

Joan Wittenberg A Tribute to a Special Woman

When it was learned that Joan was about to celebrate her 90th birthday we decided on having a party in her honor. Considering that Joan was a long time loyal member of the guild, our committee thought it only befitting to honor her with an award. Since our past president (and now Vice-President Fred Berchtold) had established an annual "Presidents Award" for outstanding service to the guild, it did not seem befitting for her years of loyalty, friendship and respect earned throughout her tenure of membership. A "Lifetime Achievement Award" was discussed but that title might not have applied to Joan's credentials. It was discussed among the committee to create a "Guild Founders Award" more appropriate. This would serve two purposes. Bringing to mind and recognizing the Guild's original founders, George Cole, Jay Marshall and the lead founder. We chose the first CPG President whose name appears on the award as, The "Hans J. Schmidt Founders Award". To make it special, Joan Wittenberg would be the first recipient! Take note that this award does not interfere or supersede the current Presidents Award. It is another means of recognizing service to the Guild and our common art form. Our CPG web master and Patter Publisher, Jeff Biske created the format for the award (pictured here). The award was presented on Sunday, March 24th, 2019 at the Covenant Village Retirement Home in Northbrook, Illinois where Joan is a current resident. Since we wanted the presentation of the award to be a surprise we allowed Joan to think that this would be an early celebration of her birthday, which is April 17th. The Village provided us with a very nice room which held several tables and chairs as well as a kitchen facility, from which we dispensed refreshments that included a large cake which was decorated with the CPG logo, fruit, cheese and crackers, hot coffee and tea. Several CPG members brought puppets as did Joan, who still has her first puppet. In the Puppet Patter we



have a column titled "Getting to Know You" in which we feature the puppet related histories of our members. Joan was featured in the August 2013 edition. Several members of the CPG as well as members of Joan's family were in attendance, 25 persons in all, had a wonderful time!

Many thanks to the Reception Committee involving Mel, LaVerne and Jeff Biske and to Marilyn and Fred Putz who together arranged for the date with the Residence and provided ordering the cake and refreshments and for delivering it all to the party room!



Joan with her first puppet made in Hans Schmidt's puppet class



*The Wittenberg Family
(l to r) Pat Tkach (Son in law), Heidi Pelrine (Daughter), Roy (Son)
Daniel (Grandson), (seated) Jenny (Granddaughter),
with Mila, Great Granddaughter (Little Kiddo)
Katie (Granddaughter), Kurt (Son)*



World Puppetry Day!

CHICAGO STYLE

APRIL 13, 2019

by Fred Putz

Susan Flucher, the CPG's WDOP Chairperson began working on the arrangements for our annual celebration of puppetry several months prior to our selected 2019 date. This year marked the third time that Susan had volunteered to chair our WDOP. Under her guidance, our special day has always been a success and WDOP 2019 was no exception.

It has been a tradition that a puppet exhibit would be installed at least one month prior to the event. Our WDOP was scheduled to occur at the Matteson Area Public Library in April but because the Library did not have a locked showcase, Susan made arrangements that our exhibit would be housed in the neighboring Town of Park Forest at Illinois Elementary School. The School was delighted to be selected as our exhibit host. Fred Putz, CPG's Historian volunteered to develop an exhibit from his puppet collection. The theme of the exhibit was "Any Thing, a Spoon or Ball Can Become A Puppet" and included the basic forms of puppets, from marionettes to shadow puppets which had been constructed from a variety of materials. Thanks to Susan, an explanation of each puppet was posted on a large board next to the show case. The exhibit ran from March first until April first.



THE MAKER FAIR (or workshops)

Our WDOP day began with the members of the CPG arriving at the library at 9:00 AM to set up the puppet-making workshops (called Maker Fair) and the Student Puppeteers from Illinois Elementary began rehearsing with the puppets that they had made during the winter under the guidance of Susan and David Herzog. The doors opened at 10:00 AM and the audience, both children and adults were allowed to Enter and to begin to assemble puppets from a variety of materials that Susan had provided. Several CPG members, Fred Bertchold, Susan Witek, David Herzog and myself assisted the children (and adults) in constructing their puppets. Everyone was pleased with the results. As the frenzy of the Maker Fair proceeded, Tabitha FeFee, Eric Stiles and Kathy Validvia cruised about the library with their walk-around puppets, adding to the excitement of the day.

When the children (and adults) had just about finished their Maker Fair puppets the call came from the auditorium that the puppet show was about to start. We all went to the basement and into the auditorium to see a very interesting puppet stage, (which I will describe later). On the floor in front of the stage on the floor were placemats that marked the spots where the children were to sit. The placemats guaranteed that there were no discussions as to "who sat where".



THE PROGRAM

Sitting in center stage was a large double playboard open style hand puppet stage. The lower stage accommodated the shorter puppeteers while the taller puppeteers used the upper playboard. The overture began as Jill Frederickson and David Quesal with mouth puppets in hand, encouraged the audience to sing along with, “She’ll Be Coming ‘Round The Mountain” and several other well-known songs. Soon



Jill leads her cast of student puppeteers to open the program



David Quesal directs student puppeteers with their freshly made pop up puppets

everyone was singing and having a good time. Susan Fulcher entered and told the history of the Matteson Area Public Library’s Junior Puppeteers Program which will include a 2019 The First Grade Junior Puppeteers displayed their puppets as well as their mouth sync technique singing “Old Macdonald Had a Farm.” The Second Grade Junior Puppeteers demonstrated their manipulation techniques with their popup puppets. The two sixth Grade Junior Puppeteers demonstrated manipulation techniques as they dusted off the stage with miniature brooms.

Then it was time for the main event, “Kevin Kammeraad and The Cooperfly Puppet Troupe”. (I must take a bit of space describing Kevin’s unique puppet stage: placed in center stage was a large four wheeled wooden box about four feet tall and six feet long. To my surprise, I discovered that this box was a multi-purpose hand and mouth puppet stage. After the show I went backstage and found that this box contained many cubicles in which puppets and technical equipment were stored and transported. It was an all-in-one-stage!). Kevin stood on the stage left of the box and rested his “vent” and rod puppets bodies on the stage floor.)

I took note of Kevin’s dress since he was wearing ordinary street clothing rather than the puppeteers traditional Bunraku black attire which minimalizes the puppeteer and maximizes the puppet. I asked Kevin about his dress and

he responded; “I want my audience to really feel, ‘I can do that!’”. So, I present myself very much as me. Also, since my program connects to poetry, music and puppetry, I take an approach that connects to all those elements. I am very much a part of the program, as much as the puppets are”. At one point during his show Kevin needed a proscenium arch and curtains. From the box’s storage areas he brought out two carved wooden table legs and jammed them into holes in the stage floor. He then placed a lintel containing a main curtain on the legs creating a proscenium arch. A scrim was placed on the back of the stage. There it was, an instant stage!



