

The Newsletter of The National Capital Puppetry Guild

# Puppetimes

Vol. 54 #5 September-October 2018



**A Conversation with  
Karen Falk - Archives  
Director for the Jim  
Henson Company and  
Vice President of the  
Jim Henson Legacy**



# Coming Up at the Puppet Co

Through September 30

in Glen Echo Park

7300 MacArthur Blvd, Glen Echo, MD

For Reservations (301)634-5380



## PETER AND THE WOLF

Staged with half life-size marionettes, Peter and the Wolf is one of the Puppet Co.'s best-loved stories. Over a million children and adults have seen this one-man show, based on Prokofiev's popular tale of good versus evil, performed by Puppet Master Christopher Piper. An introduction to the instruments in the orchestra precedes this story of Peter and his animal friends, and their attempts to capture wily "Old Lupus."

**Recommended Ages: 4 years old - Adult • Show Length: 40 Minutes**

October 4th through  
November 16th

Shows are Thursday and Fridays at 10:00 and 11:30am  
Saturday and Sunday at 11:30am & 1:00pm



## Hansel and Gretel

Humperdink's children's opera, full of magic, music and dazzling special effects. The puppets, lights, music and effects, are all operated by Christopher Piper, who also performs all the live vocal characterizations. The production has long been a favorite of children and their parents, and is an excellent introduction to musical story for children.

**Recommended Ages: 4 years old - Adult • Show Length: 40 Minutes**

The next meeting of the National Capital Puppetry Guild will on October 20th at the Durant Center as we host our 2nd annual Puppet MakerFEST! Remember you can attend free as a member, but you MUST reserve your advance ticket for the festival beforehand. Please contact Jeff at 703-424-5553 for details.

# Puppetimes

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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. 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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Website [www.puppetimes.info](http://www.puppetimes.info)

Send all submissions to: [puppetimes@gmail.com](mailto: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.

President: Jeff Bragg - Vice President: Sam Rugg  
Secretary: Heidi Rugg - Treasurer: Cori Leyden-Sussler  
Members at Large - Sandy Feulner, Tom Noll, Honey Goodenough, Pam McNaughton

NCPG home page: [www.nationalcapitalpuppetry.org](http://www.nationalcapitalpuppetry.org)  
Join the NCPG Facebook Group at: [www.facebook.com/nationalcapitalpuppetry](http://www.facebook.com/nationalcapitalpuppetry)

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**The next meeting of the National Capital Puppetry Guild is October 20th at the Durant Center in Alexandria, Virginia at our annual Puppet MakerFEST! As a member you get free admittance to this, but ONLY if you make an advance reservation. Call Jeff at 703-424-5553**

## President's Note by Jeff Bragg

As editor of Puppetimes, I sometimes get to experience wonderful things. Such is the nature of the hobby and business of puppetry - wonderful things abound! Toward the end of July, I was welcomed through the doors of the Jim Henson Company's offices in New York City to interview their historian and chief archivist, Karen Falk, the entirely charming expert on everything Jim Henson.

But this wasn't an interview about Jim Henson, which is usually what Karen does for her job. This was an interview about her work and how she does it. It's about her experience preserving the history and legacy of one of America's greatest creative spirits. In this issue of Puppetimes we get to talk to her about how it feels to handle such a vast and precious collection of artifacts, and guide their preservation and distribution to various museums, exhibitions, and festivals. Her interview starts on page 6.

I also attended my first puppet festival outside of my own backyard. At the end of June I traveled to Asheville, North Carolina for Puppet Paradise, the festival for the South East region. I had an absolutely fabulous time and saw some wonderful performances.

All of this was whipped up by Keith Shubert who is perhaps more famously known as Toybox, America's Favorite Cartoon Witch. Photo coverage starts on page 13. A few of the highlights were the National Marionette Theater with their production of Peter and the Wolf, Hobey Ford's "Sea Song," Kevin Kammeraad's "The Spinach Dip Pancakes Show!" I also want to introduce our readers to photographer Jennifer Bennett, whose wonderful photos grace that photo-essay. Bennett is an Asheville based artist. Much thanks to her for her generous offer to share her photos with our readership.

Don't forget that our collaboration with the Durant Center continues with our (mostly) Monthly Puppet Shows (September 22), and Puppet MakerFEST which is coming up on October 20th. Scant details are on page 26, with more details to follow shortly.

I also want to let everyone know that our Mistress of Revels, Sandy Feulner is all healed up after breaking some ribs. We'll be seeing her at Puppet MakerFEST.

And here's one final reminder that the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions come together with Sandglass Theater's Puppets in the Green Mountains September 20th-23rd. With performance by Sinking Ship Productions, Sandglass Theater, Joshua Holden, and many more. Joshua is also hosting the Puppet Mutiny slam on Saturday evening. Expect short masterpieces of puppetry and a mix of classical forms to the experimental cutting edge.



And this is a beautiful random picture of Sandglass Theater, just to really make you want to go even more!



**PS.** For those of you getting a print copy, the back cover is from the National Marionettes Theater's production of Peter and the Wolf. Below, me during my sound effects workshop at the Puppet Paradise festival. Photos courtesy of Jennifer Bennett.



# 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.

Under the auspices of The Judy Fund , we are now 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.

Help us do this. You can make a tax exempt contribution or use Amazon Smile to make our scholarship programs successful.

Or help us do this by nominating a qualifying student. We are always seeking qualified applicants .

Go to page 16 to see full information on the grants and scholarship programs.

Do you want more great puppetry? Then help us make more great puppeteers.

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 \_\_\_\_\_

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

# A Conversation with Karen Falk

*Henson Historian and Archivist Discusses Her Work Managing One of the World's Great Collections*

Karen Falk has a dream job. She's the Archives Director for the Jim Henson Company and Vice President of the Jim Henson Legacy. Every day, she gets to work with items in a location where the allure is undeniable. She gets to work with the history of Jim Henson. She discovers, catalogs, inventories, stores and helps preserve a part of history dear to all of us.

Karen grew up in the suburbs of Washington, DC and graduated from Groveton High School in Fairfax County (now West Potomac High) and received her BA and MA at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia.

