

The Newsletter of The National Capital Puppetry Guild

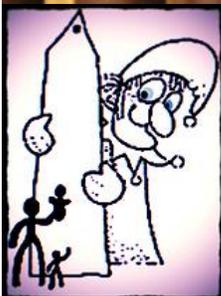
Puppetimes

Vol. 55 #1

January - February 2019

HAPPY
NEW
YEAR!!
2019!!!

A Conversation With
The Ambassador of Joy
Joshua Holden



Chartered by the Puppeteers of America, INC

Coming Up at the Puppet Co

January 18 through February 10

in Glen Echo Park

7300 MacArthur Blvd, Glen Echo, MD

For Reservations (301)634-5380



The Velveteen Rabbit

Applause Unlimited returns with Margery Williams' gentle tale of how toys become real. Told with hand puppets, storytelling and song, solo puppeteer Christopher Hudert takes children through this classic story of friendship, changes, and magic. The popular tale is of particular interest to youngsters learning to read, and to anyone who has ever had a favorite stuffed toy.

Age Recommendation: PreK-Grade 4 • Running Time: 45 Minutes

February 14 through March 24

Shows are Thursday and Fridays at 11:00am

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



Rapunzel

A "bewitching" tale by Duane T. Bowers, adapted from the Brothers Grimm fairytale. Witch Wartsmith wants a baby, and after bargaining for little Rapunzel, must go to great lengths to keep her out of the hands of a handsome prince. The Puppet Co. uses "coloring-book" charm and the simplicity of hand puppets in a production designed to delight its younger audiences.

Recommended Ages: 3 1/2 - 9 years old • Show Length: 40 Minutes

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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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Legacy website: www.puppetimes.info
Send all submissions to: puppetimes@gmail.com

Front cover: Joshua Holden hosting the Puppet Mutiny SLAM! at the Northeast/Mid-Atlantic regional festival in Brattleboro, Vermont. Photo by Sharon Murphy-Boski.

The next meeting of the National Capital Puppetry Guild is our holiday party on January 27th at the home of Sam and Heidi Rugg. The fun will start at 2pm and go until we're thrown out. To make your attendance known, call or email Heidi Rugg at 804-334-4338 or h@barefootpuppets.com. She will let you know what goodies to bring for the potluck and what entertainment we'll be having.

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: Pam McNaughton
Members at Large - Sandy Feulner, Tom Noll, Honey Goodenough, Sarah Olmsted Thomas, Alex Vernon, Cori Leyden-Sussler

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

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Mid-Atlantic Regional Director -

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President's Note by Jeff Bragg

Welcome to 2019! Another year gone, another year begins. The Northeast/Mid-Atlantic regional festival in Brattleboro was a blast this year. Justin Dupont and Anna Vargas did a wonderful job of directing. Sharon Murphy-Boski and I are searching for the festival's director for 2020. Anyone interested?

In this issue, we feature a conversation with the amazing Joshua Holden. Joshua hosted the Puppet Mutiny SLAM! at the festival and is well known to all of us as the creative genius behind The Joshua Show. His work is nothing short of inspiring and is sure to brighten even the gloomiest of Mr. Nicholases, no matter how dour. Joshua's wit and wisdom begins on page 6. Cecilia Cackely reports of their November SlamNation on page 15.

Also featured is new board member Sarah Olmsted Thomas writing about her participation in Bread and Puppet's Grasshopper Rebellion Circus at the 2640 Space in Baltimore, Maryland in December. Page 16. Once again, we are looking for applicants for our scholarship and grants programs. This year's application forms start on page 21. These went unawarded last year due to the fact that no one applied.

Black Cherry Puppet Theater lost its roof during violent storms in March of this year. The next column is dedicated to helping them fund a new one so they can keep up their good work. Won't you help?



PS. The picture above has, left-to-right, Tom McLaughlin, Justin Dupont (from behind) and myself just before the Northeast/Mid-Atlantic regional festival's Puppet Mutiny SLAM!

And now a public service message from the National Capital Puppetry Guild on the behalf of Black Cherry Puppet Theater needs to raise \$20,000 to fix their damaged roof. Please consider going to their Go Fund Me page and make a donation to help keep high quality puppetry happening in Baltimore, Maryland.



A Little Help from our Friends?

In March, a violent storm hit Baltimore and ripped part of the roof off of Black Cherry Puppet Theater. The theater was purchased and renovated originally in 1996, but it was set for a new capital campaign to finish these renovations and make the theater a more usable space in 2020. Unfortunately, the storm hit ahead of this campaign, and a new roof, which was going to be part of that fundraising, is desperately needed immediately. Other avenues for funds to fix the roof have been, and continue to be, investigated. But in six months since the storm, Baltimore has seen a record amount of rain and storms and the temporary measures to keep water out of the building are not holding up, and the inside of the theater is being further damaged. So now, we are turning to you for help. No amount is too small! THANK YOU!

<https://www.gofundme.com/a-roof-for-the-puppet-theater>

THE JUDY BARRY BROWN FUND

Providing Scholarships and Grants to Study the Fine Art of Puppetry



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.

THE JUDY FUND

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 # _____

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Name as shown on card:

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



A Conversation with Joshua Holden!

Editor's note: Joshua Holden is a performance tour de force. His work is nothing short of wonderful in every way possible. The Joshua Show, now in its second incarnation, has been delighting audiences both young and old, everywhere it plays. Puppetimes caught up with Joshua in the midst of planning, perfecting, and performing his new holiday show The Joyfully, Jolly Jamboree with Joshua and Jeb, which will tour next year.

PT: Let's start with your childhood. You're from Peabody, Massachusetts. What was it like growing up there?