Kevin Kammeraad and friend

During his performance, Kevin introduced several different “vent”-type characters for which he did their voices with great ease. It must be mentioned that Kevin has a very good singing voice. His sound tracks are so cleverly composed that it was difficult to tell when Kevin was speaking or if we were hearing the soundtrack. Often Kevin sang along with the recording. There are so many puppet characters in Kevin’s show that it is not possible to mention all of them in this review. However, here are three characters that stood out: wearing a “dunce” hat was Jacob, a very large “vent” puppet that lives in a suitcase. Very little gets past Jacob upon which he does not comment. He is far wiser than his dunce hat would have us believe; a coffee can came to life in Mr. Tolsh! This figure is amazing: the bottom of the coffee can has been removed and is hinged in the rear. When Tolsh talks, the bottom flops down. He wears eye glasses, but has no eyes. A knitted cap adorns the top of the can. His short stubby body covered with a brown sweater completes this wonderful character; the final and very strange character, Siblee Alexander, had a tubular body and a very narrow head and two large eyes that look as if they are the lenses in a pair of field glasses. His arms stand straight up from his shoulders. It looked as if Kevin’s 2nd, 3rd and 4th fingers manipulate the head while his arms were manipulated by Kevin’s thumb and little finger. Two springs protrude from the top of his head. Kevin is very concerned about the lack of emphasis on reading and writing skills in our educational system. I asked him how he became interested in promoting reading

skills. He said, “For me, this is where it all began – literacy. Music and puppetry are rooted in that same foundation. After seeing my program, I want my audience to read, write, build a puppet, perform, sing, and more. Ideas are everywhere!” He introduced and donated to the library two of his recent books, “The Tomato Collection” and “Spinach Dip Pancakes” (which also bear his illustrations). Kevin is very careful to insure that his jokes and comments are understood by the children, but also hold the interest of the adults.

Thus ended the CPG’s very successful World Day of Puppetry 2019. I am sure that plans are already under way for 2020.



Unidentified guest, Tabitha Fefee and Eric Stiles



David Quesal also has a friend



As does Dave Herrzog



Kathy Validivia, our newest member, with her Peruvian puppet



Susan explains to family and friends her program of Junior puppeteers taught at the library



The WDOP cast

Trenton Jordan, Harper Dawson, Josiah Flowers, Kendal Smith, Farrah Price, Chayah Thomas, Aniya Williams, Adam Williams, Saniyya Wilson, Zoe Morgan Jones, T’Kareea Spurlock, Ava Conley, Naomi Hollimon, Eden Price, Te’Andre Spurlock

Puppetry history was made May 5, 6, 7, 2019 as participants gathered at the Ox-Bow School of Art in Saugatuck, Michigan, to share in the first Kukla Fest. This festival was envisioned by Michael Schwabe and Larry Basgall, who have worked tirelessly for several years to bring this event to fruition. Erin Wilkerson of Saugatuck was a great advocate for the event as well providing her marketing expertise to make it not only an event for puppeteers but for the community at large. College professor and puppeteer Jason Yancey provided tech support for the weekend. The event is founded on and continues the work that master puppeteer Burr Tillstrom, who maintained a home in Saugatuck, began at the Ox-Bow School of Art.



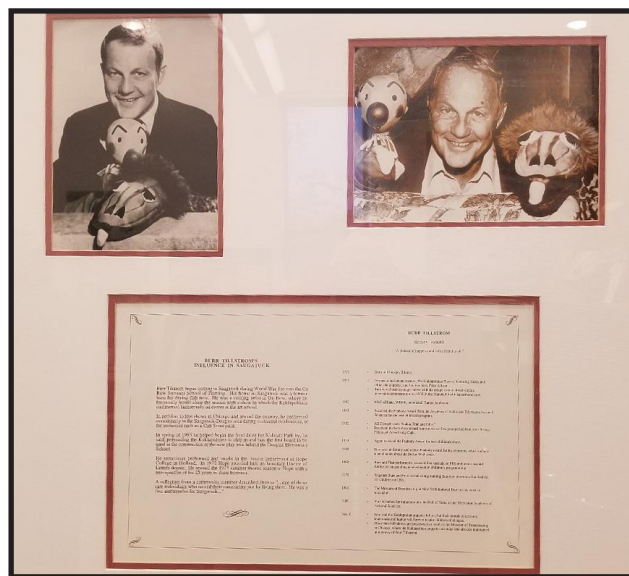
Kukla Fest is an intimate, educational, and inspirational weekend of puppetry limited to only forty participants, due to accommodation availability at Ox Bow. The limited number of participants makes it a much more hands-on event, with time for in depth discussion among artists. The wooded, nature filled Ox-Bow campus with it's world class artist studios and facilities was an excellent venue. The cozy bed and breakfast style accommodations added to the intimacy of the weekend with all participants gathering for the excellent group meals in the dining room, where we could continue our discussions in puppetry.

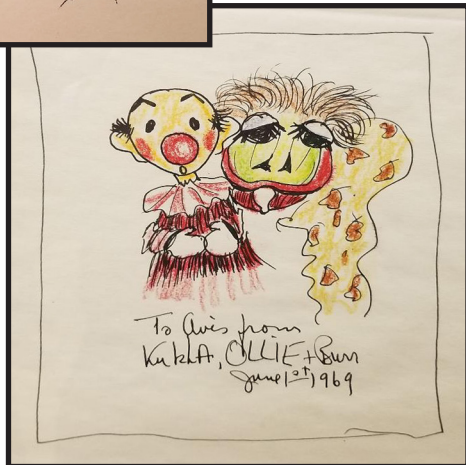
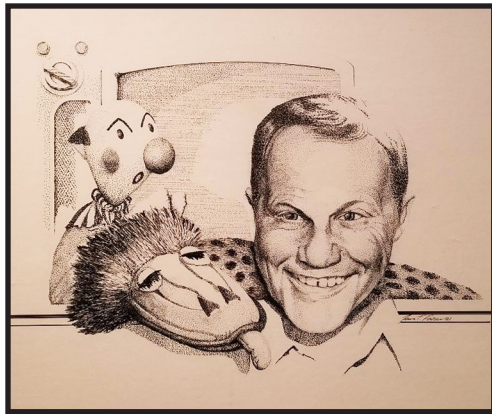
Friday, May 3, 2019

Participants started arriving at Ox-Bow in the late morning, and were able to unwind from their travels and greet old friends over a delicious lunch in the dining room of the Inn. Learning began in earnest starting at 3:00 P.M. with the first workshop, *On Camera Puppetry BASICS* by Connor Asher of Chicago. This workshop was able to give every participant a chance to actually get on camera and learn the basics of on camera puppetry movement. This workshop was a revelation for anyone who has not worked on camera. The world of television and film puppetry is far more complicated than people realize, and this crash course by Connor is the perfect introduction for people wanting to expand their knowledge in the field.

