



## Great Lakes Spring Newsletter - 2010



### Puppetry in the Land of Lincoln

Do you remember just a few months ago when this photo from the Illinois office of tourism appeared in the regional newsletter? Bridget and Ollie DePriest had tinkered with the idea of luring all of us over and down to **their** neck of the woods for a celebration of puppetry. Only a small brave number of us know the implications of taking on such a time consuming task, not to mention the gut wrenching worry of "if I build it - will they come?"

Well, our fine compadres along with the help of some very courageous helpers have indeed stepped out of their comfort zones to build what will prove to be a celebration of puppetry long to be remembered.

Speaking of remembering, I'm sure not enough time has passed for us to forget the dorm rooms (or the showers) at some college campuses. (I remember swimming at a pool where the water temperature was as hot as the air!) How about dorm food? While we all understand that puppet festivals are not meant to be the same kind of experiences as taking a cruise, it would be nice to enjoy "good" food (like we did in Shipshewana)!

*Well*, let me tell you, folks – if you miss this Celebration of Puppetry in **Springfield, Illinois** you will forever wonder about the stories people will be telling you come next November at Potlatch!!!



### Accommodations at The Abraham Lincoln

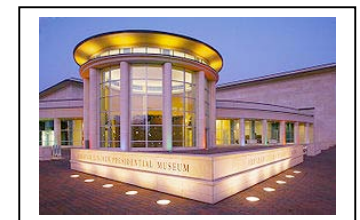
The Lincoln is in the heart of historic downtown Springfield, in one of the fastest growing metropolitan areas and tourist centers in Illinois and is known for its easy access to all of the Lincoln sites plus New Salem Village. The Abraham Lincoln Hotel is the closest hotel to the new Presidential Abraham Lincoln Museum and is just a short, easy walk from the lobby. "The hotel is also within walking distance of the Old State Capitol, Lincoln's law office, and his



This hotel offers high speed internet, a fitness room, sauna, a spa tub, and indoor pool. If the lunch I had last summer is any indication of what we can expect for food it should be very good. Remember, the registration fee for this puppet celebration includes FOOD!

### Lincoln Museum

The Lincoln Museum is the largest presidential museum which utilizes state of the art technology to create exhibits to



entertain and educate. In a stunning combination of scholarship and showmanship, the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum immerses you in Lincoln's world and time. Journey from a rustic Indiana cabin to the Executive Mansion in the nations capital and share the joys and sorrows of a family - and a nation.

The Lincoln Presidential Library opened in April 2005 to document the 16<sup>th</sup> President's life with books, manuscripts, and artifacts. Within 6 months the museum-library generated over one million dollars in admissions.

## Puppetry in the Land of Lincoln

Now, there have been various news alerts as to the shows that have been booked for this celebration of puppetry, but perhaps you'd like to know a little more about the folks that are doing the performing.

Here's a little information about each of them.

### Nataliya Khusid

Nataliya Khusid was born in Tashkent, Russia. Since her childhood she was fascinated with stage. During her high school years she participated in a local youth theater club as an actress. At age of 17 she started working in Tashkent's Puppet Theater. At this moment her love for puppets became a profession. In Tashkent's Puppet Theater she worked with professionals who have been on stage for over thirty years. She learned a lot, but soon provincial puppet theater was no longer sufficient. She moved to Moscow, where she continued to work as a puppeteer. However she soon realized that she was not only into puppets, but also became interested other sorts of acting. She left for Leningrad where she started her formal education at Leningrad's Institute of Theater, Music and Cinematography.



Since her graduation she has played major roles in more than a hundred different shows, she taught at universities, appeared and won grand prizes at many festivals world wide. She worked in film and she was a pioneer and a star of Russian avant-garde theater. Seven years ago she came to Detroit, where she joined a group of Russian actors and worked on the first in more than half a century stationary puppet theater - "PuppetArt". Today "PuppetArt" is in its prime and Natasha has moved on with her new independent project - traveling theater "Natasha's CarOvan Puppets."

### David J. Syrotiak and Peter F. Syrotiak

This father and son team established the Natl.

Marionette Theatre in Brattleboro, VT, and is an internationally known touring marionette theater that performs for schools, outdoor fairs, and festivals



The Syrotiak Family performs marionettes on a bridge high above the stage. They do performances of classic stories using exquisite marionettes made of wood. Full stage sets with dynamic lighting and sound are utilized with the puppeteers high above the set and visible on the "bridge" structure as part of the show. The performance consists of a series of sharply drawn vignettes that range from the comical to the nightmarish and performed strictly to music with no dialogue.

