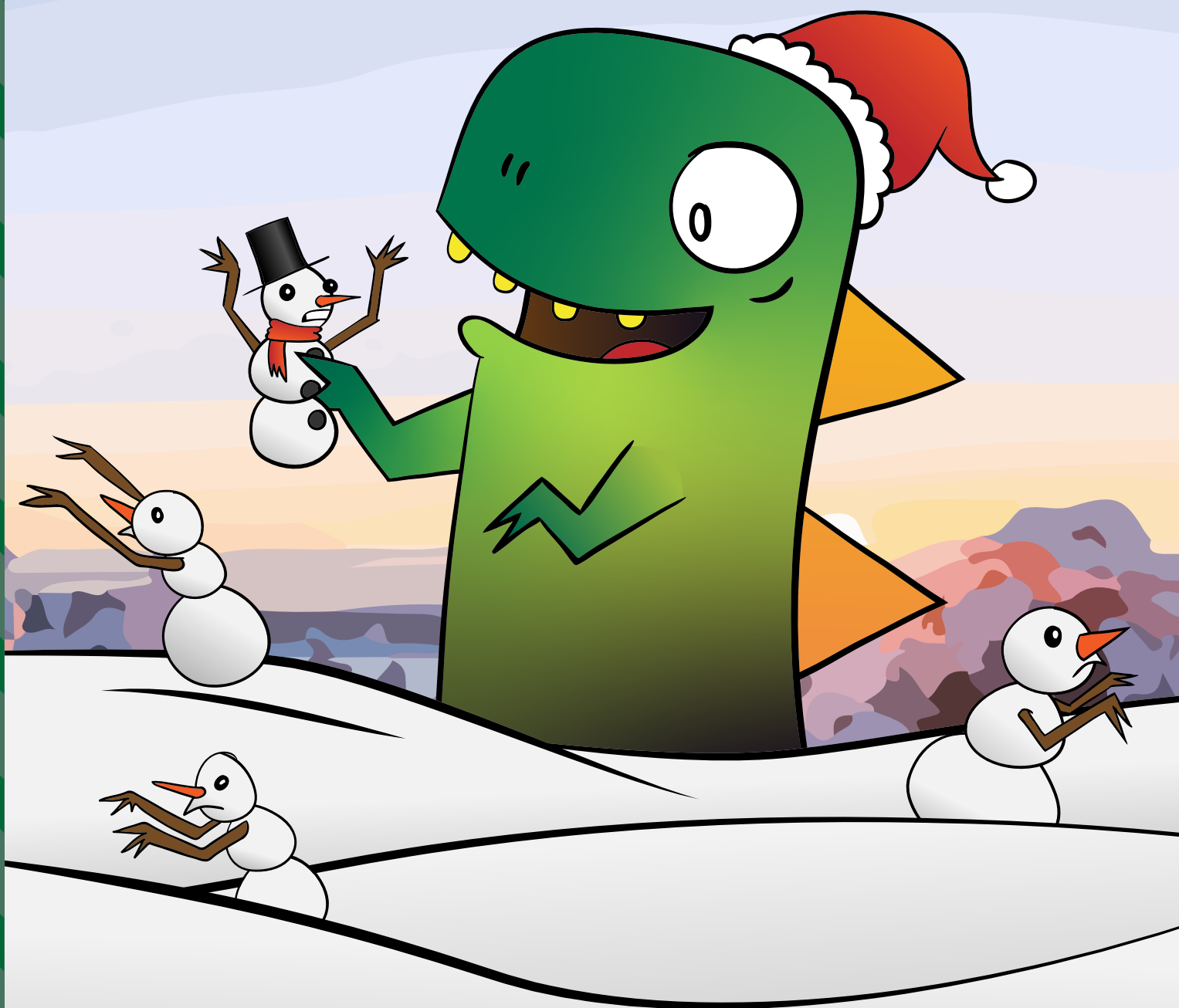


December 2022

NCPG

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PUPPETTIMES





National Capital Puppetry Guild

PUPPETIMES

December 2022 VOL. 58 #2

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Sarah Olmsted Thomas

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

Puppetimes is published biannually and is available to all members.

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

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Send all submissions to puppetimes@gmail.com

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

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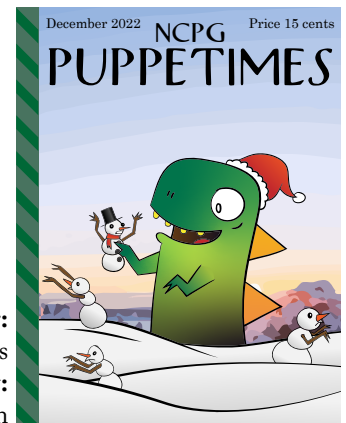
Welcome!

Welcome to the National Capital Puppetry Guild's *Puppetimes!* This issue includes a welcome from president Dr. Leigh Lafosse, a recap of 2022's successful workshops and Potpourris, member shout-outs, and a feature on local company Blood from a Turnip. There's also a NCPG Kids Club update by Board member Mobi Warren, a review of Open Eye Theater's Puppet Lab, a Scholarship Committee update by Treasurer Vanessa Spring-Frank, and a scholarship testimonial by member Daniele Viola about her experience in Peter Court's workshop about needle sculpted tabletop puppets. You'll enjoy learning more about The Puppet Co.'s exciting collection of historic puppets, and the upcoming 66th National Puppeteers of America Festival in July 2023. Please join us in welcoming new Board members Sarah Bourne, Peter Court, and Jill Kyle-Keith.

Thank you for taking a look.
Sarah Olmsted Thomas & Alex Vernon
Editors

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Cover:
Frosty Treats
Created by:
Alex Vernon

From the Office of the President

Greetings, fabulous members of the NCPG and beyond!

In these moments of authorship, I'm gifted the treat of devoting unfiltered time to reflecting on who we are as the NCPG, and to dream about where the future tickings of the world's clock may find us. To write about our ever-evolving guild is a great honor- one filled with pride, gratitude, and optimism. Membership expands like the slow intake of a deep breath, released back into the artistic community through unique performances, valued education, and esprit de corps. Workshops draw on creative energy to pull through the transition from idea to reality, spreading knowledge of new thought into the open minds of those who seek to grow.