I should pause at this point to explain that at Kukla Fest there is only one workshop per session. This way each participant can get a more hands on experience. While a workshop may not have been and individual's "cup of tea" all were informative, well taught, and each gave a special expert insight to the particular subject at hand. This was a refreshing and much needed approach to workshops and was a very successful model for this event.

After a short break to rest and refresh ourselves buses arrived to transport the participants to downtown Saugatuck for the evening's events. Our first Stop was the Saugatuck Historical Museum to view their small but excellent exhibit of the life and work of Burr Tillstrom. Among the various items on exhibit were hand drawn greeting cards he had sent to friends, as well as video footage of Burr in Saugatuck. Much printed material on Burr is available to peruse as well. This lovingly curated collection is a great tribute to one of the true masters of American puppetry.





Busses arrived to transport Kukla Festers to The Saugatuck Woman's Club for the evening Gala. While time was built into the schedule for a bit of a wander in downtown Saugatuck, most participants choose to head to the nearest coffee shop for a warm drink due to the somewhat drizzly and cold early May weather. It was however, the perfect way to discuss the wonderful exhibit we had just seen.

A short walk took us to the doors of The Woman's Club (yes this is the spelling used) and the evening's gala fundraising event. An elegant setting in a historical building, live music, two drink tickets, and an excellent hors d'oeuvre buffet started the evening off well. Soon we were called to our tables and the evening began with



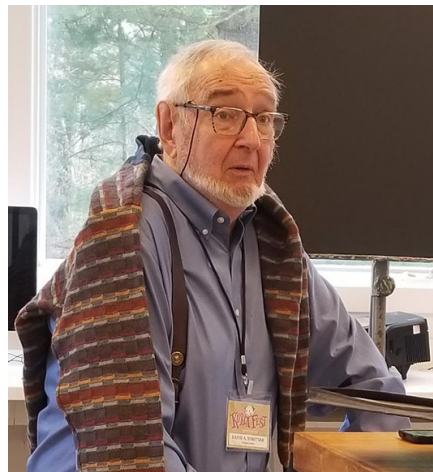
The Amazing Herman
aka Michael Schwabe

our MC, The Amazing Hermann, and his comedy magic welcoming us to Saugatuck. Hermann (aka Michael Schwabe) is a snake oil salesman, Foghorn Leghorn style, Southern loud mouth, double talking, flim-flam man, and an altogether wonderfully entertaining character. The evening's entertainment was accompanied by a salad and hot hors d'oeuvre menu including meat

balls, and prime rib sliders, provided by local eateries. The entertainment was provided by young, edgy, and very funny ventriloquist Jeff Goltz, a ventriloquist many of us have had the pleasure of seeing since his early teen years at Potlatch, and the astounding marionette (and hand puppet artistry) of Kevin Frisch. The highlight of the evening was the presentation of the first footage of a forthcoming documentary of the life and work of American master puppeteer Burr Tillstrom. Much of the existing footage consists of Burr reminiscing of his earliest influences in puppetry and of his earliest journey to what would be a phenomenal career in puppetry. There are also commentaries by many friends of Burr from the Saugatuck area, providing insights to the life of this giant of the art of puppetry. This documentary will be an important work not only for the puppetry community, but for anyone interested in preserving an important part of American television history, and for the countless thousands who lives Burr's work touched.

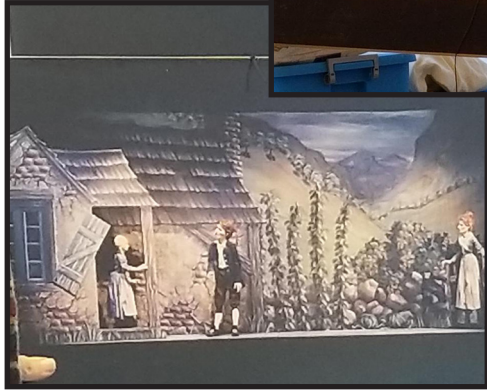
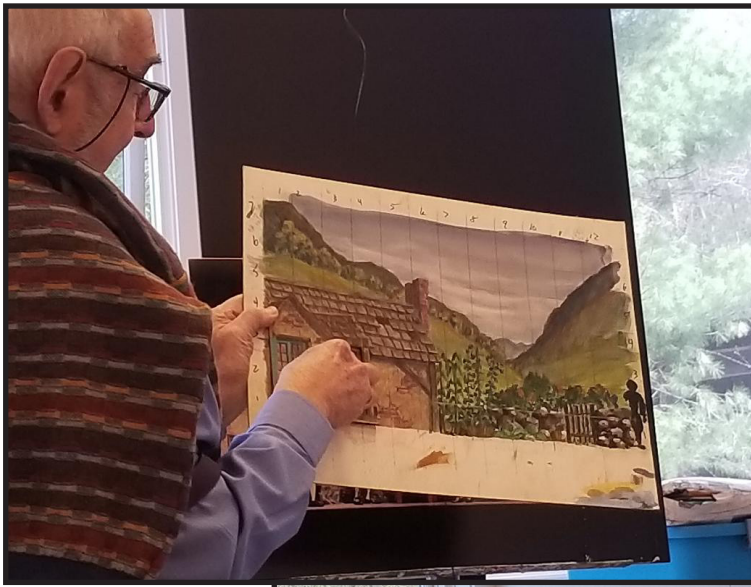
Saturday, May 4, 2019

After a long leisurely breakfast and coffee clutch, at which much discussion of puppetry ensued, the morning began with an excellent lecture/demo on the art of scene painting for the puppet theatre by another American master,



David A. Syrotiak (left) founder of the world-renowned National Marionette Theatre. In the workshop, *Painting Theatrical Backdrops for Puppetry*, David took us on the step-by-step process of creating painted backdrops for the puppet theater beginning with why

we need scenery, how much scenery is needed and of what type, and then onto the step by step process of creating the scenery starting with simple sketches, on up to transferring a finished design onto prepared muslin for painting. David also focused on the importance of using the best materials and brushes, introducing many participants to the excellent Roscoe brand of stage paints and products. The lecture was amply illustrated with pictures of each step in the process, including magnificent production shots of finished scenery from many National Marionette Theater productions. This workshop was a great gift to participants from a master sharing a lifetime of experience.



