

The Official Newsletter of The National Capital Puppetry Guild

Puppetimes

Vol. 53 #5 September - October 2017

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The Judy Fund

National Festival
Puppetry Exhibit

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Behind the
Scenes

Playing With
Memory



Coming Up at the Puppet Co

Sept 15th through October 1st

in Glen Echo Park

7300 MacArthur Blvd, Glen Echo, MD

For Reservations (301)634-5380



CIRCUS!

Limited Schedule

Fridays (only), 11:00 AM

Saturday & Sundays, 11:30 AM & 1 PM

In grand circus tradition, the "**Greatest Show on Strings**" features a collection of clowns, death-defying acrobats, and an amazing menagerie of fauna from the farthest reaches of the globe. Many of the acts were built more than 50 years ago by Christopher's parents for "Len Piper's International Marionette Circus."

Recommendation: "Children of All Ages" • Show Length: 35 Minutes

October 5th through November 17th

Shows are Thursday and Fridays at 11:00am

Saturday and Sunday at 11:30am & 1:00pm



Pinocchio

Half life-size rod puppets, performed in the Italian "Comedia del Arte" style, tell Carlo Collodi's story of what it means to be "real". Share the trials and tribulations of the little live puppet as he finds in one adventure after another that the "easy way" isn't always the right way.

Recommended Ages: 5 years old - Adult • Running Time: 45 Minutes

*And stay tuned for an email concerning the next meeting
of the National Capital Puppetry Guild, coming soon.*

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Puppetimes is the official newsletter of the National Capital Puppetry Guild. Puppetimes is published bimonthly and is available to all members. Membership is open to anyone with an interest in puppetry.

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Website www.puppetimes.info

Editor's Note

Welcome to the new look. Well, what do you think? This was just a little cover redesign. The inside is still full of great stuff. I included a reprint of Matthew Miller's great interview of Terry Fator. I wanted to include it in the last issue, but I ran out of room. I like the idea of reaching into our past. I think that it helps to keep things in perspective. Let's also welcome back Linda Zimmer as a member and contributor with Poodles, Poetry and Puppets, about her therapeutic work with the elderly. Lots to talk about. The Judy Fund. Festivals. Workshops. High school programs. Election. Nominations for the election. Let's start with nominations. As in, right now. Does anyone know anyone who would like to serve on our board? Would you like to serve on our board? Do you have time and the desire to further puppetry, in education and beyond. Then this is the job for you.

Please help us create the future in the greater national

Front Cover: Grinley Nutjob by Zack Broome, photo by the editor.

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.

President: Jeff Bragg Vice President: Eric Brooks

Secretary: Heidi Rugg Treasurer: Pam McNaughton

Members at Large: Sam Rugg, Sandy Feulner, Tom Noll

NCPG home page: www.nationalcapitalpuppetry.org

Join the NCPG Facebook Group at: www.facebook.com/nationalcapitalpuppetry

For membership information contact:

Pam McNaughton

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or visit the P of A web site: www.puppeteers.org

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capital area by serving on the board of directors. You may submit your nomination(s) to puppetimes@gmail.com.

We'd also like to know what workshops you might like to see us do. We would like to sponsor some really neat things and we are definitely looking for suggestions.

Does your high school theater program need puppets?

The NCPG is offering workshops for high schoolers in puppet building, performance, and writing for the very small theater. Contact me for details. There's more on this and other pertinent issues on the NCPG Scoop page for all the latest. go to page 15. AND....

IT'S TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP!! Please don't wait until March or even May of 2018.

President's Note by Jeff Bragg

Well, it's been an eventful year for the National Capital Puppetry Guild. These are heady times for us. On September 22nd we will celebrate our first anniversary as a 501(C)3 non profit. In the last year we had a festival and started having monthly puppet shows. We raised a lot of money and decided to start a college scholarship and a number of programs designed to further the educations of young puppeteers by fully funding the Judy Barry Brown Fund. This has been a dream of the National Capital Puppetry Guild for several years. We've been talking about sending young people to festivals, doing cool workshops, and giving money for college as long as I've been a member and now we get to do it.

There will be three categories of awards.

1. A yearly college scholarship of \$2000 for a rising high school senior to study puppetry at a degree granting institution of higher learning.
2. A grant to allow young puppeteers to attend a puppetry festival
3. A grant to help a young puppeteer attend the O'Neill Conference, if selected.

We should have the official selection criteria and application paperwork done and in the next issue. We also have money to do more programs during the year, so we've started to do yearly festivals are planning both high school and public workshops. We're continuing a high school outreach program and hope to do more to attract new members and interest in our mission through this portal.

Now on to another important issue. It's time to find a new treasurer. Pam McNaughton who has done an absolutely wonderful job as treasurer over the last two years, will be moving on. Her work for us during the reincorporation process was essential to completing our goal of becoming a 501(c)3 and we will be forever grateful.

In the next column, she has written down the qualities, qualifications and cachet of being a treasurer. Please look it over, and if you feel right for the job, please apply.

We've done a lot this year. With your help we can do even more next year.

The Next NCPG Treasurer

by Pam McNaughton

The NCPG is looking for a new treasurer, someone who will prepare the guild for growth. As my husband makes the transition into retirement, I also plan to "retire" from my current role. What will the guild need from the next treasurer? The treasurer manages the financial resources that allow the guild to thrive and grow. Transparency and accountability in all financial efforts are essential. You will be responsible to the board, the membership, the Commonwealth of Virginia (where we are registered as a nonprofit), and the Puppeteers of America. If you aren't already a member of the PofA, plan to join them. What will growth require? You can help the other board members plan new avenues for programs, fundraising and scholarships.