Over the past few years, our people and our puppets have come through fire, yet at times it feels we fail to acknowledge or recognize the toll that the flames may have taken on the very essence of what it means to be a human in society today. Rising isolation, divisiveness, numbness; walls are up, wagons are circled. It's no small feat to sit as an artist and watch the beginning of 2023, for we feel the currents swaying, the heaviness weighing, and the depth of responsibility to lift our hands, strings, and shadows against the rising tide.

To each of us who sometimes sees the world as it is and not as it could be; who want to create change but often feel lost or powerless; who wonder if these single drops can shift a needle-share with the present that you have, and know it is enough.

To each of us who struggles with feelings of inadequacy, imposter certainty, guilt at our own failed offerings of increasing engagement or devotion to others- be with us as you are, and rest.

You belong, right here, right now.



NCPG President, Leigh Lafosse

This is where our craft- this guild- this sharing of unfathomable creative power- can provide a superhuman relief to our cherished communities and cultures around the globe. Always lifting, always supporting, always accepting the truth of who we are as a family of artists. Together we embrace the beauty of our differences and empower every voice, be it human, puppet, or a blend of both through honest expression.

We provide humanity a path of capable creation and collaborative connection through our story telling, problem solving, and imaginative play. We share the answers to questions not being asked but that are resonating throughout the subconscious chambers of our species.

If all the world belonged to a puppetry guild, aye,
...what a world we would build.

Just so happens, I've got ready a 16-Ounce Steel-Forged Rip Claw Hammer with Non-Slip Handle....

What can you bring today?

Sincerely,

Leigh Lafosse
NCPG President

"OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS, OUR PEOPLE AND OUR PUPPETS HAVE COME THROUGH FIRE"



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



Planning Your Best 2022!
A Workshop with
Art Grueneberger
Jan 9, 2022 @ 1pm ET

NATIONAL CAPITAL PUPPETRY GUILD presents



Improv is Fun and Easy
A Workshop with
Stephen Major
March 20, 2022 @ 1pm ET

NATIONAL CAPITAL PUPPETRY GUILD presents

The Object Itself
A Workshop with
Rachel Gates
May 15, 2022 1pm ET




NATIONAL CAPITAL PUPPETRY GUILD presents



Workshopping the Workshop!
July 17th @ 1pm ET



TJ Jacobs



Making Money on Social Media with Puppets
with **Grant Baciocco**
AUG 20, 1pm ET
Sponsored by GO Y.O. WORLDWIDE LLC



NATIONAL CAPITAL PUPPETRY GUILD presents

Making Shadow Puppet Joints and Mechs



November 21 2022 7:30pm ET

A Workshop with **Sofía Padilla** of Paradox Teatro

Practical lessons from Javanese shadow puppetry
with **Marc Hoffman**



Sunday September 18th @ 1pm EST
presented by:
NATIONAL CAPITAL PUPPETRY GUILD



POTPOURRI



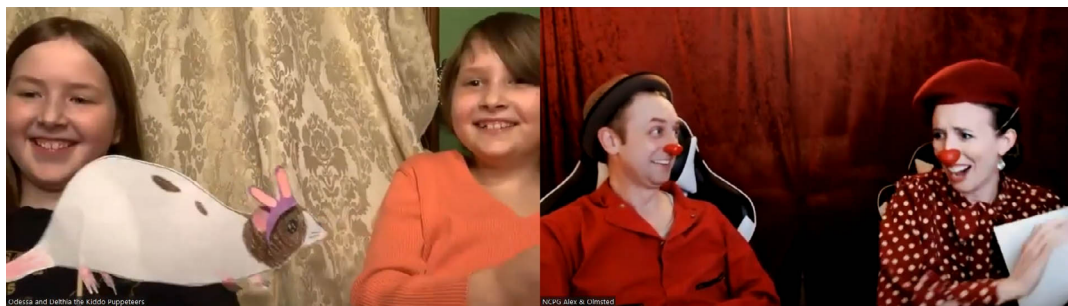
Open Mic puppetry starring YOU!

The NCPG Potpourris are open mics for puppetry. Inspired by the model at the Puppeteers of America Festivals, they are variety performances where everyone brings a short skit to share and it ends up becoming a little bit of everything. The NCPG hosts Potpourris virtually on Zoom throughout the year. The acts are under 5 minutes and family friendly. For those puppeteers who don't have an act, our hosts are ready to give your puppet an interview! The guild hosted 4 online Potpourris this year, and we LOVED seeing what you've been working on.

Sherri Roberts and Sweetie (left) entertain us during an interview during the Dino Day 2022 Potpourri.



Odessa and Delthen (left) and the Easter Rat crack us up during the April Fools Potpourri.



Want to perform or watch?

Keep an eye out for NCPG emails letting you know about sign-ups and Zoom links!

MEMBER SHOUT OUTS!

Thanks to these awesome NCPG members for sending in photos showing what they've been up to lately! If you'd like to share the puppetry you've been working on for the next Puppetimes, send it along at any time to Puppetimes@gmail.com



Miranda Elliott-Rader
of *Nettle Shirts Puppet Works*
Charlottesville, Virginia

Photo
"Indigo And The Milk Cap"
a show by Nettle Shirts Puppet Works
in Charlottesville, VA
December 2022
Puppet by Miranda Elliott-Rader



Sarah Bourne
Professor at WVU School of Theatre & Dance
Morgantown, West Virginia

Photo
National Puppetry Conference, Pub Show
Photo by Richard Termine.
Puppet painted by WVU puppet arts student Chelsea Eliff
Puppet from the donation of the T. Frank and Becky Smith Collection.
Puppet control and stringing by Sarah Bourne



Abraham Matias

puppet artist and illustrator based in Los Angeles

Photo: **Behind the Scenes of "Folklore"**

a puppet anthology film inspired

by Scandinavian folktales

Watch the short film [here](#).

