

February 2021

NCPG

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PUPPETIMES





National Capital Puppetry Guild

PUPPETIMES

February 2021 VOL. 57 #1

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Puppetimes is the official newsletter of the National Capital Puppetry Guild.

Puppetimes is published biannually and is available to all members.

Puppetimes is always soliciting your articles, letters to the editor, and other missives for publication.

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Send all submissions to puppetimes@gmail.com

The National Capital Puppetry Guild, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit charity dedicated to the education and practice of the puppetry arts. We were chartered in 1964 by the Puppeteers of America. Membership is open to anyone with an interest in puppetry.

NCPG: nationalcapitalpuppetry.org

NCPG Facebook: [nationalcapitalpuppetry](https://www.facebook.com/nationalcapitalpuppetry)

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For information regarding membership in NCPG: [Join/Renew Today!](#)

For information regarding membership in The Puppeteers of America: puppeteers.org

Welcome!

Welcome to the National Capital Puppetry Guild's Puppetimes! We're so glad you're here. Our NCPG newsletter will have a bit of a different format moving forward; it will be bi-annual as opposed to bi-monthly, and it will only be disseminated virtually. We will be sure to include information about events from the past 6 months as well as include a calendar for upcoming meetings, articles by guild members, and more! Thank you for taking a look.

Sarah Olmsted Thomas & Alex Vernon
Editors

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Cover:
NCPG Dino
Channeling his inner Eustace Tilley
Created by:
Alex Vernon

Overview of 2020

It can certainly be said that this has been an unprecedented year for the NCPG and the entire world! At the beginning of 2020, NCPG continued to successfully fulfill our mission of sharing and promoting the Puppet Arts with the greater National Capital Area by way of workshops, performances, and special events under the leadership of our former President, Jeff Bragg, who faithfully and skillfully served NCPG for five years. No one could have ever imagined that the coronavirus pandemic, coupled with the murder of George Floyd, which caused global social unrest, would forever change our world and indelibly alter the puppetry business. For many, these tsunamis wiped out public performances and depleted financial resources in the puppetry realm. The NCPG Board Team, however, charted a survival course that would forge a path to victory in a time of famine.

In July 2020, believing that he fulfilled his NCPG mission, Jeff resigned and passed the baton to me, affording me the opportunity to serve as your President.

In this 57th year as a premiere puppet Puppeteers of America Guild, NCPG provided new opportunities for its membership family by sponsoring the very first full fledged virtual puppet festival in the history of Puppeteers of America. Thank you to all who joined us for the inaugural 2020 National Capital Puppetry Festival (August 21-23, 2020) in which we had 291 Festival registrations from around the globe including the United States, the United Kingdom, Mexico, Canada, Spain, Chile, the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, and Australia. The NCPG Board Team believed that it was imperative for us to come together to share, learn and grow as puppeteers, puppet builders, producers, educators, and theatre owners living in a virtual world.



NCPG President, Yolanda Sampson

In September 2020, NCPG partnered with PuppetSoup in the United Kingdom to provide two scholarships to cover the cost of tuition for an 8-session course about Teatro Lambe Lambe. The scholarship aid was given to people who belonged to a minority group and would not be able to participate devoid of financial assistance. The two recipients for the 2020 Teatro

Lambe Lambe scholarship were Susan Merry-maker Keys who is a grandmother, puppeteer, and clown who works with a children's hospital in Irving, Texas, and María José González Bitter who is a puppeteer and artist living in the mountains of San José, Costa Rica with her husband and two children.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the NCPG Board Team. It is a blessing to serve alongside remarkable team members who are dedicated, motivated and creative. Thank you for your tremendous resilience during this arduous season. All of you made countless sacrifices in meeting several times a week to make sure that our membership had the necessary tools to create new opportunities to thrive. Your indefatigable efforts are helping us to build a future for this organization that embraces all people regardless of race, background, experience, and education. In the spirit of collaboration, communication, and community, we hosted membership meetings and potpourri every other month for further professional development. Together, we weathered and survived the storms – and together, we will move forward into the sunset. NCPG, we are here to serve you.

To our membership, NCPG would not be what it is without you. We have 217 members from 27 different U.S. States, Puerto Rico, United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, Sweden, Switzerland, South Africa, and Spain. Gathering together in virtual spaces has been a sincere highlight of this year. Thank you for your expertise, enthusiasm, and effort in attending the meetings.

As we move forward, staying true to our mission, please encourage your family, friends, colleagues, and neighbors to join our puppet family and make donations which are tax-deductible. NCPG will continue to educate and inspire through the art of puppetry. We look forward to this upcoming new year when we are able to gather virtually for more exciting workshops, Potpourri open mics, conversations with experts in the puppetry field, and NCPG's 2nd Annual Virtual Puppetry Festival.

Thank you for the honor of serving as your President. With your support, we will continue to flourish as an organization and move forward with innovative and groundbreaking artistry in our craft.

GOD bless you!

Sincerely,

Yolanda Sampson
President, NCPG

**TO OUR
MEMBERSHIP,
NCPG WOULD
NOT BE WHAT
IT IS
WITHOUT
YOU.**

Calendar of Events

JANUARY

Jan 17, 1pm ET
Member Meeting
Featuring a Conversation with
Schroeder Cherry

FEBRUARY

Feb 13
Make-A-Thon
Start Date

Feb 21, 1pm ET
Potpourri
Featuring You!

MARCH

Mar 21, 1pm ET
Member Meeting
World Puppetry Day

APRIL

APRIL 18, time TBD
Potpourri
Featuring You!

MAY

MAY 16, 1pm ET
Member Meeting

JUNE

JUNE 13, time TBD
Potpourri
Featuring You!

JULY

JULY 18, 1pm ET
Member Meeting

AUGUST

AUG 20 - 22
**National Capital
Puppetry Festival**

SEPTEMBER

SEP 12, 1pm ET
Member Meeting

OCTOBER

OCT 17, time TBD
Potpourri
Featuring You!

NOVEMBER

NOV 21, 1pm ET
Member Meeting

DECEMBER

DEC 3, 7pm ET
Potpourri
Featuring You!

Ongoing Virtual Office Hours: Every Monday from 5-6pm ET! us02web.zoom.us/j/82931188346



National Capital Puppetry Guild Make-A-Thon Begins Feb 13, 2021

Make-A-Thon by Heidi Rugg

Let's work together to get this year off to a creative start, set goals, and work towards them. We will be exploring the creative process, sharing resources, and providing inspiration. We have a group of about 20 participants that will be meeting virtually for SEVEN WEEKS beginning February 13th. The proposed time is currently 1pm-3pm ET (the time may be adjusted depending upon the applicants availability). NCPG is suggesting a minimum donation of \$25, though no one will be turned away if they are experiencing financial hardships. In addition, there will be a private Facebook group set up to provide extra support and community. If you have any questions, please contact the group facilitator, Heidi Rugg at barefootpuppets@gmail.com.

February 13: Week 1.

Meet the group members; commit to your project. Be invited to the private Facebook group.

February 20: Week 2.

Reporting to the group. (Rose/bud/thorn report)
Proposed Discussion Focus: What resources (books, podcasts, websites) have you found helpful and inspirational in terms of your creative practice? What does it mean to have a creative practice?

February 27: Week 3.

Group report. Proposed Discussion Focus: What are your biggest challenges in your creative practice?

March 6: Week 4.

Midway check-in. How are we doing? Checking in about our commitments. Are we making any changes? Proposed Discussion Focus: What do you most need to move your project to completion?

March 13: Week 5.

(Focus Discussion: TBD)

March 20: Week 6.

