you might miss something good!

The February meeting is our annual spaghetti feast. Guild members are asked to bring side dishes. Directions will be sent to all guild members along with a reminder postcard one to two weeks before the next meeting.

For more information on the schedule of events for 2001, see page 6.

Congratulations!!

Here's looking forward to an exciting and productive year with our new guild officers!

Lee Bryan—President Alan Louis—Vice President

Minutes from the Meeting



Our last meeting took place on November 12, 2000 at the home of Lee Bryan. A total of 23 members attended—a possible record! After a fantastic cookout, members shared their latest news. Highlights of what is going on with current members can be read about in *What's the Buzz* on this page.

The business of the meeting included voting on new guild officers and the new Atlanta Puppetry Guild logo. Members voted to stagger elections, and to accomplish this, Tim Koeller and Evy Berman will be staying on as Treasurer and Secretary, respectively, for one more year. Running unopposed, Alan Louis was unanimously elected to the post of Vice President. Lee Bryan was elected President of the guild. These positions are held for two years.

Eighteen entries were submitted for the new guild logo. The winning logo was designed by Bob Hintz. It will be featured in the next guild newsletter.

Welcome New Members!

The Atlanta Puppetry Guild would like to officially welcome our new members:

Bob and Tricia Berrett

Currently living in St. Petersburg, FL, the Berretts will be relocating to Atlanta sometime in 2001.

Victoria Kidd

Victoria is a librarian in the programming and outreach dept. of the Gwinnett County library system. She recently moved to Snellville from Bowling Green, OH.

Alan Louis

Alan has recently accepted the position of director of education at the Center for Puppetry Arts. He is also our new Vice President!

Katherine Mylenki

Katherine recently moved to Decatur from Florida, and she is currently writing a marionette opera which she describes as a psychotic Cinderella story.



What's the Buzz?

★ **Bob Abdou** will be appearing on Good Day Atlanta in December. Also, the Atlanta Journal Constitution will be doing an article on Bob's magazine, *The Barker*.

★ **Lee Bryan** has a new holiday show, "North Pole Follies" directed by **Gregg Wallace**. It features acrobatic bears, tap-dancing reindeer and a comedian who's a real "fruitcake."

★ **Virginia Petersen**, in addition to reporting success with her puppet ministry, performs bass guitar with the church band!

★ **Walter Stark** has one 3rd place in adult professional art for his work exhibited in the Fulton County Employees and Families Art Exhibit.

★ **Bob Hintz** worked with **Claire Ritzler** on decorations for the Georgia Pacific Christmas Party. He is also making clown props and costumes for the Peachtree Clown Alley.

★ **Andy Bremer** will be presenting a Barbie puppet show at a Barbie convention in Paris.

★ **Carol Daniel** and **Piccadilly Puppets** premiered her new show, "Joseph and the Coat of Many Colors" on December 27 at the Wesley Chapel Library.

Puppeteers of America Information

Join the P of A!

If you are a member of the Atlanta Puppetry Guild, but not of the Puppeteers of America, Inc. (the national guild which charters our local guild), then you don't know what you're missing! To find out about the many benefits of membership, go to www.puppeteers.org. You can even get a membership form online, or you can contact: The Puppeteers of America, Inc., Joyce & Chuck Berty, PO BOX 29417, Parma, OH, 44129-0417
PofAjoin@aol.com PH: 888 568-6235

National Puppetry Festival, July 8-14 2001

from the official festival website

The University of Tampa campus will be the site of the Puppeteers of America National Festival, "A Puppet Odyssey." Located on the river in downtown Tampa, the campus of the University of Tampa is very compact and level. New dormitories combine with historic architecture to create a unique campus. Workshops will be conducted in the rooms and suites of the former Tampa Bay Hotel, a Moorish extravaganza that cost \$2.5 million in 1891!

The University of Tampa is building BRAND NEW high rise dormitory buildings just for us. Well, okay, not just for us, but they are new and modern and in close proximity to the cafeteria, so your stay will be a comfortable one.

Bring the entire family!! Tampa offers Busch Gardens, The Florida Aquarium, Lowry Park Zoo, and beaches nearby! One hour to Disney World, Sea World, and Universal Studios in Orlando! Two hours to the Kennedy Space Center!

So far, we have lined up some exciting acts including:

New Hampshire's Perry Alley Theatre
Canada's Puppetmongers
Ohio's Marionette Legend Jim Rose
That Puppet Guy Lee Bryan
Olympic Gold Medalist (well, he's from Australia at least) Richard Bradshaw.