Terri Klingelhoefter presented the next lecture, *History of Women in Puppetry in Indiana*. This PowerPoint presentation was an illustrated homage to the women of puppetry from just one state, and these contributions have been many and are ongoing. I personally enjoyed this presentation because I had known, or do know, many of the women highlighted. Thank you Terri for this ongoing project, preserving the important contributions of women to the art of puppetry.

After Terri's lecture it was once again time to gather for a meal. Mealtime was a wonderful sharing experience as we all dined together in the rustic Inn giving us time to share our thoughts on the days activities. At each meal delicious hot, homemade entrees were provided. Breakfast was offered both "continental style" and as a hearty midwestern hot breakfast. Coffee, and an assortment teas and lemonade were available all day and into the late night along with snacks, fresh fruit, homemade bread with fresh butter and ample amounts of crème cheese. Along with a hot luncheon entrée, sandwiches were also available. At

both lunch and dinner a very fine salad bar was offered featuring fresh greens and a very nice assortment of vegetables and toppings. A special treat for me was the offering of Greek olives and anchovies on the salad bar, along with excellent balsamic vinegar and a fine olive oil. Of especial note was the Saturday evening dinner entrée of an amazingly complex Korean spicy chopped pork, grilled over fire and served with Asian noodles. A huge thank you for to the food service staff of Ox Bow for providing us with such excellent meals.

Michael Schwabe and Larry Basgall (*below*), the founders of Kukla Fest, and two of the most talented puppeteers working today, continued the workshops Saturday afternoon with *Building Puppets With Felt*.



Anyone who has seen The Village Puppeteers perform their hilarious *Lost in Storyland* knows that their hand puppets designs are unique, and their workshop showed us in concise step-by-step demonstrations how this effect is achieved. Each step of construction was not only demonstrated in real time, but also many examples of the finished puppets were available to observe.

Artists of this caliber are under no obligation to share their techniques, but I think that after seeing this workshop others will be inspired to innovate the way Mike and Larry have. This willingness to share is a mark of the generous nature of all the puppeteers presenting at Kukla Fest. I admire Mike and Larry saying, "here's what we do. Give it a try. See what you come up with". They gave us the basics. Now let's see what we do with it. This was for me the finest puppet construction workshop I have attended in over 50 years of puppet conferences. Thank you, Michael and Larry.



David J. Syrotiak, the son of David A. Syrotiak, concluded the afternoon workshops with *Marionette Manipulation*. Upon entering the studio, participants were greeted by almost the full cast of The National Marionette Theater's production of *Peter Pan* hanging short-strung on



a rack. David began the workshop by having participants, whether experienced or newbie, pick up one of the marionettes. David then took us through the step-by-step process of teaching everyone how each motion is achieved, and the hand position on the control necessary, then how to put all of the motions together to turn the marionette into an actor. David's clear and precise direction, coupled with the built-in movability of the company's beautiful figures, soon had even newbie marionette operators making marionettes walk, move, and emote. David kindly offered suggestions and encouragement throughout. Picking up a marionette for the first time and making it do anything is extremely difficult. The fact that the participants were soon gaining confidence is a tribute not only to the excellent teacher, but to the brilliant construction that has always put the National Marionette Theater at the forefront of puppetry.



Saturday evening began with the performance workshop *A Thrilling Experience of Live Photo-Kinetics and Fine Music* by magician/puppeteer Elliot Cutler. Elliot interpreted several pieces of classical music behind a shadow screen and using LED lights attached to his fingers, created puppetry with light. It's an interesting concept that invited more exploration. Elliot shows that LED lights can do more than light a puppet stage. The lights themselves can be the puppets.

Next up, university Spanish professor and puppeteer Jason Yancey (who was also the Technical Director for Kukla Fest) presented *Shadow Puppets - 17th Century Spanish Theater*. Now the title might sound a bit like a dry Doctoral dissertation, but this workshop was anything but dry. In fact, it was a joyful recounting a one puppeteer's enormously successful effort to include puppetry in a Spanish language theater arts curriculum. Jason recounts his process of having non-puppeteering, Spanish language university students create short puppet plays based on comic 17th century Spanish theater intermission pieces. We experience the journey from large bulky hand puppet stages touring in a big van to community schools, to the incredibly innovative shadow puppets with computer assisted scrolling sets. The audience was in total delight as Jason shared with us his shadow puppets based on 1920's and 30's wobbly arm cartoons. These shadow puppets were a great solution for Jason, and are a great tribute to the pop art designs of an earlier era, now delighting 21st century audiences while interpreting comic 17th century Spanish theater.

The Saturday evening performance was Chicago's very own Jabberwocky Marionettes in *The Cosmic Puppet Show*. This black light puppet show traces a journey through space and time into a back hole and out again, utilizing a combination of marionettes, rod puppets, and manipulated objects representing cosmic phenomenon. I had seen this production before and enjoyed it immensely, but this time I was in a venue that could be made completely dark and was able to fully appreciate the use of classic black light theater techniques. Lolly Extract, and Amber Marsh are a Mother Daughter puppeteer team, and are a perfectly coordinated joy to watch. Precise manipulation, great original music, and total dedication to the art of puppetry made this show a wonder to behold.



Lolly Extract and Amber Marsh

Puppet gatherings don't seem to be complete without a late-night puppet event and Kukla Fest did not disappoint. The late-night Cabaret hosted by Cleveland's outrageously bawdy Nate Puppets (*right*) was lots of fun. Part Pot Potpourri, part drag show with puppets, part puppet slam, the evening's puppets ranged from Asher's fetching little caterpillar to Mark Saltzman's naughty seven foot tall dog (*right*) who "accidentally" sprayed the audience when he got too excited. Special note should be made of the performance of Dick Watkins and Cindy Klott in a Carmen Miranda/Andrew Sisters quartet singing *Quando Le Gusta*, originally choreographed by Nancy Henk over forty years ago. It was pointed out after the number when Nancy Henk choreographs a number it stays choreographed!



Cindy Kott, Nancy Henk and Dick Watkins,

After the late night live performances, we were treated to additional footage of Burr Tillstrom talking about the evolution of the Kuklapolitan players as he showed examples of the puppets from various stages in his career. It's hard to believe Burr has been gone since 1985. It's wonderful to have this footage, and the forthcoming documentary to inspire future puppeteers. The ongoing documentary project has been, and will continue to be, part of the mission of Kukla Fest.

