

October 2021

NCPG

Price 15 cents

# PUPPETTIMES





# National Capital Puppetry Guild

## PUPPETIMES

October 2021 VOL. 57 #2

Editors: Alex Vernon  
Sarah Olmsted Thomas

Graphic Design: Alex Vernon

### NCPG Board

President: Yolanda Sampson  
Vice President: Sarah Olmsted Thomas  
Secretary: Heidi Rugg  
Treasurer: Leigh Lafosse  
At Large: Schroeder Cherry  
Michael Lamason  
Sam Rugg  
Vanessa Spring-Frank  
Alex Vernon

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

Puppetimes is published biannually and is available to all members.

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

© 2021 NCPG. Puppetimes: Sarah Olmsted Thomas and Alex Vernon, Editors

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.

NCPG Website: [nationalcapitalpuppetry.org](http://nationalcapitalpuppetry.org)

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

NCPG Instagram: [@CapitalPuppetryGuild](https://www.instagram.com/CapitalPuppetryGuild)

NCPG Twitter: [@NCPGpuppetry](https://twitter.com/NCPGpuppetry)

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

For information regarding membership in The Puppeteers of America: [puppeteers.org](http://puppeteers.org)

# Welcome!

Welcome to the National Capital Puppetry Guild's Puppetimes! This issue will include a recap of our successful 2021 National Capital Puppetry Festival by President Yolanda Sampson, the upcoming Make-A-Thon & Accountability Groups led by Secretary Heidi Rugg, Scholarship announcements and opportunities, our Membership Corner with Treasurer Leigh Lafosse, and the one and only NCPG Kids Club. Thank you for taking a look.

Sarah Olmsted Thomas & Alex Vernon  
Editors

## Exciting News!

Dustin Curtis, Vice President of Puppeteers of America, shared that "P of A is planning on holding the next [National Puppetry Festival] in 2023 at the University of Maryland. Due to the pandemic, this will be subject to confirmation in early 2022."

## Contents

3 Festival Recap	13 Membership Corner
4 Awards	14 Kids Club
8 Testimonials	15 Scholarships
10 Member Meetings	17 Board of Directors
11 Make-A-Thon	20 Dues Breakdown



Cover:  
NCPG Dino  
Jack-o-Lantern  
Created by:  
Alex Vernon

# Festival Recap



## Greetings NCPG Family and Friends!

Thank you so much for attending NCPG's 2nd Virtual Puppetry Festival! We had 239 festival goers from 32 US States, Puerto Rico, and 14 countries including Wales, Kenya, South Africa, Switzerland, England, Scotland, Columbia, Ireland, Italy, Germany, Mexico, Brazil, India, and Canada. Your presence, puppets, performances, participation, perspectives, proficiency, and pleasant smiles made our festival such a memorable event. Without you, this festival would have summed up to be another day in one's calendar. The festival came and went ... but what we still have is the NCPG village who will continue to gather as a community to share, learn, and grow as puppet artists and individuals.

Congratulations again to the NCPG Award Recipients: Lifetime Achievement Award – Paul Vincent Davis, Spirit of Generosity – Peter Court and Creativity in COVID – Genna Beth Davidson.

Thank you again to all our festival sponsors (Heather Henson & The Puppet Slam Network, Kwame Alexander & Big Sea Entertainment, Meg DeLoatch and GO Y.O. Worldwide) and our advertisers for helping us to keep the registration cost affordable for our festival participants during the COVID-19 pandemic.

NCPG Family and Friends, we appreciate all your support and hope to see you soon at an upcoming NCPG gathering! GOD bless you!

Warm Regards,  
The NCPG Board Team  
Yolanda, Sarah, Alex, Schroeder, Leigh, Heidi, Sam, Michael, and Vanessa

# Awards and Citations

This year was the inaugural NCPG Awards Show! Hosted by the inimitable NCPG President Yolanda Sampson, this Awards Show was an exciting night of celebration and remembrance. Two puppeteers nominated by Guild members were recognized for the inaugural awards, "Creativity in COVID" and "Generosity of Spirit." There was an "In Memoriam" program to honor puppeteers in our community who have passed away, and the pièce de résistance was a Lifetime Achievement Award honoring luminary artist and beloved puppeteer Paul Vincent Davis who, among his many remarkable achievements, was also once a member of the NCPG!



*One of the members who nominated her had this to say:*  
"Genna Beth Davidson has been working away non-stop on a wide portion of the puppet-spectrum (non-curricular puppetry besides). She is earning her Masters in Puppetry at UConn. She has done this despite breaking her wrist- as well as being restricted by the Covid non-live regulations that UConn had to put in place.... She is passionate about puppets and is a thoughtful and sensitive listener. I am very thankful for her."



Generosity of Spirit is the openness and the willingness to share our gifts freely with others joyously, willingly, and without expectation of receiving anything else in return. Peter has been described as warm, caring, and encouraging toward all fellow puppeteers. One person shared that he "shares his knowledge at almost a ridiculous price - for the cost of a class. Even during the riots in his hometown, he was still promoting peace, justice, and opportunity."