We met at the offices of the Jim Henson Company in Astoria, Queens, NYC.

PT: You've been with Henson for 26 years.

KF: Yes, since 1992.

PT: Did you have an early interest in puppetry?

KF: I took a puppet making class when I was about six, at the Little Theater of Alexandria, but didn't really take it any further.

PT: And you grew up in the Washington, D.C. area.

KF: I did. I remember that Allan Stevens was the puppeteer in the area, at the time.

PT: How did you get here? This isn't what you started out to do, right?

KF: For people who want to build puppets and perform puppets, write for puppets, this is obviously a goal. I didn't really have that kind of background. I studied American history, art history, and my Masters is in Museum Curatorship. I went out to work in the art trade; I worked for Christie's Auction House in New York for about seven years. I was keeping my eye out for interesting opportunities, curatorial type opportunities, either in corporate collections or museums, that kind of thing. My job at Christie's, after a few years, was as a liaison with museum clients, so I kind of had my foot in the museum world. Our offices were on East 67th Street, about half a block down from the Muppet Workshop. On my lunch hour, I would see people walking up and down the street wearing jackets with Kermit the Frog on the back. I had been a big Muppet Show watcher in the '70s with my



dad, but I was a little old for Sesame Street. Besides, in the Washington area, public television is a UHF channel and we didn't have a UHF antenna, so we didn't get Sesame Street. But I loved the Muppet Show and so when I saw the Kermit jackets and understood the Henson Company was nearby, I thought, "Oh, Kermit the Frog...what could I do for them? How could I work for them?" And I really couldn't think of any reason to approach them, because I didn't make puppets, I didn't perform puppets, I wasn't a television person.

But then I saw an ad in an American Association of Museums newsletter for a job in the exhibits department (Henson had an exhibits department at the time) and I sent off a resume and then I called, and they said, "Oh no we already filled that job, but we'll keep your resume." Of course, when they say that, you never expect to hear about again, but a couple months later I got a call saying, "Well, Jane Henson is looking for somebody to do archives. Would you want to come and talk about it?" And I said "YES!" of course. It was not something that I really had expected. I was an assistant vice president at Christie's and it wasn't really a trajectory that I was expecting, but I met with Jane and we talked about the collections. They hadn't really figured out where this role would be so then I talked to the PR people and I ended up getting hired as part of the PR department, but just to handle the archives. Jane was just starting the Jim Henson Legacy Foundation and the PR department was helping her put together materials so it made sense to be in the

PR section. Jane, Bonnie Erickson, Arthur Novell, Al Gottesman, Diana Birkenfield, and other colleagues of Jim were helping to put together this organization. They were developing materials for a press kit like chronologies and awards lists so that we would have information available for people who wanted to honor Jim, wanted to tell his story, and wanted to share his philosophy. I worked on those kinds of projects and began organizing Jim's papers and the rest of the collection. After about a year, the archives became a separate department, working in tandem with the photo librarian. I came in 1992 and it wasn't until about ten years later that we started to incorporate the photo library into the archives along with the media collections. All the film, video, and audio materials had been stored by our production department, so those were not part of the archives previously. By about 2005, the Archives took on responsibility for those collections as well.

The two media archivists on my team, Carla Del-lavedova and Shannon Robles, work in Los Angeles with the film/video/audio and still photography collections (totaling about 90,000 items). My colleague here in NY, Susie Tofte, and I deal with the ephemera, documents, scripts, press materials, Jim Henson's papers, character designs, awards, and 3D items. We are the main liaisons with our museum partners.

The other collection is the historic puppets. Those were previously housed in either in the exhibits department's collection or they were in the production department's collection, but in 1999 when the Henson Family sold the company, we sorted out about 1500 - 2000 items that we felt were historical and not performable and should really be kept together as a historical collection for potential museum exhibitions. And the Legacy group, by that time a more robust organization with a hands-on board (including me) and a small staff, took responsibility for managing that collection and inventorying it - the lion's share of the work was handled by Bonnie Erickson and Rhoda Cosme. Ultimately, The Jim Henson Legacy, in collaboration with the Henson family, investigated opportunities for museums and coordinated the gifts to several institutions. As a board member, I curated some exhibits and then focused my involvement on the disposition of the artifacts, providing curatorial research

and recommendations.

PT: As a history major in college, I can see how this would be fascinating.

KF: Yes, absolutely! Growing up outside Washington (DC), I spent a lot of time at the Smithsonian, so museums seemed to me a great way to present history. My father is a military historian. He was Chief Historian for the Air Force for many years. He's written many books and continues to write, into his nineties. So, I knew what that historians could teach, write books and/or work for a government agency. But I really liked the idea of museums as a way to present history. The course I did in college focused on Material Culture Theory and use of objects as documents...what you could learn about a culture from their objects. That is particularly useful for populations that are underrepresented in historical documentation. Historically, for the powerful, there is a written record, but for everybody else you have to sort-of glean



(L to R) Jane Henson and Karen Falk working with Josette Cole and Deborah Macanic from the Smithsonian on the Jim Henson's Fantastic World exhibit in 2006. Photo courtesy of The Jim Henson Company .

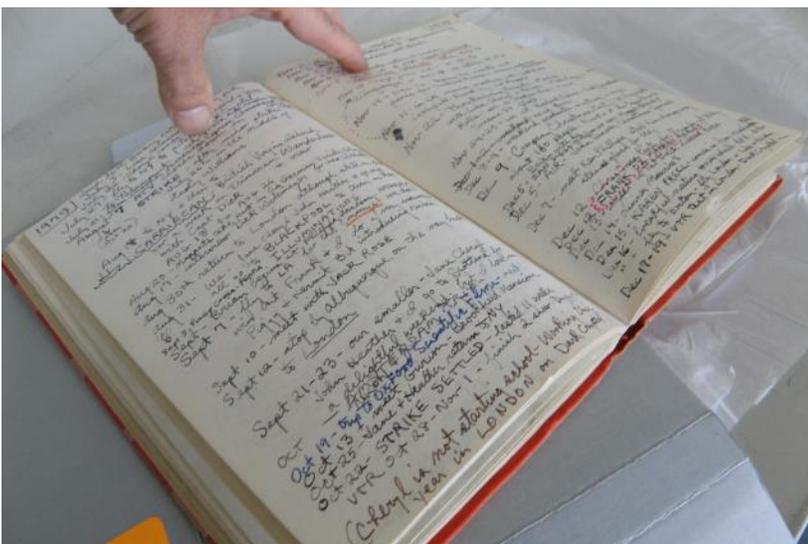
information from art, household objects, archeology, folkways, etc.