(Focus Discussion: TBD)

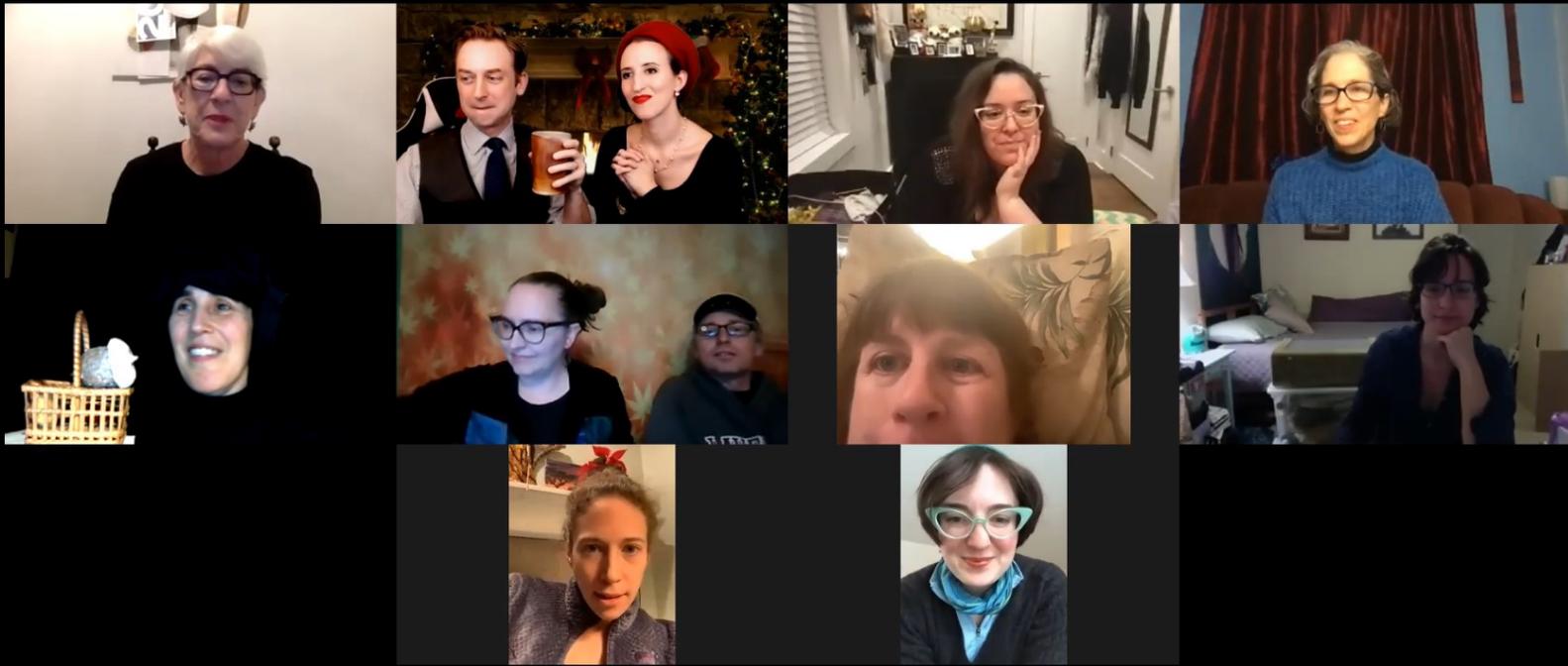
March 27: Week 7.

Final meeting. Planning for the future. What lies next?

(Optional additional meetings may be added on a week-day if deemed helpful.)



Potpourri!



Open Mic style puppetry presented every other month

The Potpourri is an open mic for puppetry. Since the Guild's inaugural puppetry festival in August 2020, Alex and Olmsted have hosted 3 potpourris for the NCPG and will continue to do so bi-monthly for the rest of the year. The material can be new, it can be old, but just make sure it's family friendly and under 5 minutes. If you don't have an act, but you have a puppet you'd like to share, Alex and Olmsted are ready to give your puppet an interview!



*Jovita Idár: A Maiden of Justice
by Genna Beth Davidson*



*Think Outside the Box
by Paige O'Malley*



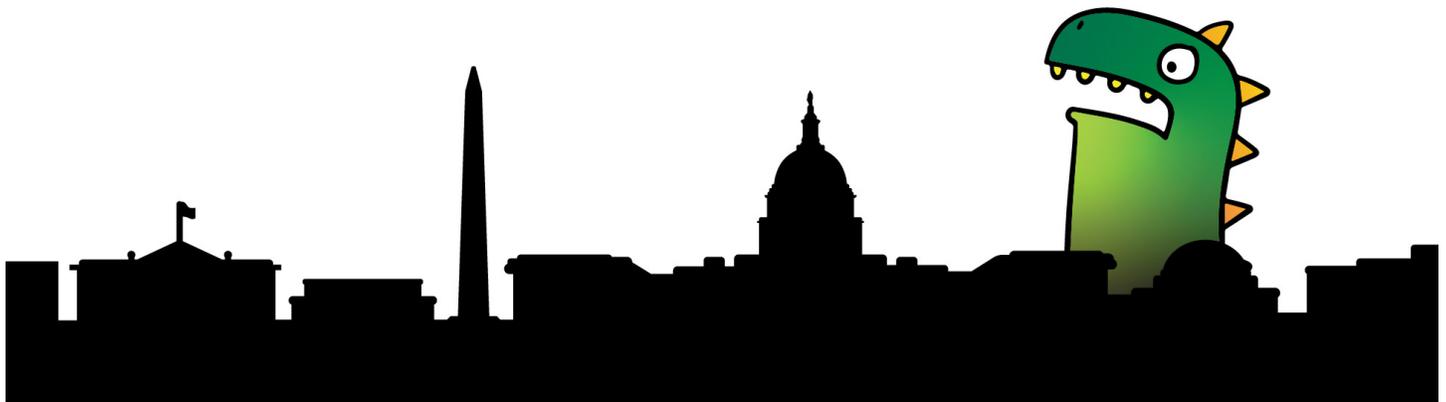
*Potpourri Piece
by Jill Kyle Keith*

Upcoming Potpourri Dates	2/21/2021
	4/18/2021
	6/20/2021
	10/17/2021
	12/3/2021

Want to perform or watch?

Keep an eye out for NCPG emails letting you know about sign-ups and Zoom links!
If you're not receiving our regular mailings, or would like to be added to our mailing list, please [email](#) and let us know.

The 2021 National Capital Puppetry Festival



The National Capital Puppetry Festival returns to the virtual space!
August 20th - 22nd, 2021

Festival planning is already underway, and we're excited to share details with you as soon as possible!

Testimonials from the 2020 Festival

“BRAVO, National Capital Puppetry Guild! Well done on an amazing virtual festival! Though there were MANY “tangible” takeaways (e.g. info on the vibrant history and creative practitioners of lambe lambe, solid how-tos for mini crankie making, one of the best Punch & Judy shows I’ve ever seen...), the overall sense of JOY and RESILIENCE is what inspired me most. Thank you for cultivating an event that proves that our community is generous, flexible, supportive - and won’t let a pandemic slow us down! That comes TOP DOWN, so it’s the NCPG that infused this great energy into the festival. Though a shift to a virtual event could have been intimidating for some due to new technology (or new applications of it), having a dedicated tech person in the “room,” having the front desk/lobby open for questions, and having front of house staff moderate the sessions was terrific. As a presenter AND an attendee, you made me feel confident I’d be able to participate respectfully and effectively. You’ve raised the bar for such events for sure!”

