



The Chicagoland Puppetry Guild Annual Banquet 2018

On Sunday, September 9, 2018, eleven members and guests gathered for the 57th time to celebrate the active year of promoting and preserving the art of puppetry. With the continued success of the Glen Town Puppet Theater Series, it was decided to once again take advantage of the scheduled performance by our Northern neighbors, the Fever River Puppeteers of Hazel Green, Wisconsin, with their production of "The Bremen Town Musicians". (See the review by Dave Herzog in this issue).



Chuck and Sandye Voight



LaVerne and Mel Biske



Scott Gryder and Dave Herzog

The show was scheduled for 2:00 pm at the Book Market facility in Glenview, Illinois. The dinner followed at 4:00 pm at Pizano's Pizza and Pasta restaurant a short distance away.

It was the custom of the guild to hold a swearing ceremony of the new board of Officers and Directors, but in the absence of key personnel it was postponed to take place at another time to be determined. That moment was replaced by a special event, the presentation of The Presidents Award. This award was created by Fred, and this year the tables would be turned by our newly appointed President,

Connor Asher. Connor along with unanimous approval of the board decided the award would be deservedly presented to Fred Berchtold. It was noted in the award that in addition conducting board meetings and providing agendas created to promote and preserve the art of puppetry he would effectively assign the personnel to accomplish those goals.



Fred Berchtold

While this award is presented annually it becomes retroactive for the past six years. For the six years in which Fred Berchtold has preserved the existence of the guild by voluntarily continuing the office of president when no one was able to come forward to assume the position.

Our heartfelt thanks for your leadership Fred.



Clockwise from left: Linda and Steve Widerman; Doria Martuzzo; and Jill Frederickson and Connor Asher.



In Review

The Glen Town Center Puppet Theater Series

By Dave Herzog

The Bremen Town Musicians

By The Fever River Puppeteers



It was love at first sight.



Jill and friend greet a young "first nighter".



The little blond girl in the second row. . . the one with her eyes lit up.

S u n d a y September 9th was a very special day for the CPG. Not only was it another performance day for the Glen Town Series of Puppet Shows at The Book Market, but it was the day of our annual Banquet. It seemed only fitting therefore to have guest artists that are a part of our extended Great Lakes Regional puppet family. It was great to have The Fever River Puppeteers, Chuck and Sandye Voight, come all the way from Hazel Green WI, to present their lively production of The Bremen Town Musicians.

O r i g i n a l l y built to fit the summer reading theme of music. The Fever River Puppeteers version of the old story is designed to fit the musical theme and manages that task delightfully,

with a clever script, interspersed with musical themes for all of the characters, and a chance for the audience to sing along, which was a lot of fun for everybody. Each animal had a different musical theme sung to the tune of I Am a Fine Musician, with the animal's characteristic sound included. Of particular delight was the Rooster who ended his refrain with a jolly cock a doodle doo, cock a doodle do, which was so much fun that the child in the stroller in front of me simply could not stop singing it. The children also enjoyed doing the chicken dance along with the Rooster. Of particular delight for the adults was the cat's theme Memory form the Broadway musical Cats.

T h e story of a group of animals who fancy themselves musicians because of their musical animal sounds, is not presented often these days, so it was a very refreshing production that introduced a lot of children to a story probably not heard before. The simple clear script was easy for children to understand, and yet there was a great deal for adults to appreciate as



Connor Asher (center) and Scott Gryder (right) sharing ideas with Chuck.



Hand puppet thieves with their loot, who are about to be scared away by the Bremen Town Musicians.



. . . And here they are!



well. Of particular delight was the line were the farmer intends to send the donkey on a vacation to the glue factory. The donkey replies that he thinks that was a tacky idea. There was a big groaning laugh from all of the adults.

The Bremen Town Musicians presents some interesting logistical problems, in that at one time there are four animals and two thieves on stage at once, with only two puppeteers. The problem is solved with the animal being rod puppets with each puppet having a progressively longer rod so they stack one on top of the other and one puppeteer can handle them all. Technically the production is handled very well. I was surprised to find at the end that the show had been pre-recorded. With all of the audience participation it had the feel, and pacing of a production performed with live voices.

Presented on a lovely booth type hand puppet stage with circus striped drapes. The Bremen Town Musicians was a delightful addition to this year's lineup, and a great deal of fun as a precursor to our Banquet. Well done Fever River Puppeteers!



Clockwise from top right: Fever River Puppet Stage is show ready! Sandye demonstrates the workings of their rod puppet creations after the show. Sandye and Chuck were more than happy to meet with their new fans.



You Have Your Hands Full!

Let Me Take Care of Your Design Work

From post cards to posters, brochures to business cards, and just about everything in between. Quality you count on. Value you expect.



jeff biske
color outside the lines

graphic design • video production • website design

For design samples, log on to www.710productions.com

A Puppet Slam

Puppet Meltdown 2018

Reviewed by Dave Herzog

Sea Beast Puppet Company had been producing puppet slams in Chicago since 2011, and with each passing year has honed this evening of short form adult puppetry to a crowd pleasing sell-out production. This years edition featuring live, as well as several very well produced videos was an especially satisfying event, which created an infectious energy within the audience that kept building during the evening.

