



# The Atlanta Puppet Press

The Newsletter of the Atlanta Puppetry Guild

Chartered by the Puppeteers of America

November 2004

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## Your Ideas Are Needed!

The Atlanta Puppet Press has the potential to become a great newsletter, but I can't do it alone. You can help by submitting short puppetry related items that would be of interest to other guild members. Here are just a few possible ideas:

News and Events	How-To's
Book & Show Reviews	Helpful Tips

If you would like to be a regular columnist, there are many topics that you can choose from. Also, if you can draw or paint, I would love to have some original puppet related artwork to use in the newsletter.

I also need your feedback, so please do not hesitate to let me know what you like or dislike about the new newsletter.

Please send all questions, comments, or submissions to Kevin Pittman at [klp@moonshade.oit.gatech.edu](mailto:klp@moonshade.oit.gatech.edu) and start your subject line with 'APGNL:'

## Meeting Information

**When:** Sunday, November 7th at 5 PM

**Where:** Home of Rosemary Glenn's  
3637 Vanet Road  
Chamblee, GA, 30341

### Directions:

Take Peachtree Industrial Boulevard to Sexton Woods Dr, about two miles south of I-285. Turn right on Vanet Rd. and follow to the corner of Vanet and Teal Rd.

### What's Happening:

- SPAGHETTI SUPPER – Rosemary and Andy Bremer will be doing their traditional spaghetti supper, so bring a side or desert to share.
- SHOW AND TELL – Bring in something fun and interesting to share with the group or tell the group about a puppetry project you're currently working on.
- PUPPETS ON THE RIDGE RECALLED – A ten minute movie of memories from the SE Regional Festival

## What's Your Preference?

The Atlanta Puppet Press is primarily distributed electronically on the Internet. By default, all members will be sent a link to the newsletter file, allowing them to download the file from a web site at their convenience. However, if you wish, you can have the newsletter PDF file sent directly to you. Just email the newsletter editor if you would prefer this option.

# Get Into the Volunteer Spirit

By Kevin Pittman

As we approach the holiday season once again, I want to put in a plug for a wonderful activity we can all take part in. I am talking about volunteering some of your time and your puppetry skills for a good cause. If you are not a professional puppeteer yet, volunteering is a great way to gain experience and have fun at the same time. And while the professionals out there may balk at the idea of doing a free show, do keep in mind that volunteering at a large community festival is a great way to get your name out in front of a lot of potential future customers.

I have been doing volunteer puppetry and costume character performances for over a year now, and I have had many, many wonderful and memorable moments over that time. I often have to work very hard to get a performance opportunity, but my volunteer work has been invaluable in helping me to grow as a performer. Since I know how challenging it can be to get started finding good volunteer opportunities, I want to share a few ideas and tips that might help someone who wants to volunteer their puppetry talents. What I am about to say is probably nothing new for the seasoned professional, but hopefully the puppet hobbyists out there will find this information useful.

The first thing you need to do is prepare yourself for making contact with event and activity coordinators. If you have not done so already, print up business cards for yourself and make up a flyer that identifies you and tells what you can do as a puppeteer. Put plenty of pictures on your flyer, as they really are worth a thousand words. Include either a phone number or email address or both. A web site can be very helpful if you have the ability to make one yourself, but if you are not running a business, you will probably find it too expensive to hire anyone to build a web site for you. You might also want to build a printed portfolio featuring pictures of your previous performance work. A loose-leaf binder, a box of page protectors, an inexpensive digital camera and a good inkjet printer are all you need to make a nice portfolio.



Kevin volunteering at Powder Springs' 4<sup>th</sup> of July Celebration

The next step, and also the biggest one, is to figure out where you want to volunteer your puppetry talents. Since you are not getting paid, you will have to evaluate possibilities based on the difficulties involved, such as distance from your home, length of the event, and the nature of the event. One factor I look closely at is the likely adult to child ratio: the less supervision at the event, the more likely it is that things could get out of control. Trust me, when you have a paycheck to look forward to, you will be willing to put up with far more than when you are doing an event as a volunteer.

It is not as easy as you might think to find the really good volunteer opportunities. You have to seek them out, because they are definitely not going to fall into your lap. Check the event calendars for all of the cities within a reasonable driving distance of your home, and look for any kind of festival or children's event. You can watch the newspapers as well, but realize that by the time an event makes it into a newspaper, it may be too late to get involved. Check with local hospitals, nursing homes, and community centers, and when contacting these kinds of groups, consider offering to do puppetry workshops as well as performances.