It's not too early to register for this festival. Be one of the first to register and get early entrance to the festival's puppetry store. Puppet Festivals are a bargain at any price, but there is a registration fee, so here is a breakdown of costs:

Full Festival Registration: P of A Members \$305.00
Non P of A Members \$350.00
Youth Members \$275.00
Single Day (might not include evening events) \$80.00
Rooms: (Sunday night through Friday night) Double Occupancy (per person) \$138.00
Additional Nights: (July 6, 7, or 14) \$23.00
Meals: Meal Tickets \$125.00

For a registration form, visit the festival web site at <http://www.puppetlove.com/2001festival/index.htm>

Developing Puppet Characters

by Jim Davis

Editor's note: Following is an essay by former Atlantan Jim Davis. Jim spent five years as an instructor and puppeteer at the Center for Puppetry Arts in Atlanta. He performs throughout the Midwest as Big Time Puppets. In 1999, Jim earned an MA in Theatre from the University of Northern Iowa, where his thesis, Sex, Violence, and Hand Puppets: History and Structure of the Punch and Judy Performance Tradition was nominated as one of the year's best. He is currently a stay-at-home-dad to 10 month old Bryant in Bowling Green, Ohio, and hopes to begin work on a Ph.D. in the fall. Jim Davis can be contacted at BTTPuppets@msn.com. - eb

Over the past few years I've had the opportunity to gain a new perspective on puppetry. I went from working exclusively in the puppet theatre into professional work and graduate studies in "regular" theatre – you know, with actors and costumes, and that stuff. While this world is not new to me – that's what I did before I became "puppet boy" as my brother-in-law calls me – it was very exciting being re-immersed in it. One of the most valuable elements of this experience was applying to puppetry the traditional training I was receiving. Among the lessons to which I was re-exposed was the importance of character creation.

As puppeteers, we often become obsessed with working with the latest technology, and building figures that are bigger, newer, and flashier than the next guy. I've seen puppets that can blow smoke, juggle, and perform all sorts of mind-boggling stunts. That's great - and they require an amount of skill far beyond that of most people to produce. However, the impact of these stunts can be further enhanced when these puppets are given a reason to do all this amazing stuff. The way to do this is to create a set of given circumstances for the character.

Given circumstances is simply a fancy name establishing a backstory and specific objectives for a character. Given circumstances are the

who, what, where, when, and why that bring a character to life. By providing this information for the audience, a character – puppet or actor – becomes a much more three dimensional being. For example, there's a puppet that can juggle. That's cool in and of itself, but what if the audience is informed that this puppet, whose name is Billy, comes from a long line of jugglers, and that he travels the world performing with his company? By providing Billy and the audience with some of his history, he has changed from being an articulated doll who can do a trick into a character. Let's mix it up even more – Billy has a twin brother Willy, who is an evil juggler; and if Billy screws up during the performance, Willy will take over the company and Billy will be out on the street. By providing Billy with an objective - he wants to keep his company, and an obstacle – he must juggle perfectly, the audience makes much more of an emotional investment in Billy's performance. This also helps to insure a more enthusiastic audience response when Billy successfully finishes his act – or, if you're a sadist, when Billy fouls up the act and is hauled off by Evil Willy.

As we all know, designing and building puppets takes a great deal of time and effort. While we all want our work presented in the most positive light possible, it is easy to forget sometimes that like Hamlet, Oedipus, or Kramer from Seinfeld, these meticulously crafted figures are also characters who simulate life in front of an audience. By providing these characters with given circumstances, audiences are able to care more about the puppets, and will appreciate the builder's hard work even more.

"Developing Puppet Characters" is the fourth article in a series by guest authors writing about their personal experiences with puppetry.

If you would like to nominate a person to become a guest author for the Atlanta Puppetry Guild Newsletter, please contact newsletter editor, Evy Berman, at ecberman@bellsouth.net.

Some Helpful Tips

by Susan Kinney

I just got a catalog from a company here in Tucker that has "puppet fleece." The name of the company is Georgia Stage, Inc. It is white Antron fleece and it comes in both 12 oz and 14 oz weights. It is 54"/56" wide and of course dyes easily. Their number is 770-931-1600 or 1-800-211-8217. Fax 770-717-6474. The web site is www.gastage.com and e-mail is drapery@gastage.com.

Please come and visit the Special Exhibit Room at the Center for Puppetry Arts. Beginning in January, we are showcasing a mask exhibit which will run for an entire year.