With pieces ranging from the absurd, to the delightfully disturbing, to a laugh out loud puppet parody of pornography, the eclectic evening of puppet pieces covered a broad range of topics, from psychological disturbances, to conservation, to health care and much more.

There were several pieces that stood out during the evening. Latina puppeteer Allyson Gonzalez presented a beautiful stop motion animated film utilizing recycled materials including wire and paper towels that came alive as a wonderfully evocative dancer who went from drab to beautifully layered color and texture, giving a perfect imitation of life that was very moving.



Allyson Gonzalez

Kevin Kammeradd had a complete theater including lights in a very small suitcase. The setup was comically directed by one of the resident puppets, with Kevin eventually being manipulated and turned into a puppet himself, in a mad parody of an innocent children's show.



Kevin Kammeradd

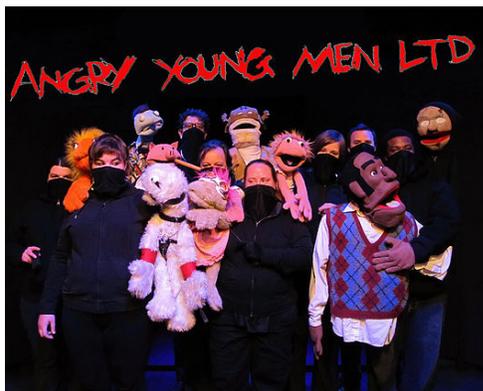
Lovecraft into an eerie and ultimately disturbing tale that had the audience in turn laughing and cringing in terror. Especially effective in Mary Kate's piece was the use of whimsical and seemingly innocent Czech rod marionettes that portrayed pigeons as innocent, and yet creepy objects of terror.

Film maker, voiceover actor, and puppeteer Chris Heady

of Atlanta sent a film entitled The Custer Wolf that spoke of the mysteries of nature and the need for conservation, with wonderfully textured puppets, made of recycled paper and paper shreds.

CPG was well represented by Connor Asher, with a bizarre and delightfully demented parody of Punch and Judy developed at the Eugene O'Neil Theater Center, Jill Fredericton with her wonderfully honest The Truth Fairy, the previously mentioned Mary Kate Jenkins

and the founder of the evening Seabeast Puppetry with their very gutsy, in your face and entirely hysterical Inspector Banana, a por-



nographic parody, starring Kat Pleviak which had the audience roaring with laughter and surprise. The piece is in your face, funny, and dares to go to the type of places puppet slam pieces should.

My only

criticism of the evening is that the performance venue has no stage, which in part limits the visibility of some of the pieces. Also the space is lacking in any kind of theatrical lighting which makes it more difficult to see the details in some of the smaller pieces. These difficulties aside, the evening is well produced, stage managed, and moves at a good pace, never letting the event lose it's momentum.

The Puppet Meltdown was produced by Seabeast Puppetry with funding in part from The National Puppetry Slam Network, and The Chicagoland Puppetry Guild, with performance facilities provided by The Elastic Arts Foundation.



Inspector Banana

The Chicagoland Puppetry Guild

The Story of Our Founders

By Staff Writer

The banquet of September 9, 2018 marks the 57th year of a continuous run for an organization known as the Chicagoland Puppetry Guild. It was organized by a group of active professional puppeteers who were successfully self employed in a business they were truly dedicated to, the world of the puppet.

In the charter there are 36 names listed alphabetically as “Charter Members”. Mixed in with those names are the names of the members who joined forces to form the guild. They would meet on a semi-regular basis in their various homes on a social level, always “talking shop”.

In this group of eight, five were marionette puppeteers George, of the Cole Marionettes, Fay Ross Coleman, The Coleman Marionettes (both worked the school assembly circuit); Mildred and Marie, The Gordon Sisters, Ruth Hill Poppenberg Puppets, both worked the marionette variety show circuit and Bill Eubanks, a marionette “Wizard of Oz” aficionado and artist (Bill designed the first CPG logo)

Charlotte Pawlak was not a professional puppeteer. Her interest in puppetry was through her famous brother, Tony Sarg. Jay Marshall was a magician and a professional M.C. who had an interest in puppetry by performing the only puppet play he knew. It was his comical interpretation of Punch and Judy. His claim to fame was a white glove puppet rabbit named “Lefty”.

The only true hand puppeteer was a gentleman, and I mean “gentle man” known by the name of Hans Schmidt. Originally from Kenosha, Wisconsin, Hans came to Chicago in 1952 to direct a children’s theater puppet show at Hull House. He remained here and in 1958 joined the Chicago Park District to teach the art of puppet making. He presented puppet shows at day camps, the Grant Park Children’s concerts and the Old Town Art Fair. He was also a prolific writer authoring children’s plays. The park district assigned him to the Douglas Park Field house on the Southside of Chicago where he maintained a puppet workshop with a small auditorium. During the early phases of the guild’s development he offered the facility to the CPG. Later, and for years thereafter, it became a permanent location for meetings and public performances.

