



Puppet Patter

The Official Publication of the Chicagoland Puppetry Guild

A Quarterly Publication

December 2019

The 2019 Great Lakes Regional Potlatch in Review!

by Mel Biske

November 1, 2 and 3, 2019, Potawatomi Inn Lake James, Indiana Members and guests of the Great Lakes Region began arriving at 3:00 pm. Dave Herzog, the Potlatch Registrar, had the registration table off and running. Dave always has volunteer puppeteers to pitch in and help members seek out their nametags. This year there were over 139 in attendance. At 4:00 pm the exhibitors began setting up their puppet displays. When complete the display area will be a source for many puppeteers to meet and discuss the merits of each their works and exchange ideas. (Sounds like a “Potlatch”) Tih Penfil., the Official Potlatch photographer, once again, set up her display for all to review those

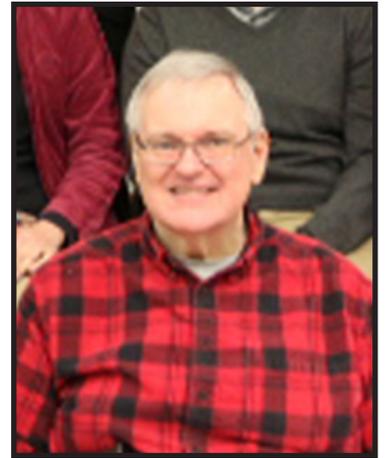


Tih's always welcomed photo display



Tih Penfil

wonderful days of yesteryear. Time out for dinner at the Inn or at a nearby restaurant but be sure to be back in time for the 7:15 official Welcome! This year we were welcomed by our newly installed Great Lakes Regional Director, Rick Morse. Congratulations Rick! With two performances on the bill, Rick turned the program over to Vince Polomy of the PGNO, who was this year's turn for programming. Two shows this evening. (See the reviews in this issue) Later that evening the



*Great Lakes Regional Director
Rick Morse*

opening night reception was hosted by the Indiana Puppetry Guild. Mangia!



Friday's MC, Vince Polomy



Indiana Puppetry Guild class picture

Shows in Review

Potlatch 2019 did not disappoint, providing a good variety of entertaining shows organized by the Puppetry Guild of Northern Ohio.

Friday, November 1st

The Witches' Ball

My Air Productions - Joe Emory

Review by Jill Fredrickson

The weekend got off to a big start with an impressive production from Joe Emory's My Air Productions. They emptied their puppet barn and brought their entire Halloween show restaging it at Potowatomie. As one would expect from the technical mastery of Joe Emory, the lighting and sound design was big and bold. Those effects supplied a lot of drama and presence for the sweetly scary vignettes. Multiple marionettes told several short stories. Break apart marionettes of skeletons and scarecrows danced and capered with black light effects to great effect. Ghosts swung and swayed to tell a love story as a final capstone at the end. Jennifer Emory debuted as a performer for the first time outside the confines of the My Air theater and did a wonderful job. The high production values and good energy kept this show moving forward to the delight of the audience. It was a fun night hayride of a show.



From Paste to Gravy

Nancy Sander

Review by Jill Fredrickson

The second show of Friday evening was a workshop lecture from the singular Nancy Sander. "From Paste to Gravy" educated us all in many of the lazzi, or story show bits, integral to Punch and Judy. Nancy described the layering of bits as stringing together lazzi like beads on a string to create new combinations to delight and engage audiences. Her admonishment to make sure that the audience participation is inviting the audience to use the puppeteer and not vice versa was enlightening. It made clear to me why some audience participation shows had irritated me and others charmed me. She mentioned the importance of the rule of three to draw in and reinforce audience understanding and participation. She described multiple pieces of business and shared her names for them. First demonstrating them with Punch and then how she employs them with other characters in other shows was an effective teaching method. I found myself madly taking notes about things like "sausage pull", "no peeking" and "where?" This close inspection of so many beloved intervals from Punch that always delight me and leave me laughing and shouting at Punch like a 5 year old did not break the spell these segments cast, if anything it

strengthened the enchantment. The rest of the weekend I spent watching shows with attention tuned to the ways the classic Punchisms appeared and ornamented other puppet works. Nancy Sander's lecture demo showed me that the roots of puppetry are entwined in Punch as much as Shakespeare and modern theater sprouts from Commedia del Arte. Puppets can take advantage of their very puppetness to do slap stick and physical bits that actors can only envy. Nancy Sander gave us all a good grounding in the classics. Not a traditional show, this workshop removed the sides of the puppet booth and showed us all the show behind the show. I came away with my head full of plans for how to apply my new information.