Another great source for performance opportunities is old-fashioned word of mouth. Let your friends, neighbors, and co-workers know that you are interested in volunteering. Give them business cards and flyers if

they are willing to pass them on to people that they know. They may not be able to give you any leads right away, but you will be surprised who might remember you several months later.

As soon as you learn about an event that might benefit from your puppetry services, determine who to contact and call that person right away. Some events are planned months in advance, and there is often competition for time slots in the more popular events. If the person you talk with sounds interested in your puppetry services, make an appointment to meet him or her, and be sure to bring that flyer and business card to the meeting.

You should prepare yourself for the likely possibility of getting turned down from time to time. Sometimes it might be because you contacted the group too late. Sometimes it might be because they just are not interested in puppetry (yes, alas, it is true that not everyone wants a puppet show at their big event). Sometimes, this may just be because the person in charge of entertainment does not like puppets. In any case, be sure to keep a record of who you contacted and the dates of the event, along with any other helpful details. If the event is an annual activity, you can try contacting the coordinators the next time it comes around. Who knows? You might just make it into the event next year.

When you do get the opportunity to perform, confirm the performance in writing with the coordinator, and provide details on the technical requirements for your show. An important caveat here is to never assume anything, even when you are returning to an event that you performed at previously. I just recently made a second appearance at a local annual event where last year the kid's stage had consisted of a raised platform with a tent covering and a professional sound system. This year it consisted of four pieces of plywood taped together – and nothing else! Had I inquired about what was going to be available, I would have at least been prepared for this predicament.



Kevin volunteering at Marietta's Harvest Square Festival

On the day of the performance, make sure you have everything you need with you before you leave home and try to show up a few minutes ahead of time. Even if you are just a hobbyist, treat the performance as if you were a paid professional: be courteous to everyone, try to do a little something extra whenever you can, and always clean up after yourself. Most importantly, be sure to send a thank you note to the coordinators of the event after it is

over. Let them know how much you appreciated the opportunity and how much you enjoyed helping them out. Mention that you would be more than happy to perform at any other events they might be putting together. This has actually worked for me just recently, getting me into a great Halloween event because of my performance at an earlier event at the same location.

Perhaps the best piece of advice I can give anyone thinking about volunteering is to be as flexible as possible. I know, this may sound counterintuitive – you might think that any group that would want volunteer help would be happy to get anything offered and would do what they could to accommodate you. However, some groups get lots of volunteer offers and have to work with rather strict guidelines. Hospitals, for instance, have to be very careful about volunteer entertainment because they are dealing with people who are sick and injured. In my opinion, it is always better to keep an activity coordinator happy by adjusting your material or even the look of one of your characters (a true story), than to stand on principle and miss out on a fun and valuable performance opportunity.

So as this holiday season nears, please consider donating some of your time and your talent to a community or charitable event. Even if you do not want to perform for free, consider lending a hand in some other way, such as helping out at a feed the homeless event. You will be surprised at what you get back when you give just a little of yourself.

# The Business of Puppetry

By Lee Bryan

The following are some "Pearls of Wisdom" by some wonderfully knowledgeable and talented people who have helped me greatly along my journey as a full time performing artist. Some seem pretty common sense but here goes:

**Peter Hart** - "Make the action fit the phrase." Peter is a Master Puppeteer as far as I'm concerned and every time he picks up a puppet it is sheer magic. He not only taught me beginning hand puppet and marionette manipulation but also led me on an exciting journey of self-discovery in his direction of my jury project, "Mr. Punch." It was an ambitious undertaking on both of our parts but we survived and I landed my first gig at the Center in the old Museum Stairwell Theatre.

**Kurt Daws** - Theatre Dept/Kennesaw College - "Never explain/never excuse." It's really very simple. Don't try to make lame explanations/excuses for a poor performance. It comes down to rehearsal. Either the performance was good or the performance was bad and the time spent in rehearsal will always show. So do your homework, keep rehearsing, hire yourself a good director (my advice) and work, work, work!

**Nancy Gerber** - From a class THE BUSINESS OF ART/THE ART OF BUSINESS - "Under promise/over deliver." Little things like a special puppet party favor for the birthday child. You didn't discuss it in your contract or with the Mother of the child but imagine their surprise when you make their child feel that much more special on their day! Even corporate types can be surprised. I made special puppet bags for Chik-fil-a and Bonanza corporations. Once again, a little extra something that helps them remember you and sets you apart from the rest.