When the time arrived to select a president and a board, it was unanimous that Hans would organize and head the process of developing an official guild. With the assistance of George Cole and Jay Marshall, both of whom had experience and were members of the national organization, proceeded with the application to obtain recognition and acceptance into the Puppeteers of America.

John Zweers, President of the Puppeteers of America, came to Chicago to present the Charter in person. By then the membership had grown to 45!

The guild flourished for many years. There was always someone willing to take command of the presidents’ office followed by members contributing their time and talents to sustain a board to assist the president. The years following were not always as smooth as one may think. The guild lost its regular meeting facility and locating alternative locations was always a challenge. The last place where the guild found a home was provided by one of our original founders, Jay Marshall. Jay and his wife Francis, owned and operated a Chicago institution known as Magic Incorporated. It was a magic store, a mail order firm for magicians and it had a large gathering area in the rear of the building. The room was perfect and Jay offered the facility without hesitation.

When Jay passed away the business was forced to close and the magic store moved to a new location. Once again the nomadic guild relied on the facilities of some of the members. One facility we were able to use was the studio/workshop of then president, Cynthia Von Orthal. In 2012 she had just completed two years in office and explained to the members present at a meeting that she would be unavailable to continue serving. Her puppet company was growing and demanded more attention.

We scanned the membership roster for a possible nominee and came up empty. Without a president and a board the only option we had was to have the guild go into hiatus. That way we could



Hans Schmidt

maintain our association with the P of A until a president could be installed. That or just...disband.

Seated at the meeting that day was a relatively new member. He joined the guild to learn how he could use puppets to aid his first love, that of being a story teller. He raised his hand to be recognized. Fred Berchtold addressed the membership and mentioned that he would be willing to hold the office if we would be willing to consider having story tellers become members. The discussion that followed was positive and Fred not only saved the guild that day but went on to serve the guild for the next six years!

As a board member serving as Vice-President for the past two years, Connor Asher volunteered to be a candidate for the office of president for the 2018-2019 year. He ran unopposed and was appointed by the board as the new president. Fred in turn, volunteered to serve as Vice-President and was also appointed by the board.

Our heart filled thanks go out to both gentlemen for their willingness to serve the dedicated works of the CPG to preserve and promote the art of puppetry.

* Your Editor would like you to read a follow up to the "Founders" article located in the By the Way column, by Ann Onymous, for some interesting insights in guild operations.

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.

Our address is www.chicagopuppetguild.org

Included is a page listing the performing companies within our guild and a link to their web sites.

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: Bridget DePriest

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 2017-2018

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

The Glen Town Center Puppet Theater Series

Upcoming Performances

THE GLEN
TOWN CENTER
PUPPET THEATER SERIES

The Puppet Company
PRESENTS
Al E. Gator & Friends

Saturday **October 13** 11:00^{AM}
The Book Market at Hangar One
2651 Navy Blvd.



 [CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)
beginning Sept. 27

PUPPET THEATER SERIES

Dave Herzog's Marionettes PRESENTS
**DRAGON DAYS
and KNIGHT TIME**

Saturday **Nov. 10** 11:00^{AM}
The Book Market at Hangar One
2651 Navy Blvd.



 [CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)
beginning Oct. 25

THE GLEN
TOWN CENTER
PUPPET THEATER SERIES

The Melikin Puppets PRESENTS
**THE SHOEMAKER & THE
ELVES and THE NIGHT
BEFORE CHRISTMAS**

Friday **Dec. 28** 11:00^{AM}
The Book Market at Hangar One
2651 Navy Blvd.



 [CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)
beginning Dec. 13

In Review

The Glen Town Center Puppet Theater Series

By Dave Herzog

Travel A Black Light Puppet Show

By the Jabberwocky Marionettes

Years ago, the much beloved puppeteer Allelu Kurten said of Lolly Extract of the Jabberwocky Marionettes, "When Lolly manipulates a puppet it really comes to life". The same can be said of the puppet theater pieces Lolly produces and performs today with her company The Jabberwocky Marionettes. "Flight" A Black Light Puppet Show is an excellent example of the innovative and exciting work of the Jabberwocky Marionettes.

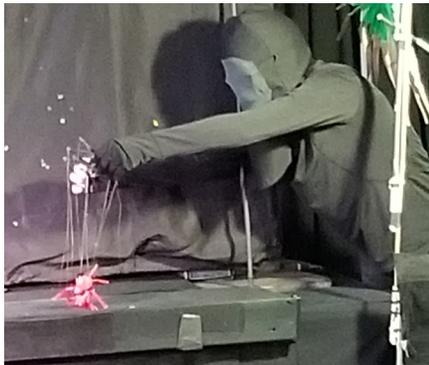
In her production "Flight" the miniature world of South American Dart tree frogs comes to life, but in this case the Dart frogs have formed a rock band, that is invited to perform "gigs" all over the world by a giant Brazilian Macaw. The very friendly six foot tall brazilin Macaw puppet appears next to the small tree frog puppets, and makes a huge impact on the audience. The juxtaposition of the giant macaw and the small frogs forms and impressive stage picture, and does not frighten, but gives an incredible sense of wonder.