Critter Capers

Pippin Puppets - Rob Papineau

Reviewed by Nancy Henk

While the schedule lists Jill Frederickson to open the Saturday afternoon shows and Rob to follow, a switch was made at the last minute when Jill was experiencing “technical” problems. Rob was summoned from the lobby and was asked to launch into his own show in a few minutes. This might rattle some performers, but apparently not Rob. His shows are always live, colorful, and original. His hand puppet characters make use of a lot of “Punch” bits - like the chase, or the character that sneaks up upon another, or the disappearing prop. As a performer he is constantly engaged with his audience - a master ad-libber, his skills honed by decades of performing at the local Renaissance Fairs, as he proved once again with his Potlatch audience.



Little Red Hen and Friends

Little Puppet Company - Jill Frederickson

Reviewed by Dave Herzog

Jill, with assistance from fellow puppeteer Connor Asher, has created a delightful version of the age old tale of a chicken who wishes to grow grain with which to make her own bread. 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 breaks the ice with the audience by introducing the show with a spirited rendition of the Chicken Dance with the children. This followed by a conversation with Mrs. Cow (played by Connor) who peppers her speech with bovine puns that was enjoyed by both children and adults.

Each step in bread making requires a different skill set, and each animal must in turn provide a solution with its 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 has been baked. The only problem left is to how to make toast for breakfast. Not to worry the ants come up with a solution. The 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 well timed dialogue kept the story moving at a perfect pace, and



the well thought out staging couldn't have been smoother. From “out front” it looked like it came off without a hitch. Congratulations to Jill and her assistant Connor on this delightful production, which will grace the stage at many venues throughout Illinois and Wisconsin for years to come.

Editor's note: We invite you to read the article in this issue, “Potlatch Little Red Hen, BACKSTAGE DRAMA!” by Jill Frederickson

Saturday, November 2nd (cont.)

The Boy Who Saw Martians The Roz Puppeteers Dave & Carolyn Rozmarynowski

Review by Jill Fredrickson

Saturday evening shows opened with The Roz Puppeteers doing “The Boy Who Saw Martians”. I was very pleased to enjoy this show again as I had seen it recently at the Chicagoland Puppetry Guild Banquet in September.



Dave Roz’s muppet style hand and rod puppets have great personality in their build details as well as the voicing and manipulation. His dog character serves as narrator and straight man for other stage hands as they clown around and frame the story. As a fresh spin on the boy who cried wolf this show is satisfying. The aliens are cute and fuzzy and not too threatening. The boy who decides to help them is compassionate and gets a great adventure in the bargain. The alien hop dance at the end had many small audience folk on their feet and others of us were bouncing in our seats.

Dave gets my commendation for the extremely effective use of a whoopee cushion. The moment when the rat sidekick brings it out and sets it up and then is so giggly and excited to spring it on the unwitting narrator is delicious. I enjoyed the anticipation of the joke by the rat as much as the actual deployment of the cushion. Its return later on brought on the giggles again. Character voices were fresh, performed live and were well differentiated. Good job Dave, making the female NASA scientist sound female and not weirdly falsetto. This was a fun high energy show.