JH: All sorts of emotions went into growing up in Peabody. I had amazing parents. My parents are absolutely incredible. They're so supportive of everything I've done in my life and have done very little to hinder anything that I have wanted to pursue, even though it might not have made sense to them. So that was incredible. I'm thirty-five, so I was '90s kid. I discovered theater when I was about six. We went to a place called the North Shore Music Theatre, which is a big regional theater up there, and I had never seen anything like it and I fell madly in love with it. I said, "I want to do that!" My parents were like, really? I was like, yes, yes, yes, yes. And so they signed me up for acting classes in Salem, Massachusetts at this place called Studio One. It's no longer there, but this woman, Cynthia Marnik, was my acting teacher and she was kind of grumpy. But um, I loved it. I absolutely fell in love with it and that's where my love for performing began.

PT: And for High School you went to Walnut Hill School for the Arts in Natick. Was Walnut Hill a goal or did it just kind of fall in your lap?



photo by Richard Termine

JH: Fell into my lap. After my sophomore year of high school, I sat my parents down and I said, I'm really serious about this. I really don't want to do anything else. I don't. I had a hard time with my academic classes because all I wanted to do was be at the theater and the theater department was, it was okay. And the culture of the school in Peabody, Massachusetts in 1999 was not a positive experience for me, I did not feel very comfortable or safe outside of the theater when I was going to school, and so I just wanted to get out. I had a friend who went to Walnut Hill and we went there for a tour and I just knew stepping onto that campus that that's where I belonged. It was going from a school where I was in a class of thirty kids, the majority of which were mean to me. And then going down to a class of twelve students maximum at Walnut Hill. The education there was incredible, like really individualized. The respect they had for the arts and understanding that these kids have a passion for the arts and they were there to support that, was, yeah, it was a dream and I got a full scholarship to go there because we couldn't afford to pay tuition to Walnut Hill. But yeah, at sixteen I sat my parents down said I want to move away from home and go to a boarding school. They were like, oh my God. Oh, okay. They said yes to pursuing this opportunity. And so I moved out of the house at sixteen.

PT: You went in your junior and senior year. And then then you went off to Roosevelt University?

JH: I did, yes. Chicago College of Performing Arts.

PT: What was that like going to college in Chicago like after being up in the northeast for your whole life?

JH: It's interesting. I mean, to be really honest, that was my safety school. Artistically, I got into all the schools that I applied to and academically my grades were not good enough.

PT: What was the Chicago experience like in theater for a young college student?

JH: It was amazing. I went to Chicago expecting to be there for a year with the understanding that I was going to transfer to another school, I had no interest in staying in Chicago. I'd never been to Chicago. I didn't know much about the school and I got there and the very first thing that we did as freshmen was my acting teacher said, "I'd like all the freshmen to write a three-minute piece of their own," that was, "now that I have your attention, this is what I have to say," and she said, I want you to make a piece based on that phrase and you're going to present this to the rest of the conservatory.

And so right off the bat, for the very first time, I created a piece of my own and this was as a freshman in college. I'd never done that. And, I was eighteen years old. And I never even considered the idea that I could be a creative artist. I always imagined that I was going to be a chorus-boy on Broadway and then eventually work up into being a character actor on Broadway. And that was it. And working for other people. And so that was incredible to me. And the more explored Chicago, the more I realized that that is a community of artists. The people are making their own work. There are so many theater companies out there and they're looking for people like me to come be part of their shows and so I was able to be part of workshopping a brand new play multiple times. I'm given the creative freedom to take the writers work and create a full character from this and step back and say, yeah, I can see my footprints all over that. That was very exciting. And so, I didn't leave Chicago. After my first year, I said, this is where it's at, this is what I want to do. I love this creative atmosphere.

PT: Is that when puppetry started to come into your life?

JH: No, that didn't happen until after school. I pursued musical theater for freshman and sophomore year of college and then switched to regular acting with a focus on physical theater. And then it wasn't until after college that I got a call from the Chicago Children's theater asking me to understudy Blair Thomas in a production of *The Selfish Giant* that he was writing, and I had never picked up a puppet before in my life or even considered that there were people underneath the puppets that I'd ever seen. I was like, oh yeah, puppets are a thing! Like I never really, never really had interest in it. I liked *The Muppet Show* as a kid and I love *Sesame Street*, but that was it. Like I was not a puppet person at all. At all.

PT: Many people in theater also don't take puppetry seriously.

JH: Yeah. I just think they just don't really know. I think a lot of people don't know the potential of what puppetry can do. We have a relationship to *Sesame Street*