PT: Yes, the real history is what average people are doing, the day to day lives of ordinary people, the artifacts we leave behind. Did you have any idea of the state of things and the extent of this collection when you started? I know there were several other people involved in this effort.

KF: Bonnie Erickson certainly is the person to talk to about the puppet collection. Bonnie and Rhoda Cosme, they really spent hours, days, weeks, months, in warehouses, both here in New York and in the UK, sorting through the puppet collection, the 3D puppet collection, so that ultimately the family could make these gifts of the Henson puppet collections to the Museum of the Moving Image, the Center for

Puppetry Arts in Atlanta, the Smithsonian, and the new Academy Museum (of Motion Pictures) in California. Bonnie really oversaw that effort. I was involved in some of that in a more peripheral way, helping to identify the puppets and decide how they should be distributed and in developing the relationships with the institutions.

The papers, documents, letters, sketches, all of that was what I manage, and I have had the leisure of twenty-six years to really shape the collection. I spent maybe the first ten years I was here pulling boxes from storage, getting stuff from the Henson's home, going into somebody's office and saying, "What are you doing with that file drawer?" Every time the company changed hands or



Jim's Red Book journal. Photo courtesy of The Jim Henson Company .

removed, or we sent people to LA, I had new material to examine. There were tons and tons of stuff, and I needed to plow through it to assess whether it was something worth saving. I had to determine if an item documented something that was part of our historical creative output. It would then get rehoused into archival folders and proper archival storage, and finally get catalogued.

PT: How difficult is the cataloging process?

KF: It's not difficult - it's more tedious than anything else. Luckily, Jim Henson did a lot of work for us in advance. He left things in well-marked folders. He kept his 'Red Book' journal starting in 1965 (but he went back and filled in going back to 1954, the first things he did on television) – it's a log of everything he was doing that he thought was important or might be of interest. At the end of every year, he would sit down with his appointment calendars and go back through the year and write in his log things like, 'Video Taped This – Met with This Person-Worked on

This Project' sort of thing. They're just one-line entries -- he did it through 1988.

It's really Jim's entire career. Based on the Red Book, there was a rough chronology document. It existed before I started here, and I've been adding to it and editing it over the years. It's now about a hundred and thirty pages long. It is really just a list with dates and basic information about anything that happened – maybe something I read about in our staff meeting notes or saw in a press clipping. The chronology is the first place an event or project gets documented. Ideally, we have further documentation for everything on that chronology - for a show like *Fraggle Rock*, we definitely have lots of additional material - production files, scripts, storyboards, designs, etc.

(We don't do the financial or legal records in the archives since we focus on creative output.) For a smaller event like a PR appearance or a one-time thing that happened, say an appearance on the *Today Show* or something, hopefully we have at least a file on it to document the who, what, where and when – but sometimes it's just that entry on the chronology that becomes the historical record.

That initial skeleton, the list of activities that Jim and the company was engaged in, was my starting point for my hunt for materials. When I pulled a box of production files, from 1965 to 1967 for example, I could kind of match it up with the chronology and Jim's Red Book and understand that... "this is what that refers to. I'm going to read the file, learn about it and put it in the catalog" -- over time I built a collection in an effort to document that list.

About eight years ago, I saw a Twitter feed from the Massachusetts Historical Society. They were tweeting entries from John Quincy Adams's trip to Russia. He had kept a log with very short, two-line entries which he wrote each day. The MHS tweeted Adams's entries, one per day, matched to the current year's date. At the time, we were talking about different things we could do on-line to augment our website, and I suggested that we do the same thing for Jim using his Red Book. I wanted to tweet using his words for a specific date, quoting exactly what he wrote in his book (something like "Videotaped Muppet Musicians of Bremen in Toronto..." or "Jane and I bought piano...") and then have it link back to our website where I

could explain what he was talking about and post images and documents from the archives about the project. So that became our “Jim’s Red Book” blog.

[[www.henson.com/jimsredbook](http://www.henson.com/jimsredbook)] I ended up writing about 750 blog entries for that over three years. I was able to do it because I had already cataloged everything by then, it was already in order, it was in boxes, it was labeled. I could really dig deep and find out the minutiae of each little story and put it out there for fans with never-before-seen materials from the archives.

It was wonderful for me as a museum person to curate

research elsewhere and conducted dozens of interviews, extensive, extensive interviews), so my book works as a really nice visual companion for that biography, nice to read side-by-side.

PT: Let’s talk about your book a bit. It’s so beautifully laid out, incorporating the “Red Book” entries. Could you talk about the design process a bit?

KF: There was a terrific designer, Michael Morris. I told him that I wanted to reproduce Jim’s handwritten entries, as many as possible, and I wanted to have as many visuals as we can, basically cram in as much stuff as could be fit



and share these treasures. A distilled version of that Red Book blog is what then became my book, “Imagination Illustrated: The Jim Henson Journal” published by Chronicle Books.

PT: A wonderful book.