**Vince Anthony** - Center for Puppetry Arts - "Invest in reliable transportation." Since being where you are supposed to be at the appointed time is a large part of being a touring performer, get some good wheels. It's the cost of doing business and he advised me to get a good trade-in every four years like he did with Vagabond.

**Alice Rhodes** - Alice Rhodes Puppet Theatre - "Invest in a good piece of publicity." Unfortunately, presenters WILL judge you on your publicity so invest in a nice piece of publicity that shows you in your best possible light...and keep your publicity updated and fresh looking.

**Carol Daniel** - Piccadilly Puppets - "Do what you do best, then hire the rest." Pretty much self-explanatory. Starting out, I did everything myself...made the puppets, sets, wrote the script, did the bookings, recorded the music...ARGH! It became more than a full time job! I learned a lot and made a lot of mistakes. Now I can afford the "luxury" of seeking out and hiring talented people to help with various production aspects...and I ALWAYS have worked with a DIRECTOR!

**Lee Bryan** - "Get it ALL in writing" and "Communicate!" I call all contracts the week prior...it is amazing how at ease it will make your presenters feel. Contracts are crucial especially when dealing with friends....don't leave anything to chance! With all the details written down, you'll know exactly what is expected of you and the presenter/friend will know exactly what to expect. Keep the lines of communication open and don't leave your contacts with any questions. Return phone calls and emails within 24 hours and the same day if possible.

# Puppet Fest 2005

Now that the 2004 regional puppetry festivals are but wonderful memories, it's time to look ahead to the excitement that is brewing for 2005. It's time to start making plans to get yourself to Minnesota for the Puppeteers of America's 2005 national festival. Puppet Fest 2005 will be held July 24-30 at Concordia University in St. Paul, Minnesota.

The performance line-up is just starting to take shape, but it's already a diverse and exciting mix. You won't want to miss "Professor" Glyn Edwards (England), State Puppet Theatre Stara Zagora (Bulgaria), In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theatre (Minneapolis), David Syrotiak's National Marionette Theatre (Vermont), Michael Sommers' Open Eye Figure Theatre (Minneapolis), Andrew Kim (Seattle), or a Javanese wayang shadow performance accompanied by the Minnesota Gamelan Orchestra. Performance applications are still being accepted. The performance proposal deadline has been extended to October 15th.

Workshop proposals are just starting to come in, but already in the mix is a performance/workshop presented by marionette master Phillip Huber. The deadline for workshop proposals has been extended to December 1st.

Don't forget to check the festival website, [www.PuppetFest2005.org](http://www.PuppetFest2005.org) regularly for the latest festival updates. On the website, you'll also find performance and workshop proposal forms that you can download as well as registration forms. It's not too early to get your registration in. A \$150 deposit will reserve your spot.

If you have questions or ideas for the festival, feel free to contact me. We'd love to hear from you and we'll look forward to seeing you in Minnesota next summer.

Kurt Hunter, Festival Director - [director@puppetfest2005.org](mailto:director@puppetfest2005.org) - 952-920-7171



## Puppeteers of America Scholarships

Youth and adult scholarships are available for the 2005 Puppeteers of America, Inc., National Festival to be held in St. Paul, Minnesota (Concordia University) July 24 through 30, 2005. Deadline for completed applications is February 1, 2005. For information and/or application, please contact:

Aretta Baumgartner  
P of A Scholarship Committee  
5097 Sumter Ave.  
Cincinnati, OH 45238-3824  
513-471-2579  
[hensonfan@fuse.net](mailto:hensonfan@fuse.net)

## Join the Puppeteers of America!

To find out about the many benefits of Puppeteers of America membership, including consultants in every area of puppetry, visit the Puppeteers of America website: <http://www.puppeteers.org/>

If you do not have Internet access, you can also request information by U.S. mail:

The Puppeteers of America, Inc.  
Joyce and Chuck Berty  
PO Box 29417  
Parma, OH, 44129-0417  
888-568-6235

# Puppet News and Happenings

On Sunday, October 17, CBS aired a ten-minute profile on the Art of Puppetry on its *Sunday Morning* show. The segment, called 'Give Them a Hand', covered puppetry on Broadway, with brief looks at *Avenue Q* and *The Little Shop of Horrors*, and then gave an inside look at the newly rebuilt *Puppet Company* theater in Glen Echo, Maryland, just outside of Washington DC.