Volunteers Needed for National Day of Puppetry

by Evy Berman

The third annual National Day of Puppetry falls on April 28 this year, and the guild has teamed up with Young Audiences of Atlanta for an exciting event. As part of Young Audiences' spring festival, to be held in Centennial Olympic Park, the Atlanta Puppetry Guild will host a giant puppet making workshop and parade. All guild members are invited to attend and help out with this program. A planning meeting has been scheduled for Sunday, March 25 from 4-6 pm (location TBA). We need plenty of guild members on hand to help plan on March 25 and to facilitate the workshop, which will be led by Claire Ritzler, on April 28. We are also working on getting musical accompaniment for the parade as well as press coverage. If you are interested in helping with this event, please contact Vice President and programs director of the guild, Alan Louis, at (404) 929-9180.



The Literary Puppet

by Reay Kaplan

Reprinted with permission from *The Central Florida Puppet Guild Journal*, April 1999

Okay, you marionettists out there!!! This month in *The Literary Puppet*, the string's the thing! These publications include a wonderful array of pictures, patterns, tricks, and hints in the world of marionettes! So don't get your strings in a knot, these books are a hit!

Abbe, Dorothy. **THE DWIGGINS MARIONETTES**. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1969.
Library of Congress: 70-86959

This is a beautiful pictorial account of the world famous Dwiggin's Marionettes. Many of these one-of-a-kind pictures have never been published anywhere else and offer a glimpse into exquisite craftsmanship and technique used by Master Marionettist, W.A. Dwiggin's.

Dwiggin's, W.A. **MARIONETTE IN MOTION**. Boston: The Trustees of the Public Library, 1976.

This guide is a detailed description of the Puterschein theory of counterbalance as used by W.A. Dwiggin's in building marionettes. It includes diagrams and explanations for building each part of a marionette in order to obtain the maximum in flexibility, maneuverability and balance and was originally published for the National Festival of the Puppeteers of America at MIT in 1989.

Both publications mentioned above are tough to find, but anyone interested in reading them can contact Reay Kaplan at (770) 414-0665.

DaSilva, Ray. **THE MARIONETTES OF BARCELONA: Harry Tozer and his Tricks of the Trade**. Great Britain: Puppet Books, 1995. ISBN: 0-9513600-2-7

This treasure provides a biography of Harry Tozer, the Grand Master of Marionettes in Barcelona. Scenarios, designs and patterns for some of his wonderful trick marionettes are included, along with his original sketches and anecdotes, detailing a unique career.

Atlanta Puppetry Guild Schedule of Events

by Evy Berman, guild secretary

On Monday, December 11, the officers of the Atlanta Puppetry Guild (APG) met to set the dates for meetings and events in 2001. There are a lot of structural changes from this past year. Business meetings with pot luck socials will still be held four times per year, but programs will now be a separate event. Because of this, business meetings have been shortened to two hours. The guild will also let you know about puppetry performances and exhibits around town to encourage members and friends to attend as a group. These "field trips" will be followed by discussion at a local coffee house whenever possible. And finally, because some members have found it difficult to attend meetings on Sundays, some meetings and workshops will be held on Saturday afternoons. Following is a schedule for 2001. Dates and times of some events are subject to change, and more may be added, so keep checking your mailbox for updates!

Saturday, January 20, 2001: 6:30 pm—Southeast regional presidents' retreat potluck social hosted by APG. Center for Puppetry Arts atrium. Please see page one for more details.

Saturday, January 27, 2001: Field trip to see Indonesian shadow puppeteer Midiyanto perform **The Great Mangir**, a shadow-puppet music drama by Steven Everett .

This music-drama, based on Indonesian author Pramoedya Ananta Toer's play *Ki Ageng Mangir*, is set in the palaces of the Mataram dynasty in sixteenth-century Java. Composer Steven Everett has created a fascinating world of sound with the use of both traditional and nontraditional instruments.

8:15 p.m. Performing Arts Studio 1804 North Decatur Road, **Emory University \$15**. Emory students with ID receive discount. Arts at Emory Box Office, phone: 404-727-5050.

Sunday, February 18, 2001: 5-7 pm, Meeting/Spaghetti Feast Social. At this meeting, members in attendance will vote on whether or not new workshops should be subsidized by the guild or if fees should be charged, officers will take suggestions on how to spend guild money in our account, and we will beef up our committee for the National Day of Puppetry. See page one for location and directions.