Beauty and The Beast

The National Marionette Theater David Junior, Mariana and Peter Syrotiak

Reviewed by Jill Fredrickson



Saturday evening was crowned by the National Marionette Theater’s “Beauty and The Beast”. Their show stage is an impressive affair with room on the bridge for 3-4 puppeteers and the rolling backdrop to change the scene. The puppets are beautiful constructions with well carved faces and lovely costuming details. The beast is not especially scary looking, perhaps it is his dapper wardrobe or catlike face. As with most versions of this story I prefer the Beast face to that of the Prince he becomes, but that says more about me than the show. The sheer beauty of the objects and set are wonderful and only become better when the performances breathe life into them.

The youngest Syrotiak performed the Beauty character with sensitive and delicate handling. She was graceful and effective and focused well on the other characters. She really appeared to think, to discover, to act. No moments of sagging or “marionette narcolepsy” here, which is something I am wary of in any marionette production.



The vocals were the original production and featured several parts performed by David Syrotiak, Senior. He was watching the show carefully from the back of the house. He seemed pleased with the smooth execution of his original by David Junior, Mariana and Peter Syrotiak. David and Mariana handled the movement of scenery, changes in lighting and set as well as the other characters in the story.

Seeing all the puppeteers share the bridge and perform around and with each other was a show within itself. It went seamlessly and the transitions between scenes were even fun to watch. This traditional version of Beauty and the Beast was well done. I am not a fan of the story because of its old fashioned designation of Beauty as a possession of her father instead of a person in her own right. This merely marks this version as a product of an older time. Many puppet play stories are based in folktales of the past and those old roots show. I would still highly recommend this beautiful piece of theater.



Sunday, November 3rd

Punch Brunch - Punch and Judy Show Mousetrap Puppets - Guy Thompson

Review by Jill Fredrickson

The end of Potlatch is always the traditional Punch and Judy show. Performed by Mousetrap Puppets this year we were treated to a Halloween flavored Punch. This show was created by request for one of Guy Thompson's historic sites.

The story of the luckless Ichabod Crane is not an easy match for Mr. Punch who always triumphs but Guy managed to take us on the trail of the spooky tale and embellish it with lazzi that kept it very fun. He punched it up with appearances by the magistrate, Judy in the guise of Katrina Van Tassel, Death, and other Punch stalwarts. Swazzle effects were well used as Punch shivered after hearing about the scary headless horseman. Punch found himself recruited to be schoolmaster to a wee baby and taught him how to walk. Finally the fearsome steed of the story was embodied by the snapping crocodile to hilarious effect.

This performance was enhanced for me as I remembered and recognized the many lazzi detailed at the start of the weekend by Nancy Sander. It was an excellent example of making a custom show from familiar elements. I think Guy met the challenge set for him admirably. The weekend proved to be a fun Potlatch with lots of good entertainment on the stages and lots of good camaraderie in the seats.



Workshops - Session 1

information provided by Guy Thompson

Performing in the Preschool Market

Brad Lancaster



Brad is an entertainment veteran with over thirty years of experience. Working in the daycare and preschool market, his ability to connect with his audience has made him a successful and busy puppeteer. In this workshop, Brad will share the many valuable performing tips and fun ideas he uses to effectively capture and hold the attention of 3 to 5 year-olds during his puppetry programs.



Crafting Appealing Puppet Creations

Smith Henderson

Smith has been making and selling his puppets for four years. Handerson's Hand Puppets have crafted characters for many professional puppeteers and ventriloquists, as well as teachers, parents, grandparents, and children. In this workshop, Smith will demonstrate, step-by-step, his methods for creating colorful and appealing puppet creations.



Hand Puppets for Children

Susan Fulcher

Susan is an absolute wiz at making puppets with children. Her work as School Liaison for the Public Library District in Matteson, Illinois keeps her immersed in creative puppetry projects. In this workshop, Susan will teach a technique for making a functional glove puppet using humble materials such as newspaper, tape, a sock, and cotton fabric.

Marionette Manipulation

David J. Syrotiak, Jr.



David is Managing Director of the National Marionette Theater founded in 1967. One of the oldest continually running Marionette Theaters in the United States, David has been touring with his family's company since 1984. In this workshop, Marionette Manipulation, David will share his decades of experience in a hands-on session. Participants will have the unique opportunity to handle actual figures from the Syrotiak's repertoire while being coached by an American master.