KF: Thanks! It was a joy to put together. And it was great that it was able to come out just a year before Brian Jay Jones’ book (Jim Henson: The Biography), because he had access to our archives. He used pretty much all the same material I did for the research (of course, he also did

on a page. Our publisher, Chronicle Books in San Francisco, had the designer Michael Morris on their staff and I gave him the scans of the entries I wanted, my text, which I tried to limit to a hundred and thirty words for each spread, and then I gave him sort of a menu of images for each spread. I told him, “I’d like to include ALL of these, but these are the important ones and these are the ones that if they don’t get in there, it’s okay.” And once he laid out the pages, I wrote the captions. He did an heroic job as far as I’m concerned, because I sent so

much stuff to him; the fact that he was able to get it in there, in such an accessible way was so impressive. It's not a big format – only about 8 x 10 or so. When I first thought about the book, I thought I wanted it to be a big coffee table book. We've just done these big coffee-table books with Inside Editions about Labyrinth and Dark Crystal that have tons of stuff from the archives, including facsimiles of things stuck between the pages - they're really wonderful and that was what I had pictured for Imagination Illustrated, but the editor at Chronicle said that if we keep it a 'smaller trim' (smaller book), we can keep it under thirty-dollars. More people – fans - will be able to buy it if it's less expensive. That really appealed to me because my goal is to get the stuff out there and if it becomes this big expensive coffee table book, it's going to be a limited audience that's going to buy it. It sold well and our fans were able to add it to their libraries. So, it actually worked out really well.

PT: You were also responsible for the online blog "Jim's



Red Book”.

KF: I wrote pretty much ninety-five percent of that.

PT: Talk about some of the other great projects that you've worked on.

KF: One of the first things I did once I had a sense for the collection was a small exhibit called Jim Henson: Designs and Doodles (in 1996). It seemed like an obvious project for me because when I first started, coming from Christie's, I was awed by all this amazing artwork hand-drawn by Jim Henson that had never seen the light of day - character designs, storyboards, concept and presentation art from the 1950s, '60s, and '70s as well as student art from high school and college. I had not known anything about those early years nor seen any of Jim's graphic art. I didn't know anything about the hundreds of commercials Jim had produced or the early guest appearances - that was all new to me. I thought to myself, "We've got put these on the wall somewhere." The Muppet exhibits up until that point had mostly been characters in cases with explanations or some video, photographs. Jim's personal art had not been displayed before, and, to me, these wonderful drawings were a way of going inside Jim's head. So, we did this small exhibit, Designs and Doodles, which was mostly just Jim's sketches and art. Only lines from his hand. And then we expanded that for the Jim Henson's Fantastic World exhibit that we toured for five years with the Smithsonian, adding puppets, videos and photos, hoping to provide a sense for Jim's visual thinking.

PT: What was the most amazing thing that you found, something that just blew your mind.

KF: The thing that was so compelling was the original Kermit, made from Jim's mother's coat - which we didn't find really because we knew exactly where he was. He was with the Exhibits Department collection because the Sam and Friends puppets had been part of their general exhibit. When we went to do the Designs and Doodles exhibit, I wanted to only have things on display that Jim actually made himself – not puppets built by his colleagues, but things he drew and puppets he sewed, glued, sculpted with his own hands. We had a wonderful board game that he made as a joke with Muppet head writer Jerry Juhl that Jerry lent us for the exhibit. And we had the Sam and Friends puppets that were the first puppets he made (and a couple that Jane Henson made, too), including the original Kermit. What was really fun was that, at one point,

the exhibit was moving from one spot to another, so the original Kermit did come home with me and spent the night at my house - that was pretty exciting. I have bragging rights to that. He now resides in the National Museum of American History at the Smithsonian.

But the other thing that we had in that exhibit which was so much fun, one of the things that Jim had drawn was from *The Muppet Show*: the Lydia the Tattooed Lady puppet, which was this pig, and her tattoos, which were based on the words of the song, were hand drawn by Jim. And that was really one of the most wonderful things. He loved the song and I guess he decided he was going to draw the tattoos on the pig. So that was a big surprise to find that puppet and put that in an exhibit of drawings by Jim Henson.

We did a fun project with ToughPigs.com, which is a great fan website. We had been thinking about those unboxing videos that are all over the internet. There are zillions of them where people get something and open it on camera. Our archives, of course, has tons of boxes, so we thought it might be fun if we let the Toughpigs guys, Joe Hennes and Ryan Roe, come to the archives and open some boxes on camera. We did ten videos with them which you can see on their website. It was so fun and a great way to engage the fans and give them some access to otherwise inaccessible treasures. Cheryl Henson appeared in a couple as did our master puppet builder Rollie Krewson.

PT: So, all of the historical puppets have been given away.

KF: In terms of the 3D puppets, almost all of the historical collection has been donated to The Center for Puppetry Arts in Atlanta Worlds of Puppetry Museum, Museum of the Moving Image in Queens, the Smithsonian, and the Academy Museum. We also helped arrange for the Henson family to donate about 350 licensed products to the Strong Museum of Play in Rochester. To a certain extent, we have sort of passed the baton to a range of institutions so that they can continue to tell Jim's story into the future.

Of course, we've done many new productions over the last couple decades, so we have puppets from those still in-house. And Sesame Workshop owns all of their production puppets. They're planning lots of things for the fiftieth anniversary next year, possibly an exhibit, so there are other historical puppets there. The archives collection, however, remains intact. No works-on-paper, drawings, ephemera, documents, etc. were donated - but those are available for



The Archives. Photo courtesy of The Jim Henson Company .

loans. Currently, Museum of the Moving Image has quite a few items on loan from the archives in their permanent collection and the traveling exhibit (*Imagination Unlimited: The Jim Henson Exhibition*) which is at the Skirball Cultural Center in LA this summer and touring to other venues over the next few years. And the CPA is opening a *Dark Crystal* exhibit at the end of August that include quite a few archive loans.

PT: Your interest in history and your mastery of the tools is quite remarkable. What really excites you about this kind of work?

KF: I was an American Studies major and art history minor. I was interested in objects and artwork and the stories they tell. So, if I go to an art museum I always want to see the story of who made it. Where did it come from? What was the culture that it came out of, who was this person that made it? Why did they make it? What did other people make at the same time? Who were their contemporaries? Those kinds of stories always interest me. So, it's art history, but not really from the aesthetic point of view, but more from the historical context.

I enjoy looking at objects, documents, artifacts, and artwork, to discover what they tell us about a people, society, how they interacted and that kind of thing - a museum is kind of a perfect setting to tell those stories in that a visitor can look at the items first hand and see how the curator has interpreted them.