What about the brass tacks? You will take responsibility for income (dues and donations) and expenses (festival supplies and insurance, for example).

You'll handle the monthly bank account reconciliation (balance the checkbook, right?); provide quarterly and annual financial reports to the board; and develop financial projections to support the board in decision-making. Internet access to the bank account and other resources is important, and financial software (I use Quicken, for example) makes the work easier. Now that we are a nonprofit, we file annual reports to maintain our status. We have a modest amount of tangible assets (like some finger puppets for sale); you can help by keeping track of their locations for times when they're needed. Altogether, you might expect this to average about an hour a week of your time. In the coming year you can support the board by developing policies and procedures for new lines of effort.

Interested? When you receive the call for nominations, let Jeff Bragg know. Prepare yourself, the board, and the guild for a dynamic future!

THE JUDY BARRY BROWN FUND

Providing Scholarships and Grants to Study the Fine Art of Puppetry



THE JUDY FUND

Once upon a time...

There was an amazing and inspiring woman who made puppets and directed theater and made costumes and created art and raised children. She helped us in any way she could and we loved her and she meant the world to us.

She was indefatigable. She was infinitely creative. She took young puppeteers under her wing and often knocked the feathers off of them, figuratively speaking.

And the stories are endless, too!

And then one day, she was gone.

In honor of this remarkable woman's life and work, the National Capital Puppetry Guild has established the Judy Barry Brown Fund to assist deserving students in furthering their puppetry educations.

The board has decided that under the auspices of The Judy Fund that we will be offering a college scholarship, a scholarship to help a young puppeteer attend their first festival, and a grant for a young puppeteer to attend the O'Neill conference.

At this time we are finalizing the eligibility and selection criteria and have let some of our partners in education know that this will be happening.

The board is still soliciting input from our membership concerning this new and ambitious program, so if you have any questions or suggestions, please email us at puppetimes@gmail.com. We welcome anything our membership would like to contribute.

We will have more details in our next issue.

Yes! I would love to help The Judy Barry Brown Fund propel the education of young puppeteers in our guild region!

Please take my money!

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

My gift:

\$25 _____ \$50 _____ \$75 _____ \$100 _____

Other: \$ _____

Enclosed is my check: _____

Or

VISA _____ MC _____ AMEX _____ DISC _____

Card # _____

Exp. ____ / ____ CC# (on back) _____

Name as shown on card:

All gifts to the National Capital Puppetry Guild are fully tax deductible as allowable by law.

More Nufonia Must Fall Live

I've often found that I end up with too much for an issue. Other times, things come in late. So it is with this bit that came in after we went to press on issue 3 of this year.

Here is a short interview with Clea Minaker, who was one of the puppet builders on materials and technology used on puppets in Nufonia Must Fall Live.

PT: What materials were you using?

The puppets were cast in a two part poly-urethane resin. The idea behind this material was that it would be resilient, and could be repaired/touched up easily. It was important to be able to 'house' the mechanisms in a material that was solid yet workable. Also the basic white colour of the plastic, created a nice base material for the black and white colour palette.

PT: What determined the scale of each figure/set?

The scale of the figures and sets was determined by a number of considerations: ease of manipulation, the needs of the camera shots, the size of the stage plot, the order of scenes, and also, the number of touring cases that we hoped to travel with. (We now travel with many more road cases than we initially intended, each time new scenes are created, we end up with more props and more sets and therefore... more road cases!).

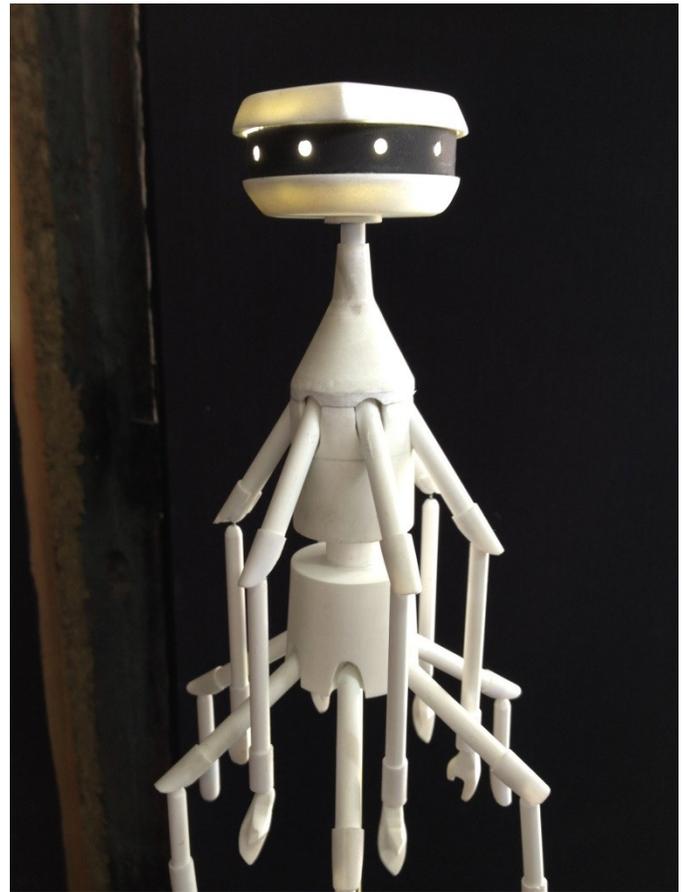


We have three scales of puppet: the main sets and indoor scenes use rod and rod and table top puppets measuring 8-12 inches; the 'jewel box' sets, which are a lot of the outdoor and street scenes, use simpler rod puppets measuring 4-6 inches; finally we have some very tiny puppets (approx. 1 inch) for long shots.