Sunday, May 5, 2019

After a delicious Sunday morning breakfast, it was time for a performance/workshop by Kevin Kammeraad *A Traveling Puppet Trunk*. Kevin outlined the evolution of his delightful puppet trunk which not only stores all aspects of his show, but also becomes the stage for the show. The trunk itself is a beautiful piece of cabinetry that becomes a delightfully rustic looking puppet stage built mostly from repurposed materials. Along with the explanation of the evolution of the puppet trunk, Kevin gave delightfully tempting snippets of performances of the puppet residents of the trunk. This workshop was only scheduled for a half hour but could easily have entertained and educated this very eager group of puppeteers for an hour or more. I look forward to an expanded edition of this delightful workshop at a future date.

Joe Emory is the Great Lakes Region "go-to-guy" for all things related to stage lighting and digital technology. *DMX Lighting Made Easy* is an exploration of the possibilities of computer-controlled stage lighting for the puppet theater. Joe delights in the application of technology in puppetry and is eager to share his ideas with his fellow puppeteers. His enthusiasm and humor is infectious and builds interest in his audience. Joe starts with explanations of what these new technologies are and then goes on to show practical application of the technologies. Joe is incredibly generous with his knowledge. Explanations of technology can be very boring, especially for those not well versed in technology, but through his workshop he manages to make all of this technology less intimidating, and more approachable. It's all about possibilities and Joe makes them seem endless.

The last event of Kukla Fest this year was all about giving back to the community *A Picnic With Puppets* by Susan Fulcher's Suzzet's Puppets of Matteson, Illinois, was a chance for local families to share in the fun of puppetry at Ox-Bow. As usual, "Miss Susan" came with all sort sorts of delightful craft objects with which children could create their own customized hand puppets. She creates "blank" hand puppets in a variety of brightly colored felt that children then decorate and customize with a seemingly unending supply of crafty colorful goodies including pompoms, chenille, sticks, googley eyes, fun foam, and much more. Several Kukla Fest participants joined in the fun manning the hot glue guns. An amazing variety of puppets were made by more than twenty children. Happy children and satisfied parents, coupled with Susan's unending enthusiasm, ended Kukla Fest on an incredibly high note.

It was hard to say goodbye, but all too soon it was time to start loading vehicles for the drive home. It was an honor to be a part of the first Kukla Fest. Michael Schwabe, and Larry Basgall, with the incredible support and work of Erin K. Wilkinson, Jason Yancy and the many others in the Saugatuck Arts Community have created an incredible event in Kukla Fest. I have no doubt there will be many more Kula Fests to enjoy, but I will always be grateful that I attended the first.



Kukla Fest Class of 2019

In Memoriam


Sandi Sylver

May 24, 1947 - April 1, 2019



It is with sadness we report the passing of Sandi who described herself as a Story Teller, Ventriloquist and Songstress. She had been a member of the CPG during recent years of her residence in the Chicago area. She performed at CPG meetings and twice at our Glen Town Center Puppet Theater Series.

Sandi will be truly missed by her many friends and colleges in the performing communities, in which she was a vital part. A celebration of her life was held on April 14, 2019 at the Arts and Music Center in Safety Harbor, Florida, where she recently resided.

Announcing

The **Marc Dunworth Foundation** for the **Performing Arts**



In the year since Marc's unexpected death we, his family, have been trying to figure out a way to allow Marc's memory to live on. We decided to start a foundation in his name.

The Marc Dunworth Foundation for the Performing Arts, is a non-profit organization founded to promote and encourage the performing arts, especially the puppet arts, through grants, scholarships, performances and education.

Any help you can provide to this cause, whether monetarily and/or spreading the word would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you

Please visit our web site for more information

<https://www.dunworthfoundation.org>

A CPG Puppeteers Potluck

Hosted by Steven Widerman and Linda Bookheim • Sunday March 10th 2019

by Dave Herzog

CPG puppeteer's potluck get togethers are always a lot of fun, but when the event is hosted at the beautiful Chicago townhome of Steven Widerman, and Linda Bookheim, the event really gets kicked up a notch. Entering the living room, the center piece is Steven's beautiful Steinway grand piano, with a tasteful bronze female nude lounging beneath, where guests gathered for a sing-along, or for conversation amid walls decorated with famous Al Hirshfeld theatrical caricatures. Of special interest to puppeteers is the Hirshfeld drawing from the original Broadway production of *Carnival* featuring the puppets of the late Tom Tichenor. Lots of space with comfy seating allowed guests to enjoy a lovely buffet of canapés, salads, lasagna, and lots of desserts, along with puppet related conversation.

Guests were welcome to venture down to the basement 3D movie theater where movies were playing. We were treated to a chance to pour through Steven's fantastic collection of Bil Baird original working drawings, which are a rare puppet treasure that Steven loves to share with people. Now that is what I call generous! These drawings are priceless master works from the hand of arguably the twentieth century's greatest puppet designer. Steven also had his Bil Baird devil marionette available for people to operate, along with two fantastically designed Baird tandem rod puppet European folk dancers. The opportunity to actually pick up and manipulate puppets of this caliber is very rare and was the highlight of the evening for many.

Everyone gathered in the Steven's 3D theater to enjoy *Para Norman* up on the big screen followed by group pictures. Steven is one of the main advocates for puppetry and new 3D technology, and is busy creating some pretty amazing new content for the field.

Thank you Steve and Linda for hosting one of the most memorable events ever for the CPG.



Steven and Steinway, a musical pair!



*Ellen Lustig
with Trump puppet*

Susan Witek



*Deanna Rollins
Susan Fulcher*



Cynthia Von Orthal



*Connor, Mary Bird,
Ramona*



More pix from the Puppeteers Potluck on next page!



*Let's Eat! Deanna Rollins, Fred, Tim, Kathy,
Susan Fulcher*



*Kathy with her
Peruvian marionette*



*Dave and Tim discussing
leg pieces from Bil Baird's
studio trash*



*Kathy and Tim
(looking puzzled)*



Mary Bird Ramona, Steven



*Steven manipulating
the Polka Dancers*



Dave with Baird Polka Dancers



All eyes on original Bil Baird drawings



Bil Baird Bullet Puppet



*(clockwise, seated lower left) Cynthia Von Orthal, Paul Mertons, Avalon Von Mertons, Deanna Rollins, Susan Fulcher,
Fred Berchtold, Jill Frederickson (seated on floor)*

(back row standing) Connor Asher, Kathy Validivia, Dave Herzog, Ramona, Mary Bird, Steven Widerman, Susan Witek, Shirley Wood

Kungsholm Miniature Puppet Opera Exhibit (Encore! Encore!)