Aretta Baumgartner, Center for Puppetry Arts, Atlanta GA

“Not sure who reads this chat- but I just wanted to say how amazing I thought the puppet festival was!! You had so many awesome panelists, and the puppet slam and open mic were amazing. I live in Utah, and there really isn’t much of a puppetry scene here, so it was amazing to be able to see and connect with so many other people from all over the world! For sure the highlight of my Covid quarantine so far. Keep up the amazing work! I’ll keep my eyes open for more online events!”

AJ Taysom via NCPG Facebook

“So far my experience is that this is so well put together. Extremely enjoyable. Don’t know exactly the right term, but the hosts???? Are just wonderful and make everything work. Great job NCPG. Also have to say that making it eminently affordable (especially during this time) makes it accessible, and is very appreciated. Also a GREAT VALUE! Am now a definite fan of what you have managed to accomplish.”

Mark Segal via NCPG Facebook

A Conversation with Schroeder Cherry

Alex and Olmsted had a wonderful conversation with Dr. Schroeder Cherry at the January 17th member meeting. Along with learning about Dr. Cherry's preferred pandemic snack (double fudge chocolate brownies with walnuts) and his preferred adhesive to use while building (Titebond), he also shared the inspiration for his puppet Miss Lily, spoke about his nationally touring production "The Children's Civil Rights Crusade," and waxed philosophically about what we value most now in pandemic times. We have included a few selections from the interview below. If you'd like a more in-depth look into Dr. Schroeder Cherry's life and work, we encourage you to watch the Jan 17, 2021 interview at [this link](#), or to read his 19 page interview with Jeff Bragg in the Sept-Oct 2020 issue of Puppetimes.

A&O: Genna Beth in the chat...said, "[Puppets] bring us back to joy so quickly, and unexpectedly for a lot of adults because I think they have forgotten to play."

SC: I often ask adults [...] what did you play with as a child? What was your play activity? It doesn't have to be an object per se, because as a kid I played with blocks. I played with marbles. I played with puppets [...] I find that as adults I'm interested in knowing what you did as a kid because many times that creeps into how you operate as an adult. Some people [...] as a child they played in isolation, some kids only played when they were with other kids and that can actually creep into how you operate in a business sense as an adult.

"I'm interested in knowing what you did as a kid because many times that creeps into how you operate as an adult"

A&O: [...] you've been so prolific during this time [...] not only continuing with your barbershop [installation] series, but also your portrait sketchbook in addition to the films that you've been putting out [...] what drives you?

SC: I'm one of those creative kids. I'm one of those kids who just makes things. I'm also [...] curious. I've been blessed to be surrounded by people who allowed me to explore my curiosity about things because in addition to making things, I've always

been a wanderer. Even as a kid, I was a wanderer. Growing up in DC, I used to wander into different neighborhoods just because I was interested in looking at the environment. So it's a [...] sense of ongoing curiosity, I think, that drives me. I'm always interested in learning about other people and how other people are doing certain things [...]

A&O: Do you find you still have time, or give yourself time, to wander?

SC: I do, I do.

A&O: There was a question in the chat: "Are there any puppets or puppeteers that really inspire you either right now or when you were younger?"

SC: When I was younger, I was really intrigued by a Russian puppeteer: Sergey Obraztsov. The work that he was doing! He worked big. He had, like, orchestras of puppets [...] I was just fascinated



*Schroeder Cherry and Ms Lily, 1990
Photo: Schroeder Cherry*

with that. I also like the Czechoslovakian artist Jiří Trnka. Yes, Trnka also did animation [which] was intriguing for me as well. I liked [...] African puppets. I got to a point in the 80's [where] I wanted to figure out if there were puppets in Africa, so I started traveling [there] and came across different types of African puppets. [...] My passport says I've been there 14 times. [...] I've been to Egypt, once in South Africa [...] but mostly I was in Western Africa: Mali, Senegal, Ghana. Mali has a rich African puppetry tradition that I'm really inspired by.

A&O: If you were to give any advice to people just starting out in puppetry, what kind of advice would that be?



African Puppet, 2019
Photo: Ballard Institute and
Museum of Puppetry

doing. There's no one way of doing puppetry. Just find one that fits you.

SC: (On his puppet show, "The Children's Civil Rights Crusade") In the Civil Rights Movement, they got to a point where they needed help for the movement and someone said, "We need to let the kids march with us and even if they go to jail, we need to fill up all the jails." [...] Everybody knew

SC: I would say look broadly and just explore. Discover as much as you possibly can. We have so many resources that are available. Even though [...] the libraries are now closed, they're still available online. You can still get resources online [...] on Facebook, for example, you've got a bunch of puppetry groups to connect with. Connect with any and everybody and just learn what they're

that they were going to gather in front of the [Birmingham Catholic Church] and march, but the police found out about it and they showed up with fire hoses and they blew these kids down the street. Well, that became national news because it got caught on television. [...] On the second day, the kids came back and then they came back on the third day, but by the third day there were so many children they had filled up all the jails and they filled up the schools and they had to, like, find somewhere to put all these kids because the kids were coming in from not only across the city but from other towns. [...] (*About DeAndre, the main character*) As he's telling the story, he's actually moving these wooden cutouts so you see the school bus, you see the police car that carries the kids away. You see the church where the people are meeting; they're congregating to have this meeting about whether or not they should allow their kids to march because that was not something that everybody agreed to. Even Martin Luther King thought it was a bad idea, but one of the local reverends said, "You got to use what you got." It was a minister who said, "You got to use what you got." And that's what happened.

A&O: Speaking of using what you got, in this time [...] what would you encourage people to do right now to be helpful [...] while using what they got?

SC: How do we fix the world? Okay. I'll choose one thing given the current times and what we're dealing with globally. Wearing a mask.



Puppet Ensemble, 2020
Photo: Schroeder Cherry

A Bread & Puppet Circus on the National Mall

By Sarah Olmsted Thomas

On September 19, 2020, the world-famous Bread and Puppet Theater traveled in their painted school bus from Vermont to Washington, D.C. to perform at the historic Sylvan Amphitheater on the National Mall.

Cultural D.C. presented the quarantine podded Bread & Puppet company and safely coordinated the free outdoor performances. They set out hula hoops, spaced 6-8 feet apart, on the large grassy knoll of the National Monument; a large audience space which was itself 15 feet away from the proscenium. I went with the intention of turning back if I felt unsafe. Upon arrival, the organized spacing, mask-wearing, and mutual abidance and respect put me at ease. I found an empty hula hoop on the cool grass and sat down before the beautiful hand-painted curtains, feeling my heart open as the brass band began to play.



*Bread and Puppet Circus at the Sylvan Amphitheater
Photo by Ryan Maxwell Photography*

Bread and Puppet, founded by the radical visionary Peter Schumann, is one of the oldest, nonprofit, self-supporting theatrical companies in the country. "The Bread and Puppet Theater (often known simply as Bread & Puppet) is a politically radical puppet theater, active since the 1960's, and currently based in Glover, Vermont... The name Bread & Puppet is derived from the theater's practice of sharing its own fresh bread, served for free with aioli, with the audience of each performance to create community, and from its central principle that art should be as basic as bread to life." (Wikipedia). The shows are suggested donation only. No one is turned away for lack of funds.

With a stunning combination of live music, puppetry, and dance, Bread & Puppet's circuses are famous for their handmade spectacle, their political slapstick, and their raw beauty. At any given show an audience member may find themselves singing along, guffawing, or moved to tears. It is hard to not be filled with a sense of wonder when their giant, 50 foot papier-mâché Mother Earth puppet emerges from backstage, catching the sun in her leafy hair as her burlap arms slowly outstretch towards the audience.