The Frogs accept the "gigs" and travel by jet plane to Rio De Janeiro, Tokyo, and Chicago to perform rock concerts. The frogs play a song at each location, and the children in the audience gleefully get up and dance along to the music which has been especially composed for this show by company member Brian. A fire ant plays host the frogs in Rio and gets the dancing started with his hysterical gyrations.

Flight is performed by three puppeteers, along with Brain, Lolly is assisted by her daughter Amber Marsh, who is a very fine puppeteer as well. The puppeteers are completely masked and are assisted in the illusion with black theater masking as well as black light projectors. While the black light was not as effective as it might have been in our uncontained space the show is none the less very effective.

I can think of no greater compliment of the production except to relate that one of our regular patrons came up to me a few minutes before the show was over to apologize to me because they had to leave early due to a scheduled Birthday party. The gentle-

man said to me" I didn't want you to think we were leaving early because we didn't like the show, I think this group is amazing and my kids have a ball, make sure you have them back!"



The Glen Town Center Puppet Theater Series

By Dave Herzog and Fred Putz

Pool Noodle Puppet Workshop

Suzette's Puppets

Editors note: While anyone is welcome to submit a review for a performance or workshop or a CPG event, it always interesting when we receive two reviews for the same activity. Here are two reviews. One by Dave Herzog and a second one by Fred Putz, both regular contributors to the Patter.

With the photos provided by Dave we have a complete picture.

Thank you "Staff!"

By Dave Herzog

Sadly due to a problem with publicity, caused by a personnel shake up within the organization that manages the Glen Town Center, only four families attended the July Pool Noodle Puppet Workshop led by Susan Fulcher of Suzettes Puppets.

Undeterred by the small turn out, an ever smiling and charming Susan Fulcher gave the families her all, and assisted by her daughters, Faith and Hope, the children (and some of the adults) had an absolute ball making pool noodle puppets.

Susan is incredibly organized in her presentation, and not only has the basic puppets pre-assembled but provides a plethora of well organized art supplies with which the participants can create their characters. Susan's daughters assist as the very efficient hot glue team. This allows participants to create a very satisfying puppet with minimal effort. The parents had a wonderful time working along side their children with very pleasing results. The cookie monster table cloth Susan has created for the craft supply tables is a delight to behold, and really sets the scene for a fun time for all.



It's hard not to have fun in Susan's workshop, Susan's enthusiasm infuses the room with positive energy. The end result was four very lucky families leaving the Book Market with big smiles and wonderful puppets to enjoy for a long time to come. Well done Susan Fulcher!

A promotional flyer for a puppet workshop. At the top, it says 'THE GLEN TOWN CENTER PUPPET THEATER SERIES'. Below that, it says 'Suzette's Puppets PRESENTS BUILD A NOODLEHEAD PUPPET WORKSHOP'. The event is on 'Saturday July 14 11:00AM' at 'The Book Market at Hangar One 2651 Navy Blvd.'. There is a 'CLICK HERE TO REGISTER beginning June 28' button. On the right, there is a photo of several colorful pool noodle puppets. On the bottom left, there is a circular logo for the Glen Town Center.

By Fred Putz

It is amazing to me that puppeteers manage to make puppets out of almost anything. My first experience with these kinds of puppet making techniques happened in the 1960's when I first met Marjorie Batchelder McPharlin at a national P of A festival. I observed the results of her "Kid's" workshop which used recyclable materials to make puppets. Egg cartons became dragons and alligators, cardboard boxes became bodies and stockings became limbs. Marjorie was one of the early conservationists and she continued this quest into her last days.

In keeping with the, "almost anything" tradition, Susan used colored foam tubular swimming pool noodles to create puppet heads with articulated mouths. A 5-inch piece of tube was mounted on a tongue depressor and became the puppet's head. (The puppet did not have a body.) A small square cut from the bottom of the tube became the puppet's mouth and was mounted on a



second depressor which in turn was attached to the head depressor with a piece of felt. When the mouth depressor was moved up and down, the puppet head appeared to talk. A small patch of Velcro attached to the front of the mouth depressor provided enough friction that the mouth moved easily. Susan provided hundreds of decorative items, colored feathers, colored pompons, colored felt, moveable eyes, scraps of cloth and pipe cleaners with which to create faces, hair and costumes.

After a short introduction, the kids and adults dug in and had a great time putting the finishing touches on their puppets. Spontaneous conversation occurred between the puppets, who completely ignored their human manipulators. A few of the participants managed to make two puppets.

This workshop occurred on a rainy and chilly day, which may be the reason that so few people (a total of 9) attended the workshop. The lack of attendance may indicate that the Glenview audiences are more interested in attending performances than workshops. This problem will be reviewed by the CPG Board at its next meeting. Congratulations, Susan on a creative and well-planned workshop.



Susan Fulcher



The Glen Town Center Puppet Theater Series

By Dave Herzog

The Three Billy Goats Gruff

Creventive Puppet Theater

Connor Asher is THE up and coming young puppeteer in Chicago! With boundless enthusiasm and energy, Connor's new production the Three Billy Goats Gruff, fills his very attractive new puppet stage with fun.