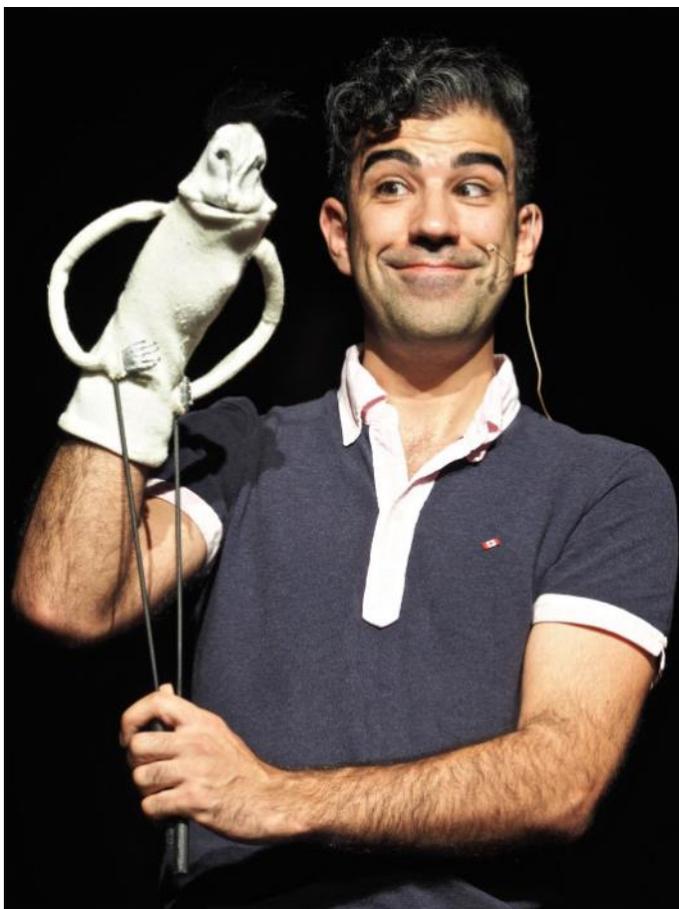


Photo by Natalia Maks



and we have a relationship to The Muppets. And that's fun, even though it's such a small slice of the world of puppetry.

PT: After that, did you start taking puppetry more seriously saying, well, I can create a show with puppets?

JH: Well, I thought I was a total hack! I thought I was terrible. And I had to do a one-man show. So, it was myself and a live musician and I had to go on these performances and I was terrified and then people thought that I was good, and I really had no sense because I couldn't see what I was doing. I just took everything that Blair taught me and just went with it. And then people started hiring me afterwards as a puppeteer. I just said, oh boy, someone's paying money, which I needed, and I hope they don't find out that I have no idea what I'm

doing. Like I really felt like it was a true story of fake-it-till-you-make-it. And then eventually, I remember standing in a room one day amongst a bunch of people and explaining something having to do with puppetry and feeling, yeah, I actually know what I'm talking about. I mean, you know, by no means an expert. But I started to really get the knack for bringing objects to life in a truthful manner. And I had this very extensive background in acting and that's what I was bringing to puppetry and I think that is what really got people excited about the work, and that's what excited me, because then it was like, I'm learning! I'm learning this new vehicle to do exactly what I was always doing, which is telling stories and connecting with audiences to emotionally effect people. And that was thrilling! Once I made that connection, it was like, oh, the sky's the limit,

really. And then I moved to New York from Chicago and I booked the national tour of Avenue Q and I was on that, the second national tour, for about a year.

Then from there, I toured in a couple of other productions and then I did a production called Peter Pan 360. And I entered that process and they rolled out the red carpet for me and treated me like I was just the king of it all. And I just thought, oh my God! They loved my audition and they just had such a respect for what I did, and I was so touched and so excited. And for the first time, that was the first time that I started calling myself a puppeteer, before that, I was an actor, "I'm an actor, I'm an actor and I also do some puppetry." But then in Peter Pan I started saying, "I'm a puppeteer", and that was really exciting and when that tour ended, it ended abruptly, and I had no place to live. I thought the job was going to last for another two years, but the show financially went under. Huge multi-million-dollar touring production in London.

Then I went traveling across the country. I was on a road trip with a friend and was asked to do a puppet slam in Chicago, I was traveling through Chicago. And I said, what is a puppet slam? She's like, "It's like a little evening where you create your own pieces and you and I are going to do something together, okay?" And last minute, her name is Casey Foster, and Casey said, "I'm sorry, I have to back out, but you should still do it on your own." And I said, "No, I can't, I don't make my own work. I don't make puppets, that's not something I do. I work for other people." And she said, "What do you day-dream about?" I said, "Well, I want to be the next Mister Rogers and I want to make content that makes people feel really good." And she said, "Well then you should do that. It's ten minutes. It's going to be forty people in the audience. You have nothing to lose." And so I did. I pulled some stuff together. I made Mr. Nicholas. He came out of nowhere. He introduced himself to me when I made him. And I made this ten-minute little piece with my theme song. I was the only song in the

show. And this ten-minute piece was the start of it all. People just went wild for it and I expected to throw the puppets away and move on, on my road trip. And that thankfully did not happen.

PT: Mr. Nicholas is certainly a force to be reckoned with. When I go out and I teach a workshop at a high school or something, and I go to show them someone other than myself, you're one of the first people I pick, and Mr. Nicholas has to be one of the most expressive sock puppets I've ever seen in my life. And the puppetry work is some of the finest I've ever seen in my life. So, we have the birth of Mr. Nicholas. Did he start out the way he is now? Or did he go through a period character development? Has he evolved much in the way you want to present him?

JH: That's interesting. He has been the same. My friend Casey gave me this sock puppet with these two-little beady-eyes - had no arms, no hair and this crude little hot-glued, mouth-palette. And he didn't really look like what he looks like now, but I wrote this little poem about being grumpy

THE JOYFULLY JOLLY JAMBOREE

WITH JOSHUA & JEB

Best Served for Ages 6-106



Just to get your jingles jangling and songs to soothe your scroogie's side

and how you trick yourself into being happy on days when you feel sad and blue and I knew I wanted to make a little puppet that expressed his grumpiness and so she has a whole bunch of sock puppets and I found this one and I said, "Yeah, he looks grumpy. I can take him." So, I clipped his nose and I did some color on the eyes, just fuddling around. I fixed the mouth palette and I put him on and instantly, instantly, instantly, I just started making him breathe and I was looking at him and I, I remembered my training from Blair and from past mentors. You

let the puppet tell you who they are, and you let the puppet show you how it wants to move. Opposed to you imposing things on it. And he started making some sounds and then he said, "My name is Mr. Nicholas." And I said, "Oh my gosh,okay, cool." This cute little British voice. And then he did this lovely little poem. And yeah, he was always very, very grumpy and very pessimistic. So over time, the thing that's really flourishing is his vulnerability. The ways in which I think he

really wants to fit in, but he is just too scared. He's such an open and vulnerable soul, with so much worry, that that is like, that has been a really exciting part of him, too. Really, that's really developed since the beginning. And also the love that we have for one another, and his love for me, because there was a period in which Mr. Nicholas was just, he's just grumpy and it was a mood. He just put the fears up, the little brush strokes of this grumpy little guy. And the tenderness and the real companionship has come in with the two of us in a way that just, oh, I am just so over the moon that I have in my life, because I've traveled all around the world with him and it has affected people in such a deep way that I just, I'm so touched by it. Whenever it happens.