PT: This must be a perfect place to indulge that curiosity. This work must be endlessly fascinating.

KF: It's so interesting and of course I've been able to meet so many extraordinary people through this job. Just the people right here each day who work out in our workshop, they're so talented creatively.

In doing this sort of historical research, I like the sort-of mystery solving, making connections, reading about one thing and remembering that I had seen something in some other file and figuring out, 'Oh, that's why he said that!' or 'That's why she did that!' Or someone will remember something but won't quite remember it and I'll be able to pull out the documents and figure out the sequence of events that happened -- so it's kind of a bit of detective work and that's a lot of fun to do.

I couldn't ask for a better subject if I want to interest people in my work. Everybody wants to know what I'm researching and what I've discovered. If you're an historian working in some other esoteric area with a less engaging focus, you're not going to get as broad an interest in your work. So, I'm very lucky to work on something that people connect to and value.

PT: You get asked to be the spokesperson for the organization often. I watched a video of you being interviewed for Comic-Con. You looked like you were having a good time. What's it like to do that at a con?

KF: That's really, really fun! It's not really my world -- the whole fan side of it is completely new to me. The few times I've done it has been mostly to promote publishing projects with Archaia. Archaia/BOOM! Studios is our graphic novel publishing company, and a few years ago, we did this

amazing project that Lisa Henson spearheaded. We took a script from the late '60s that Jim Henson and Jerry Juhl wrote called Tale of Sand which had never been produced, all we had was a script, there weren't even visuals, and Archaia adapted it into a graphic novel with a wonderful artist named Ramón Pérez. It was such a fun process, working with them, developing the art, consulting with the artist, working with Lisa Henson and getting it out there as a graphic novel. It won all kinds of awards. I went to several of the cons to talk about that with our publishing people, and really enjoyed having a chance to share the backstory of the project and get feedback from the fans. More recently I've been to Dragon Con down in Atlanta to promote things related to the Center for Puppetry Arts Henson exhibits, doing panels with people from the museum. It's fun! Everybody in the audience is so eager to hear what you have to say, and they have such good questions. And there is this extraordinary creativity that you see everywhere around the convention hall, the costumes and what have you. Of the various cons I've attended, I especially like Dragon Con -- it's so friendly. It's not-for-profit and very much fan originated in terms of the programming and panels.

PT: You seem to have found a happy and satisfying place to work while furthering the work of Jim Henson.

KF: It's such a gift - it's easy to be enthusiastic about my subject and such a privilege to have any connection at all to the positive, optimistic messaging that is connected with Jim and his work. It's a very special work situation that seems to be pretty unique.

PT: Karen, thank you so much for taking time to talk with us about your work. I hope we get an opportunity to dig deeper into the archives someday.

KF: Jim and Jane Henson made an effort to continue their involvement with and support of puppetry organizations throughout their lives -- the National Capital Puppetry Guild was one of the first they encountered so I am happy to connect to your membership in this way. It was a pleasure. ■



# Having Fun Outside My Own Back Yard

text by Jeff Bragg

photos by Jennifer Bennett

I have always believed that travel broadens the mind. In the spirit of that notion, I have started venturing out of my region to discover the delights of other puppetry festivals. I had never been to Asheville, North Carolina, so when my friend Keith

Shubert organized Puppet Paradise, I knew I had to go. So here is a little photo essay on the three day event. This page shows some photos of the opening ceremony with Puppet Club and Street Creature performing at Warren Wilson College.



Above is a creature called Bam Boeey, who is apparently a "thing" in Asheville, NC.



We were also treated to an introduction to the history of the area with some notes on flora and fauna.



The first evening, we were thrilled to see The National Marionette Theater perform Peter and the Wolf.





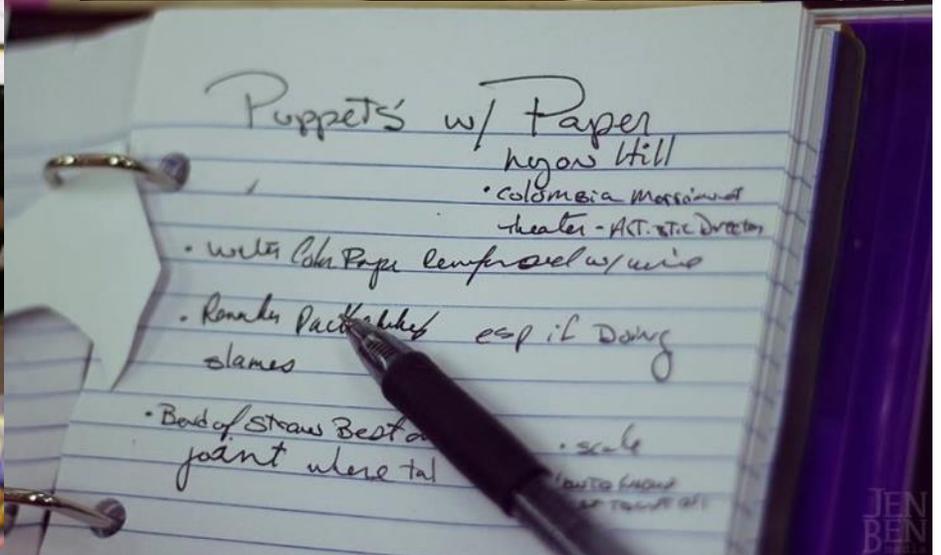
Here's a whole bunch of random stuff from day two. I'm at the right  talking about noise. Your guess is as good as mine for everyone else in the picture.