King Cetus (a very unfriendly young fellow) gets on the wrong side a Wicked Witch and to teach him a lesson the green hued enchantress turns him into a troll. Cetus hides under a bridge, but his troubles aren't over yet as the three Billy goats are on their

erent, with clever references to rock bands thrown in that provided a nice chuckle for the young parents in the audience.

Of special note is Connor's new stage which provides a very professional new look to his productions as well as much more room for the puppet to work in, and handle scenery and props. The very effective use of a fog machine when the witch transforms the Cetus into a troll, was a lot of fun, and covered the switch of the puppets very well.

Connor's previous production of "The Three Little Pigs" was performed by two puppeteers. "Billy Goats" has been designed as a one man show for Connor, providing some new challenges which Connor meets very well.

Well done Connor (and Jill). I look forward to Creventive Puppet Theater's next production.



way to find new pastures to chomp on, and trouble ensues as each goat trip traps over his bridge. It is fortunate for Cetus he is taught a lesson on bullying by the biggest goat and repents his evil ways.

The show is performed by a combination of rod puppets, regular hand puppets, and one large "mouth puppet". The stand out in this production is the large mouth puppet Troll version of Cetus, easily Connors best work to date. While big and somewhat gruesome he is never scary, and the audience actually sympathizes with him as he learns his lesson. It's not that he wants to be mean, he just is until big brother goat shows him the error of his ways, and he finds out life is much easier when you are nice. It's all a good use of the anti-bullying theme, demonstrated through the use of solid story telling. The children are eager to meet the repentant troll after the show and shake his hand.



Connor Asher, and Jill Fredrickson provide the very fine pre-recorded voices. The show is fast paces, funny and a bit irrev-

Lest We Forget

By Fred Putz (FP)

Chicagoland Puppetry Guild's Historian

WHO WERE OLGA AND MARTIN STEVENS AND MARGE KELLY?

Had it not been for the endeavors of the showmen who came before us, the art of puppetry could not exist. Often as we go about claiming our individual and ancient collective greatness we forget that we are only copying and applying new materials to old techniques and processes. The purpose of this column is to remember and pay homage to the puppeteers who have "played on the boards" here in Chicago before us. Perhaps, some day you will be so remembered.

Why an article about Martin Stevens? Recently I had the pleasure of attending a traditional Punch and Judy performance by Guy Thompson at the Glentown-CPG puppet show series in Glenview, Illinois. Guy calls his show the "Mouse Trap Theater" as a tribute to one of the best of the Indiana American Puppeteers.

The material used in this article was taken from a 1990 interview with Jay Marshall, (JM) held at The Magic Shop on Lincoln Avenue in Chicago, the *World Encyclopedia of Puppetry Arts* (WEPA, Steve Abrams), and *The Puppet Theater in America* (PTIA, Paul McPharlin) and PTIA Supplement (MB PTIAS, Marjorie Batchelder McPharlin).



Guy Thompson with Punch & Judy

(FP) Jay, do you know something about Martin Stevens? What are his birth and death dates? I think he died in 1983 when he was 78 years old. So, that means that he was born in 1905. He had a very sad early life. To put it bluntly, his mother slept around. He was, well, I mean, I take it from his writings; Stevens was not his father. He did not meet his father until many years later. Stevens was one of the actors that his mother lived with for a longer time than any other man. That is where he picked up the name, 'Stevens'.

He did a little bit of everything. He was a scene painter. While he was working in Cincinnati he found an old article by Tony Sarg in a 1925 *Popular Mechanics* magazine and that started his interest in puppetry, but it was not of much help in creating a puppet show. While he was working in Cincinnati, he met a dancer named Olga and the two were married. Martin and Olga did not get along very well, but they did great artistic puppetry. They were always fighting."

(JM) "The best help that they got in starting a puppet show was from Sue Hastings. It was when Sue Hastings' troupe came to town that they saw her show and were fascinated. The puppeteers did a matinee and Martin and Olga went back stage and the puppeteers went out to lunch leaving Martin and Olga to examine the puppets. They measured the puppets and took notes. So, the Sue Hastings troop was responsible for Martin Stevens' success". (PTIA) The Stevens first show was presented on September 19, 1934, in Cincinnati, Ohio and included *The Good Bad Wolf*, the balcony scene from *Romeo and Juliet* and *Schnozzle and Zasu*. From 1935 to 1940 they produced a few more marionette shows that included, *The Passion Play*, *The Nativity*, *Joan of Arc* and *Cleopatra*. (FP) (Paul McPharlin mentioned 21 different productions in which Martin was involved and Marjorie Batchelder McPharlin, in her supplement to *The Puppet Theater in America* mentioned even more.

(JM) "He was one of the founders of The Puppet-puppeteers of America and I believe, was the first official President of the organization. There was a rumor that Tony Sarg had been elected, but it never came to fruition. I mean that he did not accept it and Martin did". (FP) At this point I must refer to Howard Ryan's book, *Paul McPharlin and the Puppet Theater* and correct Jay's statement about who the first president of the P of A was. Ryan reported that "Paul McPharlin became the first Honorary President of the newly formed Puppeteers of America". Stevens was one of the founding members of the P of A.)