This was my first live performance since the pandemic hit in March of 2020. As Joshua Krugman, a Bread and Puppet puppeteer and company member, shared, "Political public art offers us an opportunity to gather together, to mourn together, to celebrate together, and to continue to rise up together against the rotten system and those who profit from it." It was invigorating to be in a large audience that cheered for the embattled postal worker with a crutch, that booed the greedy, cigar-wielding businessman, and that offered audible sighs when the blue painted horses danced onstage, trotting in unison to the music of a single bell and flute.

As the circus came to a close and the band played exit music, the audience rose into a standing ovation. The ovations merged into dancing as many boogied in their respective hula hoops. Masked puppeteers carefully presented bread and aioli on large breadboards at the ends of 7-foot poles. I left chewing on Peter Schumann's tangy sourdough rye, waving to puppeteer Clare Dolan who was dancing high up on stilts, feeling nourished and feeling hopeful.

To learn more about Bread and Puppet's impactful history and current exhibitions and performances, please visit breadandpuppet.org.

DREAMING



BREAD & PUPPET

Artwork by Peter Schumann

Membership Corner with Leigh

I was treated to the fantastic opportunity to reach out to each of you as individuals in order to learn a bit more about what makes the puppeteers of your imagination tick! To those who had a chance to reply: I can barely contain how blown away and energized I have been by the scope and depth of the responses, and the exchanges and ideas that came forth are still a personal source of giddy excitement. We have such an incredibly and diverse array of talents and passions within our ranks, and I'm inspired by the projects, goals, and determined visions happening all around us. If you have not yet been able to respond, it's never too late! Please drop us a line and let us know how we could better be supporting, encouraging, and educating our community during these uncertain times. We are always eager to hear directly from you. One of the recurring elements shared with us is the desire for continued connection and collaboration, particularly while we must remain exclusively within the virtual realm. To that end, the NCPG would like to initiate a recurring and casual safe virtual space for members to drop in and say hello on a weekly basis, if and when they have the bandwidth to do so. **THE NCPG OFFICE HOURS!** This will be an opportunity to share thoughts on current projects, keep your hands busy while engaging in random conversation, offer ideas and ask questions in real-time, or just be a fly on the wall and share a few vibrating airwaves with others. This is a brand-new endeavor, and we are eager to see how it evolves over the next few weeks!

**NCPG Office Hours:
EVERY MONDAY! 5-6pm (ET)**

us02web.zoom.us/j/82931188346



Leigh Lafosse

Similarly, if you are interested in being more involved with upcoming Guild projects, being considered as a workshop presenter, joining in our efforts to increase education and youth outreach, or helping to raise and create scholarship and donation opportunities- please send us an email and let us know.

We are here to serve the puppetry community, and we welcome helping hands!

We are so excited at everything in store for the NCPG this year and are eager to continue sharing and growing with all of you. We hope to see you at some of our upcoming workshops, meetings, and potpourris!

May your creativity continue to be a shining light for yourself and for those around you.

Dr. Leigh Lafosse
Treasurer & Membership Director
nationalcapitalpuppetryguild@gmail.com



...And Now, a Word from An NCPG Member

We at Puppetimes wanted to give a platform to our members in the newsletter; an opportunity to share about their experience with the guild. If you'd like to share about your own experience of the role NCPG plays in your life, email us at puppetimes@gmail.com.

I encountered the National Capital Puppetry Guild during 2020, at a time when I needed creative connection the most. Since then, it has been such a rewarding experience communing with the incredibly talented artists, puppet builders, content creators, and just their whole lovely cache of kooky puppet-people from all over the globe. I personally, being a DC-based theatre artist, puppeteer, and family entertainer of many years, got SO inspired by the original work I saw at the NCPG's latest virtual puppet festival, that I became a Guild member post-haste. Very thankful I did! I relish the regular (virtual) meet ups with Guild members and puppet enthusiasts that have nudged me to become more expressive and whimsical in my application of bringing original characters to life with my hands. From the NCPG puppet Ice Cream social (no people allowed), to the recurring puppet Open Mic they hold 'Potpourri,' I've gotten to perform and play with abandon from the safety of my home, and it has been so enriching and smile-inducing in a rather isolating time in our history.



Paige O'Malley

Most importantly to me though, are some of the workshops that the NCPG has offered which really gave me the push I needed to have a sense of ownership over my maker status. I have had a long, beautiful career as a puppet manipulator but never really allowed myself to be identified as a puppet builder, and was honestly always wanting an entry point into that world but was tentative and less than confident. After taking the Pocket Crankie workshop by Katherine Fahey that the Guild offered I became enamoured with using paper to spin narratives and have since built a boatload of mini crankies, plus my first Proustian shadow puppet show in ode to my father, and have also started a wave of digital short films using up-cycled 'packing paper puppets' to help repurpose the refuse from all the online orders we're now prone to. With the encouragement of the NCPG community and the fantastic events they've hosted (especially those literally hosted by Alex and Olmsted who are endlessly talented, witty, and open-hearted), I have found a new voice in my own work and hope to continue to let those influences shape my artistic trajectory.

We encourage you to check out Paige's work at www.paigeomalley.com

NCPG Scholarships



Judy Barry Brown Festival Grant

The Judy Barry Brown Festival Grant is awarded to ages 18-24 to participate in their first regional or national Puppeteers of America sponsored puppetry festival.

Application is open to all members in good standing with the NCPG.

Applications for the grant must be made at least one month prior to the festival.

You can find the application on the NCPG Website under "[Grants and Scholarships](#)"

O'Neill Puppetry Conference Grant

The O'Neill Conference Grant is offered to guild members under the age of thirty who are accepted by the conference for first-time attendance. It is a need-based, partial scholarship designed to offset a participant's expenses while there. Application is open to all members in good standing of the NCPG.

Applications are due May 15 of each calendar year.

You can find the application on the NCPG Website under "[Grants and Scholarships](#)"

Donate to the Scholarship Funds

We can't offer these scholarships without donations from people like you. The NCPG is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that runs its programming based solely on grants, membership dues, and donations.

If you'd like to donate to the NCPG Scholarship Funds, you can do so on the NCPG Website under "[Donations](#)"

PuppetSoup Partnership and Teatro Lambe Lambe

The NCPG is thrilled to have partnered with the theater company PuppetSoup based in Wales in the United Kingdom in support of their Teatro Lambe Lambe workshops. Headed by President Yolanda Sampson, the NCPG worked closely with Cass and Fagner Gastaldon, Co-Artistic Directors of PuppetSoup, to develop a diversity scholarship opportunity for puppeteers across the world who were interested in the unique art form of Teatro Lambe Lambe but who may not otherwise have the means to afford the workshop.



Photo courtesy of PuppetSoup.com

What is Teatro Lambe Lambe?

Teatro Lambe Lambe is a form of puppetry or shape animation that takes place inside a confined but easily transportable space that, normally, one spectator would watch at a time. Each play or show is traditionally short, usually two to three minutes in length, and a whole variety of techniques and tricks are used within these miniature theatres to offer spectators the full variety of puppet art on a small scale. Teatro Lambe Lambe originated in Brazil and Fagner Gastaldon (founder of PuppetSoup) is recognized in Brazilian puppetry literature as the UK's leader in this artform.

Who is PuppetSoup?

PuppetSoup creates visual and plurilingual bodies of work and offers diverse learning opportunities and workshops for all ages. The primary focus of their work is to make theatre that is universal and they take puppetry everywhere because they believe everyone deserves to be an audience member. The PuppetSoup company is a friendly, professional, highly experienced and very hard working team that comes from across the world to make truly excellent theatre in Wales. The company pools their diverse experience from Wales, Brazil, Portugal, The Americas, Eastern Europe, and beyond. For more information about PuppetSoup, please visit: [HERE](#).