Initially K.K Barrett and Kid Koala had envisioned including a scene with giant wearable versions of Robot and Malory but simplifying things often meant getting smaller- not bigger.

PT: What difficulties did you face?

The original graphic novel Nufonia Must Fall contains



many more scenes, characters, and story details than the stage show. In the early discussions I once made a list of all of the 'main' story actions that the Robot puppet would need to perform. There were over seventy! Obviously one puppet alone could hardly be designed to accommodate all of these 'special' actions. For quite some time we thought we would need to design many versions of Robot. In the end, with one full size table-top (bunraku) puppet, and one full size rod puppet, for both Malory and Robot, we are able to perform all of the main scenes. In the jewel box puppet category we have between 4-6 versions of each main character- including hexabot- about 30 puppets in total.

There were many actions that we needed to translate that puppets do not perform 'well' such as spilling a glass of wine. Working with the cameras in rehearsal we were eventually able to respond to technical challenges that the puppet design alone could not solve.

PT: How long did each phase of the process last?

This process was insanely short! I came on board in mid February of 2014- for one week of storyboarding with the puppeteers, set-designer, camera person, K.K Barrett and Kid Koala. From that point onward we had 8 weeks to design and complete the build for all sets and puppets, before leaving to rehearse and perform for the first time at Banff Centre for the Arts. We often laugh

when remembering our first show in late May in Banff which was a first true run through and premiere at the same time. We have never (to this day) stopped working on improving the show. Whether adding new scenes, attending to a glitch in the storyline, solving a design conundrum, or perfecting the puppeteering, Nufonia remains a work in progress, now that the stress of the beginning is behind us, it is a great way to work!

PT: How resilient have the puppets been?

Incredibly resilient. Thanks to fact that our puppet design team- myself, Patrick Martel, Karina Bleau, and Felix Boisvert- have all been puppeteers on the tour, when a problem comes up on the road we can almost always solve it. We are now two years into the tour, and have had a few major rebuilds, but not many.

PT: What kind of "fixes" have been used?

Fixes as in glue? We used scandalous amounts of zap-a-gap, and also a lot of white epoxy sculpting putty.



Above: Patrick Martel, who one of the puppet designers. He was behind the technical design, and sculpted the 'extras' featured in the photo at top right. In this picture he has been sanding furiously and is covered in plastic dust as he assembles puppets.

PT: I noticed some "Fettig"-like mechanisms. What can you tell me about the use of those techniques?



Sorry I don't know the term Fettig! One inspiration for the types of puppets that we used was traditional Indonesian rod puppets (the elegance of their arm gestures), and also the simple logic of an umbrella, rods within rods, and mechanisms on the inside.

It was a very interesting and challenging process to translate the drawing style of Kid Koala's book into a 3-D puppet film. In the end, we chose an aesthetic that is half way between Kid Koala's drawings and a kind of 'puppet naturalism' (in a Robot populated world that is). As a director, K.K Barrett had very specific desires around the aesthetics of the puppets and sets. As prolific production designer himself, he had a tendency to get hands on with the design team- he actually built all the props for the insert scenes himself! It was fun to watch him work in this way.





2017 PofA National Festival Puppetry Exhibit Highlights

*Clockwise to the right: Harlequin and Col-
umbine by Tony Urbano. Rosina Rubylips
by Bill Tolson and Stephanie Tolson-
Daniels. Clown by Bob Brown. Mouse by
Rene Zendejas. Diana Mooncloud by Bill
Henderson.*





Clockwise from top left: Cast of "Alice in Wonderland" by David A., David J., and Peter Syrotiak. Rudy Valee by Sue Hastings. Cast of "Varekna" by Marionnettes de Geneva. Chet Huntley, Bolero Boy, and Polka Dancers by Bil Baird.



POODLES, POETRY and PUPPETS

by Linda Zimmer

The following is an excerpt from my book: PLAYING WITH MEMORY. The book depicts my work as an expressive arts therapist and the development of a playful protocol utilizing music, writing, art, drama, nature, food and pet therapy to help first my own mother, then 100 other residents of a nursing home in West Virginia. Even with a diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease, I found that most people could be reached through their emotions and innate creativity. I helped establish the first certified Music and Memory program in the state of West Virginia. (Music and Memory is a widely acclaimed national program that connects people in nursing homes with the sound tracks of their lives through access to personally programmed iPods.)

I am first and foremost a puppeteer having designed puppetry programs for several children's hospitals, worked as performer and teaching artist, created puppets for Mister Rogers Neighborhood and now construct puppets from native hard woods on our farm. So of course, I used...

PUPPETS!

I lean close to the person sitting in the wheelchair. She is someone I know well and yet the diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease can make her seem like a stranger. She's bent over a stuffed cat whose mouth is stained a bright fuchsia from the strawberry yogurt she fed her this morning.

She is my mother: Ellen Mc Cay Zimmer.

I take my hand puppet cat, Caroline and begin softly singing ***Someone to Watch Over Me.***

Does Mom know this song? I can't remember having heard her sing it or play it on the piano.

Suddenly she sits up straight, makes eye contact with Caroline, winks, smiles and joins in the chorus. She finishes on the beat, gives Caroline a kiss on the nose and starts speaking in full sentences, which surprises me as she has been monosyllabic of late.

"You have two brown eyes, a pink nose and tongue and soft fur. I think you are a cat."

"How old are you? What do you like to eat? Don't



worry. I'll get you something. You're going to have a nice life and learn how to do a lot of things." She says. This must be the way she encouraged the many small children that passed through her class room over her thirty years as an elementary school teacher.