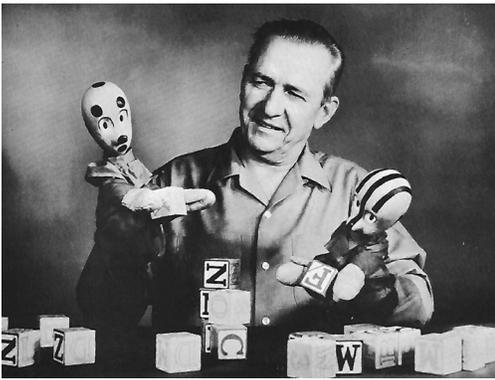


Jay Marshall with Lefty

(FP) "The Stevens were based primarily in Indiana, is that correct? (JM) "Yes, although they moved to New York and lived there for a while. Then, in the middle 50's they moved to Middlebury, Indiana and lived in a house they called "The Mouse Trap". It was off the road just outside of Middlebury. (WEPA) "In 1940 the Stevens built a studio-home-theater called 'The Mouse Trap' at Middlebury, Indiana."

'Steve', as Martin was called, helped train dozens of puppeteers including Dick Myers, George Latshaw, Kathy Piper, Fred Cowan, Jim Menke, Jean Reges Burn, and Canadian, Ronnie Burkett. After WW II, they produced *Macbeth* with rod puppets and, *The Taming of the Shrew* with hand puppets."

(JM) "They made films for the Encyclopedia Britannica. In 1949 he recorded *The Toy Maker* there. (FEP) (*The Toy Maker* is a one-man hand puppet play.) (JM) "I think that there were three recordings of *The Toy Maker*. He did two of them and Rufus Rose did one. It was a very profitable film. (FP) Was it filmed in



Martin Stevens *The Toy Maker*

Chicago? (JM) “Could well have been, quite likely. I worked with him at Northwestern (University) during a puppetry festival in 1955 when he made the film. It was a wonderful show. Gene Starr Mitch-

(JM) “*The Stevens Correspondence Course in Puppetry*; it was advertised as 20 lessons and he sent you 19 lessons, one every 10 days or so. At the end of 19th lesson, you found out that

The STEVENS CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

offers you a Master Puppeteer's knowledge of every detail of puppet showmanship from the inception of the idea to collecting the fee! Get a practical working program for your development in the art. Study with a Master — 20 Sessions - \$25.

MARTIN STEVENS
Middlebury, Indiana

el was the MC and Martin Stevens did *The Toy Maker*. Burr Tillstrom was there and I was doing ‘Lefty’. (FP ‘Lefty’ was Jay’s signature puppet made from a handkerchief wrapped around his left fist.) Romane and Ellen Proctor did a puppet show, I don’t remember



Spots and Stripes from The Toy Maker

which one but it was wonderful.” (WEPA) “A live performance of Steven’s *The Toy Maker* graced the opening of the 1980 puppetry exhibit in Washington, DC, held during the UNIMA 13th World Puppetry Festival. Martin performed at eighteen national festivals.”

(JM) “Martin and Olga divorced in the late 50’s. He picked up with a lady named Marge Kelly. She was a puppeteer from Topeka, Kansas. She had two or three kids and smoked heavily which led to her demise in the early 80’s.” (WEPA) “They created over a dozen shows that toured schools”.



Marge Stevens nee Kelly

(FP) A separate item from McPharlin’s *The Puppet Theater In America*: “A notable TV series on Chicago’s WGN produced in color, was *The Blue Fairy*, based on Pinocchio, which ran for 26 weeks. It won the Peabody Award for best Children’s television series of 1958. Rufus Rose made the puppets, Martin Stevens wrote the scripts, Urbach and Kane were producer and director respectively.”

(WEPA) “Olga Stevens became the executive secretary of the Puppeteers of America in 1966. She received the Puppeteers of America President’s Award. Martin Stevens received the President’s Award in 1982”.

for the 20th lesson, if you had a problem, you wrote to him and he would write a 20th lesson just for you answering your question. You really got your money’s worth. It started out, like \$25.00 for the course and it was \$55.00 at the time he died in the 1980’s. It was a remarkable course and I intended to republish it as a book. Because I could not answer everyone’s 20th lesson, I made one copy (of a question) that a lady had sent in and a copy of what Martin sent her in return. So, I included that as the 20th lesson. However, I did not answer everyone’s particular questions”.