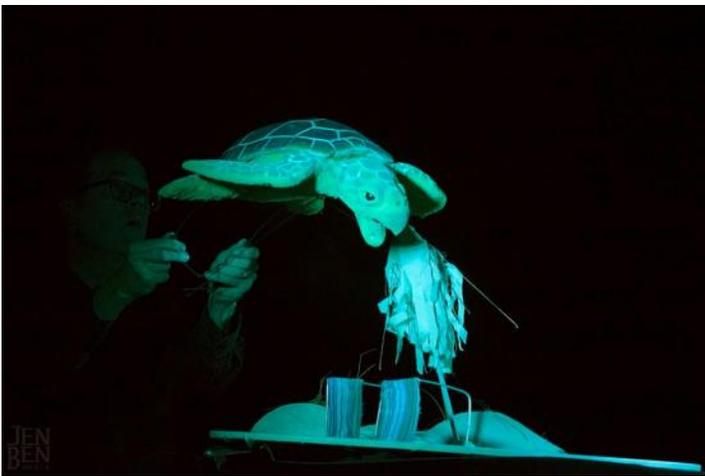
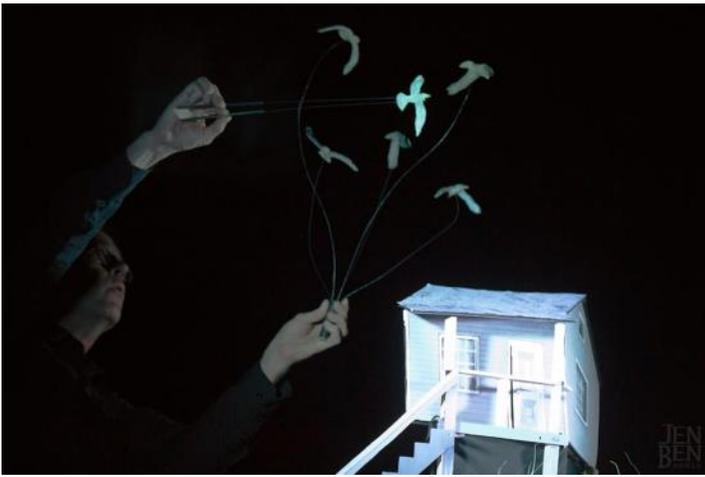


 Keith Shubert and Qate Bean



 Clockwise from left: Carole D'Agostino with Lyon Forrest Hill, Kevin Kammeraad, Mariana Palade Syrotiak, big decisions being made by our PofA board of directors at their meeting, notes from Hill's workshop, and Jeff Cornett.





Few people put on as mesmerizing and wonderful a one-person show as Hobey Ford. A true master of miniature mechanisms, His shows incorporate intricate sets, shadow puppetry and animation. And beautiful puppets that he carves from foam in his Asheville studio. He performed on the second evening. He performed his new production “Sea Song’ to an enthusiastic audience of puppeteers and local attendees.



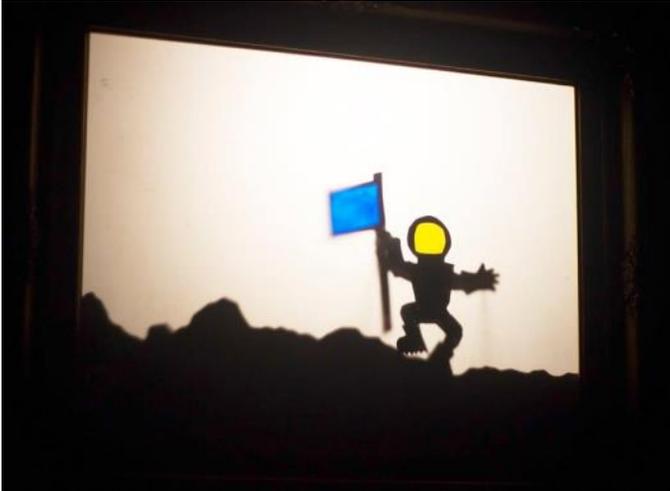
Some highlights from Potpourri with Toybox, Carole D'Agostino, Linda Sigismondi, Bean and Bear, Edna Bland, Jennifer Himes, and Ronni Richman Gerstel, Tarish Pipkins and son, Lyon Forrest Hill, and Elizabeth Norval.





Kevin Kammeraad gave an absolutely wonderful performance of The Spinach Dip Pancake Show. Kevin had a group of pre-schoolers take over his stage at one point. Non-plussed, he integrated them into his show. What a performer, taking on new actors mid-performance!





Above are photos of from Saturday evening's performance of Shadow Factory: Still Life by Matt Sandbank

Below are pictures from the The Wham, Bam! Puppet Slam. David J. Syrotiak 🇵🇸



Angela Beasley 🇵🇸

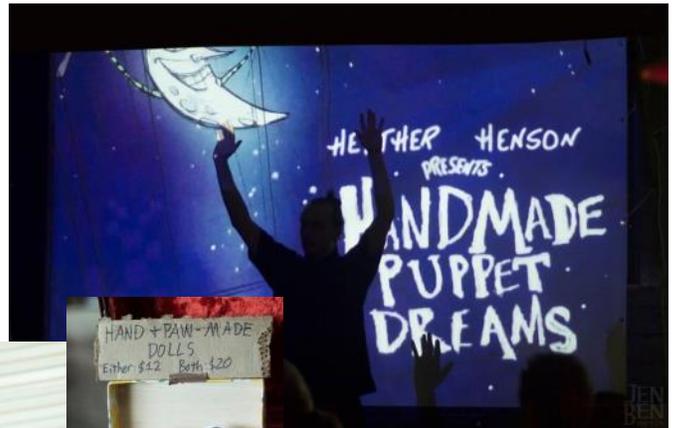
Tarish Jeghetto  
Pipkins  
🇵🇸





Alex U. Griffin brought Heather Henson's Handmade Puppet Dreams films to the party! 🐾

Qate Bean and Michael Butler with their Bean and Bear Show. 🐾



Tarish Jeghetto Pipkins performing "Time Machine".

Tarish brought his whole family.



**Thanks to Keith Shubert for doing such a great festival!  
 Now you see why we love festivals soooo much!!  
 Get tickets to Puppet Homecoming before it's too late!**

All photos in this essay courtesy of Jennifer Bennett. Thank you, Jennifer!

A Preview of the Performers and Performances at the upcoming  
**Puppet Homecoming/Puppets in the Green Mountains**  
 festival September 20th -23rd.



**Louis Riel: A Comic Stage Play**  
**Rustwerk Refinery (Canada)**  
 Riel sits in a courtroom; a judge stands ready to sentence him to death by hanging. He must plead his case and we get to witness an important piece of Canadian history.