It's a gift. I realize that my mother is still here.

I developed a playful protocol utilizing the modalities of music, writing, art and drama when she came to live with us on our farm in the central mountains of West Virginia and was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. I also discovered the two abilities remaining with us through our entire life span even with dementia or Alzheimer's: the ability to access our emotions and the ability to use creativity to understand and cope with change.

When I could no longer care for her in our home, she moved to a nursing home where I work as an Expressive Arts Therapist. I expanded the playful protocol to meet the needs of 100 elderly residents, most of who had some degree of dementia.

Artistic achievement is distinct from accomplishing arts and crafts activities. While arts and crafts may keep people occupied, artistic accomplishments operate on a



deeper level accessing problem solving capabilities and providing profound satisfaction.

Although a puppeteer by profession, I initially hesitated in introducing puppets as part of the program. Perhaps it's because American culture unlike European and Asian ones, views puppetry as primarily a children's entertainment. I was sensitive to anything that might be interpreted as patronizing. I was already using music, writing, visual art and storytelling (all elements of puppetry) with my clients so why not puppets? I was aware of the therapeutic power of puppetry for adults as well as children. The fact that puppet shows are strongly visual and emotion filled make them natural communicators for people with dementia.

Puppetry is powerful theater and powerful therapy I've watched as Sergei Obraztsov, reduced an audience of adults to tears as he sang a lullaby to a simple hand puppet at the Kennedy Center. I've been on set at Mister Rogers Neighborhood as actor, Betty Aberlin had a quiet, dignified scene with Daniel striped tiger, the melodic notes of Johnny Costa's jazz piano playing in the background. In my role as play therapist in children's hospitals, I created dog puppets who could be the companion a kid needed to talk with to express their fears and concerns.

A child's work is play.

As it turns out adults too can use play to help them understand and navigate new circumstances and difficult terrain. Before long I brought on the puppets.

The first thing I noticed was the willing suspension of disbelief. Performing without a stage, seemingly visible, I become invisible as residents interacted directly with the puppets.

I introduced my own marionettes and hand puppets while acquiring a collection of Pelham marionettes on ebay an etsy. These lightweight vintage figures were manufactured

in England for children from the 1950s to the 1970s. They are a perfect size to be operated by someone in a wheelchair. The distance from the strings to the puppets made for a magical transformation that captivated both the puppeteer and the audience in the nursing home. Together we made simple finger puppets and hand puppets to perform in a theater fashioned from a vintage suitcase. Stick puppets could be created from magazine images and old calendars could be transformed into backdrops. The puppets simplicity is what made them successful communicators in this environment. Residents are often approached by nursing assistants and visitors who speak rapidly and whose faces display a confusing array of emotions. The puppets freed the residents to explore a variety of emotions and story lines with shifts in time and place. They transported memories and imaginations to surprising landscapes filled with dramatic possibilities.

Performing for the residents, I introduced marionettes of Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt to be greeted with a delightful response from a woman who grew up in a "new deal" community.

"My brother danced with Eleanor Roosevelt when she came to dedicate the Homestead School! "she exclaimed. The Roosevelts did a lot for us here in West Virginia."

When the foxgloves were in bloom at the farm. I brought some to the nursing home as I portrayed Beatrix Potter with puppets from her tales.

"You're the person who wrote the stories I read to my children when they were young." exclaims an excited viewer.

Because music and poetry had been a central feature in my playful protocol, it was a natural fit to create shows for *Daisy, Daisy. Take me out to the Ballgame, Easter Parade or Stopping by the Woods on a Snowy Evening*. I was assisted in my work by therapy dog **Toby** an apricot toy poodle who is a total charmer. Many of the residents did not remember my name but always remembered Toby's moniker. They delighted in making Toby stick puppets and creating new stories, poems and adventures for him.

It is humbling and gratifying to discover the reservoir of creativity preserved in this population.

Marketing Makeover

by Heidi Rugg

Part 1 - Facebook Reigns

Social media. Facebook. Instagram. Twitter. LinkedIn. Snapchat. Pinterest. Tumblr. Sigh.

I confess: I have a love/hate relationship with social media. Most people I talk to seem to have similar feelings, and it's fairly often that someone on Facebook will post, "I am taking a break! You won't see me here for a while."

If you are not on social media, you are part of an ever-decreasing minority. There is no shortage of data to support this fact. Just looking at the active users for Facebook only, the population of Facebook has been larger than the size of China since 2015.ⁱ Currently, there are over 2 billion active monthly users on Facebook – and over a billion active daily users.ⁱⁱ Yes. Every. Second.

What does this mean for you, the puppeteer? Like it or not, Facebook is something we must take seriously for marketing our work and connecting to our audiences. And connecting to an audience, we know, is the key to a good performance AND a top-notch marketing strategy. Facebook, used properly, CAN lead to building your audience.

"Wait, wait....our audiences?" you ask? "But those three-year olds and seven-year olds are not on Facebook!"

True. But their parents are. Their schools are. The PTA president of their school is, too. The theatres that present your work to them in their oversized seats are also there. The people that book you are on Facebook – and this is the audience that matters most when you go to the bank. Even if "they" have not actively engaged with you by "liking" or commenting on a post, they are there. They are lurking. They have been to your Facebook page to see if you are a "real" puppeteer. To see how professional you are.

Think about the person who books you. For me, it's usually a female (77% of women are active on Facebook), and she's usually between 30-60 years old (also



an active Facebook demographic with over 80% active users).ⁱⁱ If the people who are booking you are on Facebook, then it is a tool, not just a modern torture device.