Directed by Abraham Matias

Sets and Puppets by Abraham Matias

MUSICIAN CREDITS:

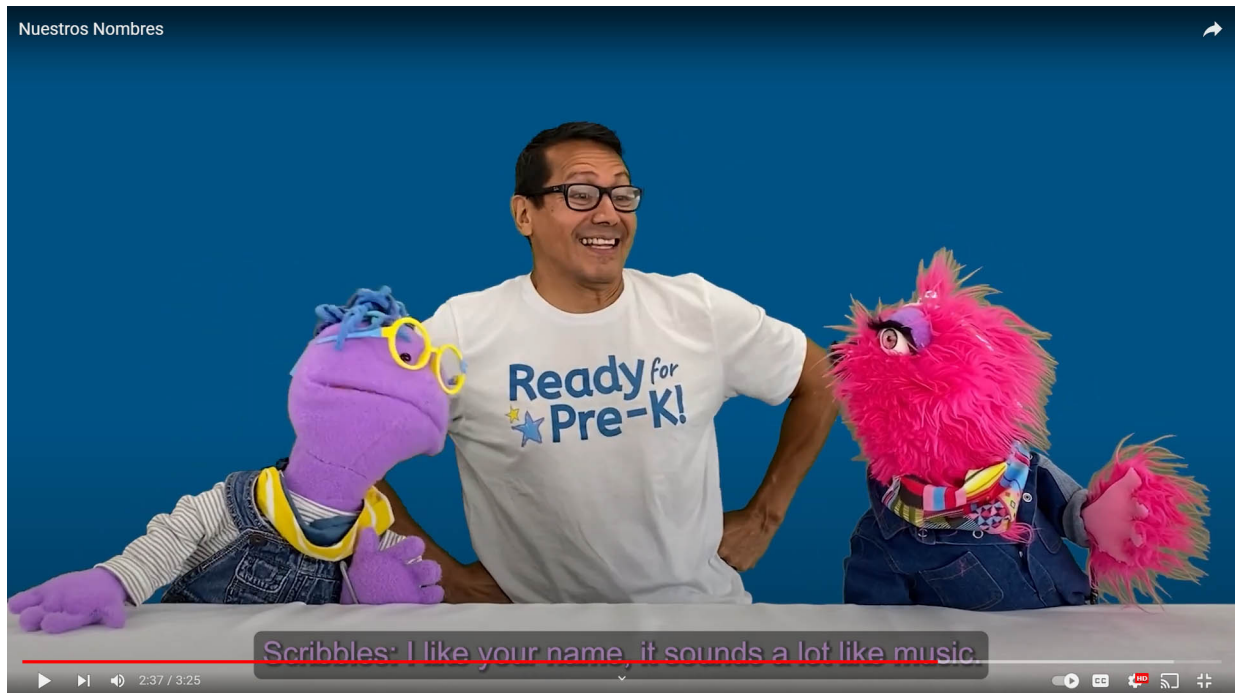
'Mournful Sound' by Alejandro Montoya

Narration by: Alejandro Montoya

AUDIO CREDITS:

Music Mixing by Morten Lava

Website: [Here](#)



Paige O'Malley

puppeteer, actor, songstress, and company member of We Happy Few DC

"Wrapped up my first season of videos for DC Public Schools' Enrollment campaign, Ready for Pre-K! I play their non-binary mascot, Scribbles!"

Scribbles videos are viewable [here](#).



Mary Nagler

Artistic Director of Whorls of Wonder Puppet Theater based in Ruckersville, Virginia

Whorls of Wonder Puppet Theater is a performing arts company dedicated to ecological messages of hope, inspiration to action! Mary is new to Virginia and is eager to connect with other puppeteers and getting recommendations for local theaters and rehearsal spaces.

Website: <https://whorlsof wonder.com>

Contact: mary.nagler@gmail.com



Alex and Olmsted

Puppet theater company based in Takoma Park, Maryland

"We had a great time doing a month-long run of Milo The Magnificent® at The Puppet Co. this past September. The weekend crowds were warm, responsive, excited. We loved visiting with them after the shows to let them see the puppets up close and answer any questions they had."

Website: AlexAndOlmsted.com





The Turnip Rides Again!

by Vanessa Gilbert of Blood from a Turnip

Between 1997 and 2016, Blood from a Turnip served as Rhode Island's only late night puppet salon for an adult style audience. Co-founder Jeremy Woodward and I built the event as a portmanteau for our personal exploration into puppet work, but BfaT, as we lovingly called it, attracted all manner of artists finding their way into the puppet world. The number of folks who embraced our call to make short puppet shows surprised and charmed us- my now-husband (and current co-host) David Higgins among them. We created an early Slam circuit between the Puppet Showplace in Brookline MA, the Ballard Museum at UConn Storrs, and BfaT in Providence RI, coordinating our events when possible so artists could reach multiple audiences.

When David and I moved to DC in 2018 for my job, we were pretty certain that BfaT wouldn't move with us. But then we started working with Natsu Onoda Power, a DC-based theatre maker who incorporates numerous puppet styles into her work, and found Rachel Gates, whose Puppet Lab in DC is hosted with a particular generosity that we recognized from our BfaT days. Then we were invited to perform in a Crankie Festival at Rhizome in DC, effectively igniting our desire to see Blood from a Turnip resurrect.

We planned a season of 3 shows for 2020, each to happen in a different venue. We applied for and received funding from the Puppet Slam Network to produce these salons. We managed to put together a wonderful first show at Georgetown University in February, with Michael Lamason from Black Cherry Theater sharing the bill with Cecilia Cackley, Nina Budabin McQuown, Bridget Cimino, and David Higgins with charming and personable musical interludes provided by Don Undeen. We were giddy with the possibility for the remaining 2 BfaTs. A month later, we were effectively shut down.