## Lifetime Achievement Award

In honor of his many contributions to the art of puppetry, the NCPG presented Paul Vincent Davis with a Lifetime Achievement Award. In celebration of this award, a Proclamation was written by Mayor of the City of Richmond Levar Stoney, a Citation was written by the Governor of Massachusetts Charlie Baker, and a personal note of congratulation was written by the one and only First Lady of the United States of America, Dr. Jill Biden. The Proclamation, Citation, and Personal Note can be found on the following three pages.



# City of Richmond



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

RICHMOND, VIRGINIA USA 23219

## Proclamation

**WHEREAS**, Paul Vincent Davis was born in Richmond, Virginia January 5, 1935; after relocating and growing up in Alexandria, Virginia, Paul earned his B.A. in Fine Arts from the Richmond Professional Institute of the College of William and Mary; and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Davis' fascination with puppets began at the age of four when he performed with hand puppets for his family and friends; when Davis was 10 years old, he and his father converted the family garage into a puppet theater, and he began to perform for neighborhood children; and

**WHEREAS**, for more than 30 years, Paul Vincent Davis served as the Artistic Director and an Artist in Residence at Puppet Showplace Theater in Brookline, Massachusetts, where thousands of children and adults have enjoyed the fine art of puppetry he brought to life; working with his partner, Mary Churchill, who founded the Puppet Showplace Theatre in 1974, he nurtured a company and a permanent theatre that became the home of puppetry in Boston; and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Davis has received numerous awards: UNIMA-USA, founded by Jim Henson in 1966, presented Paul Vincent Davis with Citations of Excellence for his productions of "The Leprechaun of Donegal" (1980), "The Golden Axe" (1982), "Three Festival Dances" (1982), "Beauty and the Beast" (1984), and "Fables of Ancient Rome" (1988), and he received the Puppeteers of America President's Award for his outstanding contributions to the art of puppetry (1990); and

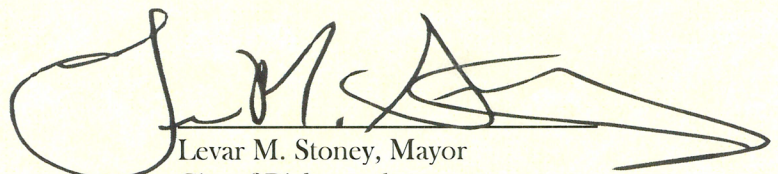
**WHEREAS**, Mr. Davis advocates following one's passion in life, as he did as a child, saying, "Keep in mind that it is not what you do," he said, "but rather, how and why you do it;"

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, Levar M. Stoney, Mayor of the City of Richmond, Virginia do hereby celebrate the achievements of

### “Mr. Paul Vincent Davis”

in the City of Richmond and congratulate him on receiving the National Capital Puppetry Guild's Lifetime Achievement Award.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed, the seal of the City of Richmond, this 19<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2021.

  
Levar M. Stoney, Mayor  
City of Richmond



# The Commonwealth of Massachusetts



## *Paul Vincent Davis*

ON BEHALF OF THE CITIZENS OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS,  
I AM PLEASED TO CONFER UPON YOU THIS GOVERNOR'S CITATION IN RECOGNITION OF YOUR MORE THAN 30  
YEARS OF DEDICATED SERVICE AS THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR AND AN ARTIST IN RESIDENCE AT THE PUPPET  
SHOWPLACE THEATER IN BROOKLINE, MASSACHUSETTS. THE COMMONWEALTH COMMENDS YOUR MANY YEARS  
AS A PUPPETEER AND YOUR WORK TO PROMOTE THE ART OF PUPPETRY TO AUDIENCES IN MASSACHUSETTS AND  
BEYOND.

THIS NINETEENTH DAY OF AUGUST IN THE YEAR 2021

  
CHARLES D. BAKER  
Governor

  
KARYN E. POLITO  
Lieutenant Governor

THE WHITE HOUSE

August 16, 2021

Mr. Paul Vincent Davis  
West Roxbury, Massachusetts

Dear Paul,

Congratulations on receiving the National Capital Puppetry Guild's Lifetime Achievement Award! For over three decades, your career has brought the magic of puppetry to life. Thank you for bringing joy to so many through your art.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jill Biden". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J" and a long, horizontal flourish at the end.

# Festival Testimonials

---

“At this stage of the pandemic, I’ve had the pleasure of presenting hundreds of virtual workshops. Only a very small handful have been as AWESOME as the one I was lucky enough to present for the National Capital Puppetry Guild 2nd Virtual Festival! To feel so supported as a presenter is a TREAT! The warm and informative communications from Heidi, the confident and positive tech and moderating from Alex and Sarah, the gratitude and warmth from Yolanda, the competent and kind support from Leigh –that’s just the start of the awesome leadership the guild and festival had in place to make this an incredible experience. This top-down magic was felt in EVERY PARTICIPANT. They were engaged, responsive, thoughtful and just plain FUN. I am so grateful to the NCPG for a terrific event and for fostering the creative community that is the NCPG extended family.”