Increasingly, I receive requests from venues (especially theatres and libraries) to re-tweet and re-post all content related to a performance that they are presenting. I have found that venues LOVE to see that you are paying attention to them and interacting with them via digital media. There are so many ways to better connect with your venues:

If you do a school or a library show, post up to a school's Facebook page a "Thank you for having us out to share our work!" with an accompanying photo from the show (but not of the kids).

Taking a picture of their school (not the kids, just the school) and sharing it on your own puppet business Facebook page will also show followers the kind of work you are doing – ideally, to bring in more of the kind of work you want to be doing.

If you are in a theatre with an amazing green room, take a picture and post it up. "Wow! We love that this venue has such an awesome space for performers to relax! Best. Greenroom. Ever."

For library gigs, you can post up encouragements about their Summer Reading Programs. You can even post up what you are reading (you are reading, right?).

Doing puppet repair work before heading out to a venue? Document it with some photos – the public needs to know how much work we REALLY do!

We are storytellers – and not just of "Rapunzel." You have a story. The story about how you became a puppeteer.

Who sparked your interest early on? Who mentored you? What kinds of puppets do you make? What materials do you use to make your puppets? What new work are you working on right now? What puppet took the longest to make? Who do you love to perform for most? All of these bits and pieces are your story. A story you can share on Facebook. For FREE.

If you do not have a dedicated business page for your puppet work, it's easy to create one. You just need your business name, a blurb about your business, and a photo. Go to <https://www.facebook.com/business/learn/set-up-facebook-page> to get you started. You can have a page up and running in less than 5-minutes!

If you do have a page, then it must be used regularly and with good timing. The blend of content and timing will determine your success. The BEST content (i.e. the content that the Facebook algorithm pays more attention to) will contain a photo or a video (this works for us – puppets are visual and invite photos). The timing part is a bit trickier, but there is easy science to it.

Facebook is excellent about data; they keep track of EVERYTHING. At the moment, the best times to post are midweek between 1-3pm, in the morning (around 7:30am), and in the evenings (7pm) with the heaviest usage happening on Thursdays and Fridays. These numbers change and flow with the seasons, but if you Google “best times to post on Facebook” you will be inundated with the information you need.ⁱⁱ

I know what you are thinking. “But I can't just be posting things all day long! That's crazy.” Fortunately, you can schedule posts to happen while you are off-line. You can do it for your Facebook business page on Facebook or by using an app that does scheduled planning. It's true that Facebook algorithm does somewhat favors native posts, but the reality is that you only have but so many hours in a single day. There are a plethora of social media scheduling apps out there – HootSuite, Buffer, SproutSocial, and Everypost are just a few. I've landed with PostPlanner because I like the interface and find it easy to use. If you are looking for reviews, check out: <https://www.lifewire.com/social-media-apps-for-managing-everything-3486302>.

Facebook can connect you with your audience – the

people who book your shows. Digging deep into data, there are, on average, just 3.57 degrees of separation between you and every other Facebook user on planet Earth. Can you imagine? Not six degrees, but less than four! Facebook allows you to tell your story in a controlled way. You will get out of it what you put into it. It will take some patience, persistence, and time.

There is one more juicy piece of Facebook magic: Facebook can drive more traffic to your website. We will explore this in Part 2. Stay tuned!

If you want to dig into more statistics, please visit: <https://blog.hootsuite.com/facebook-statistics/>, <https://www.socialbakers.com/statistics/facebook/>, and/or <https://www.socialbakers.com/statistics/facebook/pages/total/united-states/>

Source: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/01/28/facebook-biggest-country_n_6565428.html

Source: <https://zephoria.com/top-15-valuable-facebook-statistics/>

Source: <https://research.fb.com/three-and-a-half-degrees-of-separation/>



Bonus festival photo! Guess who made these!

Editor's note: I had intended to include this wonderful interview with Terry Fator, from long time member Matthew Miller, in our last issue, but I ran out of room. Since I've endeavored to include blasts from the past in previous issues, I thought I'd just go ahead and add it to this issue.

My Interview with Terry Fator, Ventriloquist, Singer, Comedian, and Celebrity Impressionist by Matthew Miller



M: I saw in your video that you use a different technique than substituting letters, how does that work?

T: I didn't like the normal substitution because it didn't sound right. You know, so when you're trying to substitute a T for a P for example: you know you end up with "Teter Titer Ticker a Teck of Tickled Tettters". I mean nobody knows what you're saying there, or "The Doy Dought a Dasketdall" you know. So, I actually just experimented with the inside of my mouth cavity and I just tried to figure out ways that I could manipulate my tongue, so that I could make a letter sound more like the real thing. And I found that apparently, this is pretty common with the top ventriloquists. As opposed to saying a T sound where you get your tongue kind of coming off the roof of your mouth, I put the tip of my tongue against the back of my front teeth and I do that for B's P's and M's. There's a little bit of finesse with it, and it's just practice. I used to practice with a pencil between my teeth, to learn to keep my jaw straight. They say put your teeth together, but I just hold my mouth in a comfortable position and I let my tongue do all the work. You're going to find that you are going to be able to recreate those sounds, but it takes a lot of practice! I must have practiced 400,000 times! I mean I said it over and over, it used to drive my family crazy

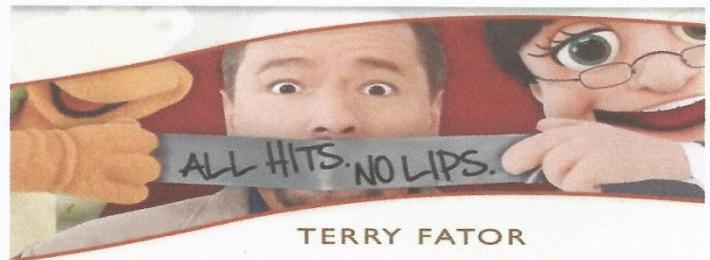
M: What is the start to finish process for developing a new character and how long does it take? What inspires you first: the impression or the song? Do you have any new characters planned?