NCPG PuppetSoup Teatro Lambe Lambe Scholarship Recipients

María José González Bitter (2020 Scholarship Recipient) is a puppeteer and artist living in San José, Costa Rica, “in the mountains with my two kids and my husband.” She is amazed by the Teatro Lambe Lambe form of puppetry and eager to learn more about this specialized art form.

Susan Merrymaker Keys (2020 Scholarship Recipient) is a grandmother, puppeteer, and clown living in Irving, Texas. She has worked for many years in children’s hospitals and is especially eager to “develop [a Teatro Lambe Lambe show] for use at the children’s hospital I work with.”

Ellen Cherry (2021 Scholarship Recipient) has been working as an independent musician for 23 years. Ellen writes, “Music was always therapy for me, and I have now reached a place in recovery where I can describe my experience--an idea that I hope will be therapeutic for others.” She is looking forward to using the Teatro Lambe Lambe technique as a means of creative exploration and expression.

Bonnie Kim (2021 Scholarship Recipient) is a freelance puppet artist and teaching artist based in a rural community in the middle of the Pacific Ocean with limited access to diverse arts and cultural experiences. Bonnie writes, “It [will] be a great opportunity for me to learn Teatro Lambe Lambe not only for my creative projects but also to help children in schools to create their own Lambe Lambe puppetry through my teaching artist work in Hawaii.”

Tanya Nixon-Silberg (2021 Scholarship Recipient) writes, “As a Black puppeteer I like to share the experiences of Racial justice and joy to the Boston community. I have looked up to the artform of Teatro Lambe Lambe as a way to bring the art to my community. It is my feeling that after COVID, intimate, one person audience shows will aid us in being able to be close in wonderful, innovative ways.” Tanya also hopes to bring the knowledge of the Lambe Lambe art form to youth in her community.

World Puppetry Day

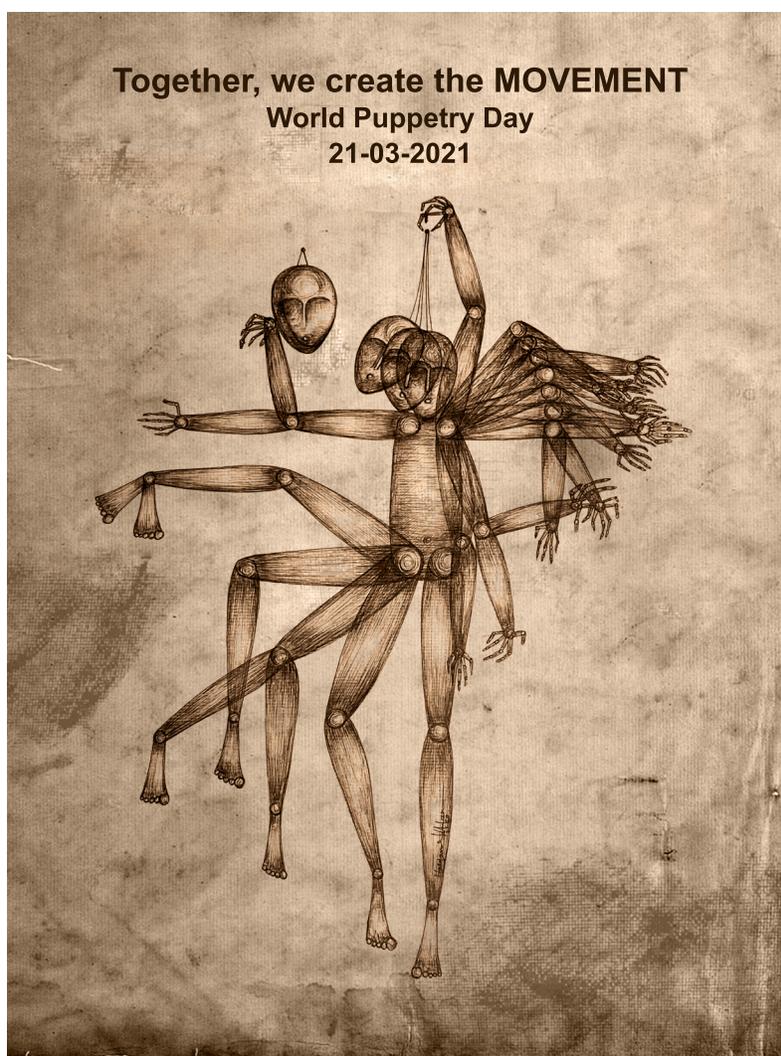
March 21, 2021

On March 21, join the NCPG at 1pm ET for a member meeting in celebration of World Puppetry Day! We are hosting a panel focused on “Puppetry & Advocacy.” A selected panel of puppetry artists from the U.S.A, México, and Kenya will share their experience on this complex and exciting topic. We look forward to seeing you there!

Launched in 2003 by [UNIMA](#), the World Puppetry Day is both a real tool for the promotion of puppetry arts and a project allowing to unite the puppet actors of the same territory. UNIMA stands for the Union Internationale de la Marionette, an organization that is non-governmental and affiliated with UNESCO.

World Puppetry Day seeks to promote the puppet arts by defending, among other objectives:

- the maintenance and the safeguard of the traditions and, in parallel, the renewal of the art of puppetry
- the use of puppetry as a means of ethical and aesthetic education
- to collectively and as widely as possible carry the diversity of puppetry arts today!



World Puppetry Day poster by Syrian artist Maryam Samaas

NCPG Theater Spotlight

Black Cherry Puppet Theater in Baltimore, MD

by Michael Lamason

MISSION STATEMENT

Black Cherry Puppet Theater is an association of artists and performers committed to the advancement of the art of puppetry through collaborations, residencies with artists of other disciplines, educational, and community art activities, and by sustaining an organization bringing a very special theatrical experience across the Mid-Atlantic Region.

Founded in 1980 by art students at the Maryland Institute College of Art as Summer employment touring Baltimore City recreation centers, Black Cherry Puppet Theater (BCPT) has performed before tens of thousands in hundreds of locations. Company artists conduct educational programming in schools, after-school sites and summer programs in Baltimore and the surrounding region, as well as professional development programs.



Black Cherry Puppet Theater, Baltimore, Maryland

Black Cherry's home is in Baltimore's historic Hollins Market Neighborhood at 1115 Hollins Street where it took occupancy nearly 20 years ago. The stability of a permanent home has enabled the organization to grow beyond a touring theater and in turn develop a community of artists exploring the art of puppetry. It has further illustrated that a small arts organization can have a positive impact on the revitalization of a neighborhood. Two abandoned buildings slated for demolition and two vacant lots next to the Historic Hollins Market were purchased in the late 1990's and were completely stabilized and consolidated with major systems installed and the facade reconstructed. Along with a lot of sweat equity, the lots were transformed into an outdoor performance garden and are now a haven for butterflies and songbirds when it is not filled with an audience. It is also the site of many free events and performances throughout the year. While Black Cherry's role in developing a puppetry community in Baltimore is well known, its importance as a major regional puppet theater has just been recognized by the Jim Henson Foundation with a major challenge grant to help see it through this challenging period while live programs are not possible.

Thousands of children have grown up with BCPT and many are now part of the adult audience: attending evening performances or even presenting their own shows. Company artists strive to present a mesmerizing experience whether it is through a puppet performance or an educational program. Audiences are asked in surveys at free performances if they will return to a show if they have to pay admission. Few give a negative answer. Some patrons arrive more than an hour before performances. When told that seats could be saved if they wish to leave and return closer to show time, they reply that they just wanted to sit in the theater and soak it all in. It's that kind of a place.