Workshops - Session 2



LYSSA TROEMEL is a busy Puppet Designer and Builder from Fort Wayne, Indiana. In addition to creating puppets and props for the local theater scene, Lyssa is an educator and presenter. Most recently, she was seen at the National Puppetry Festival giving a workshop on Conductive Thread, interfacing puppetry with technology. In this workshop, "Exploration of Shadow Puppetry," Lyssa will share a number of various styles and materials with which to experiment and explore.

Manipulation of Hand Puppets for Beginners

Darlene Federle Thompson

Darlene has been a puppeteer for 20 years. Her troupe, Puppets In Performance, was formed in 2011 and has since given hundreds of performances. In this workshop "Manipulation of Hand Puppets for Beginners," Darlene will teach the basics of manipulating glove puppets, mouth puppets, rod puppets, hand-and-rod puppets, and miming puppets. Darlene will provide some of her own puppets for participants to use or bring your own puppets if you wish.



Workshops - Session 2 (cont.)

Give Your Puppets Personality!

David Quesal

David creates vivid characters with his puppetry. When he puts a puppet on, it comes alive with a distinct personality. In this workshop, David will teach methods on how to give puppets unique personalities and characteristics to help enrich one's performances. Be sure to bring along your puppets!



Making Flower Fairies and Puppet-like Bookmarks

Mariana Palade Syrotiak

Mariana is a veteran of the Tandarica State Puppet Theater of Romania and has been working in the realm of puppetry since 1990. Today she is Manager of David Syrotiak's National Marionette Theatre in Erie, Pennsylvania. In this workshop, Mariana shares two ideas and lots of insight for quick 'make-it take-it' projects including a Flower Fairy, perfect for summer festivals, and a Puppet-Like Book Mark for library presentations.



Backstage Manager Stories



Have you ever had a BACKSTAGE DRAMA?! It seems inevitable (just ask Jill). Has a backstage manager ever come to your rescue? "Here he comes, to SAVE THE DAY!!" It would be interesting to hear about your experiences. Send your story, or stories, via email to Ann Onimus, c/o the Puppet Patter Editor at melikinpuppets@comcast.net. Please put "Backstage Manager" in the subject line.

The Little Red Hen Backstage Drama

by Jill Fredrickson

When Little Puppet Company heard that we were indeed on the bill for Potlatch 2019, I was very excited and a bit nervous. Even if you have performed a piece multiple times, doing it before a room full of your peers is a different level of stress. In preparation for the event, I double checked the puppets and props, carefully packing them up for the journey. I did some touch up sewing on the backdrop and conscientiously worked through my packing checklist as I assembled the pile of materials to go into the car. Little Red Hen utilizes my popup hand puppet stage, which has the advantage of being light and easy to transport as it fits into a backpack. The disadvantage of this stage is that it has a narrow proscenium and no backdrop support. To compensate I have rigged up a PVC construction with rope threaded through which lashes to the stage to hold a backdrop for the puppets. In many simple shows that is not even necessary, but the backdrop plays an important role in Little Red Hen. When the grain grows in the story, the backdrop rolls up so that sprouts of grain appear to grow taller and taller. I was excited to get the show on the road and headed off to Potlatch.

When I got to setting up my stage for showtime, I suddenly found I was missing one two-and-half foot piece of PVC. Without this little thing there would be no backdrop, no growing grain! Panicking, I asked Kat Pleviak to check her car (we had traveled together) to see if it had gotten dislodged from the other long pieces; no luck finding it in the car. I went to the PGNO folks and asked if we could switch the show order as we rapidly approached start time. Robert Papineau graciously switched up and performed his show first. Scott Beam from the Indiana guild very kindly volunteered to go to Home Depot and secure the needed piece. Scott came back with the part I needed, and I got the stage functioning just minutes before we performed. Needless to say, I had lots of energy to start the show with, leftover from my adrenaline rush of fear. Happily, the show seemed to go well.