T: Inspiration is inspiration you know, you never know when that's going to come. I'll be on vacation, laying on a beach with her (wife) and all of a sudden I'll go, "Oh my gosh, this would make a great character"! She'll say that's great, write it down and forget about it, till were off vacation. Because I'm always thinking. You might meet

T: I have no talent whatsoever with building or drawing. What I do is kind of like a police sketch artist. I'll sit and I'll explain to an artist, someone who can draw, and I'll say here's what I want. Like with the crash test dummy I said I want him to have this perpetually scared look on his face and I want his eyebrows up. And at the Mirage, when I was creating the Beatle character, I wanted it to look like a conglomeration of all 4 Beatles. The artist did 12-14 passes back and forth of the picture, till it looked like the guy that I had wanted. Then you have to have them make a 3D model so you can see what it will look like and decide on the type of puppet you want to make. They can be very expensive. You also have to be very careful to get written permission to use a puppet owned by someone else. Make sure you know who made the puppet and get written permission to use them, especially on TV. I got sued for the puppets I used on "Americas Got Talent" I was clueless and didn't know this. That's why I had to have all the puppets changed and remade.

M: What materials are used to make the puppets and what type of mechanisms do you use?

T: Hard puppets have a stick and triggers for all of the functions. I don't want all the crazy functions though. I want to have winkers, blinkers, raising eyebrows and moving eyes and mouth. I do have one that crosses his eyes, Monte Carlo, but he had those when I bought him. With soft sculpture puppets you put your hand in the back of his head or all the way up into his head.



M: And my last question, what words of wisdom do you have for an aspiring puppeteer or ventriloquist?

T: Just never stop working towards it, always practice. If you are driving in the car for an hour or 2, practice singing along to the radio with out moving your lips, if you are working on ventriloquism. For puppetry, look in the mirror, watch yourself or video tape yourself, for hours. When I was on "Americas Got Talent" I spent 10 hours a day practicing in front of the mirror and watching the puppet. I said this is my shot, I may never have another shot like this. I want everything to be perfect. I want the audience to feel the emotion from the puppet and every move of the puppet to be scripted and blocked. The tiniest hand movement can create an emotion. You know where that puppet is going to be looking, every tilt of the head, everything is scripted. So, my advise is work, work, work. And if you love what you do, its not work, its fun. Somebody told me the other

somebody and say "Wow that was an interesting person, I think I might want a character like that". My character Vicky, the Cougar came from seeing so many women with plastic surgery in Los Angeles. So I have to create a character just like these women, a plastic lady. And the process is different for any of them. Sometimes I'll create a character first and then decide what impressions they are going to do. Other characters I create specifically for certain songs. I wanted to do songs about cars so I created a crash test dummy character for that. My newest character is a robot, so I am looking for songs about robots, like "Mr. Roboto" by Styx. Try to find that sweet spot where you're happy with the character and the audience loves them and then be consistent. Don't stray from that character's basic personality. Like Winston is by far the audience's favorite character, because he is so sweet and nice and cute, so being obnoxious would be out of his character.

M: About how long does it take to get a new impression down pat? What influences your choice and what is your favorite impression to perform?

T: My favorite impression is Michael Jackson. I love doing Michael Jackson! He's probably also one of my best. I learned how to do him when I was about 9 years old, before I even started being a ventriloquist. He was also one of the first singing impressions I did as a ventriloquist. I had a character that would sing Michael Jackson songs. Every impression is different. When I was working on Barbara Streisand, it took me 2 years to get it down to where it would be good enough to perform. Other impressions I picked up right away, Etta James, I picked up a puppet and went (sings "At Last..."). Oh perfect, it was right in my range. Its all different, just depending on who I am trying to do.

M: Who builds your puppets and how do you communicate your ideas to them, to have the puppets come out as planned? Have you built any of the puppets?



day "Happy Weekend" and I said everyday is the weekend for me. I love what I do. I get on stage and I have fun. For me every day is Friday (laughing).

It was a pleasure to meet Mr. Fator, his wife Taylor and his staff. They were all very friendly, kind and helpful. Thanks also to Ms. Alissa Kelly for her help in arranging this interview and her help with resources for this article.

Terry Fator's show afterwards at The American Music Theater was amazing! He is extremely talented and the consummate entertainer. He did an act which was biographical and illustrated his rise to the top, from his humble beginnings. He honors any veterans in the audience, having them stand while he thanks them for their service. He also uses proceeds from his merchandise sales to support the Wounded Warrior Project, as well. His impression of Louis Armstrong with Winston singing "What a Wonderful World" was striking as were all of his performances: Garth Brooks, Natalie Cole and many more. He has an incredible voice and his singing impressions are uncanny. His performance is a must see, if you are in the area where he is performing or even if you have to travel to see it. It's worth the trip!



2018 NCPG BOARD of DIRECTORS NOMINATIONS!

Yes, it's that time of year again. It's time to elect a new board. Nominations are officially open. If you have a desire to serve your guild and the furtherance of puppetry in the greater national capital area, please step up and nominate yourself or some other likely candidate. If seconded, their (or your) name will appear on the ballot for the Election at our November meeting.

The current board will be running for reelection with the exception of our treasurer, Pam McNaughton, so we will need a new treasurer.

Please respond to puppetimes@gmail.com if you are interested.