September 28 - November 25, 2019 at Swedish-American Museum • Chicago, Illinois

A Brief History of The Kungsholm:

by Fred Putz

1930 - Restaurant entrepreneur Fredrick Chramer purchased the large 1889 Leander Hamilton McCormick mansion at the corners of Clark and Ontario Streets in Chicago where he planned to establish a Swedish style gourmet restaurant that he named “The Kungsholm”. The restaurant would feature a sumptuous Swedish-style smorgasbord.

1939 - The World’s Fair was in Chicago and one of the featured programs was Ernest P. Wolff’s Miniature Puppet Opera, known as “The Victor Puppet Opera” (because Wolff used Victor Records for the voices and musical accompaniments). The puppets in this opera were innovative because they were controlled by rods from beneath the stage which allowed the puppets to go through doorways.

After seeing the Wolff’s miniature opera, Chramer tried to buy the Opera Theater, but the Wolffs offered to build him a new show instead. The Wolffs also lent Chramer the puppets and settings until the new show was finished. At this point Ernest was drafted into the U.S. Army and was forced to leave his mother to oversee the Kungsholm project in Chicago. (J.M. Pg. 2)

1942 - On February 23, Chramer opened The Kungsholm Miniature Opera Theater in a new wing of the restaurant. The restaurant, with its lavish smorgasbord and the theater were considered, opulent. (J.M .Pg. 3)

The stage was 20 X30 feet and the proscenium was a faithful replica of that of the Royal Opera House in Copenhagen. (MSIP May/June). A photograph (no date) of the under-stage shows four women operating the puppets. (*Encore! Encore!* 2018). By the time Gary Jones had arrived at the Kungsholm in 1967 the puppeteers and technicians were all men. The world- renowned restaurant and the Miniature Opera became an important factor in Chicago’s cultural scene and it lasted from 1942 through 1970.

1947 On February 26, a fire destroyed 1500 puppets, 2,000 stage lights and hundreds of costumes as well as scenery and props. (J.M. pg.3)

1947-1952 Chramer rebuilt both the restaurant and theater. “Again, Chramer spared no expense and installed state of the art lighting and sound systems in the theater”. (J.M. Pg. 3)



Introduction to the exhibit

1952-1957 Chramer reopened the facility. The Opera and restaurant continued to thrive until 1957 when Chramer went into debt, became ill and sold the restaurant and Opera to the Fred Harvey Restaurant Chain. “The Chain continued to operate the Miniature Grand Opera, but Chramer’s vision and artistry were gone, and the quality of the shows as well as the food declined.” (CST’47)

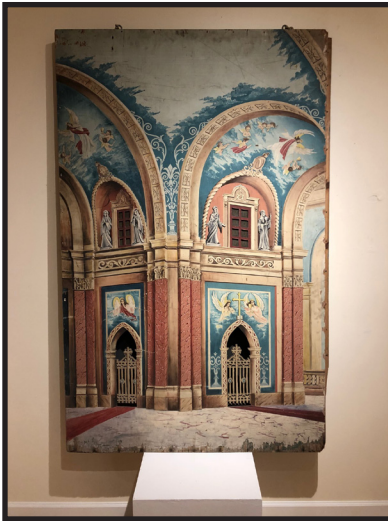
1960- 1966 When Robert Gregg, now deceased, came to Chicago to study photography he obtained a part time job as a puppeteer at the Kungsholm. At the time of his death, he was writing a history of the Kungsholm and had done a large amount research related to the facility. (His wife, Christine is planning to complete his book.) He considered himself to be the last of the Kungsholm puppeteers. (RGG 66)

1967 While visiting my wife’s family in Chicago, my mother-in-law, knowing of my interest in puppetry took us to dinner and a puppet performance at the Kungsholm. The opera was *Camelot* and, being from Denver, Colorado (where, good puppetry was not being performed, to say the very least), I was highly Impressed!

1971 The Harvey Corporation closed the Puppet Opera. There are two stories concerning the closing of the Theater. One came from Bill Fosser who said the administration told the puppeteers that the theater would be closed for two or three weeks for cleaning and repair. When the puppeteers and crews returned to go back to work, they were handed



their severance checks. The other story came from Gary Jones who stated in his book, *Sub Plot*, that, “rumors continued to intensify“, (GJ) Pg. 126. Mr. Madison said, “the Kungsholm would be closing within a week! Not just the theater, but the entire operation”. (G.J.), Pg. 129



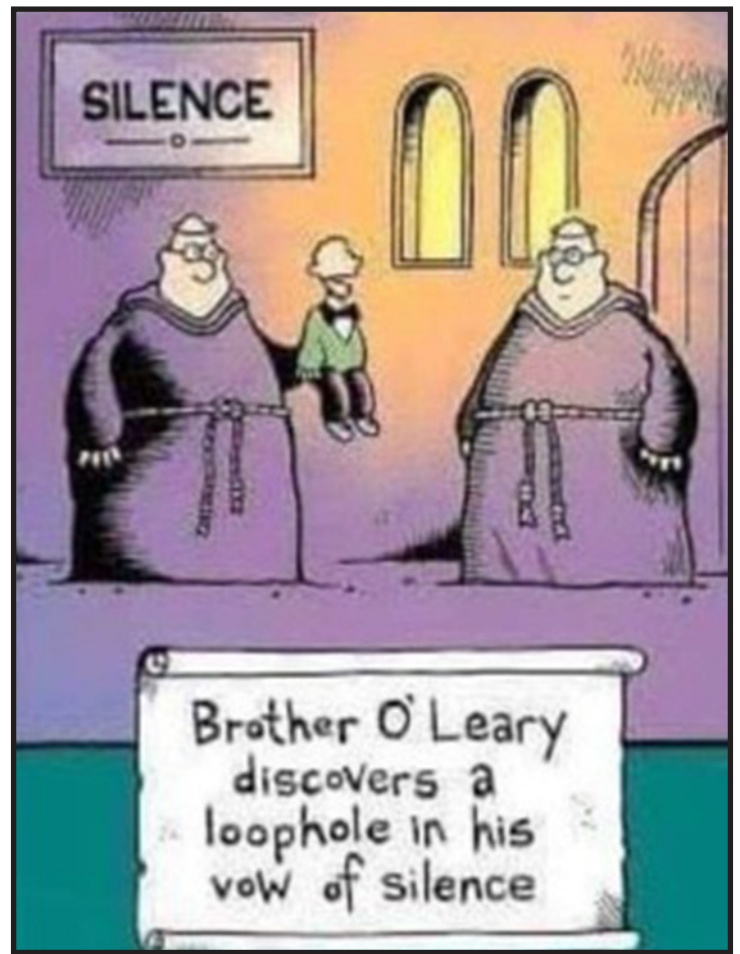
A portion of scenery used in the first act of the opera “Tosca”

What happened to the Kungsholm Puppets?