(FP) I remember that you told a story about the demise of the Stevens Estate. That you had gone there after he died. (JM) “Yes, well I was going to a potluck at Bob Vesley and Roger Dennis’s place, they have a Labor Day picnic. I stopped on the way to look at the place, (The Mouse Trap) the doors were wide open and the windows broken, there was junk all over the place. It had been trashed. Chuck Williams, his successor and wife, Mary Lou Williams, I think, went in and looked after him in his last years after Marge had died. I think that they inherited the place, the puppets and the business. Mary Lou disappeared and went down to West Virginia. He, (Chuck) was running the thing, (the show) from the (Mouse Trap)”. (FEP However other accounts said that the Hummels were the first to take over the shows. This mystery will have to wait until more research can be accomplished, hopefully in time for the next *Puppet Patter*.) (JM) “I went there and found the place trashed. I picked up some magazines and books that were on the floor. Draped over a chair was a dragon which was one of the things that I picked up.” (FP) Another item was the ragged original copy of Martin’s Autobiography which was published as, *Martin Stevens, An Augmented Autobiography*, Ed. Luman Coad.

Editor’s Note: I was delighted to read Fred Putz’s “Lest we Forget” article featuring Martin Stevens. I was intrigued by the somewhat unstable beginning of his early life. Yet it revealed to me an artist searching to find his niche in the creative world. Strange, once again, how fate always seems to play a part. At the age of about twenty he came across an article in a Popular Mechanics magazine written by Tony Sarg (a native Chicagoan). This was the first inkling of what was to become a successful career.

While his marriage to Olga did not fare well, they did, as talented artists, managed to create a series of classic marionette theater productions. Eventually they divorced. As noted in Fred’s

article, he mentions Marge Kelly, a puppeteer from Topeka, Kansas. They eventually married and together continued an illustrious career.



Margie and Steve

It was at this point in our lives that LaVerne and I became aware of and entered the world of puppetry on a professional level. We were members of the Chicagoland Puppetry Guild and joined the Puppeteers of America. Wanting to learn more about the world of puppets we began attending national

P of A festivals. We were invited to present a workshop on sound recording techniques. Martin was in the class. When the class ended a few of the puppeteers remained and came to us with questions and a closer demonstration. Not to disturb the conversations he reached in and handed me a note which read, "I have three Wollensak T1500 tape recorders I would like to get rid of." Signed, Steve. At that time the T1500's were one of the best brands available. I mentioned I was interested. We made arrangements to meet at his car in the lot.



Martin "meeting at his car"

When he opened the trunk my eyes lit up. Keep in mind; this was before "computers". Three tape recorders were needed to create a master tape. When I inquired about a price for all three he mentioned they were all in good condition and wouldn't be using them anymore and wanted to be sure they would have a good home, you're welcome to them.

Through the years we became "Festival Friends". Puppeteers who get together once a year and update on what's 'goin' on in our lives.

It was at Festival 1962 at Western College, Ohio where we were treated to a live performance by Martin Stevens' of his world famous production of "The Toy Maker".



Aside from the many performances and the many workshops at the Nationals, there was always so much to be learned from the informal gatherings at the end of the day. This photo shows a very young Mel Biske chatting with "Steve" and Margi. Nearby is Lucille Cole of the Chicago based Cole Marionettes and a yet to be identified woman, far right.



The P of A always had a Puppetry Journal publication. In the 60's it was a 6 x 9 booklet with a glossy cover, in one color. It contained sometimes over 36 pages. It was published bi-monthly. "Steve" had a column he titled "Under the Bridge" (marionette puppeteers will understand this). It was a Who, What, When, Where and Why? tracking the activities of members from around the country. Here is a cut from the "November 1963/December" issue.



One of my favorite encounters with Steve occurred once again, in a parking lot. Laverne and I were fortunate enough to attend the 1980 UNIMA-XIII World Puppetry Festival held at the Kennedy Center for Performing Arts in Washington D.C. June 8th through the 15th.

Steve and Marge were there as well. On about the second day Marge took suddenly ill and was rushed to a local hospital. She was admitted and was cared for, for about three days. Steve went to visit her every day. One day I noticed him returning from the hospital pulling into a parking spot. I walked over and asked him how Marge was doing. Tucked under his arm was a sketch book. "Here", he said, "I'll show you". He opened the book revealing sketches he made of Marge sitting up in the hospital bed with a smile on her face. "She's doing just fine".

It has been an honor to have known a true Icon in the puppetry world.

By the Way.....

By Ann Onymous

Dave Herzog and Travis McClendon graciously hosted the picnic this year. While all CPG members are invited, we are sad to report an uninvited guest showed up, Mother Nature!

In this season of unpredictable weather she arrived with intermittent showers limiting the turn out to our hosts and six members. Here they are seated around the dinning room table. Mother Nature stayed outside. The food was great and the egg toss game was reduced to passing the deviled eggs around the table.

Below, clockwise Left to Right – Susan, Shirley Wood, Doria Martuzzo and Jean Vanier.



In the article of “The Story of our Founders”, it should also be mentioned that the current board of Officers and Directors have volunteered to continue supporting the guild when requests for nominee replacements go unheeded.

Please refer to the page listed in every edition of the Patter that lists the names and titles of the positions available. If you are interested, contact the person who holds that position and you can receive an explanation of what the duties are. The tasks involved in keeping the guild operative are distributed so no one person is overloaded with responsibility.

How to get in touch? Last February an updated Membership Directory was emailed to every member. In case you failed to save it an updated version will be emailed when the membership renewals are returned and reviewed.