Aretta Baumgartner  
President, Board of Directors, Puppeteers of America

“The National Capital Puppetry Guild's Second Virtual Puppetry Festival was an inspiring and exciting achievement. It fully reflected the dynamism of the guild, and its rich and varied array of active puppeteers. The performances, presentations, and workshops comprised a very full program which gave a great boost to our collective puppet spirits during this challenging time.”

Dr. John Bell  
Museum Director, Ballard Institute and Museum of Puppetry

“Thanks to all who organized and participated in such a great festival. Paul-Vincent’s Tribute was lovely. Amazing how many official recognitions you amassed. Be sure to photo and post them for all to see and for posterity. Impressive and well-deserved. Performances and shows were all well done, Congratulations and thanks to all.”

Nancy Staub  
Former President of Puppeteers of America  
Vice-President of UNIMA-USA  
and a longtime member of NCPG

“I’d just like to say such a huge thank you to you all! This festival was an absolute delight. I have attended a lot of on-line conferences this year and this was my favorite. Absolute favorite. I heard an elder say [Alex and Olmsted] are an excellent role model for a society, making everyone feel welcome and heard. That is so true. I just loved your demeanours, humour, readiness to play. That synchronous singing. Ohhhh delightful! Dino D and Tuna, you rock my world. You are marathon hosters with the mosters! Leigh, I am so keen to find me some whacky fortunes. deLIGHTful!...So feel like I’ve found my people, and a medium that is broad enough for my eclectic curiosities!”

Shelly Sharp  
NCPG member



# Festival Testimonials

---

“Namaste and Warm Greetings!!

On behalf of Sphoorthi Theatre-STEPARC I would like to extend my gratitude for allowing us to participate in the Three day-NCPG Puppet Festival. I thank President Ms. Yolanda Sampon, Ms. Sarah Olmsted, Ms. Heidi Rugg, Dr. Leigh Lafosse, Ms. Vanessa Spring, Mr. Alex Vernon, Dr. Schroeder, Mr. Micheal Lamason and all other members & supporters. It was a great opportunity for us to be part of it. Perhaps the first International Puppet festival outside India. We are glad to have got to know renowned and successful puppeteers all around the world and we had an opportunity to share our work. We look forward to being associated with your organization for the future workshops and performances.”

Padmini Rangarajan

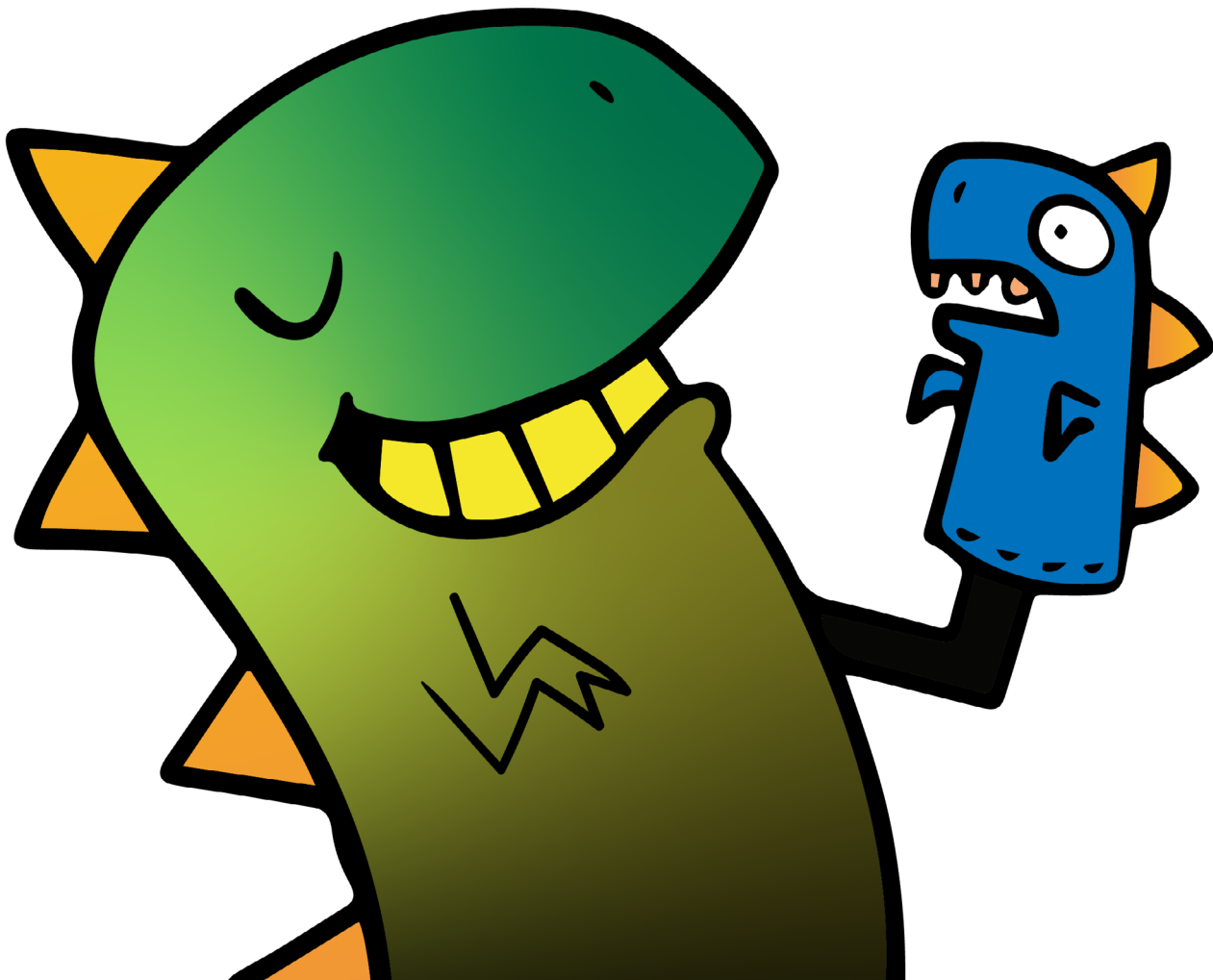
Director of Sphoorthi Theatre for Educational Puppetry, Art & Craft-STEPARC, India