Dear Readers, you just read the first of two installments of an article devoted to the *Kungsholm Miniature Puppet Opera Exhibit (Encore! Encore!)*. The second instalment will be available in the September 2019 *Puppet Patter*.

The sources of information in this article have come from:

- *Subplot, Memories of Chicago's Kungsholm Miniature Grand Opera* by Gary Jones, (G.J.), Charlemagne Press, Garden Bay, Canada.
- Interviews with Bill Fosse. (B.F.) and Luman Coad (L.C), *The Chicago Sun Times* Feb. 27, 1947 (CST'47).
- *Progress, July/August & Progress, May/June 1982, the Museum of Science and Industry's News Letters, (MSIP May/June) & (MSIP July/August).*
- *The Swedish American Museum's newsletter, (FLAGGA -Fall, 2018).*
- *Kunsholm Miniature Grand Opera Theatre* by Julie Morrison, Univ. of Connecticut 1977 (J.M.)
- *Exhibit Guide, Encore! Encore! The Puppets of Chicago's Kungsholm Miniature Grand Opera Swedish American Museum 2018, (Encore! Encore! 2018).*
- Robert Gregg, *In Memoriam, CPG Puppet Patter 2016 (RGG).*
- Interviews by F. Putz.



Happy Summer!

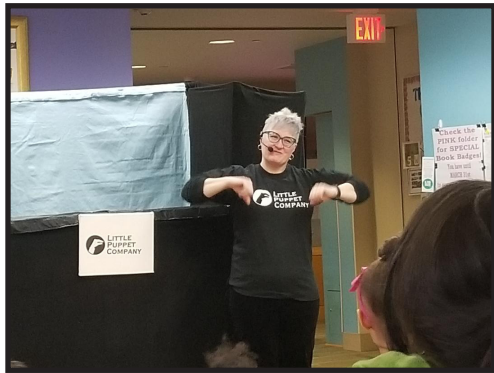


The Glen Town Center - Puppet Theater Series

The Little Red Hen • March 9, 2019

The Little Puppet Company • Jill Frederickson producer

Review by Dave Herzog



Saturday March 9th 2019 marked the premier of The Little Puppet Company's production of The Little Red Hen at the Matteson Public Library. Jill Frederickson, with assistance from her husband Paul, and fellow puppeteer Connor Asher has created a delightful version of the old tale of a chicken who wishes to grow grain with which to make her own bread.

It seems our barnyard heroine is tired of scratching for bugs and worms to eat, and longs for hot fresh bread for her breakfast. Of course, the only solution is to make her own bread, and to make bread one must grow their own grain. You may ask why our enterprising hen does not just run down to the local grocery store? Well that of course would ruin all the fun of the story.

Jill first breaks the ice with the audience by introducing the show with a spirited rendition of The Chicken Dance with the Children. This is followed by a conversation with Mrs. Cow (played by Connor Asher) who peppers her speech with bovine puns that were enjoyed by both children adults.

Each step in bread making requires a different skillset, and each animal must in turn provide solution with it's own natural ability. Pigs, ducks, goats, squirrels all help out along the course of the show, often to very comic effect, and before you know it the grain has been grown, ground, and bread had been baked. The only problem left is how to make toast for Breakfast. Not to worry the ants come up with a solution. They all work together to hold a magnifying

glass up to the sun in order to toast the bread.

I have to admire the skill and dedication with which Jill approached this show. The delightful animal puppets were pleasing to the eye, and very appealing to the intended target audience of children. The very clever, well timed dialogue kept the storying moving at the perfect pace, and the well thought out staging couldn't have been smoother. If I had not known I was attending a premier I would have thought this was a time honed, oft performed production. From "out front" it all looked like it came off without a hitch. Congratulations to Jill and her able assistants on this delightful production which I hope will grace the stage at this year's Puppeteers Potlatch, and at many venues throughout Illinois and Wisconsin for years to come.



The Show Must Go On! April 14, 2019

That is an old age adage in the Show Biz' world, and it came to pass on Sunday, April 14th. Kevin Kammerad and his Coopersfly puppets were scheduled to perform. He arrived at the Book Market early that morning and began setting up to prepare for his 11:00 am show. Hardly noticed at first but little by little a late Spring snow was falling. As the hours progressed that "late" Spring snow developed into a Wintery snow storm! Two CPG members and one spectator managed to arrive. When it became obvious that no one else would be able to show up, it was decided that "the show must go on!" Kevin performed as if there were a hundred people in his audience. The day before, April 13th, Kevin performed the same show at the Matteson Library as a guest performer for the WDOP celebration. A review of his performance, by Fred Putz, can be read in the WDOP article in this issue.



The Glen Town Center - Puppet Theater Series

Little Red Riding Hood • May 11, 2019

Creventive Puppet Company • Connor Asher Producer

Review by Mel Biske



The weather on Saturday, May 11th, was just the opposite as the April 14th weather we experienced. In fact 80 puppet theater goers were thrilled to see a premier performance by Connor Asher, presenting his latest production of, “Little Red Riding Hood”. His newly created stage is a comfort to the eyes. His take on this popular fairy tale has revealed a style that is recognizable for his talents in writing, with a storyline easy to

follow for young audiences. It was noted that Connor was experimenting with a new technique for making simple hand puppets. Examine the photos accompanying this report and you may notice the gentle, warm pleasing results. We would venture to say, “Superific!”, Connor.

Our thanks to Tim Dunworth for his photo contributions.



Coming Soon to The Glen Town Center - Puppet Theater Series

Now entering the third year of presenting quality professional touring puppet companies.

June 8, 2019

Come re-discover the classic stories of Stone Soup and Rudyard Kipling's *How the Whale Got His Throat* in this lively exciting production. Surf and Turf utilizes puppetry, music and audience participation to tell these imaginative tales in a colorful and entertaining way for the whole family.



PUPPET THEATER SERIES

Sea Beast Puppet Company PRESENTS

SURF & TURF

Saturday **June 8** 11:00AM
The Book Market at Hangar One
2651 Navy Blvd.

Registration begins
now at
www.TheGlenTownCenter.com





July 13, 2019

Safari Adventure!

This thrilling adventure combines traditional puppetry, amazing magic, and tons of audience participation.

August 10, 2019



Little Red Hen and Friends

The Glen Town Center - Puppet Theater Series



Standing in the wings...

Dates and show times to be announced.