In relation to the article of the “Story of our Founders” there is a point of interest that some readers will acknowledge. Our first CPG President, Hans Schmidt, was truly a gentle man. During the formative years of the guild there were many decisions that had to be made, i.e. writing the Constitution and the By-Laws and making changes there-of. When an item was discussed and finally put to a motion, following the Roberts Rules of Order of course, it had to be presented to the membership with an “Aye” or “Nay” vote. Gentle Hans would proceed to make sure it was approved. “All those in favor say Aye (pause) All those opposed, **IF ANY**, say Nay!



Above, clockwise Left to Right - Dave, Travis, Connor Asher, Susan Witek. Everyone managed to get into the picture except Jill Frederickson (the photographer).



Great Lakes Regional Potlatch Registration Form
November 2 - 4, 2018
Potawatomi Inn, Pokagon State Park, Angola IN

REGISTRATION FEES:

- P of A or Regional Guild members: \$40.00 in advance or \$50.00 at the door
- Non-P of A members: \$50.00
- Children 12 and under: \$10.00

Name: _____ Email: _____

P of A member number (found on your *Puppetry Journal*'s mailing label): _____

I am a member of the _____ Guild.

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Names of additional registrants from this address:

Is this your first Potlatch? _____ yes _____ no

Include my/our names in an attendee list to be distributed to Potlatch attendees _____ yes _____ no

of Adult Registrants: _____ @ \$ _____ = \$ _____

of Child Registrants: _____ @ \$ _____ = \$ _____

Total enclosed: \$ _____

Please make checks payable to **Great Lakes Region, P of A**, and mail to:
David Herzog 920 W. Carmen #1 Chicago IL 60640.

Special Note #1: 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.

Our group # is **1102 PU** . PLEASE MAKE YOUR RESERVATION WITH THE INN BY **OCTOBER 1, 2018** FOR BEST CHOICE OF ROOMS.

Special Note #2: Early registration saves you \$10.00. We must now give the Hotel our "final" numbers several weeks in advance. We need to know as close as possible our actual numbers so enough food can be available for the Punch Brunch.

PLEASE REGISTER IN ADVANCE IF AT ALL POSSIBLE!



chicagoland puppetry guild

www.chicagopuppetguild.org • chicagolandpuppetryguild@yahoo.com • facebook.com/cpguild

Mission Statement

The Chicagoland Puppetry Guild is a non-profit organization and is part of a national organization of performers promoting the art of puppetry. Our role is to honor, promote, encourage, and inspire all forms of puppetry arts' and puppeteers in their endeavours and to provide a fellowship of cooperation and inspiration to puppeteers everywhere.

Chicagoland Puppetry Guild Membership Application for September 1, 2018 - August 31, 2019

Send this application with check payable to: **Chicagoland Puppetry Guild** to: LaVerne Biske • 169 Woodlet Lane • Bolingbrook, Illinois 60490

Please Print All Information Neatly

Membership Yearly Votes

- Couple/Family.....\$30.....2
- Adult\$20.....1
- Company.....\$30.....2
- Senior (62+).....\$15.....1
- Student\$15.....1
- Junior (15-).....\$15.....1
- Associate.....\$15.....0

Application Date _____

Check enclosed for \$ _____

Name _____ Birth date _____
mo/day/year

Company _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone (_____) Cell (_____)

Email _____ Preferred contact Home phone Cell phone Email

Additional names associated with this membership:

Name _____ Birth date _____
mo/day/year

A membership directory is published and distributed among the membership in November. Would you and/or your company like to be listed in this directory? (please check all that apply)

- YES** - Please list me in this directory
- YES** - Please list my company in this directory
- NO** - I do not wish to be listed in this directory

Please list any additional information you would like to add. CPG will make every effort to include this additional information in the directory.

The Chicagoland Puppetry Guild is interested in you. Please tell us about your interest in puppetry: what you are doing and your status as a puppeteer. (please check all that apply)

I perform	I am interested in		I perform	I am interested in	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Marionettes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Puppet Builder
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hand Puppets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Librarian
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shadow Puppets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Teacher
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ventriloquist	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Puppet Ministry
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rod Puppets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Puppet Enthusiast
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Film/Video	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Semi-Professional (part time puppeteer)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Costume Maker	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Professional (make my living in puppetry)

Other: _____

Occasionally the Guild is asked for sources for puppet shows, workshops, and more. If you are interested in our referral, please indicate what services you or your company can provide and what your limitations are. Please include your website if applicable.

Are you a member of any other puppetry related organizations? (please check all that apply)

- Puppeteers of America UNIMA USA Storytelling Guild or network Other (please specify)

For more information about the Chicagoland Puppetry Guild contact CPG President - Fred Berchtold at 847-529-1725

FOLD HERE

Please print your name and return address in the space below

Please make sure address appears in window

LaVerne Biske
 Chicagoland Puppetry Guild
 169 Woodlet Lane
 Bolingbrook, IL 60490

**Check must be made payable to:
 Chicagoland Puppetry Guild**



OFFICE USE ONLY

Date Received _____
 Recorded by _____