“Thanks, Leigh, and the entire National Capital Puppetry Guild Board for a glorious virtual festival. You were so welcoming to everyone and are inspirational leaders for the puppetry arts community.”

Carol Sterling

Former President of UNIMA-USA

Former Education Consultant for Puppeteers of America



# Member Meetings

Did you know NCPG has member meetings every other month? Did you know ALL of these meetings include a workshop, artist discussion, or panel conversation? Check out the awesome events from the past year!

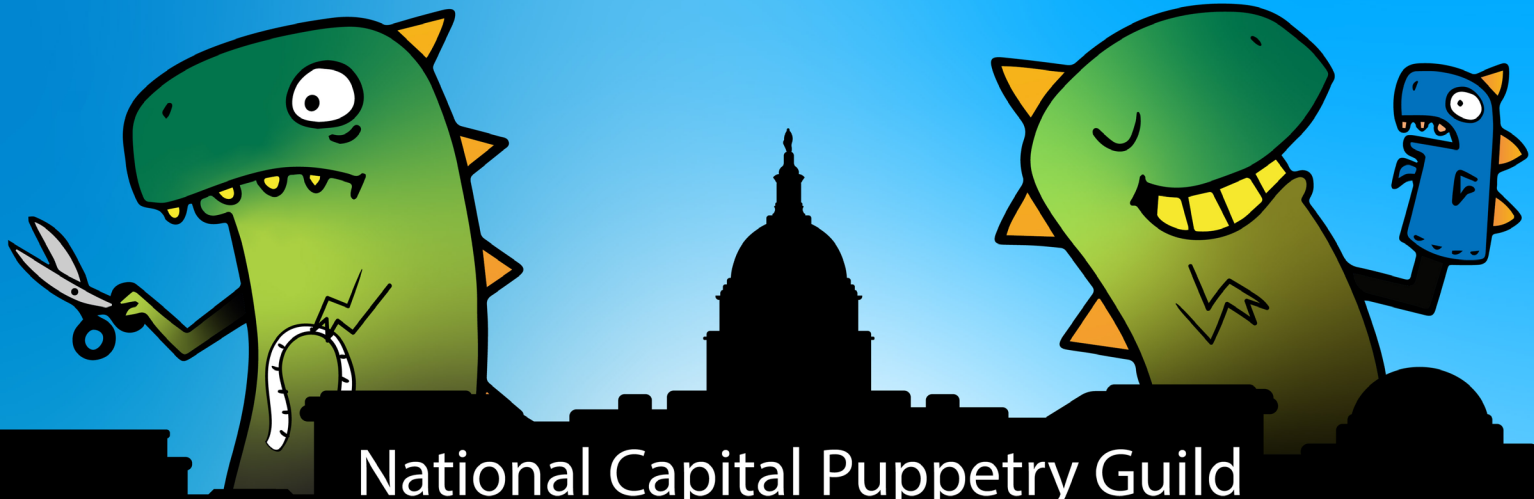
**NATIONAL CAPITAL PUPPETRY GUILD**  
presents  
**A Conversation with Schroeder Cherry**  
Jan. 17, 2021 1pm ET  
Photo: David Moss

**NATIONAL CAPITAL PUPPETRY GUILD**  
**Puppetry & Advocacy**  
March 21 @ 1pm ET  
Ailin Ruiz  
Torri Lynn Ashford  
Mobi Warren  
Fedelis Kyalo

**NATIONAL CAPITAL PUPPETRY GUILD**  
presents  
**Multiplane Shadow Puppetry**  
An Artist Talk with **Linda Wingerter** of **The Stringpullers**  
July 18, 2021 @ 1pm ET

**NATIONAL CAPITAL PUPPETRY GUILD**  
presents  
**Voice Versatility**  
A Workshop with **Jayden Libran**  
May 16, 2021 @ 1pm ET  
Photo: Jayden Libran