If you'd like to learn more about the impactful history and work of Black Cherry Puppet Theater, we encourage you to visit their website and consider making a donation in support of their important work at blackcherrypuppettheater.weebly.com.

Get To Know... Your NCPG Board



Yolanda Sampson - President

An ordained Christian minister who brings the gospel to life through the art of puppetry, she is the Founder & President of GO Y.O. Worldwide, LLC, which creates and distributes products to educate and empower children to live out their Christian faith. Recently, she was featured in the Living Objects: African American Puppetry exhibition which brought together puppets, performing objects, masks, and video by over twenty different puppeteers from the late 19th century to the early 2000s at the Ballard Institute and Museum of Puppetry. In 1992, Yolanda founded PuppeTainment Productions, a puppet ministry company. In 1995, she competed in the Ms. Black World Beauty and Modeling Pageant, winning the title using puppetry as her talent. She has produced and performed puppet shows for the national Anheuser Busch's "Kings & Queens of Africa Storytelling Puppet Show", "Everything Must Change" puppet show at The Harriet Tubman House in London, England, Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C. and Fox Morning News to name a few. Back in 1995, PuppeTainment Productions released the acclaimed self-esteem/anti-drug use video "What Time Is It?" which was distributed by Blockbuster Video. Yolanda received a Master of Divinity from Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California and a Bachelor of Arts from Howard University's School of Communications.



Sarah Olmsted Thomas - Vice President

Sarah Olmsted Thomas is a fifth generation performing artist. She is half of Alex & Olmsted, an internationally acclaimed puppetry duo that was awarded 2017 and 2020 Jim Henson Foundation Grants as well as the 2020 State Independent Artist Award from the Maryland State Arts Council. Alex & Olmsted has toured the Festival of Wonder in Denmark, the Puppet Festival Chuncheon in South Korea, the Festival de Casteliers in Montréal, and Symphony Space in New York City, among others. Since 2012, Sarah has also been a company member with Happenstance Theater with whom she has devised 10 full-length productions (31 Helen Hayes Award Nominations, 5 wins). Sarah completed an apprenticeship with Bread and Puppet Theater, was awarded a Lisa Simon Scholarship to attend the 2017 National Puppetry Conference at the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, and has been honored with 2 Helen Hayes Award nominations for Outstanding Lead Actress by theatreWashington. She is a proud NCPG member since 2018. B.A., Sarah Lawrence College.



Dr. Leigh Lafosse - Treasurer

Leigh is an active duty military musician, serving the last 12 years as a clarinetist in the U.S. Army Band "Pershing's Own". She received her undergrad and masters from Texas Tech University and her doctoral degree from Indiana University, Bloomington. Actively involved in education and community, she most recently served as Association Director of the MD/DC chapters of Odyssey of the Mind, and enjoyed coordinating the State Tournaments as springboards to prepare the teams of creative kids for their acceptance to the World Finals. As a puppeteer, Leigh devised, created, built, choreographed, and produced a two-person puppet production of "Hamilton", that Lin-Manuel Miranda sent a personal letter of regret for not being able to attend. She was also responsible for developing a puppet feature for the 2019 U.S. Army Birthday Ball, which included caricatured puppets of the Army Senior Leaders; an event that required her to escort the puppets through Pentagon security for likeness approval by the Secretary of the Army.



Heidi Rugg - Secretary

Heidi grew up as a Navy brat and lived a nomadic existence throughout her childhood. She first began building puppets to fulfill the “visual aid” requirements for book reports in fifth grade. (If she could write a thank you note to Mrs. Norrington, her 5th-grade teacher, she would!) In 1997, Heidi founded Barefoot Puppet Theatre and now reverts to her nomadic ways, touring her works throughout the country with her family in tow. Working with a wide-variety of puppetry styles, she designs, builds, and writes for puppet theatre. She is passionate about puppet mechanisms, STEAM, playwriting for puppetry, and puppetry’s applications in education. When not on tour, she is pleased to call Richmond home and is working to establish a puppetry scene in the region with Puppets Off Broad Street, a nonprofit she helped found in 2014.



Sam Rugg - Member at Large

Sam has been involved with puppetry since 1996 when he met puppeteer (and wife-to-be), Heidi Rugg. Originally from the Windy City, Sam is known for his work behind-the-scenes with sound systems, stage design, and set construction. He has also been performing with Barefoot Puppet Theatre since 2005. A professional auto mechanic of 18 years, Sam brings a knowledge and love of power tools to the puppetry scene along with a deep appreciation for all forms of performance.



Alex Vernon - Member at Large

Alex Vernon is an actor, puppeteer, designer and automata engineer. In 2017, the National Puppetry Conference awarded Alex the Eugene O’Neill Theatre Center Scholarship during which time he studied Mechanisms with Jim Kroupa and Marionette Construction with Jim Rose. Since 2012, Alex has been a company member with Washington, D.C.’s award-winning Happenstance Theater with whom he has created 10 original productions. With Happenstance, Alex was nominated twice as Outstanding Lead Actor for the Helen Hayes Awards. In the Spring of 2020 Alex taught as an adjunct professor of Puppetry Arts at the University of Maryland, College Park: Jim Henson’s alma mater. Alex built a 6 foot mechanical horse puppet for the Washington Revels, 21 Wayang Kulit puppets for WSC Avant Bard’s Midsummer, and a transforming chair for Theater Alliance’s Mnemonic; a Bunraku-style puppet that also functioned as a weight-bearing chair. Alex is a proud member of the Fettig Project and often shares his build research with puppeteers around the world.



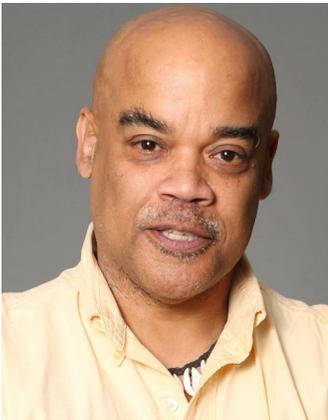
Vanessa Spring-Frank - Member at Large

Vanessa Spring-Frank is a props artisan and puppet designer for Imagination Stage. She consistently develops her artistic techniques to encourage innovation for theatrical productions making each one unique and personal to the project. She is passionate about the creation of curiosities and excels at creative solutions to prop problems. Vanessa Spring-Frank has a BFA in Theater Design/Tech from Western Michigan University with a minor in Art History.



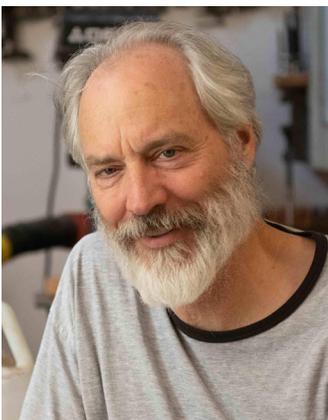
Kate Spinello - Member at Large

Kate Spinello is an eternal optimist with over 10 years' experience in project management, team development and strategic communications, applying her skills within a non-profit, for Fortune 500 clients at a public affairs agency in DC, and at a small, farm-winery in rural Virginia. She is currently a Director of Corporate Communication at the APCO Worldwide DC office where she has helped her clients achieve their business goals through rebranding initiatives, employee engagement programs, advancing public policy, and issues management and crisis preparedness. As 2020 has illuminated so many points of pain within our communities, she is committed to being more involved in bringing joy and creativity to assist in our healing.