So many Puppet Slams transitioned beautifully to a digital space. We got to "attend" so many more of the great events across the country because they were streamed. But we were still new to DC, didn't know enough folks, and were confused about how we might add to the overall rich menu of offerings. And we were jonesing for the live experience- we dreamed into how we might activate our neighborhood with a Blood from a Turnip Social Distance Spectacle, but felt overwhelmed. We weighed whether getting the "old gang" back together for a virtual event made sense, but so many of them were showing up in other virtual slams and we didn't feel that we had much to offer to that space. So we hunkered down, we cheered other events on, we watched.



From the show- Buzzards Bay, performed at the Sweet Little Variety Show. Pictured, L-R: Stuart Window, David Higgins, Jeremy Fortier, Vanessa Gilbert.



Photo Credit: Elizabeth Keiser, from the show *Buzzards Bay*, performed in the Providence Fringe Festival (inside Big Nazo Studio). L-R: Jeremy Fortier, Vanessa Gilbert, Stuart Window, David Higgins.

Now, almost 3(!) years after our first DC Blood from a Turnip. we're pleased to announce that the Turnip will ride again on January 29, 2023 at the Firehouse Theatre in Richmond VA. We'll be bringing together folks new to BfaT with some of the old guard, and there's room for a few more shows. If you are in the Richmond area and have a show that is 12 minutes or shorter, get in touch! If you are in the Richmond area and want to attend, check out the listing at <https://www.firehousetheatre.org/blood-from-a-turnip>.

Hope to see you at the Firehouse on January 29th!

Vanessa Gilbert/David Higgins



Photo Credit: Vana Dougias From the show- *Buzzards Bay*, performed at the New Bedford Whaling Museum. Pictured: David Higgins at OP, Jeremy Fortier on viola, Vanessa Gilbert on vox

KIDS CLUB!



Paige O'Malley

"I had a blast creating puppet projects and having small but mighty virtual meetups with the NCPG Kid's Club creators and members! Here is the Spring project I came up with, a peekaboo flower puppet growing from a fertile pot of aspirational words!"



Mobi Warren's Neoma meets with children at a neighborhood park to talk about the amazing insects she observes and takes photos of in the park. October 2022

photo credit: Judith Beaulieu

NCPG's Kids Club wrapped up a fun year of puppet-making projects and Zoom sessions with a spooky themed activity on October 22, 2022. Members received a packet to create a simple puppet inspired by Edward Gorey's weird and wacky tale of an ill-fated ballerina, the Gilded Bat. Kids came up with wonderfully creative versions of the character.

We're looking forward to more fun activities to engage and encourage young puppeteers in 2023. New members are always welcome – sign up is free at <https://www.nationalcapitalpuppetry.org/kids-club.html>. While you're at it, explore the Kids Club! page on NCPG's website to enjoy videos and activities from our past sessions. If you are an NCPG member who is an educator/puppeteer and would like to contribute a short video or activity for the Kids Club! just let us know.

End of year thanks go to the 2022 Education Committee members who created activities and engaged with children during our three Zoom sessions: Mary Benson, Schroeder Cherry, Dona Davis, Dirk Joseph, Paige O'Malley, and Mobi Warren.



"Disconnected" by Dominique Herskind

Reviewed by Miranda Elliott-Rader

at the Open Eye Theater Puppet Lab 2022

in Minneapolis, Minnesota

More info about the Puppet Lab [HERE](#)

SYNOPSIS: *There's no better way to spend your weekend than hanging out in your studio apartment! Who needs friends when you can overanalyze all of the mistakes you've made with your existence? Come see a silly journey of self-discovery and reconciliation told through foam puppets! Meet the body, the mind, a head of lettuce, and all of the other wacky characters that inhabit this world. Besides, what could possibly go wrong?*

COLLABORATORS:

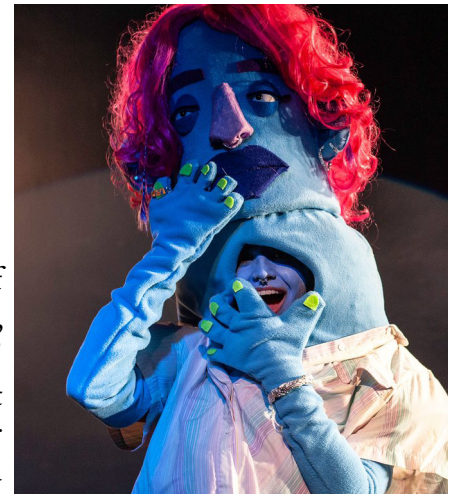
Mentor Director: Steve Ackerman

Performers: Ashley Ripley, Dominique Herskind, Grace Barnstead

Show/Puppet Designer: Dominique Herskind

Set Designer: Steve Ackerman

I had the great fortune this past August to stumble upon a performance of Open Eye Theater's Puppet Lab while on a long train layover in Minneapolis, Minnesota. I caught only the last performance of the evening, "Disconnected" by Dominique Herskind, and how lucky I was to catch it! First of all, the set was Amazing. Carefully crafted in bright colored felt, it re-created the interior of a messy apartment, complete with late bills on the fridge, crushed cans, and piles of laundry. But in this apartment, everything had the potential to be a puppet. There were google eyes or felt eyes on everything: the lamp, the mail slot, the fridge, the sofa, the trash can, the pictures on the walls, I mean everything. This built a wonderful sense of anticipation: what would talk?? What would they say?? Then the main character came in, an actor (I believe the show's creator) wearing a big blue felt puppet suit with big head and big hands, and plopped down on the sofa. A puppet brain (on a bike helmet worn by another actor) came out of their head, and soon body and brain were arguing hilariously, and poignantly, about what food to eat, what to watch on TV, and more. Additional characters soon appeared in the story such as a wilted head of lettuce in the fridge, and a particularly stellar climactic dialogue between Body, Brain, and Bladder. Herskind did a phenomenal job of reflecting on the hardship of modern life, how brutal it can be to try to love yourself and take care of yourself in our world of late stage neoliberal capitalism, all in an outrageously goofy format that draws the viewer right in. I laughed, I cried, I wished all my friends could have been there. I hope Dominique Herskind continues creating puppet work!!





Thread and Needle: Puppet Building Experience

by NCPG scholarship recipient Daniele Rocha Viola, Brazil

edited by Vanessa Spring-Frank

Before I tell you about my experience in the workshop “Needle Sculpted Heads and Bodies for Table-top Puppets” with Peter Court, it is important to say a little bit about me... I’m a woman from Brazil, living in the countryside of São Paulo. I speak and understand a little English. I don’t know how to sew and I work mainly with shadow theater, Lambe Lambe theater and mask, and these things don't involve fabric works (just a few). Actually I’m working with reusable waste materials of my daily life. I’m a researcher of theater, of materialities, of light design, I’m a curious person.

Let 's go...

The process of this workshop was very interesting because there were many layers of the process: the drawing of the molds in paper (first, a generic one) and experimentations in the shape of this mold after the research about a character for the creation of a puppet. At this moment, the instruction was to start with the color.

This part was a little difficult because I wanted something that isn’t a European reference, and it was hard because our territory suffered (still suffers) a strong epistemicide... Anyway, I looked for non-academic information. I thought about my territory... Here, in my city, there is an aquifer, Guarani Aquifer, that is the source of all the water for the population and because of it, I chose the color blue (despite the rivers of the city be dark) and I made a relationship with the myth of Yara (a mermaid), a indigenous myth. At the same time I wanted to build a young scientist (a girl). Mainly because the moment that we are living in Brazil, the actual President went to TV to tell the people to not vaccinate their children and this is one the stupid things that he said against science, humanity, environment, etc.

I started the process with the things that I had in my home. This is something amazing of the workshop, because Peter showed the principles and then I used the principle to work with as much as possible. So I used a different type of fabric. For the filling, I used some old bunnies... And I sewed without a machine, I used just a needle. So before the classes, I premade some parts and with this I had time to do the second puppet.

For the second one, I didn’t have much time to think about the color. I looked for the result (the head) and I decided: it would be an ancient, woman, indigenous Caiapós¹.

¹ The Caiapós lived here, which is actually my city, they were killed or escaped from the Bandeirantes (descents of Portugueses, that killed, raped or slaved indigenous during territory invasions in São Paulo).

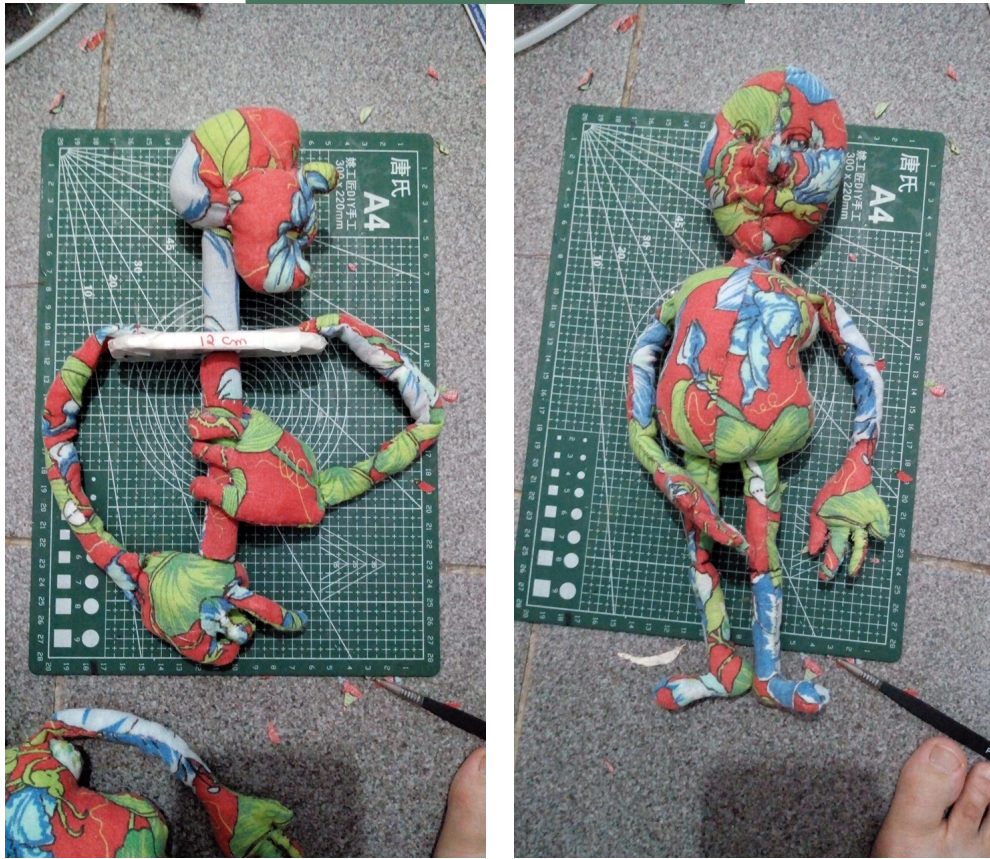


I was working hard. I took much time to do the heads... but I could do two heads, and this is amazing for me... remember I don't know how to sew... and, probably, I lost some information because I'm not fluent in English... so each shape that appears made me feel happy, I thought "is working... my first puppets"

The moment of the puppet body... Peter taught a way to do it, but I was interested in two ways that I saw in his puppets. So he sent me some patterns to do the body all in a fabric way. I spent some days trying to understand because this part was hard for me, because I work with a puppet in two dimensions. So I tried to do it on paper. When I understood, I drew on paper, and cut the fabric (and, of course, I exchanged emails with Peter to know more about, understand better, etc, and he answered) .



This was body 1, for my first puppet (the Young Scientist). The second one was easier... I didn't have the same materials, but I had the principles, so I used the things that I had in my home. For the second one, the neck I used a stick (that normally I used in shadow theater) and pieces of hose (punctured)



I could build the bodies. Of course they weren't perfect, but I understood the principles, the process, and the techniques... I had the structure of a complete puppet, but it was necessary to finish them (with paint, hair, clothes, eyes, etc)...



With the ideas of the beginning, I started this part... and did something new. Because, normally, I don't paint the fabric, so I don't know how the fabric reacts with the paint (and I mixed paints, because I used the ones that I had).

About the materials... that I used... As I told you, I'm working with materials of my daily life, discarded materials, reusable waste. So I'll tell you a little bit about the ones I "chose" for these puppets.



- **Fabric.** The colorful one, that I use for all body, in Portuguese, we call it 'chitão', which is a cheap one. This fabric I had in my home, was a big one I won in a workshop a long, long time ago. Normally, I save different types of fabric.
- **Sewing Threads.** They are things that I don't use frequently, but I have. I don't know who bought (me, my sisters, or my mom), but they are here.
- **Foam.** For this element, was necessary to kill some bunnies. These bunnies were made by my mom more than 10 years ago, so they are old foam. She found them for me to make these puppets (in a workshop with Peter), but she almost threw away a part of them (but I kept).
- **Hose.** I use it for the neck of one of the puppets. My dad cut off a part of a hose, and my

mom forgot to throw it away. Is just this.

- **Sticks.** I have two types in my puppets, large and thin... the large one, I used for the neck too. This stick normally I use for my shadow puppets, so I have some pieces. The thin one I used for the arms. These sticks normally are used in a barbecue for the cheese (queijo coalho in Portuguese). After that, they were washed, dried, and when they are very clean, I used them in the puppets.
- **Buttons.** These objects I used for the eyes in one of the puppets (but I added hot glue to do a shape and to have some shine in the eyes). I don't know the origins of these buttons, I just know that I save every button that I find.
- **Paints.** I have some because I work with masks, but I found a paint for fabric so I made some mixes and I think that worked.
- **Strings.** I used them for hair puppets. My mom does carpet of strings, and sometimes she leaves some wastes of carpets, carpets unfinished, so I used them. And these colors are the colors of the carpets, just these two.
- **Pipe.** I used it to hold the blue puppet. This pipe made part of my lambe-lambe tripod, but, with time, it wasn't a good idea for a lambe-lambe desk, so I built another tripod (lighter and smaller) for my lambe-lambe theater. With this, I have some pieces of pipe.
- **Cardboard and Polystyrene.** These were from packages of different products that I used for the body for one of the puppets.
- **Brown Fabric.** This is a remnant of a shadow screen that I use in spectacle. I had this remnant, so I used the clothes for one of the puppets.

So I used what I had. I didn't have to buy anything and I think that was a good job and a very fun process.

And, finally, I would like to say that I'm grateful for the scholarship, for the NCPG and Peter Court. He is an amazing teacher and artist. I'm grateful for his patience with me, my questions and with my terrible English. Thanks for the generosity. Sewing is something difficult to me, but I'm really happy because I got to make 2 puppets. They aren't beautiful like Peter's puppets, but I understand the principles, the mechanisms, the tips. I could work with simple materials, recyclable ones. So thanks again.. and it was a pleasure...

Daniele Viola
from a countryside in Brazil



The Scholarship Committee

by Vanessa Spring-Frank

Over the past two years, the National Capital Puppetry Guild has been able to bring exciting international workshops to the virtual table. Due to the pandemic, we have all had to pivot our work and learn new skills in the digital era, and these virtual workshops allow participants to grow their crafts while creating lasting connections and network with people from all over the globe. Because of this online transition, we have been able to experience some incredible workshops and work with some amazing participants.

NCPG has been so proud to offer scholarships with our partnerships between Peter Court of Creative Madness located in South Africa, and Fagner and Cass Gastaldon of Puppet Soup located in Wales. Special thanks to Daniele Rocha Viola for the excellent article she wrote about her experience in one of Peter's workshops (page 13)!

For those early-career puppeteers, participating in a festival for the first time is a life changing experience. For this specific purpose we are able to offer the Judy Barry Brown Festival Grant. It is awarded to puppeteers 18-24 to help them participate in their first regional or national Puppeteers of America sponsored puppetry festival. If you've never been to a festival and are planning to make the [2023 National Festival](#) your first, it's the perfect reason to reach out about this scholarship! This is a rolling grant and can be applied to at any time, please email nationalcapitalpuppetryguild@gmail.com

We have another scholarship specific for those who wish to attend [The O'Neill National Puppetry Conference](#). The grant is offered to members who are accepted to the conference for the first time. The scholarship is need-based and is designed to offset the participant's expenses. The application is open to all members in good standing that are under the age of thirty. This year's conference dates for the Pre-conference is May 29 - June 2nd and the Main Conference is June 2 - June 11. The application for the conference will be available January 10 - 31. Once you have been accepted to the O'Neill and wish to apply for this scholarship please email nationalcapitalpuppetryguild@gmail.com

Lastly, if you are passionate about making the puppetry arts more accessible and you want to help make a difference, we hope you'll consider joining our scholarship committee or making a financial donation to help us continue being able to serve our puppetry community by offsetting the costs of the educational opportunities.

Donate to the NCPG [HERE!](#)



A Visit to The Puppet Co.

by Sarah Olmsted Thomas

[The Puppet Co.](#) was founded in 1983 by Allan Stevens and Christopher Piper. In 1987, Piper married MayField Piper, and together the three created the Puppet Co. Playhouse in Glen Echo Park, a park dedicated to arts and culture and run by the National Park Service just outside Washington, D.C. In 2020, the Pipers and Mr. Stevens retired and welcomed the new team of Artistic Director Elizabeth Dapo and Executive Director Toni Goldberg to inspire the next generation of puppet enthusiasts.



Liz Dapo and Toni Goldberg

The Puppet Co. is an incredible place. Complete with a custom-designed puppet theater, museum display cases, a workshop, a storage facility, and a library with an incredible archive of puppetry literature. Among the many puppets, sets, and costumes stored at the Puppet Co. for their in-house productions, there is also a collection of historic puppets crafted by some legendary artists.

On October 15, 2022, The Puppet Co. held their first live puppet slam since 2014. We were honored to be asked to create a new piece for the show. Other performers with live pieces were Schroeder Cherry and Kristina Hopkins. The artists who contributed original puppet films were Stoph Sheer, Crooked Square Puppetry, Davey Morrison, and Daisy Taysom.

We had a little time between shows, and Artistic Director Elizabeth Dapo invited us upstairs to take a peek at their remarkable collection. In addition to several sketches and posters by legendary puppeteer Bil Baird, there are also some of his puppets. We all had the exciting privilege of trying one out.

During his tenure at The Puppet Co., Alan Stevens acquired the most comprehensive collection of Bernard H. Paul's puppets. *Paul's Puppets* was founded in 1930 by husband and wife duo Bernard and Edee and eventually performed a marionette show that ran for 10 years on WBAL-TV in Baltimore.



The Puppet Co. is an incredible place and we encourage all members to stop by and catch a show or peruse their wonderful library.



Schroeder Cherry with a marionette by Bil Baird

Liz Dapo, Alex Vernon, Sarah Olmsted Thomas, Schroeder Cherry with a marionette by Paul's Puppets

2023 NATIONAL PUPPETRY festival

We are excited for you to join us at the University of Maryland for the Puppeteers of America 2023 National Puppetry Festival and Academic Symposium. Scheduled for July 18-22, 2023, Puppeteers, enthusiasts, educators, and friends will all be gathering to celebrate the puppetry arts and experience our first festival together in four years. The festival will focus on the theme of *Generations*, honoring those that went before, celebrating those who are with us now, and encouraging those to come.

Make sure to [subscribe to the festival email](#) and [social media channels](#) to stay in the know about all of our incoming announcements!

We look forward to seeing you!

Xx Dustin, Yolanda, Anatar
National Festival Directors

Prez Leigh says:

"To all of our members who are planning to make the trip out this way next summer- stay tuned for more information about ways to share in-person space with your fellow NCPG members, and be sure to bring your NCPG shirts, hats, and buttons to show off your Guild pride!! Don't have a shirt yet? No problem! Head to our [Redbubble site](#) and pick your favorite design from the last few years to sport around campus!"



Election Results

We knew we were going to have to say goodbye to a few of our amazing board members at the end of this year, and we'd like to take this opportunity to just say 'THANK YOU' for all the time, talent, and sincere service you shared with the NCPG. We are so grateful to you for everything you offered our community in 2022. And, as in the cycle of life, we turn our eyes to welcome our newly elected board, here to support and foster our guild's creative spark throughout 2023!

FAREWELL:

Vanessa Spring-Frank (Treasurer)
Paige O'Malley
Dirk Joseph

WELCOME:

Sarah Bourne
Peter Court
Jill Kyle-Keith

WELCOME BACK:

Leigh Lafosse
Sarah Olmsted Thomas
Heidi Rugg
Schroeder Cherry
Michael Lamason
Sam Rugg
Alex Vernon
Mobi Warren

We are so excited to dig into building this next year for the NCPG, and we can't wait to see everyone again on Zoom! (And maybe we'll even get to break bread in person sometime this 2023; the National Festival IS happening in College Park next July... :)



NCPG Board Members met in November for a potluck meeting graciously hosted by Paige O'Malley. Left to Right: Sam Rugg, Michael Lamason, Heidi Rugg, Paige O'Malley, Schroeder Cherry, Sarah Olmsted Thomas, Alex Vernon, Leigh Lafosse.

Welcome New Board Members!

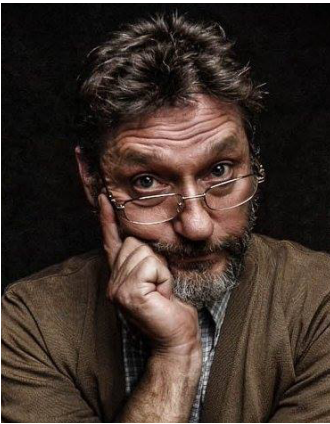


Sarah Bourne

Sarah Bourne first joined the National Capital Puppetry Guild in 1998. She's happy to be back after a long hiatus, rejoining in 2020. She's currently the Costume and Puppet Shop Manager at West Virginia University, home of one of the two USA-based BFA in Puppetry Programs. She's previously worked for Austin Peay State University, Animax Designs, VEE Corporation, In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theatre, and has been the technical director for Puppeteers of America National Festivals in 2001, 2005, and 2007. She has performed her own puppetry pieces in Minneapolis, Baltimore, Salt Lake City, Shepherdstown, and Boston as well as performing in shows with the Underground Railway Theatre, the University of Utah Lyric Ensemble, and the Contemporary American Theatre Festival. She was a participant at the National Puppetry Conference in 2021 and 2022. Sarah earned a B.F.A. and an M.A. in Puppetry Arts from the University of Connecticut and an M.F.A. in Interdisciplinary Theatre and Performance Art from Towson University. She's very excited to serve on the NCPG Board of Directors!

theatre.wvu.edu/faculty-staff/sarah-bourne

Photo is by Richard Termine.



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, counselor and a skilled facilitator. He continues to make theatrical work and to perform occasionally.

Peter is the Director of Creative Madness (Pty) Ltd. Creative Madness is an award-winning company with international experience in theatre and education and specialises in creating tailor-made productions, processes or curricula for the corporate, not-for-profit and education market. Creative Madness works with the Mr Price Foundation as the Creative Arts implementation partner in its National Schools Development Programme - EduRise.



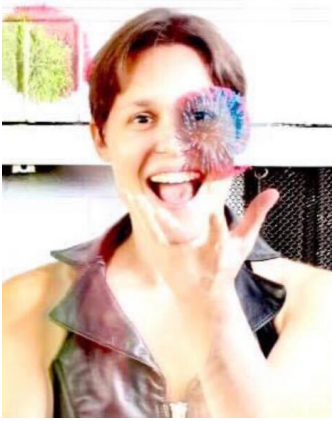
Jill Kyle-Keith

Jill Kyle-Keith is the Owner and Queen of Beale Street Puppets in Baltimore, Md. A professional full-time puppeteer since 1988, she holds a BA in Performance Theatre from the University of Maryland, and a Lifetime Achievement Award in Making a Living Out Of Thin Air (self awarded). Jill and her husband Bill Walker have been married for 33 years resulting in another Award for Marriage Endurance, also self awarded. She is the proud parent of Scotty Walker, 26, and Toby Walker, 23, both of whom, over the years, have been forced, sometimes at Nerf gunpoint, into performing in various puppet shows as well as dressing up as the Crab from Moana and Toby the Dog from Punch and Judy. During the performance-free days of Covid, Jill has been making artisan dollhouse miniatures, selling online, and most recently, has traveled twice to the juried London Dolls House Festival in the UK. Scotty and Toby were, of course, forced to come and help set up and sell and then go see culture.

Jill is currently involved in an ill advised, pie-in-the-sky endeavor to turn her tumbledown Beale Street Puppets studio in Baltimore into The Museum of Tiny Things, an offbeat, Balty-style small museum, devoted to dollhouses, vintage toys, squished pennies, 1950s rhinestone jewelry, miniature bits and bobs, and, of course, puppets.

She also recently got a tattoo of a mermaid, because why not? Who's gonna stop her?

Get To Know Your NCPG Board



Dr. Leigh Lafosse - President

Leigh is an active duty military musician, serving the last 15 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 served as Association Director of the MD/DC chapters of Odyssey of the Mind, a volunteer for Ameri-Corps Reading Partners in DC, a head of family for the THREAD outreach program in Baltimore, the education coordinator for the Del Ray Artisans, and as a volunteer for STEAM onward in Fort Washington. As a puppeteer, Leigh devised, created, built, choreographed, and produced a two-person puppet production of "Hamilton", that Lin-Manual 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.



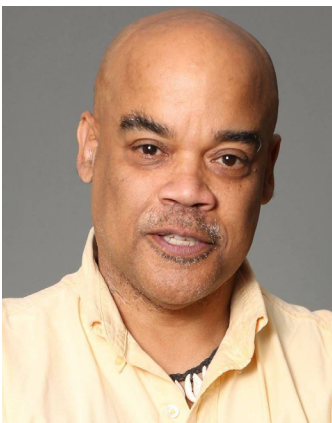
Sarah Olmsted Thomas - Vice President

Sarah Olmsted Thomas is a fifth generation performing artist. She is half of Alex and 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 for Performing Arts from the Maryland State Arts Council. Alex and 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 Theatre Washington. She is a proud NCPG member since 2018. B.A., Sarah Lawrence College.



Heidi Rugg - Secretary

Heidi Rugg is a Richmond-based puppeteer, puppet builder, playwright, director, educator, and founder of Barefoot Puppet Theatre, now entering its 25th year of touring! Working with a wide-variety of puppetry styles, she designs, builds, and writes for puppet theatre. She is passionate about puppet mechanisms, STEAM, playwrighting for puppetry, and puppetry's applications in education. Heidi is on the teaching artists roster for the Virginia Commission for the Arts and has worked with all ages. She has a special passion for arts integration and has received extensive training through the Kennedy Center, Partner in the Arts, and is a current Wolf Trap Teaching Artist. In 2005, she was awarded an UNIMA-Citation of Excellence for her original work, "Galapagos George." She has received grant support for her work from the Wolf Trap Foundation for the Arts, The Virginia Commission for the Arts, Puppeteers of America, and the Jim Henson Foundation. Heidi holds a Bachelor's of Interdisciplinary Studies in Arts Integration from Virginia Commonwealth University with a minor in Art History. She and her husband, Sam Rugg, reside in Richmond, Virginia.



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. During COVID, he and his puppets began making appearances on Instagram, commenting on everyday events.



Alex Vernon - Member at Large

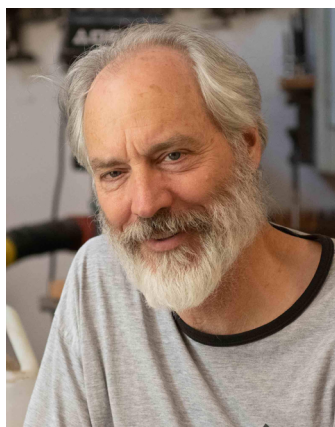
Alex Vernon is an actor, puppeteer, designer and automata engineer. In 2017, the National Puppetry Conference awarded Alex the Eugene O'Neill Theatre Center Scholarship during which time he studied Mechanisms with Jim Kroupa and Marionette Construction with Jim Rose. Since 2012, Alex has been a company 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. He is one half of the puppet theater duo, Alex and Olmsted.



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, terrible puns, and set construction with Barefoot Puppet Theatre. Sam brings a knowledge and love of power tools to the puppetry scene along with a deep appreciation for all forms of performance. He is in constant search of the perfect touring vehicle. He and Heidi have two daughters and reside in Richmond, Virginia.

Sam has served on the board of NCPG for over twenty years and retains much institutional memory for the organization.



Michael Lamason - Member at Large

Michael Lamason is a cofounder 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.



Mobi Warren - Member at Large

Mobi Warren is both a puppeteer and writer. She is author of a YA novel, *The Bee Maker*, translator from Vietnamese of several works by Thich Nhat Hanh, and co-founder of a Texas writers/artists collaborative, *Stone in the Stream*, that advocates for environmental awareness and justice. She was the Puppeteer-in-Residence at the San Antonio Museum of Art before leaving to teach mathematics for 21 years in San Antonio's inner city schools. Since retiring, Mobi has re-activated her lifelong love for puppetry to create a troupe of hand and rod puppets that perform skits that range from fairy tales to themes of biodiversity, especially the beauty and necessity of insects. As a retired teacher who does not need to earn a living from puppetry, Mobi is interested in supporting the work and livelihood of others, sharing puppetry locally as a community service, and exploring ways to make puppet-building and performances eco-conscious and environmentally friendly.

NO PEPPERMiNT!



TOO SPICY!