**NATIONAL CAPITAL PUPPETRY GUILD**  
presents  
**What Are You Worth?**  
Artists Talk About Getting Paid  
Moderated by **Schroeder Cherry**  
Sept 12, 2021 @ 1pm ET



National Capital Puppetry Guild

# Make-A-Thon

Oct 21 - 23, 2021

## Make-A-Thon by Heidi Rugg

Connect with your National Capital Puppetry Guild to build community AND build your next work! Writing a script? Working on a puppet build or some other creative work for the stage? A Make-A-Thon is a great way to create support for your next work. We gather together for goal-setting, progress reports, breakout rooms, exchange of knowledge -- you name it! Be energized and stay connected in this time designed with your next work in mind. Our proposed schedule is as follows:

### Friday, October 21, 2021

3pm-4pm: Kick-off!

6pm-7pm: Connect with goals (and check-in for those who could not attend at 3pm)

NOTE: All times are listed in Eastern Time

### Saturday, October 22, 2021

10am: State your intentions

12pm: Lunch on your own

12:30-4:30pm: Optional Virtual co-working in Creative Break-out Zooms

5pm: Check-in!

6-9pm: Independent Working/Dinner/Break

9pm: Optional Check-in!

### Sunday, October 23, 2021

11am: Final intentions/Re-evaluation goals

12:30pm: Lunch on your own

1-5pm: Optional Virtual Connections and co-working

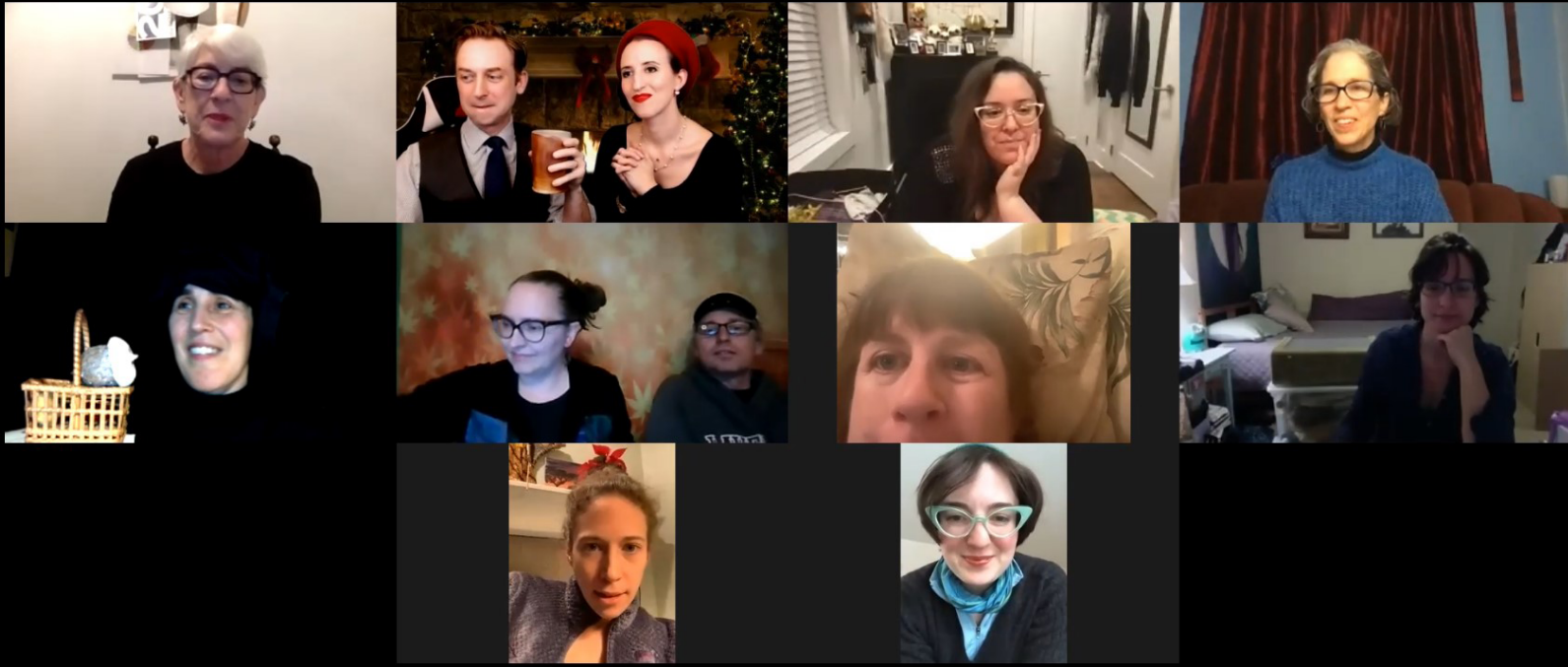
6pm-8pm: Final Gathering & Celebration

### NCPG Accountability Groups with Heidi Rugg

3pm-4pm Kick-off! By popular demand, we will be forming Accountability Group(s) to help our puppet community flourish in 2022! Stay tuned for more information on how to sign up for a group. If you are interested in leading a group based on a specific topic (i.e. puppet mechs, building, scripting, marketing...), please contact Heidi Rugg at [barefootpuppets@gmail.com](mailto:barefootpuppets@gmail.com).