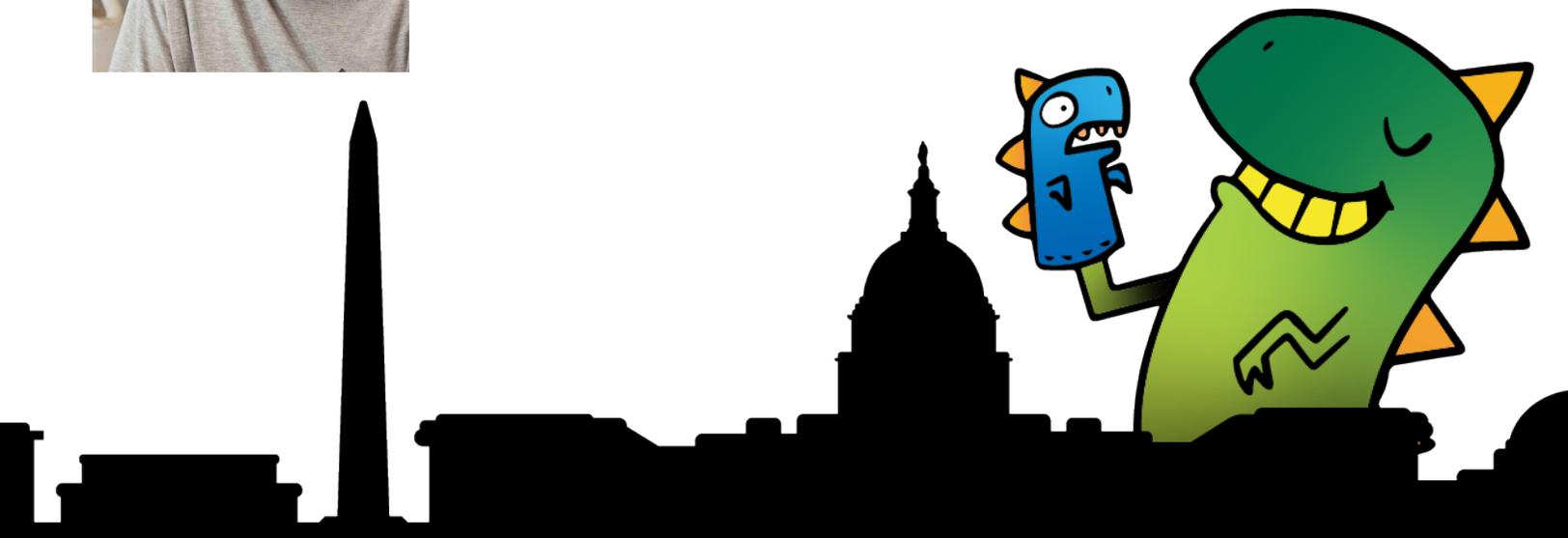
Dr. Schroeder Cherry - Member at Large

Dr. Schroeder Cherry is a puppeteer and visual artist based in Baltimore, MD. Working with sculpted rod puppets and wood cutouts that he designs, Schroeder has performed original shows with puppets in museums, libraries, schools, and cultural centers across the United States. Performances include: "Can You Spell Harlem?," "The Land of Primary Colors," "Underground Railroad, Not A Subway," "Tuskegee Airmen," "How The Sun Came To The Sky," and "Children's Civil Rights Crusade." Dr. Cherry was recently featured on the front cover of the Puppetry Journal, the official magazine of the Puppeteers of America.



Michael Lamason - Member at Large

Michael Lamason is a co-founder and current Executive Director of Baltimore's Black Cherry Puppet Theater where he wrangles puppets, builds new shows, and manages its community arts programming, all while trying to conquer a mountain of administrative tasks. He and the other Black Cherry artists have been touring marionettes, as well as other puppets, and creating innovative puppetry based educational programs in city neighborhoods and across the Mid-Atlantic region since 1980.



Dues Breakdown

by Leigh Lafosse, Treasurer

The new NCPG dues cycle will be shifting to a fall renewal. All members will be required to be in good standing to receive fall festival entrance discounts.

The membership options have been reduced to the following:

Individual: Anyone 18 or older having a sincere interest in puppetry and who maintains their membership in good standing by being current with their membership fees. Adult members having voting rights.

Cost: \$20

Junior: Anyone less than 18 years of age having a sincere interest in puppetry and who maintains their membership in good standing by being current with their membership fees. Junior members do not have voting rights.

Cost: \$10, Requires adult signature/sponsor

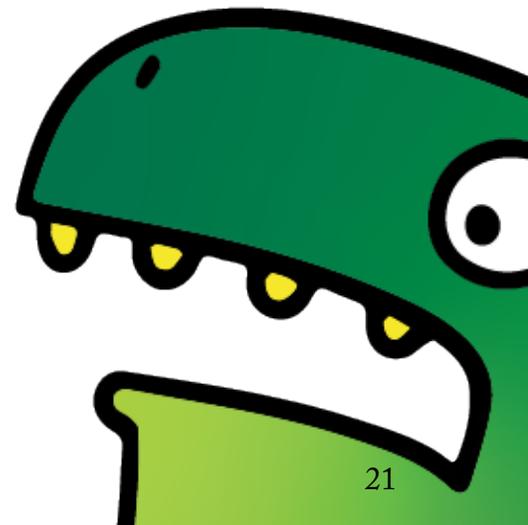
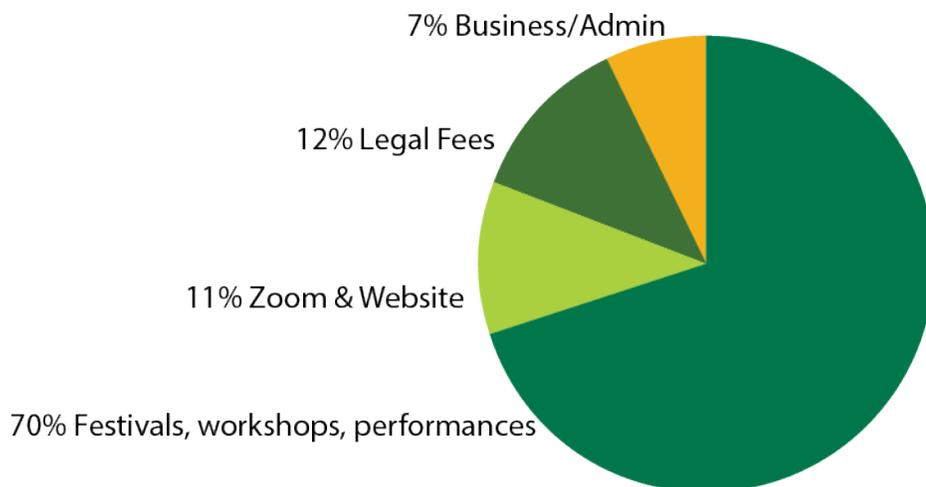
Organization: Any business or nonprofit entity having a professional interest in puppetry and maintains its membership in good standing by being current with its membership fees. Organization members have voting rights (1 voting position).

Cost: \$30, Inclusion in Membership Company Directory

Emeritus: Any person deemed by the Board of Directors to be an invaluable asset to the Corporation and whose contributions to the art of puppetry are immeasurable. Emeritus members have voting rights.

Cost: FREE FOR LIFE, to be determined by the NCPG Board of Directors. If you would like to nominate someone for this status, we welcome your recommendations.

What do your dues do?