**Mr Ruraru's Yard**  
**Puppet and its Double (Taiwan)**  
 This modern Asian company brings a Japanese children's book to life in an evocative piece about an old man who tries to keep his backyard tame and free of nature and its critters.



**The Joshua Show: Episode 2**  
**Joshua Holden (USA)**  
 The Ambassador of Joy will cheer up even the grumpiest grump, like Joshua's right-hand man, Mr. Nicholas, who is planning an escape to outer space.



**A Hunger Artist**  
**Sinking Ship Productions (USA)**  
 A man sits alone in a cage, starving himself for your entertainment. This darkly comic adaptation of Kafka's short story uses physical theater, Victorian miniatures, puppetry, and a set of simple props to support a powerhouse solo performance.



**Babylon**  
**Sangdlas Theater (USA)**  
 Seven puppets in need of asylum wash up on a metaphorical shore. This production looks at the relationship of refugees to their homelands, lost and new, and the conflicts that exist within American communities to which they have fled.



**Meet Fred**  
**HIJINX / BLIND SUMMIT (UK)**  
 Fred just wants to be part of the real world, get a job, meet a girl. But Fred, being a little cloth puppet, must face incredible prejudice every day. His life begins to spiral out of control when threatened with losing his PLA (Puppetry Living Allowance).



Smile! You're on Amazon!

Well, we're on Amazon, too. On Amazon Smile, that is.

Got some shopping to do? If you use Amazon Smile you can help support the NCPG at the same time.

Every time you make a purchase at Amazon Smile, a donation is made to the National Capital Puppetry Guild for its work bringing educational opportunities to the public in the fine art of puppetry.

If all our membership did this when making Amazon purchases, it would be possible for us to raise some significant funds.

Here's how you can make an easy donation:

Go to <https://smile.amazon.com>

Go to "Pick your own charitable organization" and click the "Search" button. Find "National Capital Puppetry Guild" and click "Select."

Then go ahead and make your purchases. The guild, which is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit, will automatically receive a donation of 0.5% of your normal purchase price on the tens of millions of eligible items and you won't pay anything extra for that.

Bookmark <https://smile.amazon.com>, or click on <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/81-3977781> and remember: whenever you shop there your donations will fund our festivals, puppet slams, newsletters and scholarships.

Now that's something to smile about!

# Your NCPG Guide to Regional Festivals 2018



## GREAT PLAINS PUPPET TRAIN

**Great Plains Puppet Train** Sept. 13-16, 2018 West Liberty, Iowa

The Regional Festival will take place in various buildings downtown, all within a distance of about four to six blocks, including Owl Glass Puppetry Center, the New Strand Theatre (a 1910 opera house), the historic depot, a regional learning center, a Mexican restaurant, and the Methodist Church. The Festival will start Thursday evening with registration, finger foods, a show, and a party featuring Quintron and Miss Pussycat. Friday will include workshops, performances in our opera house, and a Puppet Slam. Saturday will feature the West Liberty Children's Festival, complete with five puppet performances and lots of street food and activities. A street dance with a Mariachi Band, and finally a delicious catered dinner and another performance. Sunday: breakfast, one last show, and farewells to friends, old and new!

For more information, visit: [greatplainspuppettrain.com](http://greatplainspuppettrain.com)



**Puppet Homecoming** Sept. 20-23, 2018 Brattleboro, VT

The Puppeteers of America Northeast and Mid-Atlantic Regions are joining with the Puppets in the Green Mountains Festival produced by Sandglass Theater for Puppet Homecoming 2018. Open to professionals, students, and puppetry enthusiasts, PH 2018 will be a 3-day weekend of workshops, shows, camaraderie, special events, and more. This is the tenth edition of Sandglass Theater's international festival in Brattleboro, Vermont. This year's Festival, titled Opening Our Doors, September 18 – 23, 2018, is 6 days of performances that foster a spirit of inclusivity and are designed for both children and adults.

For more information go to: <http://puppethomecoming.org> and [puppetsinthegreenmountains.com](http://puppetsinthegreenmountains.com).

## Letters to the Editor

Jeff,

Thank you so much for sending me this most informative issue of your guild on Jean Reges Brown! I was not sure when I asked if this was or was not the person we in our guild made puppets for children in Iraq and her son. But it was indeed! And it was about 10 years ago. Our guild held a "Day of Puppetry" somewhere in which we saw new shows and ate refreshments while constructing and decorating puppets for Jean's son to take to Iraq. I think I was in charge of this event. I remember sewing basic cloth puppets which were decorated that day by the members of our guild and by some of their children. I believe Jean was sick shortly after that, and we never did hear much about the project. But everybody in our guild was really glad that we had participated in getting puppets to Jean's son. I never knew much about her. But I knew she had to be a really special person to have taken on that project during the Iraq war, and indeed your memorial issue for her showed that she certainly was! Thank you so much for sending it to me! Perhaps I'll be able to meet you at the Northeast/MidAtlantic Regional Festival in Vermont in September.

Gail Kearns

## NCPG SCOOP! What's Up With Our Guild.

**Another busy couple of months.** What about you puppeteers? Up to your ears in gigs? We sure hope so. Our guild is chugging right along. Our (mostly) Monthly Puppet Show series continues at the Durant Center. October will see our second maker festival, also at the Durant.

**Our most recent general meeting** was held on Sunday August 19th at the Puppet Co. We welcomed Karagöz Master Ayhan Hülügü with a performance and workshop. Karagöz translates to Black Eye, which is what Karagöz

and his foil, Hacivat, try to give each other. Karagöz is the traditional Turkish style of shadow puppetry that goes back 500 years. The character Karagöz represents the illiterate but straightforward public, Hacivat belongs to the educated class, speaking Ottoman Turkish and using a poetical and literary language. Although Karagöz is the more popular character with the Turkish peasantry, Hacivat is always the one with a level head. Though Karagöz always outdoes Hacivat's superior education with his "native wit," he is also very impulsive and all of his many get-rich-quick schemes result in failure. After our performance (in Turkish, I might add!) Ayhan treated everyone to a make-your-own Karagöz and Hacivat puppets workshop. A splendid time was had by all present.