# Potpourri!

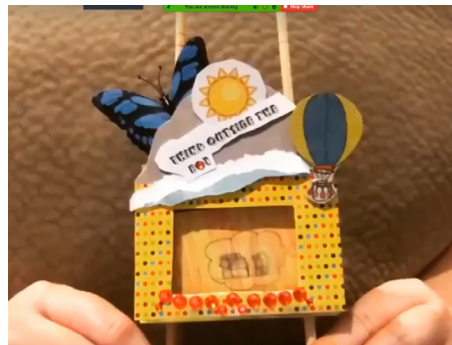


## Open Mic style puppetry presented every other month

The Potpourri is an open mic for puppetry. The material can be new, it can be old, but just make sure it's family friendly and under 5 minutes. If you don't have an act, but you have a puppet you'd like to share, Alex and Olmsted are ready to give your puppet an interview!



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



*Think Outside the Box*  
by Paige O'Malley



*Potpourri Piece*  
by Jill Kyle Keith

Upcoming  
Potpourri  
Dates

10/17/2021  
12/3/2021

## Want to perform or watch?

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

# Membership Corner with Leigh

To our amazing members!

We have had such a fantastic year continuing to share virtual spaces with your energy, enthusiasm, and talents. It's no secret that the NCPG has an incredibly deep bench of awesome when it comes to all of YOU, and we are so grateful for your trust and positivity.

## LOBBY HOURS!

Our time spent in the weekly Office Hour zoom room was absolutely a bright spot for this NCPG gal, and I am so excited to announce that we will now be holding open Virtual Lobby Hours after our Membership Meetings and Potpourris! Join us for some meat and potatoes through monthly workshops and open mic performances, and then stick around to enjoy a savory smidgen of social free time with fellow friendly faces! We'll splash through current projects and goals, catch up on the lives of our puppetry buddies, and sprinkle a dash of giggles within a safe and welcoming atmosphere. Pop in to participate in the conversation or just observe and enjoy the banter.

## VOLUNTEER!

If you are interested in being involved with upcoming Guild projects, applying for a role as a workshop presenter, joining in our efforts to increase education and youth outreach, or helping to raise and create scholarship and donation opportunities- please send us an email and let us know. All are always welcome!

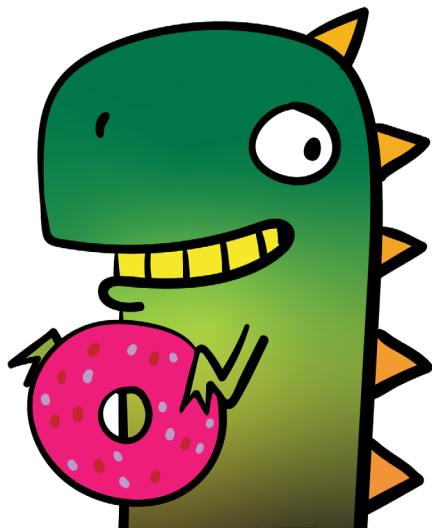


*Leigh Lafosse*

## TO INFINITY AND...!

We are so excited about everything in store for the NCPG this year and are eager to continue sharing and growing with all of you. We hope to see you at some of our upcoming workshops, meetings, potpourris, and Lobby hang outs. And if you find yourself in need of a peer, teacher, or friend know that we are here to be your extra eyes, to serve your spirit, or to help hold your hand. Together, we are your NCPG.

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

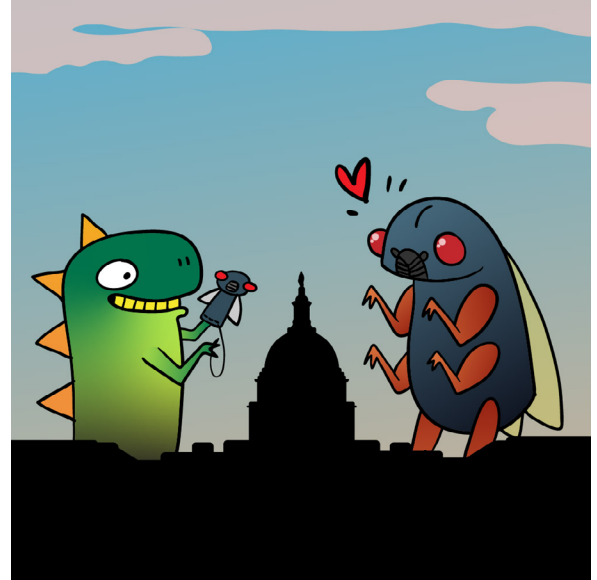


Dr. Leigh Lafosse  
Treasurer & Membership Director  
[nationalcapitalpuppetryguild@gmail.com](mailto:nationalcapitalpuppetryguild@gmail.com)