Make Your Own Puppet

Designed by Vanessa Spring-Frank

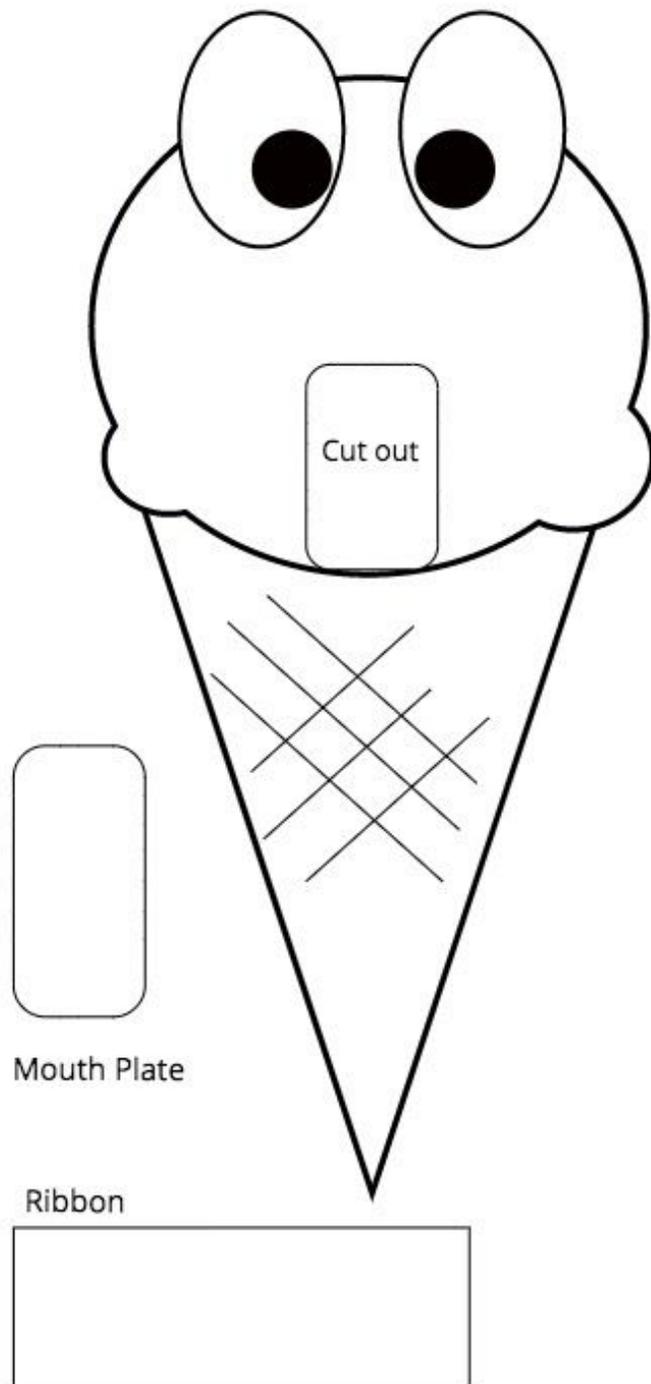
NCPG Board Member Vanessa Spring-Frank created this original ice cream puppet template for the 2020 Festival's virtual Puppet Ice Cream Social and we loved it so much, we just had to share it with our members again. Feel free to print it out, follow the instructions, and build your very own ice cream puppet!



Ice Cream Social Puppet

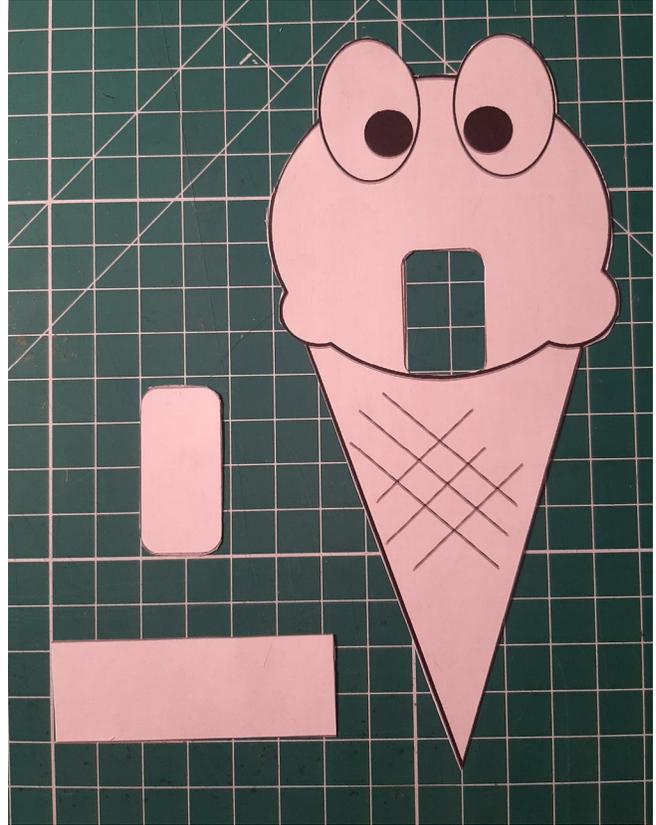
Directions:

- 1) Cut out Ice cream cone and white interior mouth
- 2) Cut out the mouth plate
- 3) Attach mouth and Ice Cream Cone to two separate popsicle sticks
- 4) Place the popsicle stick with the mouth plate behind the ice cream cone so it shows through
- 5) Cut out the Ribbon
- 6) Wrap the Ribbon around both sticks so it fits snugly (and can move freely) and tape it to the stick with the ice cream cone body
- 7) Decorate and have fun!!!



Designed by: Vanessa Spring-Frank
Board member of the NCPG

Step 1: Cut out Ice Cream Cone and white interior mouth



Step 2: Cut out the mouth plate

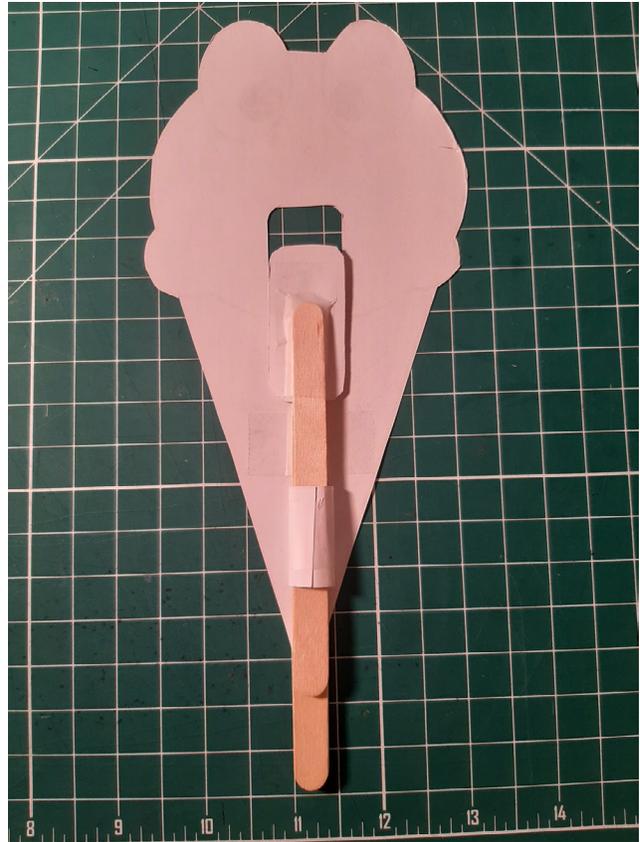
Step 3: Attach mouth and Ice Cream Cone to two separate popsicle sticks



Step 4: Place the popsicle stick with the mouth plate behind the ice cream cone so it shows through

Step 5: Cut out the ribbon

Step 6: Wrap the Ribbon around both sticks so it fits snugly (and can move freely) and tape it to the stick with the ice cream cone body



Step 7: Decorate and have fun!!!



THE END