Sunday, February 25, 2001: Field trip to see Awaji Puppet Theater (Awaji Bunraku) Performance. Organized with help from the Center for Puppetry Arts, a special one-night-only performance of Japan's best known puppetry group will be held at the 14th Street Playhouse in Atlanta. For the most current information, please call The JASG at (404) 524-7399. And visit their website at <http://www.awaji-is.or.jp/nakamura/ningyoza.html>

Sunday, March 25, 2001: 4-6 pm, Planning meeting for National Day of Puppetry's giant puppet workshop.

Saturday April 28, 2001: National Day of Puppetry Giant Puppet Workshop and Parade! All guild members are asked to come help with the workshop, build a puppet, and participate in the parade. Centennial Park, 12-5pm.

Saturday, May 12, 2001: 5-7 pm, Meeting/pot-luck social. Location to be announced.

Saturday, June 23, 2001: 2-5 pm, Rod Puppet Workshop Part I with Alan Louis. In this two part workshop, Alan will teach participants how to make a simple but effective rod puppet. Part I will focus on sculpting the head and hands of the puppet out of Cell-U-Clay. Location to be announced.

Saturday, July 21, 2001: 2-5 pm, Rod Puppet Workshop Part II with Alan Louis. In part II of this workshop, participants will learn how to build the body and arms for their rod puppets. They will complete the puppet by attaching the finished head and hands to the body. Location to be announced.

Sunday, August 19, 2001: 5-7 pm, Meeting/pot-luck social. Location to be announced.

Sunday, September 9, 2001: 4-6 pm, Business of Puppetry Workshop. Bring your questions and your suggestions to this round table discussion which will cover anything related to puppetry business, bookings or promotions. Location to be announced.

Saturday, November 10, 2001: 5-7 pm, Meeting/pot-luck social. Location to be announced.

Puppets on the Net: Automata, part four in a series

by Chuck Robinson

Here we are with the final edition in our series on web sites with information about puppets. The benefit of writing this column is that now as we reach the end I can list sites on something near and dear to my heart - automata. I'll leave it to you to decide just how far this branch of puppetry reaches from the tree, but do enjoy these sites:

Cabaret Mechanical Theatre, <http://www.cabaret.co.uk/> Constantly on the move, Cabaret Mechanical Theatre recently outgrew its trendy Covent Garden (London) location, and spent last summer in The Kursaal, Southend-on-Sea, Essex. The entire exhibition has been closed for restoration, and will likely reopen in a new location. Thankfully for us techno-savvy folks, much of their exhibit is on display at this site, including some nifty animations.

Windup Automata, <http://home.earthlink.net/~chomedolls/emautama.html> Located a little closer to home, this group of artists make lively wind-up automata. They plan on branching out to a combination of traditional and electronically controlled automata. Again there are some great animations on this page.

Clockwork bodies, http://access.tucson.org/~michael/cb_intro.html This page features the ultimate ambition in automata: creating lifelike mechanical people. Much like puppetry, one goal of automata (especially during the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries) was to recreate a human so faithfully that one would have to see the inner workings of the automaton to know for sure it wasn't real.

The Flying Pig, <http://www.flying-pig.co.uk/> Paper automata that you can order and build yourself. It's amazing just how complex these automata can get, especially considering many of them are made from just one sheet of paper. Includes such great sculpture as the Skiing Sheep, the Ruminating Cow, and of course the Flying Pig.

Rube Goldberg, <http://www.rubegoldberg.com/> Pulitzer Prize winning cartoonist Rube Goldberg (1883-1970) was a master of ingenuity, and his bizarre creations showed us complex ways to do simple things. There is now an annual Rube Goldberg contest in his memory.

The unofficial Jaquet-Droz page, <http://www.delectra.com/jporter/jspMDA.html> This page examines exquisite works of the Jaquet-Droz family from the eighteenth century. There is a good deal of the history of the family, and also three dimensional pictures of some of the automata (in case you happen to have anaglyph glasses near your computer).

In case you want to save your typing finger, all of these links can be found at <http://www.puppet.org/potn4.html>. Thanks to the Center for Puppetry Arts <http://www.puppet.org/> for the space. Keep an eye out for "**Automata: the Magic of Mechanical Movement**" a special exhibit at the Center for Puppetry Arts, in 2003.

Happy Surfing!

Chuck Robinson is the official Webmaster at the Center for Puppetry Arts.

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Got a problem? Need information? Got suggestions? Drop us a line.