Pinocchio



The Frog Prince

Dave Herzog's Marionettes



The Melikin Puppets

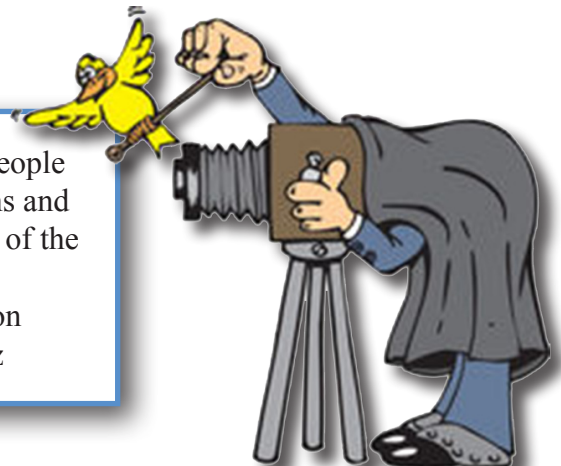
the Night Before Christmas

the Shoemaker and the Elves



Thank you to the following people
for their talents behind the lens and
providing photos for this issue of the
Puppet Patter!

Jeff Biske • Jill Fredrickson
Dave Herzog • Fred Putz



Pinocchio

The House Theatre of Chicago

Adapted by Joseph Steakley & Ben Lopries from the works of Carlo Collodi

Directed by Chris Mathews

Reviewed by Dave Herzog

The House Theatre of Chicago has produced a solid and intentionally disturbing view of the time-honored tale of the little wooded puppet who wants to be a real boy. Instead of a warm friendly family theatre piece, the company has instead chosen to use the familiar framework of Pinocchio and placed him in a bleak, Orwellian society where compliance with the state, and conformity is the rule of law.



Geppetto, played by non gender conforming Molly Brennan, dares to sneak a log from an off limits forest into his bleak and colorless workshop and creates a fanciful, wooded puppet, that is all too bright, intelligent, and curious for the repressed society into which he is thrust. Pinocchio longs to go to school and meet other children, but when he sneaks out he is brutalized by the children for his differences. Later, Pinocchio is befriended by Romeo who is himself different. In fact Romeo has an obvious crush on Pinocchio, and together they dare to enter the forest where Pinocchio learns the truth of his origin from The Blue Fairy. Pinocchio dares to confront the society that will not accept him, and after a trial is “strung up” for being different. Pinocchio and Geppetto are fed to the giant fish, and must learn to accept, love, and be truthful to each other in order to escape their fate. In the end Pinocchio and Geppetto dare to return home and defy a society that will just have to learn to adapt to difference. This is a Pinocchio very much for adults, and very much for our times, reflecting our deeply divided society, and our yearning to be better than we are.

The leads are very solid in this production, and are ably assisted by an ensemble of capable young actors who have great belief in the story they are telling.

The puppet used in this production is a product of Blair Thomas and Tom Lee’s *Chicago Puppet Studio*, and is a wonder to behold. Bearing a resemblance to the baby Groot of Guardians of the Galaxy movie fame, this Pinocchio is a complex character brought to life by actor/puppeteer Sean Garratt, renowned for his work in the award winning puppet show *The Table* - featured two years ago at *The Chicago International Puppet Theatre Festival*. Pinocchio is portrayed as a complex mixture of innocent, and yet worldly wise, badly damaged, yet able to heal, possibly autistic, but brave, unfailingly optimistic, and through no fault of his own, occasionally creepy. This last trait seems to be shared by any puppet these days that has the audacity to not be a Muppet in a puppet culture filled with the warm and fuzzy. While often manipulated by Sean Garret alone, who gives a brilliant vocal performance of the character, the figure is used to its fullest potential when Sean is assisted by other cast members. When fully manipulated by three, this puppet really comes to uncanny life.



By The Way...

by Ann Onymous

Dave Herzog (of Dave Herzog Marionettes) has ventured into the world of hand puppets. Dave and Connor Asher have been working on some prototype hand puppets. They are a George Latshaw style underbody and a kind of Bob Brown/Marc Dunworth style head. Seen here in the photos, the big blue lady is Mrs. Marmalade, the little guy is a generic story book puppet to be used in Dave's classes he conducts at the Matteson Library.



Mrs. Marmalade



Storybook Puppet



Through the efforts of our President, Connor Asher the, CPG has a new home for meetings. Considering the wide spread area our guild covers in Chicagoland and the availability of public transportation for those who do not drive, monthly meetings, along with official board meetings, the Elmwood Park Public Library was gracious enough to offer their facility located at 1 County Parkway, Elmwood Park, Illinois 60707. Meeting time will be 7:00 pm till 8:30 pm. in the Corbel Room. Dates are reserved for the fourth Wednesday of every month through March 20, 2020. The next meeting is scheduled for June 25, 2019. Make a note on your calendar for succeeding monthly dates. Be sure to check your emails for announcements relative to the theme of the meeting and if treats may be brought.

Oh, and "by the way". If you made it this far reading a very lengthy and informative edition you will see missing, a copy of the CPG Membership Application which we usually include. If you are in contact with someone who may be interested in joining the guild you may refer them to the CPG web site www.chicagopuppetguild.org and click on JOIN CPG and download a copy. Whew!

Have You Visited the CPG Website Lately?



Be sure to visit our guild's web site on a regular basis for the latest postings on what's happening in the Chicago area. Posted you will find the current and upcoming performances at the Glen Town Center monthly Puppet Series co-sponsored by the CPG, a page listing the performing companies within our guild and a link to their web sites, and more!

Our address is www.chicagopuppetguild.org

The Puppet Patter is the Official Quarterly Publication of the Chicagoland Puppetry Guild. It is published on line and available in hard copy version to those CPG members without access to a computer. It will also be posted on the CPG web site. Publication dates are on or about the first of March, June, September and December. All items for publication by CPG members should be submitted no later than fourteen days prior to publication date to:

Mel Biske, Editor
169 Woodlet Lane • Bolingbrook, IL 60490
email at: melikinpuppets@comcast.net

Publisher: Jeff Biske

CPG Web Master: Jeff Biske

Notices of regular gatherings and/or special events will be posted on the CPG web site: www.chicagopuppet.org, by email, or direct USPS mail to hard copy members. Future dates for events, performances, announcements or scheduled gatherings (meetings) will appear in the "Patter" if they apply to the time frame the publication covers.

Elected Officers and Directors for 2019-2020

President: Connor Asher
Vice President: Fred Berchtold
Treasurer: Marilyn Putz
Recording Secretary: Jill Frederickson
Director of Guild Member Relations: LaVerne Biske
Guild Historian: Fred Putz

Director of Guild Publication and CPG Web Site: Mel Biske
Director of World Puppetry Day 2018
and Outreach: Susan Fulcher
Liaison with Other
Puppet Organizations: Dave Herzog
Glen Town Center Puppet Theater Series: Dave Herzog