Last year I built the show, this year I think it is time to consider building a stage. Oh, and that pesky piece of PVC? It was on the floor inside the door of my house where it had come loose from the bundle as it waited to go into my car. Like my version of The Little Red Hen, my friends each brought their help to make my dream come true, for that I am very thankful and will raise a toast.

By the Way...

by Ann Onymous

Joe Emory of the West Michigan Puppet Guild remarked in a recent email, "At the risk of being snuffed out by the Chicago gang, I named the new West Michigan Guilds publication "Puppet Chatter" because I like so much what [Chicago] has done for years for their publication "Puppet Patter".

Not to worry Joe, we accept your choice as a compliment. Nice looking News Letter!

The Glen Town Puppet Theater Series

It is with sadness and disappointment to announce the cancellation of a four year successful run between the Chicagoland Puppetry Guild and the Glen Town Corporation. The program was created through the efficient efforts of former CPG member Silvia Kraft Walker. Silvia made changes in her life and moved to be with her family in Colorado and had to give up her position of Program Director. Dave Herzog volunteered to take up the reins and continued to create programming by booking local and neighbor professional puppet companies. It was a success in that the monthly event of a puppet show or a puppet workshop provided an opportunity to promote the art of puppetry with a venue for live family entertainment on a regular basis.

The Book Market at Hanger One, a retail book store, provided a large performing area to accommodate and audience for up to 150 patrons. With programs booked through December and more in the planning stage, contact was lost between the Glen Town Corporation and the CPG Director. When pursued it was discovered that the contact person was no longer in charge. The parent company of the Glen Town Corporation explained that due to a change in personnel they have elected to decline support of the Puppet Theater Series. All programs were cancelled starting in November, 2019.

There is one piece of good news. The Book Market at Hanger One has taken the initiative to book one last performance. On Friday, December 27, 2019, The Melikin Puppets will present their traditional offerings of "The Shoemaker and the Elves" and "The Night before Christmas". Showtime is 11:00 am. The Book Market at Hanger One is located at 2651 Navy Blvd., Glenview, Illinois. Admission is free. All is not lost, however, as The Book Market hopes to do occasional promotions booked directly by their owner Barbara's Bookstore Corporation. Many thanks to the managers of The Book Market, Rick, Chris, and Seth for their support of our programs. They have each expressed how much they appreciated our efforts.



The Melikin Puppets and the Book Market at Glen Town Center present

the Shoemaker and the Elves

the Night Before Christmas



and



Friday, December 27, 2019 at 11:00 am

Wait! There's More!

by Mrs. Silence Dogood

There were quiet a few pictures taken during Potlatch (as usual). Thanks to Tih Penfil and everyone else who contributed images from this wonderful event. Here are a few more pictures. To view even more, check out the Puppeteers Potlatch site at <https://www.puppeteerspotlatch.org/2019>

LIGHTS!



"Don't tell Joe. I'm going to reset his lights."

CAMERA!



Peter Thompson documents performances

ACTION!!



Jill Fredrickson warms up the audience before her show



The National Marionette Theater - David Syrotiak, Jr., Mariana Palade Syrotiak, David Syrotiak, Sr., and Stephen Syrotiak



David Syrotiak, Sr. supervises Kevin Frish, Phillip Huber, Steven Widerman, and Dave Herzog. No pressure.



Judy and Jim Rose pose with Tih Penfil



Kevin Frish fights off an attack by a vicious marionette



Fletcher, Kukla, and Ollie tribute puppets by Dave Rozmarynowski



The audience enjoying Guy Thompson's Halloween themed Punch & Judy show during the Punch Brunch



Dave Herzog, Steve Widerman, and Connor Asher get ready for Potpourri



*Nancy Sander shares a laugh with
"The Goblin Child"*



Fred and Marilyn Putz



Fred Berchtold



Class of 2019



You are invited to visit The Marc Dunworth Foundation for the Performing Arts

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.

Please visit our web site for more information

www.dunworthfoundation.org

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



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

Happy New Year!



Leave 'em Laughin'!

FRANK & ERNEST by Tom Thaves