Everything Wrong with This Caja Show

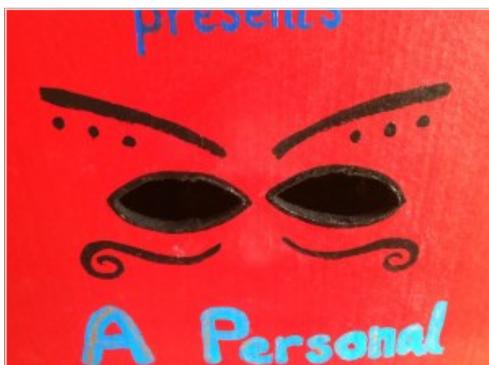
By Cecilia Cackley, Wit's End Puppets

In 2012, I visited Argentina for the first time and I was fascinated when Mara Ferreya, a puppeteer from Cordoba, described a kind of street puppet show that took place in a box. She showed me a photograph, with three people all wearing headphones and looking through their own peephole at some invisible show inside a cardboard box. It didn't look that hard to make.

Later that summer I made my first attempt at a similar show. I called it the Personal Puppet Show and performed it at farmer's markets and community events. People liked it, but it was only after I went back to Argentina two years later and took a workshop with Mendoza puppeteer Gabriela Céspedes that I realized all of the things I had done wrong. Here is a list of them.



1. **The box is too shallow.** I could only see one side of the box in Mara's photo and I didn't realize it had to be a certain depth. Part of the magic of caja lambe-lambe is that the tiny peephole creates a forced perspective for the viewer. This gets ruined, however, if the box isn't deep enough and the puppets end up too close to the eye. My box is only about 6-8 inches deep which is great for transport, but not for creating a forced perspective.



2. **There are two eyeholes instead of one.** This was purely me trying to be fancy. I thought two eyeholes would make it easier to see inside, but it's actually the opposite. Because everyone has a slightly different distance between their eyes, some people find it much harder to focus, looking through two holes. One peephole per viewer works the best.

3. **There is no viewfinder for the puppeteer.** Another detail that I missed because I only saw a photo. There should be some kind of window in the back or the top of the box so that the puppeteer can see what they are doing. Otherwise, movement becomes imprecise and easy to mess up. Without a viewfinder, my puppeteering isn't as good as it could be.



4. **There is a curtain at the back, instead of holes for the puppeteer's hands.** Another mistake that causes practical problems for puppeteering. Trying to smoothly move my hands (and puppets) between pieces of fabric is difficult and it's easy for the cardboard puppets to get stuck. This creates a jerking motion as they enter the scene, which ruins the illusion of movement. Most boxes have holes for the puppeteer's hands either at the back or the side, with a



curtain over the top to block the light spill. It is much easier to place a puppet in front of this curtain and then enter the box, rather than trying to do both those movements at once. Another option if your puppets are on vertical rods is to cut the holes in the top of the box and bring the puppets in from above.

5. **The box isn't created with a single show in mind.**

This is the biggest mistake I made, and it's arguably the one that takes the Personal Puppet Show out of the category of *caja lambe-lambe*. A true *caja* show is a miniature world, one that is constructed for the purpose of telling one short, 1-3 minute story and that story alone. The walls, the floor, the ceiling, the puppets, the soundtrack—all of these should combine to create the illusion of a complete setting. My box, with its one-color walls, black curtain background and plain floor does not do this.

Despite (or perhaps because of) my many mistakes, I enjoyed building my Personal Puppet Show and felt very much at home with the style of puppetry. After studying with Gabriela Céspedes and building a second show as part of the 2015 Fringe project *I Thought the Earth Remembered Me* I was only more convinced. This year, I'm looking forward to premiering my third *caja* show, called *Library Love* and demonstrating how much I've learned since I first built the Personal Puppet Show.

Cecilia Cackley is a puppeteer and playwright based in Washington, DC. and one of the chief collaborators at Wit's End Puppets. This was used by permission.

NCPG SCOOP - What's up With Our Guild

On August 1st, the NCPG board of directors held their first board retreat. Here are the abbreviated minutes. Our meeting officially began at 1:45pm. Jeff opened the meeting by encouraging us to figure out what our organization can commit to accomplishing. Pam presented the Treasurer's Report. We then talked about how we might structure our yearly meeting schedule. Jeff proposed two physical meetings at Puppet Company Playhouse, two meetings that would be location broadcasts, and two parties. Heidi moved to accept this proposal; seconded and passed. It was noted that these meetings could be done in conjunction with other events. We will be scheduling our board meetings to match our public meeting schedule. Then we outlined

and passed our year's season which includes: our Durant Center Programs: two yearly festivals and eight monthly puppet shows. Then talk turned to the Judy Barry Brown Fund. Pam moved to re-establish the Judy Barry Brown Fund (this made it official) at \$2,500 for this year. This fund will support young people with a college scholarship program, a scholarship to attend the O'Neill, scholarships to attend festivals and other educational opportunities in puppetry. The motion was seconded and passed.

We also talked about the need for a membership committee or a new member "leader" of some sort, the upcoming election and completing our mission statement. This filled the entire 8+ hours session.

Minutes taken by Heidi Rugg, NCPG secretary

OKAY.....

We have an election coming up. As of now, everyone is up for re-election to the board except for Pam McNaughton, who is leaving us after two years of faithful service as our treasurer. We all owe her a debt of gratitude for a difficult job, very well done.

Also, nominations are open for board membership. If you would like to help us achieve our educational agenda, please let any of your board members know of your interest. Some members should also expect phone calls, as we intend to recruit new board members.

The Judy Fund is fully funded and we're writing the selection criteria for its programs: college scholarship, festival attendance grants, and O'Neill scholarships.