# Kids Club

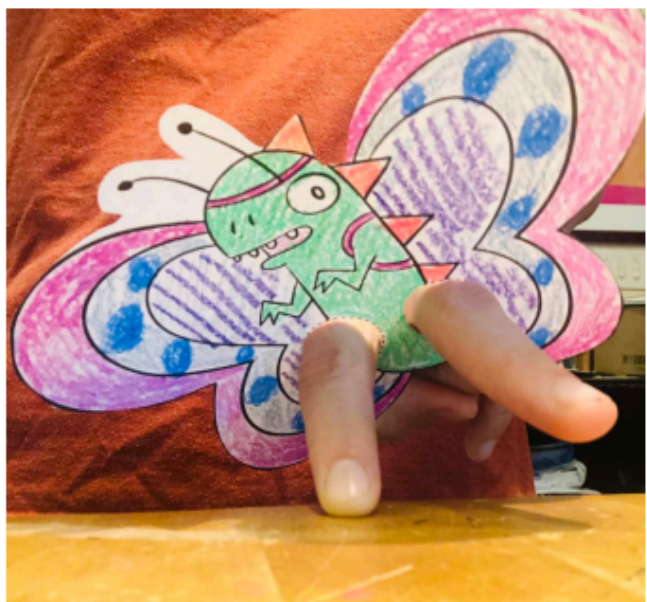
Our Kids Club has remained virtual this year in an effort to keep everyone as safe as possible through COVID distancing, but that hasn't stopped us from having fun creating and sharing some puppet fun with our junior members! This past May, we welcomed the Cicada awakening on the East Coast with a cicada finger puppet, in June we created DINOfls that can high kick with the best of any dance line, and in September we celebrated the happiness inherent in a simple sock puppet!

Are you a teacher, parent, or advocate for kids and education? It's not too late to sign those kids up for FREE and gain access to workshops, performances, and personalized surprises! Registration is easy- simply fill out the form on our webpage and you'll automatically be added to our mailing list for upcoming events and unique, educational offerings: <https://www.nationalcapitalpuppetry.org/kidsclub>. And while you're on the website, check out the terrific videos created by our membership specifically to match our Kids Club themes!



A big thanks to our phenomenally generous Kids Club committee members: Mobi Warren, Paige O'Malley, Dona Davis, Mary Benson, Kris Woolen, Schroeder Cherry, Michael Lamason, Yolanda Sampson, Vanessa Spring-Frank, and Leigh Lafosse.

If you'd like to be involved on the committee or have content shared on our Kids Club page, please send us an email at [nationalcapitalpuppetryguild@gmail.com](mailto:nationalcapitalpuppetryguild@gmail.com).



# NCPG Scholarships



## Judy Barry Brown Festival Grant

The Judy Barry Brown Festival Grant is awarded to ages 18-24 to participate in their first regional or national Puppeteers of America sponsored puppetry festival. Application is open to all members in good standing with the NCPG. Applications for the grant must be made at least one month prior to the festival. You can find the application on the NCPG Website under "[Grants and Scholarships](#)"

## O'Neill Puppetry Conference Grant

The O'Neill Conference Grant is offered to guild members under the age of thirty who are accepted by the conference for first-time attendance. It is a need-based, partial scholarship designed to offset a participant's expenses while there. Application is open to all members in good standing of the NCPG. Applications are due May 15 of each calendar year. You can find the application on the NCPG Website under "[Grants and Scholarships](#)"

## Donate to the Scholarship Funds

We can't offer these scholarships without donations from people like you. The NCPG is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that runs its programming based solely on grants, membership dues, and donations. If you'd like to donate to the NCPG Scholarship Funds, you can do so on the NCPG Website under "[Donations](#)".

# Partnerships with PuppetSoup and Peter Court

The NCPG is thrilled to have partnered with the theater company PuppetSoup based in Wales in the United Kingdom in support of their Teatro Lambe Lambe workshops and Peter Court of Creative Madness based in South Africa. Headed by President Yolanda Sampson, the NCPG worked closely with these companies to develop a diversity scholarship opportunity for puppeteers across the world who may not otherwise have the means to afford the workshop.



## Teatro Lambe Lambe with PuppetSoup

Teatro Lambe Lambe is a form of puppetry or shape animation that takes place inside a confined but easily transportable space that, normally, one spectator would watch at a time. Teatro Lambe Lambe originated in Brazil and Fagner Gastaldon (founder of PuppetSoup) is recognized in Brazilian puppetry literature as the UK's leader in this artform.

## Who is PuppetSoup?

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

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



## Paper Pop-ups for Puppet Performers with Peter Court

"We will explore Toy Theatre, Pop-Ups, Flexagons and 'Good Old-Fashioned Storytelling' to create new and interesting forms of visual theatre, either for the young, the old, or both!!!"

## Who is Peter Court?

Peter has worked in education, the creative arts and theatre for almost thirty five years, and in South Africa for over twenty five years. Much of his current work focuses on strengthening school systems through the creative arts and life orientation programmes. He is also a certified life coach, counsellor and a skilled facilitator. He continues to make theatrical work and to perform occasionally.