**On the board front**, one thing we are asking ourselves at our board meetings is, "how can we grow our membership so that we can sustain the organization?" It's certainly true that to survive we must continue to incorporate new leadership. So we think the question we should ask is really, "who wants to step up?"

When the current leadership took over, the National Capital Puppetry Guild was losing members, hemorrhaging money, and providing little value to its members or the public in general. Since then, we've produced three festivals, almost a dozen independent puppet shows, and raised enough money to make it possible to continue. We are looking to do even more in the future.

Does anyone want to help make sure that happens? Then step up and let us know. Once again, we will be holding our board election at our November meeting on the 11th. The call for nominations will go out October 15th. We'd like to see your name on the ballot.

Signed,

The Manglement



PS. Our next meeting will be October 20th at the Durant Center in Alexandria, Virginia for our Puppet MakerFEST. NCPG members can get in free, but you MUST make a reservation in advance.

Make your complimentary reservation by calling Jeff Bragg at 703-424-5553.

# Puppetimes

## Back Issues



Volume 52 No. 2 March - April 2016

Feature: Don Becker Interview



Volume 52 No. 4 July - August 2016

Feature: A Remembrance of the Life and Work of Founding Member Ida Jervis



Volume 52 No. 6 Nov. - Dec 2016

Feature: Paul Vincent Davis Interview



Volume 53 No. 2 March - April 2017

Feature: Heidi Spieth Rugg Interview



Volume 53 No. 3 May - June 2017

Feature: DJ Kid Koala Interview, Nufonia Must Fall



Volume 53 No. 5 Sept. - Oct. 2017

Feature: The Judy Fund, National Festival Puppetry Exhibit

Interviews with puppeteers! Informative articles on every aspect of the art and craft! Enjoy the issues you've missed!

We are now offering printed copies of back issues for the last two years. Each copy is \$10 with shipping included. Full color copies are also available for \$20 with shipping included.

For issues not shown on this pages., please email: [puppetimes@gmail.com](mailto:puppetimes@gmail.com)



Volume 53 No. 6 Nov. - Dec. 2017

Feature: The Beauty of Difficult Shows



Volume 54 No. 1 Jan. - Feb. 2018

Feature: Bob Brown Part Two



Volume 54 No. 2 March - April 2018

Feature: Ingrid Crepeau and Michele Valeri of Dinorock



Volume 54 No. 3 May - June 2018

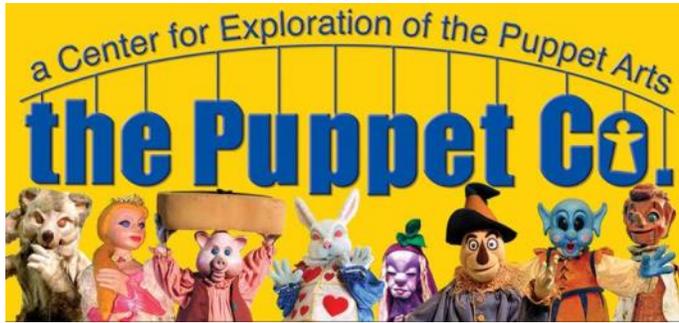
Feature: Sesame Street Puppetry Workshop



Volume 54 No. 4 July - August 2018

Feature: The Life and Work of Founding Member Jean Reges Burn

# THE SEE AND BE SEEN SCENE



**The Puppet Co. Playhouse** at Glen Echo, MD  
Reservations: (301) 634-5380    [thepuppetco.org](http://thepuppetco.org)

Through September 30th

## **Peter and the Wolf**

October 4th through November 16th

## **Hansel and Gretel**

Thursdays & Fridays 11:00 AM

Saturdays & Sundays 11:30 AM & 1:00 PM

## **Tiny Tot Time with Bob Brown**

9/15, 16/18 - Sing-a-Long

Sat, Sun - 10:00 AM

9/7, 11, 15/18 - Old MacDonald's Farm

Sat, Wed, Sun - 10:00 AM

9/19, 22/18 - Magic Toyshop

Wed, Sat - 10:00 AM

9/30/18 - Dragon Babies

Sun - 10:00 AM

10/6/18 - Dragon Babies

Sat - 10:00 AM

10/10, 14, 20/18 - PandaMonium

Wed, Sun, Sat - 10:00 AM

10/24, 28/18 - Imaginary Friends

Wed, Sun - 10:00 AM

**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](http://wondermentpuppets.com)

[wondermentpuppets@yahoo.com](mailto:wondermentpuppets@yahoo.com)

## **Elves and the Shoemaker**

Sept 8 - Oct 28

## **Puppets at the Durant Center**

703-746-5560

## **Silly Goose and Val**

September 22 10:15am and 11:15 am

## **Puppet MakerFEST**

Three Puppets Shows (featuring Matt Muirhead) and Three Puppet Building Workshops

October 20th Doors open at 10:30

## **Pointless Theatre**

### **Don Cristóbal**

Through September 8

Dance Loft on 14 (4618 14th St NW)

Tickets: <https://www.artful.ly/store/events/13440>

Thursdays - Fridays, 8PM

Saturdays, 3PM + 8PM

Sundays, 7PM

## **Wit's End Puppets**

[info@witsendpuppets.com](mailto:info@witsendpuppets.com)

### **Malevolent Creatures** at Page to Stage

Saturday, September 1, 2018 at 12:30pm

North Atrium Foyer, The Kennedy Center

### **The DC Puppet SlamNation is Coming Back!**

Friday, November 2, 7:30pm

Takoma Park Community Center

7500 Maple Ave, Takoma Park MD 20912



National  
Capital  
Puppetry  
Guild

# 2019 Membership Renewal Form - Mail In

[www.nationalcapitalpuppetry.org/](http://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](http://www.nationalcapitalpuppetry.org)

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

I sent check # \_\_\_\_\_ for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to join The National Capital Puppetry 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, lectures, demonstrations, workshops, show and tell sessions, work-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/](http://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