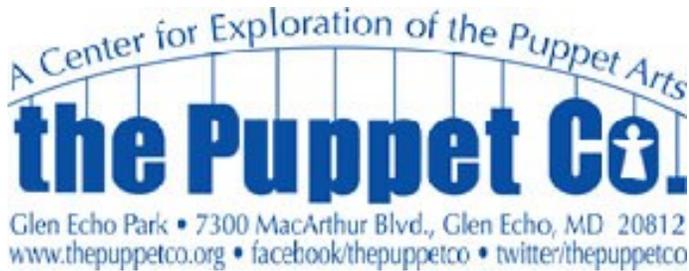
Our other programs are already in motion with our second festival in planning and outreach to local high schools also in progress.

We have another festival coming up in October at the Durant Center in Alexandria. This one focuses on the maker aspect of puppetry with building workshops and performances. Heidi Rugg will be sharing her Naked Puppet Exhibit and there will be a puppet petting zoo for younger children.

It's also time to talk about renewing your membership. It's never too early to think about renewing. I'd also like to make a pitch to everyone to use Amazon Smile.

Why? Because if you designate the NCPG as your charitable organization, you can contribute to our work every time you make a purchase.

THE SEE AND BE SEEN SCENE



The Puppet Co. Playhouse at Glen Echo, MD

Reservations: (301) 634-5380 thepuppetco.org

Sept 15th through October 1st

Circus!

October 5th through November 17th

Pinocchio

Shows are Thursdays & Fridays 11:00 AM
and Saturdays & Sundays 11:30 AM & 1:00 PM

Tiny Tot Time with Bob Brown

9/16, 17/17 - Jelly Bean Circus

Sat, Sun - 10:00 AM

9/24, 27, 30/17 - Old MacDonald's Farm

Sun, Wed, Sat -10:00 AM

10/7, 11, 15/17 - Baby Bear's Birthday

Sat, Wed, Sun - 10:00 AM

10/22, 28/17 - World on a String

Sun, Sat -10:00 AM

11/8, 12, 15/17 - Clowning Around

Wed, Sun, Wed -10:00 AM

WIT'S END PUPPETS

Malevolent Creatures: What the Waves Bring
Saturday September 2, 2017 at 5pm

Kennedy Center, Israeli Lounge

FREE. No tickets required, limited seating available. Info at: (800) 444-1324

YOUR SHOW HERE!

That's right. Tell us what you're up to and we will share with the world! At least the world of our membership. Get your notice in within five weeks after your current issue and we will (most likely) post it here.

Wonderment Puppet Theater

412 W King St, Martinsburg, WV 25401

Martinsburg, WV

(304) 258-4074

wondermentpuppets.com

wondermentpuppets@yahoo.com

Sept 9 - Oct 29 Hokie Pokie Magic Show

Oct 21 and 22 Harvest Party

Puppets at the Durant Center

Alexandria, VA

Sept 23rd 11AM and 1PM

Joe Pipik's Backpack Puppets

PUPPET MAKERFEST!

Oct 14 11AM to 3PM

Durant Center, Alexandria, VA

THE SEE AND BE SEEN SCENE...

..as it states above, wants to know about your scene! Please submit your upcoming shows, spectacles, and other public performances and protuberances along with their particulars to: puppetimes@gmail.com

Puppetimes is always soliciting your articles, opinions, advice, letters to the editor and other missives for publication. Please note that article submission deadline is roughly two weeks before publication date.

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It's Membership Renewal Time



National
Capital
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Guild

2018 Membership Renewal Form - Mail In

www.nationalcapitalpuppetry.org/

The NCPG is a chartered Guild of the Puppeteers of America

Name:

Address:

City: State: Zip Code:

E-mail:

Company Name:

Company Web Site:

Please send my newsletter as a PDF to my e-mail address!

Annual Dues: Associate () \$10 Junior/Senior () \$15
Regular () \$20 Adult Couple () \$30 Company () \$35

____ My check also includes a charitable contribution of _____ to the Guild.

Amount enclosed: Today's Date:
Check #

Please make your check payable to N.C.P.G and send to:
P. McNaughton, NCPG Treasurer, 489 Cameron Station Blvd.,
Alexandria, VA 22304

Phone (check box prior to the number if
you don't want it listed in the Directory)

() - Home:

() - Work:

() - Mobile:

If you want a print copy of our newsletter,
please add \$20 to your membership fee
and check here: _____ (Associate
Members not eligible)

Need details? See our website: www.nationalcapitalpuppetry.org

-----CUT HERE AND SAVE BOTTOM SECTION FOR YOUR RECORDS -----

I sent check # _____ for \$ _____ to join The National Capital Pup-
petry Guild as a _____ member, on (date)

Membership benefits include:

6 informative newsletters a year, in a PDF version. Print edition
available.

6 meetings a year, festivals, educational events, pot-luck's, lec-
tures, demonstrations, workshops, show and tell sessions, works-
in-progress previews, and meet and greets with guest artists. Free
admittance to most shows at our host facility – the Puppet Co.
Playhouse in Glen Echo Park.

Access to "Members Only" areas of the Guild Website:
nationalcapitalpuppetry.org/

Public listings of, and a link to, your puppet business
from the Guild website, if applicable.

Summer Picnic, Winter Party, and National Day of
Puppetry Celebration.

Meetings on selected dates typically follow the 1:00
show at the Puppet Co. Playhouse.

Meeting dates are published in the NCPG Puppetimes
newsletter and on the Guild website.

Reservations for the show are recommended.

Membership questions may be directed to: Pam
McNaughton • NCPG Treasurer

489 Cameron Station Blvd., Alexandria, VA 22304