Betsy Stark entered a puppet art piece (pictured at right) in the Fulton County Employee Art Show. She won first place in the "intermediate artist" category, receiving a blue ribbon and \$250. The money was put to good use, helping Betsy and Walter celebrate their tenth wedding anniversary. Congratulations, Betsy!



Virginia Peterson wants to remind everyone to watch the segment on the Vent Haven Ventriloquism Convention that will be airing on CBS's 60 Minutes on Wednesday, November 10<sup>th</sup>, at 8 PM. Be sure to look for Virginia and her ventriloquism puppet, Aunt Margaret.

Lee Bryan will be heading to South Florida just before Thanksgiving for a ten day tour of his shows *Princess and the Pea Y'all* and *Aesop's Fantastic Fables*. Lee has also developed a portable stage setup that is airplane-friendly. His portable configuration consists of two trunks that hold all of the puppets and props. The trunks convert to become the tabletop version of his stage.

The Center for Puppetry Arts will begin selling DVDs of three favorite shows from its past two seasons: *Dinosaurs*, *American Tall Tales*, and *Beauty and the Beast*. DVDs are \$19.21 each for members, or buy all three for \$44.24 (member price). DVDs will be available starting November 1<sup>st</sup>.

Kevin Pittman has been very busy these past two months, performing at five different community events including spending whole weekends performing at Marietta's Harvest Square Festival on October 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> and Candler Park's Fall Fest on October 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>.

## Showing November 2004 through February 2005 at the Center for Puppetry Arts (<http://www.puppet.org/>)

Charlotte's Web	Mainstage Theater	September 21 <sup>st</sup> through December 12 <sup>th</sup>
The Velveteen Rabbit	Downstairs Theater	November 23 <sup>rd</sup> through January 2 <sup>nd</sup>
Mighty Nice by Paul Zaloom	Mainstage Theater	November 12 <sup>th</sup> through 14 <sup>th</sup>
The Adventures of Mighty Bug	Mainstage Theater	January 4 <sup>th</sup> through March 13 <sup>th</sup>
The Firebird by The David Simpich Marionettes	Downstairs Theater	January 21 <sup>st</sup> through 23 <sup>rd</sup>
Rumpelstiltskin	Downstairs Theater	February 8 <sup>th</sup> through April 3 <sup>rd</sup>

# Pictures From The September APG Meeting



Aunt Margaret and Virginia Peterson



Roopert the Kangaroo  
(AKA Kevin Pittman)



Lee Bryan with the cast of his new show  
*Princess and the Pea Y'all*



Mountain Booger Marionette  
Made by Asheville NC Homecrafts

# Summary of Minutes of the Last Guild Meeting

Sunday, September 12th, 2004

- **Attendance:** Approximately ten members were present at the meeting held at the Center for Puppetry Arts.
- **Brochures:** Lee Bryan brought in a batch of brochures he had ordered through a company recommended by Bob Abdou: <http://www.brochureplace.com/>. This company is located in Canada and batches jobs together to keep the cost down. Typical cost for 5000 full-color two-sided pages is \$395 + \$75 S&H.
- **Transparency Protectors:** Jeff Cornett brought in several boxes of Projectable Transparency Protectors, which he gave away to anyone interested. (Editor's note: these are great for holding and protecting signs to be hung on or near your puppet stage)
- **Festival Workshops:** Evy Wright brought the workshop manual from the SE Regional Festival, Puppets on the Ridge, to share with the guild
- **National Day of Puppetry**
  - There was discussion as to whether or not the NDoP should continue to be celebrated with a large event at Discover Mills Mall. Attendance was low last year, so it was decided that we will contact Claire Ritzler about having a puppet event during the "Fourth Saturday" celebration on April 23, 2005 in Centennial Olympic Park.
  - Jeff will contact Claire about having puppet stations and tents at the Fourth Saturday celebration. We are also planning to build giant puppets and have a parade
  - Ideas of how to promote ourselves and the guild were discussed. One idea: create a brochure that lists our guild members, what they do (such as parties or workshops), and how to contact them.
- **Meetings:** It was decided that we should alternate between social and program-based meetings. Social meetings will involve a potluck meal at someone's home and will include show and tell. Program-based meetings will not involve food and will have at least a three hour workshop for attendees
- **Next Meeting:** The next meeting will be on November 7<sup>th</sup>. If we have the spaghetti social it will be at Rosemary Glenn's house. If not, it will be at Lee's house and will include a presentation by Jeff Cornett on Cambodian Shadow Puppets.
- **Costume Puppetry Presentation:** Kevin Pittman gave a presentation on costume puppets, talking about how he became interested in costume puppets, his experiences while performing in costume, and how he designs and builds his characters. He brought in parts of three of his characters, Roopert the Kangaroo, Reynard the Red Fox, and Raxor the Dragon and opened the meeting by demonstrating Roopert.
- **Show and Tell** (See pictures on the previous page)
  - Virginia Peterson brought in her vent puppet Aunt Margaret
  - Kevin brought in a "Mountain Booger" marionette that he found in Asheville while at the SE Festival. This puppet was hand made by a group of local craftswomen