PT: Well, I have noticed that no matter how badly Mr. Nicholas feels when he starts out, you, Joshua, can always make him feel better and calm his fears. We live in a very frightening time and to see someone take a fearful character like that, a character that really wants to shrink into not just into his own shell, but to shrink away from existence entirely, and to bring this character back out into a world of living beings, into a world where happiness is possible. That's a powerful thing to show people. You know, I should ask you how much has changed from

episode one to episode two of The Joshua Show?

JH: Well, the structure is similar. It still feels like you are at this episodic children's show. Like, there's a wonder of the day. There's still the theme song. There's a word of the day.

PT: Did you get that from Pee Wee's Playhouse?

JH: Yes, absolutely. One hundred percent. I got the tap-dancing, out at the beginning from, Pinky Lee (editor's note: Pincus Leff, better known as Pinky Lee, was an American burlesque comic and host of the children's television program The Pinky Lee Show in the early 1950s). At first it was supposed to be parody of all these iconic children's television shows all mashed into one and it's sort of, you know, I pay homage to these people that I had such a great effect on my life. In the first episode, it centers around the word authenticity and the importance of being true to who you are and the things that make you different are the things that make you great. And Mr. Nicholas, he discovers that he's a puppet and he wants to be anything but that, and he just loses it. He wants to just go away and never be seen again. And through the show we teach him that being an authentic sock puppet is really actually a wonderful thing and he should be proud of that. He expresses that even though he knows that that's

the case. he still can't help himself from feeling horrible on Sundays and we talk about that that's okay. That not every day is going to be great. It's important for you and everybody else to honor those feelings and know that yeah, some days are going to be rotten and you just to let yourself feel that way and then when you feel that and then eventually, we'll move past that and you'll be in a place of joy again. Turn to your friends in those times. And also don't pressure yourself into feeling anything else. Just be authentically how you're feeling. So that's what the first episode was and that really is like a big part of my life and like how I conduct myself. I mean it's no secret to me. I'm not trying to keep it a secret that Mr. Nicholas is absolutely a part of who I am. I have a lot of feelings similar to his and I'm learning that most people do too. There's something about it when we all say, Gosh, I hear you man. I totally hear you. So, I'm a very emotional being and so that's what that show came from. The second show comes from my completely overwhelmed feeling that I get when I turn on the news and feel like this is doomed, we're doomed, we are just doomed, we need to get outta here, we should all move to another planet and there's nothing we can do about it. And then you just take a breath and you say, actually there's a lot of good things happening and there's a lot of good people out there and we've got to focus on that and we got to find ways for us to be that. So, I want to be part of that change. I want to be part of that sunshine and that light to remind people.

PT: Jeb played a smaller part in Episode One and now...

JH: Yeah, he had a small little scene where he plays a character, otherwise we didn't sing a whole bunch together. The second episode was written with Jeb, bearing in mind that the two of us have a great

musicality together. We really built that into the show and so he's more heavily involved in the second episode. The first one (Episode One) feels a little bit more like a one man show.

PT: Well, it was certainly a wonderful show. I enjoyed it immensely and every time I get to tell anyone about it, I tell them to come see it. It's just pure fun. Let's talk a little bit about your becoming the president of the Puppetry Guild of Greater New York (PGOGNY). I guess what I would love to know because of course, you know, this is going to go into a little bit over the discussion of the future of puppetry guilds in our country and stuff. And espe-



cially on the east coast here. Peter Lewis had been basically doing this for I think sixteen years. All on his own.

JH: Yes.

PT: And you show up in December of 2016.

JH: Two years ago, yeah. I joined the guild in December 2016. Liz Joyce told me that it was my duty and I had to join the guild, and I was just a member, just observing it. No one came along with me. I was just there amongst whomever was there for like half a year.

PT: Then September of 2017, that's when it really turns around. You bring forty or fifty new members in. What prompted this? What actually triggered the decision to go all in?

JH: Well, I really think it's from what I experienced at Walnut Hill. The Walnut Hill community really changed my life. It opened me up to this idea of how important it is to have a community of people that support you and love you. And you have that, the things that you're capable of and the quality of your life is just so rich. And so that's always been a really important thing to me is finding community and building community and supporting community. And when I went to the guild meetings and you know, these 10 people that were showing up, they were just as lovely as can be and it just felt like there was so much excitement and so much desire to soak up what this art form has to offer.



And also, it was just important to the people to get out of the house and come together. And I just looked at that and thought yeah, there are a lot more people in this city that could benefit from coming together. And I think it would not be terribly difficult to do that. And so, that is really what drove me was the community. Really trying to think about an opportunity to really make a difference with this incredible group of people.

PT: Exactly. You've been very ambitious in getting programs together. What do you have planned for the next couple of years for PGOGNY?

JH: I want to flout the clout of the PGOGNY. I want your membership to PGOGNY to be a really full membership in that we gain the respect from arts organizations around the city in a way that we can get discount tickets, we can get on lists for comp tickets so that PGOGNY is a club that is important and can effect change and is a respectable

group of people that you could turn to in the city. We already have a handful of messages coming to us saying we're looking for puppeteers.

I would love for that to continue for really this to be the central hub of puppetry in the New York City area. That to me feels accomplishable and really exciting that I really want you to become you to become a member and I give you this big list and say these are the local businesses that will give you a discount, these are the theaters that will give you a discount. Here's a network of people that you now have access to and welcome to

the family. So that's one goal. I would like to start fostering the creation of new work within PGOGNY. I'm not talking about a residency. I'm talking about just trying to create more programming that gets people up on their feet. And also have some opportunities for people to come in and throw something up against the wall and for it to land flat on the ground and feel okay in doing that and we all can help you pick it back up and look at that. And I don't know exactly how to do that, but we're in our early conversations about what does it mean to be a supportive community and what value do we have with having all these people coming together and how can

we really take the most advantage of that in a positive way for people, while also keeping it simple. I mean, I have big dreams for it, but you've got to also keep it simple, because I'm managing a board of eleven people and as much as I'd like to just make decisions and go out the door with them, it's a slow process with that. It's not all up to me and certainly I represent the guild, but I'm really a facilitator for conversation. It's a slow moving, but I think it's great.

PT: Recently, you started an internship with the Henson Company which is just finishing up. What are you doing for them?

JH: It is amazing! Well, it changes every day. There are some days where they're a little over-worked. We just got like six giant, giant crates full of puppets out yesterday and that took like two days to pack up and it was a build that they had been working on for about four

months. It's amazing how they build all this stuff and it's managed so beautifully by Melissa Creighton (senior production manager of Jim Henson's Creature Shop, NY).

I don't understand how she schedules this all out, but it gets done and there are days where it's like we don't have enough hands and I get to jump on and help. My main project right now that I'm working on is organizing the props, which is very exciting. They have a big prop-file there. So, I'm doing an inventory and taking some stock of the props that they're doing there. I've been photographing some puppets from time to time and it's very exciting. And they asked me to bring something over to Sesame Street, like, will you grab Ernie and bring him to Sesame Street? And I'm like, will I ever! So, I put him in a bag and we walked down the street together. Yeah, we're walking down the street and people are passing by and I'm like, you have no idea right now because inside my bag is Ernie! Sesame Street is the most magical place on Earth. Everyone is so happy to be there and it is beautiful. I love being there. But the thing that I'm most excited about is I feel like I'm building a vocabulary to be able to understand how to build quality puppets, more than I do now and also an understanding of how to properly talk to a builder. So, I feel like I'm building a vocabulary now that I didn't have before based on the things that I've seen in the shop. I mean I just wander around and see people just working with the most extraordinary, most interesting and mysterious materials and coming together to make something really fantastic. So that is something that I'm really grateful for with this internship is it the opportunity to be amongst these incredible artisans. Any question that I have, they are happy to tell me where they get stuff, how they make it, why they make it and why they're supposed to make it like that. These people are just as giving and generous as we see at the festivals, as we see at the guild meetings, as we see when we go to see a show and someone turns their puppets inside out at the end to show you what they're doing. It's the same thing up there. It's so awesome. That is so awesome. In other industries, I feel like you get to that same level and there isn't necessarily that openness and kindness, but we still got it. We still have that at the very top and

that is just awesome. I think anytime I see someone who is, you know, pulling a diva attitude, I think it's our duty to say, you know, we don't really do that here. It's just not done. So that behavior is not acceptable because there's no one doing it and anyone that is, you're robbing yourself, but we don't do that here.

PT: From what little I've seen, a lot of the folks at Henson seemed to be selected, not just for their skills, but for their kindness.

JH: Oh yes. Oh yeah, it's very much feels like a family for sure.

PT: When I visited there everyone was kind, everyone was friendly, so you must be having a really good time there.

JH: I am. This internship ends at the end of December and I'm looking forward to having a little more time in my schedule, because I'm balancing that with my job as a puppet wrangler and wardrobe supervisor Avenue Q on Broadway right now too.

PT: That was another thing I wanted to ask you about. You're the puppet wrangler for Avenue Q. You were in the national tour in 2010. So, it's eight years later and now you're wrangling for these guys on Broadway. What's that like?

JH: That's great. It's a lovely little job. I remember when I first started working there, how captivated I was by the puppets, now it's a little more part of my everyday norm, but Rick Lyon has built just incredible, incredible characters and it's an honor to be maintaining those every day. It's a lot of work because (originally) it was two separate departments. You had the puppetry department and the wardrobe department and that consisted of four people total and now the job is mixed down into one, which is just me. So, I'm doing puppets and I'm doing wardrobe. That's how the show has been able to maintain itself for the past fifteen years. But, you know, it's eight shows a week, every week and I'm not sick of the show. The show is just, it's awesome. The music is great. The message, I feel like it teaches me something every day, it connects to the different part of my life every day. And I really enjoy it. It's a well-oiled machine and I appreciate that and it's efficient. It's a nice little job. It's flexible. So really, that's what it's helping me while I'm pursuing the Joshua Show, which I hope to be moving into full time in the next year or two.

PT: So, what's the future look like? Will you be developing the Joshua Show? Will there be an episode three?

JH: I'm currently, right now, building my holiday, Christmas show that's going to be performing at two private events and then I'm going out to Sag Harbor at the end of the month. And it's called the Joyfully, Jolly Jamboree with Joshua and Jeb. Of course, Mr. Nicholas plays the Scroogiest, Scrooge. He has a beautiful little song that I wrote called Skipping Christmas, and oh goodness, it's so beautiful. I'm hoping to have that booked next year and it's really a goal of mine to have my father join the show with me. My father is a "real beard" Santa Claus.

PT: Oh really?

JH: Yeah. I mean he is Santa Claus. It's like, my father *is* Santa Claus, like 100 percent. He is just beautiful. His connection with children is unlike anything I've ever seen, and he is full of Christmas spirit, so I kind of want to bring them into what I'm doing and kind of tour around with him a bit. I think that would be really fun. So, I'm talking to my booking agents about what that

possibility would be like, but I'll certainly hopefully have the Christmas show booked in a real way next year.

PT: And finally, it appears that we both have a scientist crush on the same person. And that would be Dr. Jane Goodall. Talk about it a little bit. Why? Why is she important to you?

JH: Oh, she's so compassionate and she's so gentle and she's pursuing something that she really believes in and it's good and just. I think through her efforts, she teaches us a lot about what it means to be a compassionate human being. And I also just love monkeys, so that I'm wildly jealous of her making friends with all these monkeys and I've always wanted to be friends with one!

PT: What else do you have on the horizon? What other ambitions do you intend to realize?

JH: I want to have my own TV show. That's, that's, that's really what I'm working towards these days.

PT: I think we all want you to have your own TV show. Thanks for talking with us Joshua, it's been a delight.



Puppet SlamNation

by Cecilia Cackley of Wit's End Puppets

We had a blast at the 2nd annual DC Puppet Slam-Nation on November 2nd at the Takoma Park Community Center. We were thrilled to welcome fellow puppeteers from Baltimore, as well as Takoma Park and Washington, DC for a great night of puppetry for all ages.

If you missed the event or just want to relive the magic, here are a few shots of the action.

All photos by Laura D. Meyer.



String Theory Theater performing "Collaboration Story".

Schroeder Cherry performing "If I Can't Sell it I Will Sit on It".



Matthew McGee performing "How Possum Played Death".



The SlamNation cast.



Katherine Fahey and Daniel Van Allen performing "I Know Moonrise".

Performing with Bread and Puppet in Baltimore

by Sarah Olmsted Thomas

For the first time in 40 years, Bread and Puppet Theater engaged in a 4-month, cross-country tour of the United States. From Vermont to Vancouver, from Joshua Tree to New Orleans, Peter Schumann's hand-painted school bus and van traveled all over the country. On December 9, 2018, I participated in Bread and Puppet's Grasshopper Rebellion Circus at the 2640 Space in Baltimore, Maryland. This was the penultimate show before their final performances in New York City.

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

I completed an apprenticeship with Bread and Puppet in 2012 and visit every summer to participate on their farm in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont.



Sarah Olmsted Thomas. Photo by Josie Colt

Joining the cross-country tour was particularly memorable. Baltimore's 2640 space is a huge church with high ceilings, exposed beams, peeling paint, and stained glass windows. I felt giddy when I spotted the Bread and Puppet school bus parked outside in the cold - the painted words, "Listen" and "Onward" surrounded by bicycles and flowers. Walking into the space felt like coming home.

We had a thoughtful meeting to determine the rehearsal order and incorporate notes from previous performances. And then we were off! I penciled down a small cheat sheet which smeared every time I took it out of my pocket. The audience began to enter in droves a half hour before

showtime, and sure enough the house packed so tightly that many stood to watch.

There's nothing quite like the moment backstage when the brass band begins to play. The pulse of the room shifts and livens, and even as we're double checking our presets and running to pull forgotten puppets, we're dancing. The sound is big and generous, and I'm excited. Bread and Puppet Theater is in town and I'm going to run on stage with a flag that reads, "MUSIC."



Photo by Mark Dannenhauer



Photo courtesy Cambridge Arts

I was incorporated into the circus with two kid volunteers - Sky and JJ. We became a little family for the duration of the performance, smiling at each other backstage, whispering reminders. I'll never forget how game they were to participate in everything. "Would you like to be a frog?" "Yes." "Would you be comfortable riding the tiger?" "Yes!" "In the Kids Riot act, we need you to rip up the book, tear off my wig, and chase me off the stage. How does that sound?" "Sure! What is a riot?"

I hovered close to Peter's Grasshopper banners backstage. I loved hearing the audience laugh and cry out. I also loved their silence - moments of beauty during the circus that left us all a little breathless. We were listening with such intent and care.

Onward, mighty Grasshoppers! Thank you for teaching me your celestial dances.

Editor's note: Sarah Olmsted Thomas is the Olmsted half of Alex and Olmsted and their award winning work is well known in the puppetry community. Sarah and Alex are new members of our Board of Directors and we are delighted to have them on our board and as contributors to Puppetimes



Photo by Leonardo March

AMAZING FUN

at the Northeast/Mid-Atlantic regional festival Puppet Homecoming in the Green Mountains, hosted and curated by Shoshana Bass and Sandglass Theater's Puppets in the Green Mountain Festival.

Here's a smattering of photos and text that cover five days spent in Brattleboro, Vermont, enjoying some of the best puppetry to be seen anywhere.



👉 Cheryl Henson answers questions after Wednesday night's pre-festival screening of *The Dark Crystal*.

Jeb, Shoshana, and Joshua serenading the Sandglass Gala attendees on Thursday. 👉

Thursday



Below: Sandglass Theater's powerful and moving production, *Babylon*, evoked the difficulty and anguish of refugees seeking asylum. 👉



Friday



👉 Left: Louis Reil, from Canada's RustWerk Refinery, gave us a history lesson on events that formed our northern neighbor.

Right: Sinking Ship Productions' *A Hunger Artist* portrayed a time when audiences watched people starve to death, for entertainment. 👉



Puppet Cabaret

Here are a few photos from the cabaret. Produced by festival co-director Justin Dupont and MC'd by Ragliacci Rags, both at the right. 👉



Next to that photo, we have, clockwise: Randall McNair; Darci Davis, Cheryl Capezzuti, and Edna Bland; Tom McLaughlin and his band of merry women (Darci Davis, Cheryl Capezzuti, Edna Bland; Lex Rudd and the guy who ran sound.



Saturday



👉 Above: Mr. Ruraru's Yard from Taiwan's Puppet and its Double Theater taught us how to celebrate the natural world instead of fighting it.



👉 Above: Meet Fred From the UK's Hijinx addressed assumptions about people with developmental differences, showing their capabilities to be the real heroes in life and in art.

Puppet Mutiny SLAM!

Here are a few photos from the Saturday night puppet slam hosted by Joshua and his accomplice Jeb Colwell.



👉 Clockwise from left, Sarah Frechette, Maggie

Winston, Tanya Khordoc and Barry Weil, and Heidi Rugg.



👉 Curtain call.

Sunday

And finally on the festival's last day, we wrapped up our fun with a wonderful and inspiring finale, The Joshua Show. 👉

Thank you Shoshana, Eric and everyone at Sandglass for an excellent festival!!



APPLICATIONS for THE NATIONAL CAPITAL PUPPETRY GUILD 2019 SCHOLARSHIP AND GRANT PROGRAM

The following three pages contain applications for this year's Judy Barry Brown College Scholarship in Puppetry, Judy Barry Brown Festival Grant, and the O'Neill Conference Grant.

Part of our core mission at the National Capital Puppetry Guild is to provide support for education in the puppetry arts. To that end, we have established a program of grants and scholarships to help deserving puppeteers further their study and practice.

The Judy Barry Brown College Scholarship is awarded to a first year student enrolling in a college or university that provides an undergraduate degree in the puppet arts.

It is a need-based scholarship, designed to help offset the cost of tuition. In a social climate where the arts often seem threatened, support for education is essential if we want to see young people pick up and continue the work.

The Judy Barry Brown Festival Grant is offered to a younger guild member to help offset the cost of attending their first festival. It is awarded on a needs basis. Many young puppeteers just need that little push to convince them they have a life in puppetry.

The O'Neill Conference Grant provides a small grant to help defray the cost of attending the conference, for artists that have been accepted into one of the puppet tracks of the program. It is designed to help further a puppeteers continuing education in the art.

If you have any interest in any of these scholarship or grants, please consider applying. If you have any questions please contact us through the Puppetimes email at puppetimes@gmail.com.

Application for First Time Festival Attendance Grant 2019

Every year the National Capital Puppetry Guild makes available a need based grant for any member (associate members excluded) over 17, but not over 35, who is attending their first regional or national festival.

This grant application form must be submitted to the National Capital Puppetry Guild. See the General Instructions below for additional information about completing this application.

General Instructions to Applicant:

1. Make a copy of the blank application form and complete a draft copy first.
2. Which Festival do you want to attend. Please give festival name and dates.

3. Personal Information

Full name of applicant _____ Date of Birth _____

Home telephone number _____ Email _____

Present home address

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Number of years as an NCPG member _____ Citizenship _____

4. Education - please use extra sheets to elaborate, if needed.

- a. Name all secondary and/or technical schools you have attended. List the school you are presently attending first.

5. Puppetry Education and Experience - please use extra sheets to elaborate, if needed.

- a. Please discuss your puppetry education. Include any classes, workshops you've taken.

- b. Please discuss any performances you have participated in.

6. Please write a short essay on why we should send you to your first puppetry festival.

Please complete and send to:

National Capital Puppetry Guild

Scholarship Committee

64 Southall Court

Sterling, VA 20165

Submit no later than one month before the proposed festival. You will be notified within 10 days whether or not you have been selected.

**Preliminary Application Form for the Judy Barry Brown
College Scholarship in Puppetry
2019-2020 Academic Year**

PLEASE NOTE: This application is to be used ONLY if you are applying to study puppetry at one or more of the following universities:

University of Connecticut Storrs

West Virginia University

This scholarship is available to high school seniors and home-schooled students that are full members in good standing of the National Capital Puppetry Guild (associate members are not eligible), applying to the qualifying institutions. This scholarship application form must be submitted to the National Capital Puppetry Guild. See the General Instructions below for additional information about completing this application.

General Instructions to Applicant

1. Make a copy of the blank application form and complete a draft copy first.
2. This is only a preliminary application. If you are selected to continue the application process, more information may be requested.

3. Personal Information

Full name of applicant _____ Date of Birth _____

Home telephone number _____ Email address _____

Present home address

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Number of years as an NCPG member _____ Citizenship _____

4. Education - please use extra sheets to elaborate, if needed.
 - a. Name all secondary and/or technical schools you have attended. List the school you are presently attending first.
 - b. How do you plan to pursue the puppetry arts after finishing college?
 - c. What college(s) would you most like to attend? Please explain your reason.

5. Puppetry Education and Experience - please use extra sheets to elaborate, if needed.

- a. Please discuss your puppetry education. Include any classes, workshops you've taken.
- b. Please discuss any performances you have participated in.

Please complete and send to: National Capital Puppetry Guild Scholarship Committee, 64 Southall Court Sterling, VA 20165 no later than April 1st. You will be notified within 10 days whether or not you have been selected to continue the application process.

National Capital Puppetry Guild O'Neill Grant Application 2019

The National Capital Puppetry Guild has established this grant to provide financial support to members of our guild wishing to attend the **National Puppetry Conference** at the **O'Neill Center for Theatre** in Waterford, Connecticut. All full members (associate members excluded) in good standing are invited to apply. Scholarship funds are contingent upon acceptance into the chosen NPC program.

Name: _____ Birthdate: _____

Address: _____

_____ State _____ Zip _____

Email: _____

Best Phone Number: _____ Circle Type: Home Cell Work

Website: (if available) _____

Please thoroughly answer the following questions. Type your responses and attach.

- Have you attended the O'Neill in the past? If so, when? What tracks did you study?
- What track(s) do you plan to explore at the National Puppetry Conference? Please describe.
- How will this course of study align with your future plans and your professional development in the art of puppetry?
- Provide the committee with at least two references (full name and contact information) who can speak to your work/interest in the art of puppetry.
- Please attach the following (if you are mailing your application via post, please send a CD, DVD, or physical printouts of your supporting documentation):
 - Resume detailing your puppetry/theatrical work, education, and relevant history.
 - Links to photo galleries or video clips that represent your work.
You may also send images as attachments. Be sure to describe the images/video clips to the committee as an attached index. (If you are mailing your application via post, please send a CD, DVD, or print copies.)

Please submit the completed scholarship application and ALL supporting documentation via email to jeffbragg1@verizon.net or mail to:

National Capital Puppetry Guild
Scholarship Committee
64 Southall Court
Sterling, VA 20165



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!

The NCPG Scoop - What's Up With Our Guild

Happy New Year everyone! A new year and a new board. Well, not exactly new, but we do have two new board members!

Welcome to Alex Vernon and Sarah Olmsted Thomas, who were elected as at-large members at our November meeting/election. Sarah has already contributed to Puppetimes with her article on Bread and Puppet's D.C. workshop at the beginning of December.

We'd also like to note that Cori Leyden-Sussler has stepped down from the treasurer's position and Pam McNaughton has assented to replace her for 2019. We will be looking for another person to fill that role, as Pam will be doing this only for this year as we find another treasurer.

At our December 10th board meeting, Secretary Heidi Rugg took notes which are presented below.....

Present: Jeff, Pam, Sam, Heidi, Alex, and Sarah

Old Biz: None

New Biz:

*We welcome Alex Vernon and Sarah Olmsted as new members.

*Roles: Leadership and roles/positions are maintained as is.

*Mostly monthly puppet shows at the Durant are continuing, but we have some concerns about getting proper credit. Makerfest in October was disappointing.

*Funding:

-We did not award any scholarships or grants last year.

-Funding for Festival attendance will be maintained. No other changes at this time.

*What are the needs of emerging puppeteers?

-building, performance skills, materials, and resources

*Website issues noted. Suggested that we change our platform. Moved and seconded to create a new website in the coming year with a recommendation that we use Weebly.

Meeting adjourned at 8:02pm

Our next meeting is our holiday party, which will be held at the new home of Sam and Heidi Rugg in Richmond, VA on January 27th between 2pm and 6pm. All current members are invited. Please contact Heidi at 804-334-4338 or h@barefootpuppets.com to find out the details.

The Manglement

Puppetimes

Enjoy the issues you've missed!

We are now offering printed copies of back issues for the last three years.

Each copy is \$10 with shipping included.

Full color copies are also available for \$20 with shipping included.

For issues not on this pages., email: puppetimes@gmail.com



Volume 52 No. 2 March - April 2016
Feature: Don Becker Interview



Volume 52 No. 4 July - August 2016
Feature: The Life and Work of Ida Jervis



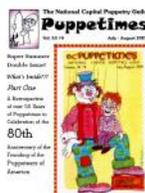
Volume 52 No. 6 Nov. - Dec 2016
Feature: Paul Vincent Davis Interview



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. 4 July - August 2017
NCPG Retrospective Issue #1



Volume 53 No. 4 July - August 2017
NCPG Retrospective Issue #2



Volume 53 No. 5 Sept. - Oct. 2017
Feature: The Judy Fund, National Festival Puppetry Exhibit



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 Jean Reges Burn

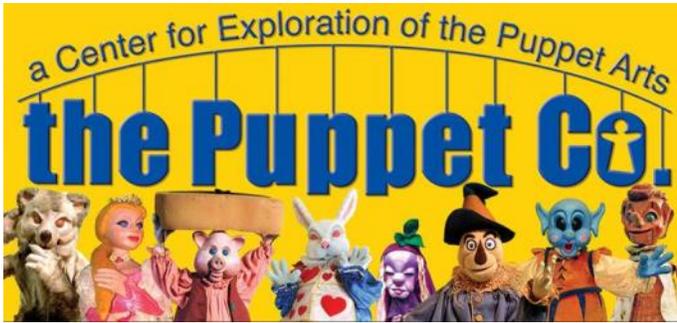


Volume 54 No. 5 Sept - Oct 2018
Feature: Karen Falk Interview



Volume 54 No. 6 November - December 2018
Feature: Exclusive interview with Bonnie Erickson

THE SEE AND BE SEEN SCENE



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

January 18th through February 10th

The Velveteen Rabbit

February 14 through March 24

Rapunzel

Thursdays & Fridays 11:00 AM

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

Tiny Tot Time with Bob Brown

1/19, 20/19 - Penguin's Playground

Sat, Sun - 10:00 AM

1/26/19 - Winter Wonderland

Sun - 10:00 AM

2/3/19 - Winter Wonderland

Sun - 10:00 AM

2/9,17/19 - Snow Show

Sat, Sun - 10:00 AM

2/23/19 - Baby Bear's Birthday

Sat - 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

wondermentpuppets@yahoo.com

Jan 12 - Feb 24 **The Frog Prince**

Puppets at the Durant Center

Bob Brown Puppets

February 16, 10:00am & 11:45am

Pointless Theater at

Dance Loft on 14

4618 14th St NW, Washington, DC 20011

Visions of Love

January 11 - February 9, 2019

Tickets at <https://dancelofton14.ticketspice.com/visions-of-love>

Wit's End Puppets

Brookland Artspace Lofts

3305 8th St NE, Washington, DC 20017

Puppet Lobby

Monday January 7, 2019 at 8:00pm

Free and open to the public.

ADVANCE NOTICE!

Alden Theater

1234 Ingleside Ave, McLean, VA 22101

The Joshua Show

March 23rd, 2019 at 1:00pm

Tickets at:

<https://web.ovationtix.com/trs/pr/996319>

It's that Time Again. Do it now.



National
Capital
Puppetry
Guild

2019 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 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, 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