## NCPG Scholarship Recipients for PuppetSoup's Teatro Lambe Lambe Course: (Sept - Oct Session)

A. Tony Jerome and Fedelis Kyalo

## NCPG Scholarship Recipients for Peter Court's "Paper Pop-ups for Puppet Performers!" Course:

Cathy Pruett and Padmini Rangarajan



# Get To Know... Your NCPG Board



## **Yolanda Sampson - President**

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



## **Sarah Olmsted Thomas - Vice President**

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



## **Dr. Leigh Lafosse - Treasurer**

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



## Heidi Rugg - Secretary

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



## Sam Rugg - Member at Large

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



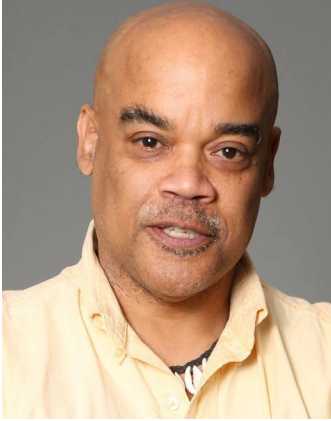
## Alex Vernon - Member at Large

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



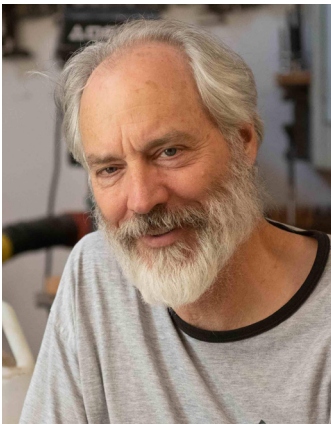
## Vanessa Spring-Frank - Member at Large

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



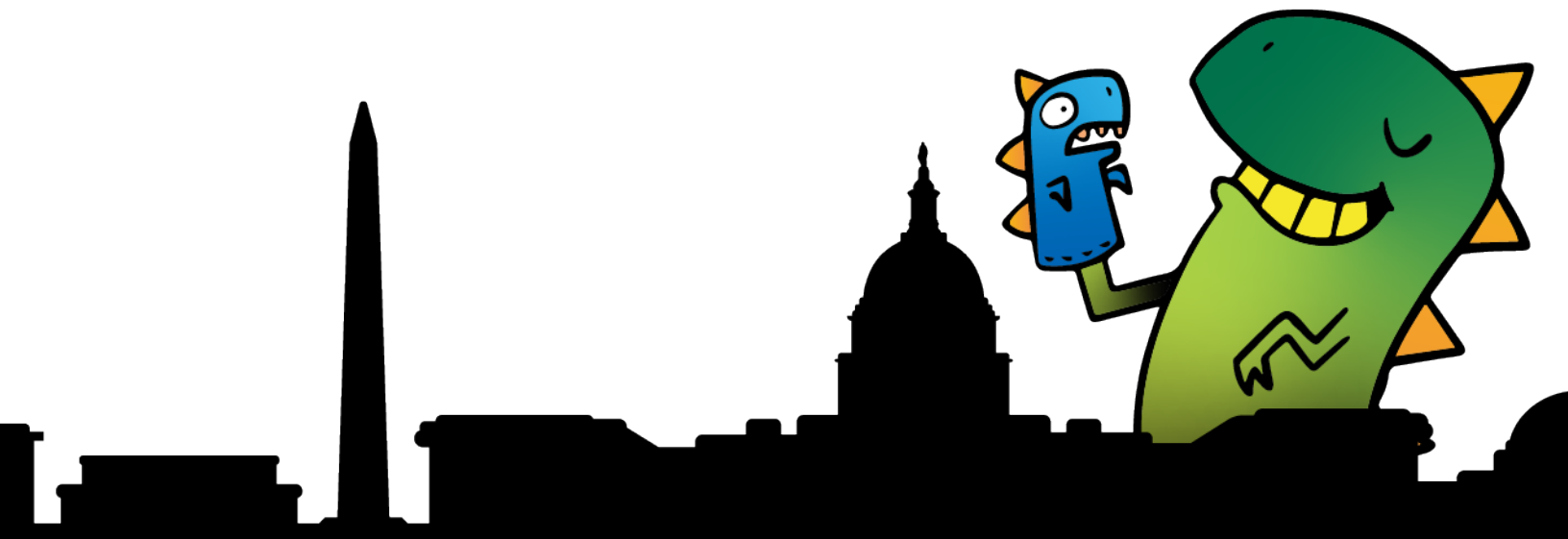
## **Dr. Schroeder Cherry - Member at Large**

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



## **Michael Lamason - Member at Large**

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



# Dues Breakdown

by Leigh Lafosse, Treasurer

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

The membership options have been reduced to the following:

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

Cost: \$20

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

Cost: \$10, Requires adult signature/sponsor

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

Cost: \$30, Inclusion in Membership Company Directory

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

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

## What do your dues do?