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## Guild Related Web Sites

Atlanta Puppetry Guild: <http://www.atlantapuppetryguild.com/>

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

UNIMA-USA Website: <http://www.unima-usa.org/>

## Are You on *The List*?

Bob Abdou  
Bob Berrett  
Tricia Berrett  
Lee Bryan  
Jeff Cornett  
Carol Daniel  
Rosemary Glenn  
Barbara Goltz

Sara Hendrix  
Akbar Imhotep  
Marilyn Latta  
Gail McKay  
Virginia Petersen  
Wally Petersen  
Kevin Pittman  
Claire Ritzler

Sandy Shuster  
Betsy Stark  
Walter Stark  
Jay Terrell  
Gregg Wallace  
Evy Wright

See your name? Thanks for being a paid member of the Atlanta Puppetry Guild!

Didn't see your name? You're either a lapsed or prospective member. Please renew or join. It's only \$10 for a single membership or \$15 for a dual, and it ensures that you'll receive all member communications and privileges.

*Special Offer* – Send \$15 for a single or \$25 for a dual, and your membership will be effective through April 2006! (Membership year runs May 1 through April 30.)

Please make your check payable to Atlanta Puppetry Guild. You can bring it to the next meeting or mail it to 2510 Sunset Drive NE, Atlanta GA 30345. Include a note indicating if you're a current member of Puppeteers of America or UNIMA-USA, and any changes to your contact information (address, e-mail, telephone number).

If you have any questions (or if you've paid and your name's not listed), please contact Tricia Berrett at [tbberrett@aol.com](mailto:tbberrett@aol.com) or 404-633-1575.

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## Atlanta Puppetry Guild Officers

### **President**

Lee Bryan  
404-315-1363  
lee@puppetguy.com

### **Vice President**

Gregg Wallace  
greggwallace@compuserve.com

### **Treasurer & Membership Director**

Tricia Berrett  
404-633-1575  
tbberrett@aol.com

### **Secretary**

Carol Daniel  
ppuppets@bellsouth.net

### **Newsletter Editor**

Kevin Pittman  
klp@moonshade.oit.gatech.edu

## About The Newsletter and the Guild

The Atlanta Puppet Press is published four times a year by the Atlanta Puppetry Guild. A new edition of the newsletter will be available approximately one week before each guild meeting.

Chartered in 1974, the Atlanta Puppetry Guild is dedicated to bringing together artists, educators, librarians, hobbyists, professionals and everyday people who share an interest in the art of puppetry. Current activities include potluck socials, field trips to view and discuss adult puppetry presentations, occasional workshops, and participation in the National Day of Puppetry on the last Saturday in April.

Members receive notifications of meetings, new newsletters, and other local puppetry events via e-mail. They also receive discounts on tickets and in the gift shop at the Center for Puppetry Arts in Midtown Atlanta. The cost of a membership is \$10 for an individual or \$15 for a dual membership. The membership year runs from May 1<sup>st</sup> through April 30<sup>th</sup>.

Please send membership application and a check payable to "Atlanta Puppetry Guild" to:

Atlanta Puppetry Guild, 2510 Sunset Drive NE, Atlanta, GA 30345

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### Atlanta Puppetry Guild Membership Form

Name/s \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number (home unless you prefer to be contacted at work; please indicate which number you're listing):

Also member of  Puppeteers of America  UNIMA-USA

Special interests or other information: