



Puppet Patter

The Official Publication of the Chicagoland Puppetry Guild

A Quarterly Publication

September 2022

What the Heck is Potlatch Anyway?!

by Silence DoGood

If you go back into your Patter archives and check out the June 2022 Patter, you'll see the front page mentions Potlatch and a happy little song is found on page 11. In fact, if you look hard enough you'll find quite a few articles about this event appearing in past issues. But what is Potlatch? That's a good question. And the Patter will now give you a good answer. Below is a brief history of Potlatch written by Nany Henk. If you've been, you know how much fun it is. If you've never been... what are you waiting for?

The HISTORY of POTLATCH

The Great Lakes Region of the Puppeteers of America is unique in that it is the only region that has a yearly get-together. We call it Potlatch, which is a Native American term for a celebration characterized by lavish gift giving. This is the spirit of Potlatch that people share their knowledge generously with one another.

The Potlatch was the brainchild of the Atlantis Expedition - Nancy Henk, Dick Waskin, Bill Wilson, and Cindi Yott. On their way to perform in Indianapolis, they stopped to the Potawatomie Inn for lunch, and began talking about what a wonderful place it would be for a regional festival. When they returned home, They contacted then Regional Director Kathy Piper, and shared their idea. What transpired was not a regional festival, but a very relaxed imitation of one. Registration costs were minimal. No one was paid for performing or conducting workshops and most people brought something to share - a song, a game, a puppet idea, or a new technique.

The Potlatch began in October 1982. This first Potlatch was probably the wildest. The icebreaker was supposed to be a long underwear party, and while some made elaborate costumes out of union suits, others just came out in their skivvies. The Inn was much more tolerant at the time and no one ever complained.



(l to r) Nancy Henk, Rick Morse, & Dave Herzog ham it up at 2014 Potlatch

Over the years we have had a variety of madcap events - including at least two parades throughout the Inn, Halloween costume parties, many Scotch auctions, a game of "Who Wants to Be A Millionaire?", a murder mystery, campfires, a mock wedding and a square dance - among many other activities. Through it all there have been performances, wonderful and not so wonderful, great workshops, a trading post, and the ever-popular potpourri.

We've been at Pokagon in balmy 65° weather, in chilly rain, and a raging snow storm. We've weathered the expansion of the Inn and the attendant rising prices. We've had good meals and ones that sent us scrambling for the nearest restaurant.

At the beginning, the Potlatch was planned for every two years - 1982, 1984, 1986, 1988, and 1990. In 1990 we were told that, if we wanted to secure our dates we would have to reserve them every year. So we did. Since the 1991 we have met annually.

Potlatch is a time to celebrate, to remember all those who have attended throughout the years but are no longer with us, reunite and reconnect with old friends and to make new ones, and a time to share generously what we know. That is what Potlatch is all about.

Dave Herzog's Marionettes at Team Land Productions

by Dave Herzog

In early 2021 I was approached by Lisa land at Team Land Productions in Las Vegas, NV, to be a part of their 2022 advanced classes in puppetry. Scott and Lisa Land's *Team Land Productions* not only creates fabulous marionettes for their own shows and commissions, but builds a beautiful line of professional marionettes for sale. All of that is fantastic in and of it's self, but Team Land also runs a school of professional puppetry at their Las Vegas headquarters where, not only do Scott and Lisa teach, but they invite guest teachers known for their expertise in various fields of puppetry to teach as well.

Being asked to teach for Team Land is an honor. I was a quest speaker in 2019 just before the Pandemic hit, so I was very excited to take on a full class as a project. I spent a good deal of 2021 creating the 20 marionette kits that I would need to teach my class on the techniques of wooden marionette construction.



May 2022 Class Picture

I knew it would take almost a full year to create the kits needed for my class on wooden marionette construction. Each kit contained a fully carved and jointed professional wooden marionette, a control, costume, patterns, dust bag, and cast neoprene head.

One thing I learned from carving the same puppet so many times is that you get very efficient at carving said puppet. That along with my use of power tools requiring me to do almost no hand finishing, made the task a bit easier. I got to the point where I could create a fully carved marionette body in about three days.

I tried several different techniques to make this project less tedious. Since the marionette costumes would have short pants but long sleeves, I opted on using dowel rods for arms. Not only did this save time, but it demonstrated another jointing system for the students utilizing brass hinges. I also opted to cut out all twenty torsos and hip blocks before starting. On several occasions I spent a day just cutting out one body part such as feet or legs. I saved the controls for last and cut and shaped them all in about four days. I opted for the Phillip Huber style paddle controller which is a bit easier to mass produce. I also created most of the costumes in batches of about five at a time. I found that by varying the tasks in this huge project I was able to keep tedium at a minimum.

In addition to the 20 kits, I also created a fully carved assembled and facially animated 21st marionette as a door prize, as well as several other items of swag including a fully finished trapeze artist marionette, and a 22nd uncarved kit to give away.

In late March I started shipping the marionette kits to Las Vegas in batches of five. Luckily all arrived intact and in good condition.

On May 19th I boarded my flight to Las Vegas and all the hard work of the past year started to pay off. My twelve students came fully prepared and worked their hearts out. The results of this weekend of intense creativity speak for themselves. I was astounded by the dedication each and every student showed.

It was quite a weekend. On Friday we disassembled the kits and the students painted and started to assemble their marionettes, on Saturday morning I performed a 25 minute version of my show, and also taught a seminar on

wood working techniques. Saturday afternoon we started stringing some of the marionettes. By Sunday morning we were finishing up stringing marionettes and started learning manipulation techniques. By Sunday afternoon all the marionettes were finished and we had time for various questions, rehearsals, prizes, and general discussions on puppetry.

There are two more people to thank for helping make my May 2022 class so successful. My heartfelt thanks goes to Tim and Rose Dunworth and the Dunworth Foundation for the Performing Arts for sponsoring six of my students with full or partial scholarships to the class in Las Vegas. It was even more wonderful that my class was on the same weekend as a family birthday party for Tim and Rose in Las Vegas, so they were able to join us at Team land Studios. The astounding generosity of the Dunworths makes me humble and proud to be a part of their organization. It was my work with Marc that made me realize I could be a teacher of puppetry in the first place and has so vastly enriched my life.

I would like to encourage people to go to www.scotlandmarionettes.square.site, [#scottlandschool](https://www.instagram.com/scottlandschool) on Instagram, or Team Land Productions and Studios on Facebook to see the amazing work being produced by Team Land Productions. Better yet come and join the Lands at one of their 2023 classes.

Believe it or not, I am already hard at work on another 20 marionettes for Team Land Productions. I have been invited to teach how to create a Trapeze Artist marionette July 21-23 2023. In the 2023 class not only will the students create their own unique trapeze marionette, but they will also learn the choreography to the music I use to perform the number in my shows. Fair warning to all; You will hear the Overture to the Broadway Musical *Cats* about 200 times during the weekend.



(l to r) Scott and Lisa Land, Tim Dunworth, Dave Herzog, Rose Dunworth



The finished products of
Team Land Productions 2022 Advanced Classes in Puppetry

The Puppet Remedy

by Susan Bass Marcus

At a neighbor’s holiday party, the conversation was dying. Guests in our little circle darted their eyes around the room in search of an exit—until I mentioned my puppet performances in schools and a hospital. With relief, the usual comments followed:

“Children love puppets. They’re not threatening.”
“Oh, puppets are so easy to talk to. Remember Fran talking to Kukla and Ollie?”
“Puppets—they don’t judge you.”

“You can say stuff to a puppet that you wouldn’t say to anyone else.” This last statement is often true. As a puppet therapy artist at a Chicago’s children’s hospital decades ago, I - well, actually my puppet Orange Julius - heard many confidences never shared with adults.



I, too, benefitted from several puppet “therapists.” In 2003, my mother’s death consumed me in crippling grief. I knew her heart disease was incurable, but I hoped Mom would find a way to stay around longer. She would not and she did not. As a result of my responsibilities as her executor, I had panic attacks. Recurrent, incapacitating panic attacks. To help, my doctor recommended I see a cognitive or “talk” therapist. After a few unproductive sessions with M___, I was ready to give up on that strategy, but when M___ learned I had been an active puppeteer, she urged me to create a puppet that would, as we used to say, ‘get in touch’ with my feelings.

I made at least seven hand puppets, most with salt clay heads, painted canvas bodies, and varying numbers of arms. Some puppets were monsters, others were aspirational star seekers; one had a visible core holding an exploding star. I did not censor my creations; I just let my emotions choose the way I was sculpting them. Each time I completed a puppet, I inched a bit more toward a calm zone somewhere in me. By the time I sensed that the seventh was the last one I needed to make, I had found a way out of my grief.



M___, my therapist enjoyed seeing each new piece, but she never asked me to perform with any of them, nor interpret them for her. The following sessions with M___ bored me. I was not much interested in any more talk. I had things to do and places to go, thanks to my puppet “therapists” who helped me master my loss and return some breath into the void my mother left.



A Review
“Avenue Q”

by Dave Herzog

You would think a puppeteer who loves Broadway Musicals would have seen *Avenue Q* by now. But, for some reason, I have avoided seeing this Tony award winning best musical for many years. It could be the fact that I am just not very “Muppet style” puppet oriented, or it could be the fact that I felt “Wicked” was the rightful winner of the 2004 Tony award for best musical, or it could be that the extreme mugging of human actor/puppeteers, that I have seen in video clips of this show, is just really annoying to me. Whatever the reason, I have avoided this show like the plague for years, despite many chances to see it from the first National tour on through many local productions.

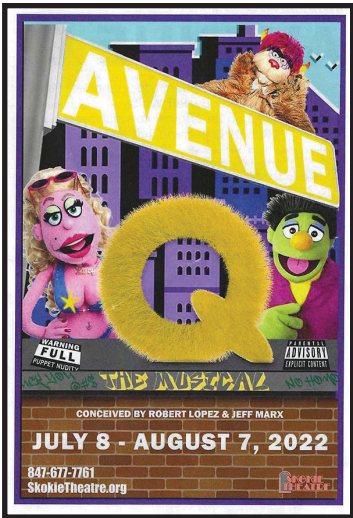
At the time it was written, *Avenue Q* was considered very groundbreaking, in that the puppets in the show were talking about sexuality (both gay and straight), including simulated puppet sex on stage, profanity, racism, vulgar language, internet pornography, and so on. The fuzzy Muppet style puppets deal with these topics perhaps in a bit more lighthearted way than most, but for some reason time, and pop culture seem to have blunted the impact of the show to some degree. I never did feel it was all that ground breaking, since, after all, anyone who knows anything about puppetry can tell you puppets have been bawdy for centuries.

Avenue Q tells the story of a young puppet named Princeton, who not being able to afford anything else in New York, ends up on Avenue Q. His interactions with other puppets Rod, Kate Monster, Lucy (a hooker) Nicky, Trekkie Monster, Bad Idea Bears, Mrs. Thistletwat, and humans Christmas Eve (a multiple degree holding, over achieving Korean-American), her finance, Brian (a wanna be comedian-loser) and strangely enough Gary Coleman. Over the course of the show Princeton falls in love with Kate Monster, gains and loses a job, has a sordid affair with Lucy, loses his job, solves everybody else’s problems and “finds” himself all in the course of about two and a half hours including a fifteen minute intermission.



I have to admit I ended up liking *Avenue Q* more than I wanted to or thought I would. For one thing, I think the show which in itself is a bit small for a big Broadway house, works extremely well in the confines of an intimate 100 seat theater. The cast was uniformly strong in their performances and had good voices that blended well together. Rod/Princeton was a particular stand out in the vocal department, as portrayed by newcomer Zack Moore in his stage debut. Mr. Moore has a degree in music from the University of Arizona and has directed choirs in Hawaii. His obviously well trained and smooth tenor voice was a real asset to this production. The rest of the cast was made up by Sabrina Edwards as an enthusiastic and big voiced Gary Coleman, Rami Halabi as Nicky, Trekkie Monster, Bad Idea Bear, Heidi Hansfield as Bad idea Bear Mrs. Thistletwat, Shea Lee another big voiced stand out as Christmas Eve, Natalie Rae as Kate Monster, and Dennis Schnell as Brian. Together the actors formed fine and well-tuned ensemble.

Now on to the puppetry. Kristopher “Mr Krist” Neumann is credited as the puppeteer for the show. The program doesn’t say whether he created the set of puppets used in the show, but he did a fine job of training the cast in the use of the puppets. Most importantly the mugging that has been a hallmark of the *Avenue Q* style of puppetry was kept to a minimum in this production, making the puppets more believable and appealing. My only reservation about the puppets used in this production is that they seemed to be a “mish-mosh” of styles and types. The Rod/ Princeton, Kate Monster, Lucy puppets were decent enough facsimiles of the original concept, and served well. The important Nicky character (think two handed Ernie style puppet) was barely adequate to the task, although very well performed by actor Rami Halabi. I just felt this fine performance deserved a much better puppet. The Bad Idea Bears were cute but appeared to be commercially made, as was the Mrs. Thistletwat puppet which was on the level of those poor quality puppets used by church groups. The rods on the puppets were a distraction in that they were bare metal and often reflected in the stage lights. The best puppet in the show was the Trekkie Monster puppet, again played by the versatile Mr. Halabi. This well-crafted Muppet style puppet was really up to the task and was a stand out among the puppet cast. Mr. Halabi’s hysterical performance of this puppet in Act one’s “The internet is for Porn” was a comedy stand out in the show.



The Chicagoland Puppetry Guild Files

by Dave Herzog

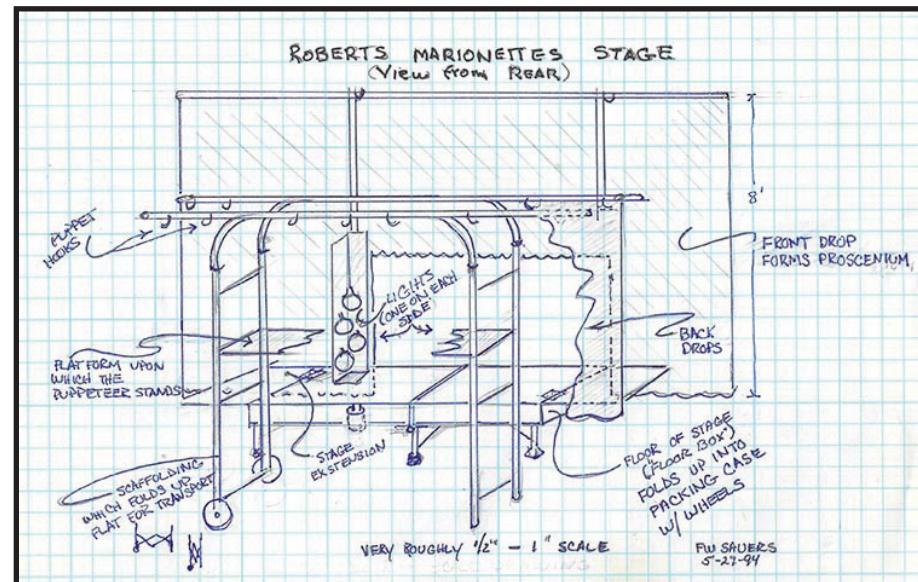
The Chicagoland Puppetry Guild files were meticulously kept by Fred Putz for decades. While perusing this amazing collection of Chicago, national, and international puppetry ephemera, I continue to discover files of historical significance or special note. I am fortunate to be able to share my findings as a regular feature in each quarterly issue of The Puppet Patter. Appearing in this Issue...

The Roberts Marionettes

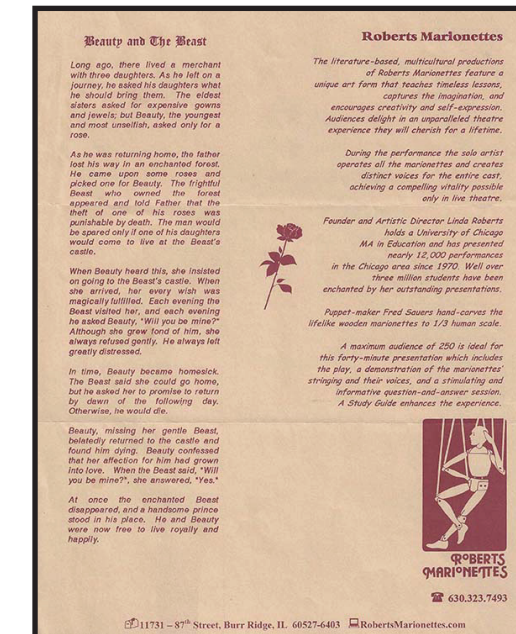
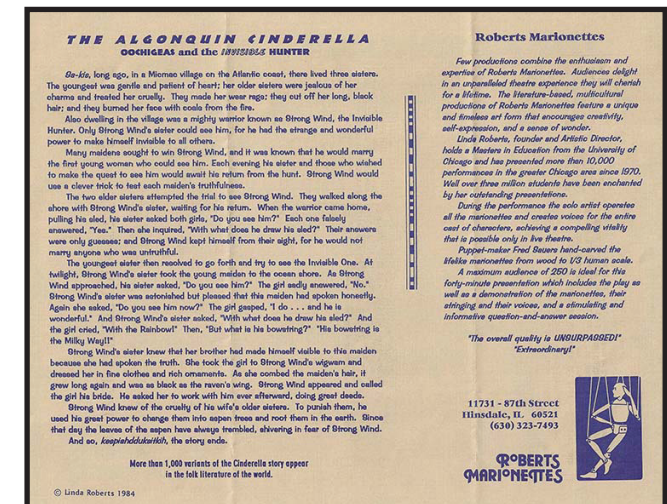
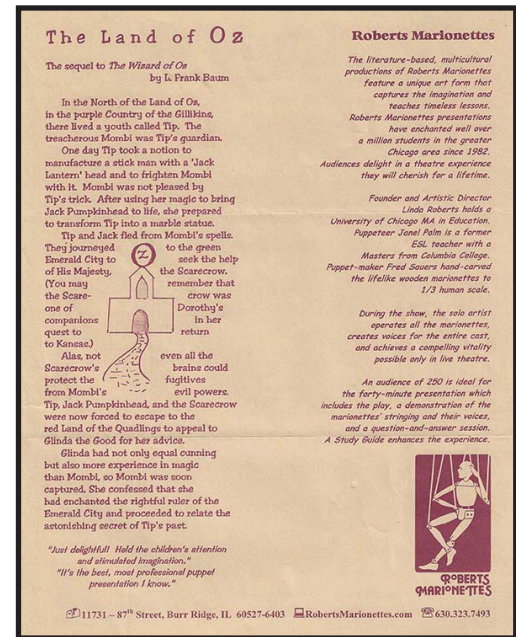
Linda Roberts and her husband, the late Fred Sauers, were not only important to the Chicagoland Puppetry community but in the Chicago and Suburban theater scene. Both Linda and Fred were active as actors and directors for many Chicago area theater companies. Their firm foundation in the performing arts made their fine marionette shows a joy to behold. Linda began her career as a puppeteer in 1970 and presented thousands of quality school assembly programs during her many years on the road. Fred Sauers was well known for his beautifully crafted marionettes that brought the productions to life. Together, Linda and Fred were an unbeatable team and two of the finest and most respected members of the puppetry community. Fred was a recipient of the Puppeteers of America Presidents award for his work in creating the Puppeteer Liability Insurance Program.

I have always found the Roberts Marionettes publicity materials to be some of the finest in the business, not only in their elegant graphics, but also beautifully written. This meticulous attention to detail was also evident in the quality of the writing of their scripts and the attention to detail in the actual staging of their shows. The Roberts marionettes created theater in every sense of the word.

The Roberts Marionettes productions are currently being prepared for sale, as complete productions. It is rare that the chance to purchase a show in full ever comes about in the world of puppetry. For the right person, or persons, this opportunity is the chance of a lifetime. Serious inquiries should be made to robertsmarionettes@gmail.com or call Linda Roberts at 1 (630) 323-7493



Some of Roberts Marionettes publicity materials



Lest We Forget

Steven "Steve" Allan Golden

April 30, 1945 - July 6, 2022

Steven Allan Golden was born on April 30, 1945, in Chicago, Illinois. He developed an interest in puppets at an early age and went on to become a member of the ensemble that earned an Emmy for Outstanding Accomplishment in Children's Programming for the television show *The Magic Door* (a Jewish educational show in the late 60's) while working at Ray Nelson's Puppet Place in Chicago. In the early 70's, he joined Bobby Clark's touring puppet company show of *Pinocchio*, which performed at such prestigious venues as the Huntington Hartford Theater in Hollywood, as it traveled across the country. In the mid 70's, he performed *The Wizard of Oz* for the National Marionette Company in Chicago. Upon returning, he worked again at Ray Nelson's Puppet Place, doing both touring and in-house shows through the late 70's.

Moving to Inglewood, California, with his mother in 1980, Steve took a job at the Animal Lovers Pet Shop in Torrance where he sold and groomed exotic birds. Returning to puppetry full-time, he spent several years in San Francisco, working at the Olde World Puppet Theatre, where he built and performed puppets from the late 80's to the early 90's, frequently at the Renaissance Pleasure Faire. Upon his return to Inglewood, he got a job with the Bob Baker Marionette Theater and worked there doing children's birthday parties and other performances. He was a member of the Chicagoland Puppetry Guild, the Los Angeles Guild of Puppetry, and the Puppeteers of America, for which he worked at the Puppet Store run by them at their national festivals for many years.

An avid collector of puppets for all his life, his philanthropic efforts included several Verna Finley ventriloquist dummies and the dummies of Ruby Willson and BB King (from the estate of BB King), a King Triton puppet and Little Mermaid puppet from his collection to the Portland Puppet Museum, enhancing their current collection, as well as many other donations to other museums. He also sent many books on 3D filming and made numerous connections to experts and organizations developing 3D filming technology, to The Puppet Company in Chicago, because he was a supporter of developing 3D puppet filming technology.

With a heart of gold, Steve was devoted friend to the renowned puppet collector Alan Cook and helped him tremendously at the International Puppetry Museum (IPM) in Pasadena as a board member or their board of directors, where he curated and restored their puppet collection. Steve lived with Alan in Alan's home in Altadena, assisting Alan with every aspect of daily life, and in Alan's final years of declining health at the end of his life, Steve was there to help him in every way possible, never asking for compensation or assistance.

Steve had a great love for animals, especially exotic birds, of which he owned several, that spanned his entire life, eventually leading him to a career as an exotic bird sales representative at For Birds Only in West Hollywood for many years. He was also an active member of the West Los Angeles Bird Club, with many great friend there, and was one of their team that did the natural products show for years. After leaving his job at the bird store, Steve moved to North Hollywood in late 2020.

Steve had Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia for many years but had fought it into remission in 2021. Shortly after that he was diagnosed with Amyloidosis, which resulted in a rapid decline in his physical strength and balance. Steven Allan Golden passed away peacefully on Wednesday, July 6, 2022, at Valley Presbyterian Hospital in Van Nuys, California. He was seventy-seven.

Steve's sharp wit, vast knowledge, loving nature, outgoing personality, and fabulous demeanor will be sorely missed by all those who knew him. Rest in peace, Steven!



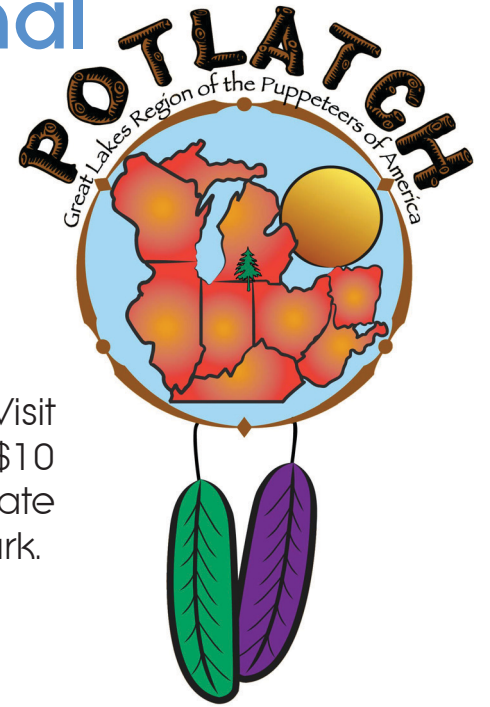
2022 Great Lakes Regional Puppeteers Potlatch

November 4 - 6, 2022

Potawatomi Inn

Pokagon State Park, Angola, IN

Potlatch is almost here! Make sure to register early. Visit the Puppeteers Potlatch website to register and save \$10 on the cost of the conference. You must make a separate reservation with the Potawatomi Inn at Pokagon State Park.



Performances • Workshops • Tradin' Post

download the registration form and pay at
www.greatlakespotlatch.org

We'll See You There!

Special Note: This registration is for the conference only. You must make a separate reservation with the Potawatomi Inn at Pokagon State Park. Call 1-877-563-4371. Tell them you are with the Great Lakes Puppeteers for discounted price. PLEASE MAKE YOUR RESERVATION WITH THE INN SOON FOR BEST CHOICE OF ROOMS.

By The Way...

by Ann Onymous

I got to wondering; Now that the COVID restrictions have been all but been lifted, and after a two-year Potlatch “drought”, how many CPG members have decided to attend? I was also curious, if any formerly active members have returned to their active schedule of performing, teaching, continuing their special interests, or whatever their motus-operandum was. I asked them to respond and answer my inquiry by return email. I would need their response to snugly fit into my column so we could share our “return to puppetry” stories with thirty-one other members. So, we are happy to report, that there a few of ambitious email replies that we received. As for me, Ann Onymous, I will see if I can hitch a ride to Potlatch with our Puppet Patter Editor with his two sons, Neal and Jeff.



Jill Frederickson

I am slowly returning to puppetry. I really enjoyed doing a workshop for the Marc Dunworth Foundation this spring. We had a great time making sock puppets. I wish I had photos to share, but my phone turned into a brick last weekend and took about 8 years of photos with it. I thought they were backing up to the cloud, but alas, no. So please everyone, learn from my woe and make sure you backup your photos! I am working with SeaBeast to do our annual slam *The Puppet Meltdown* which will happen December 10th. In



Kenosha, I have been doing some fun performances with The Puppet Underground at the local farmers market and a preschool. I am eagerly anticipating Potlatch this November. I am very sad to have to miss Monica Leo’s great festival in September but work and family commitments are taking up that weekend. During the pandemic I started a carving course online with Bernd Ogrodnik. I am very far behind and still working on learning new skills. I have a slam piece in development for the Puppet Meltdown and need to get my rear in gear and make some progress in order to be done in time! I am looking forward to reconnecting with my puppet family this fall, until then, be well!

Love and puppets!



Bernd Ogrodnik

Kat Pleviak

Yes, I plan on attending Potlatch this November and am so excited. Jill Frederickson and I plan to room together and are looking forward to all the fun.

Double Yes! Since the pandemic has subsided, Sea Beast is back in full swing. We are not doing touring shows much at this point but have shifted to teaching classes and doing custom builds. Over the past year our puppets have been seen on the stage in Illinois Wesleyans production of *The Lightning Thief* and Fever Up’s immersive experience, *The Genie’s Secret Bizarre*. We have also built table top puppets for Babes with Blades production of William Shakespear’s *Richard III* opening September 3rd at the Edge Theatre in Chicago.

I’ve also been teaching online classes in puppetry and was a teaching artist last year at Lemau Middle school as part of the C.A.P.E. program. I also just finished my first year as the Membership Officer for the Puppeteers of America and am loving the job. Sea Beast will be producing the Puppet Meltdown Puppet Slam this December 10th using the theme of *Female Autonomy: Bodily, Sexually, and Intellectually*. We are accepting submissions through September 18th. Visit www.seabeastpuppetry.com to apply and for more updates as the slam approaches.

Finally, it is with great sadness and extreme joy that we report Mary Kate Jenkins is no longer with the company due to the new addition of her son Atticus Jenkins to her family. Despite her departure she will be hosting this Decembers Puppet Meltdown. She is as bad at quitting as she is good at being a mom.



Jean Kuecher

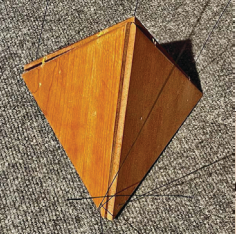
Hi Mel and Ann,

I am hoping to attend the Potlatch. I have presented a few marionette and black light shows in the Southwestern Michigan area. And I have a few scheduled. I am the director of the Houston Puppet Festival September 15-17. My husband and I will fly to Texas. I have hired three puppet performers and 14 workshop presenters. We expect up to 100 participants in the festival. In December, we will drive to Houston from our home in Michigan to perform approximately 30 puppet shows.



Steven Widerman

The Tetrahedron Marionette - will be a manipulation workshop led by creator, Steven Widerman, assisted by co-conspirator and builder, David Herzog. This workshop is intended for experienced marionette artists. Puppets will be supplied. Inquiries are welcome at widerman@aol.com



Far left - Tetrahedron Marionette
Steven demonstrates the Tetrahedron Marionette

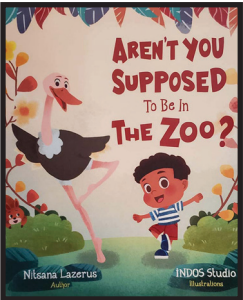


Nitsana Lazerus

Thank you for the email. I didn’t receive an email from Ann. Please forward to her the following:

I am not performing much because I no longer have a car. I have done some shows thanks to a good friend who gave me her car. I am working on a few stories for my publisher, who published my first book: *Aren’t You Supposed To Be In The Zoo?*

I am painting, singing and exploring other creative fields that I enjoy. I post vegan cooking ideas with my chef Pierre puppet. See attached link: <https://www.facebook.com/nitsana.lazeru>



Publisher’s Note: Having access to Mel’s email (as well as “Ann’s), I’m sometimes privy to those “backstage conversations.” Shhhh. Don’t tell anyone Mel’s little secret.

Hello Nitsana,
Thank you for your response. I will let you in on a little secret. “Ann Onymous” exists only as a made up name to cover me. I write the column but not as the Puppet Patter editor, but as someone else not identified. Split the word “anonymous” and I become Ann onymous.

Nitsana’s Reply
I can’t stop smiling...

Have You Checked Out the CPG Website Lately?

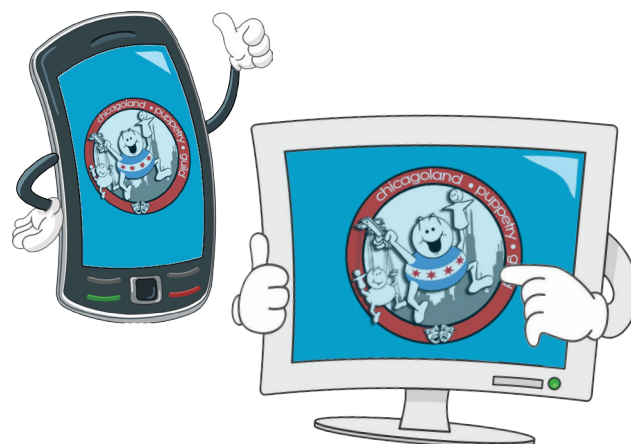


Be sure to visit our guild's web site on a regular basis for the latest postings on what's happening in the Chicago area, the latest on the Great Lakes Regional Festival and a roster of active and newly added puppeteers. Events and Shows page has the latest posting of local performing companies, their current production and a link to their web sites, current and past issues of the Puppet Pater, and more!

Our address is:

www.chicagopuppetguild.org

The CPG is on Facebook, too!
Be sure to check us out!



Leave 'em Laughin'!

Frank and Ernest by Bob Thaves