### Brad Lowe

Recording artist, comedian, engineer, sculptor, painter, writer, director, teacher, lighting technician, marketer, storyteller, actor, inventor – and these are just a few of the hats that Michigan native Brad Lowe finds himself putting on as a talented master puppeteer. He has the ability to turn almost any inanimate object into a charming comedic character.

As a child, Lowe was raised in a family filled with creativity and it was only natural for him to develop and pursue an interest in performance art.



"My mom helped me make my first puppet while dad made the stage", says Lowe. "My first shows were in our garage for the neighborhood to watch. Pretty soon people were asking me to do birthday parties".

And, it's been snowballing for the past 35 years. Lowe works in film, theater, workshops, Fortune 500 conventions, the Ringling Brothers Circus, and the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. His television projects include the WXYZ-TV Channel 7 nationally syndicated show *Hot Fudge Show*, and a new family program called *Aunt Molly and Friends*, which is expected to air July 11 at 8:30 a.m. on Channel 20. All of this has led to a multitude of prestigious awards such as the "Seal of Approval" from Action for Children's Television, a broadcast media award given for the highest standards in television broadcasting, Puppeteers of America's 2006 Paul McPharlin Award, and two Emmy Awards.

## Dave Herzog

Herzog has been involved in the art of puppetry since receiving a toy marionette from his father when he was four years old. As a full time professional puppeteer for 35 years Dave has performed thousands of shows in theaters, amusement parks, schools, and libraries nationwide.

Well known to audiences throughout the Chicago Metropolitan Area, Dave is a popular guest at many summer camps, pre-schools, library fairs and festivals each year. Herzog has also been a frequent performer at Chicago's Navy Pier for fourteen years, and is the creator of one of the Pier's signature characters – ***Fathom the Sea Serpent***.

In addition to his own company Dave has been a guest performer with Chicago's acclaimed Hystopolis productions, and made his New York stage debut with the company in 1991 at the

famed off Broadway

Joseph Papp Public Theater. Dave is also proud to be associated with Chicago's spectacular Emerald City Children's Theater having created marionettes for their critically acclaimed productions of ***A Fairy Tale Life***, and ***Dr. Dolittle***.



Dave Herzog's Marionettes is a full time professional puppet company specializing in the art of the marionette, and dedicated to preserving the uniquely American art form of the marionette variety show. Not only does Dave perform some 375 shows a year but he also creates all of the hand carved marionettes used in his performances.

## Byron Thompson

Perhaps this puppeteer would be better recognized as "Bob-in-the-Box". This puppeteer hails from Fort Wayne, Indiana where he works with children in the public school system (Weisser Park Elementary School).

"Barney" Thompson, as he is generally known to most puppeteers in the Midwest, is completely immersed in the study and presentation of *"Punch and*

*Judy"*, the classic Puppet show.

In 2006 Barney was one of 126 teachers, principals, guidance counselors, and library/media specialists to be



awarded a Lilly Endowment Teacher Creativity Fellowship in the whole state of Indiana. The purpose of the fellowship is to allow educators to pursue their personal interests, to explore issues and subjects that fascinate them, and to "get away" from the classroom.

The 120 recipients each received an \$8,000 grant for their activities which, for the most of them, took place during the summer months. Thompson used his grant to travel to England to study (from the real masters) the art of doing ***"Punch and Judy"***. Thompson said that the experience of studying the how and why of the ages old slap stick routine from "real" Punch Professors was very rewarding.

## Robert's Marionettes

The literature-based, multicultural productions of Roberts Marionettes feature a unique art form that encourages self-expression, captures the imagination, and teaches timeless lessons.

Audiences delight in an unparalleled theater experience they will cherish for a lifetime.

During the performance the solo artist operates all the marionettes and creates unique voices for the entire cast of characters, achieving a compelling vitality that is possible only in live theater. The life like marionettes are hand carved from wood to 1/4, 1/3, and nearly 1/2 human scale in some cases.



## Heidi Shackelford



Shackelford is currently involved in two puppet companies. One is The Melchior Marionettes. This company partnered with another puppet troupe called “Hands On Puppets” to form a non-profit puppet theater called Peewinkle's Puppet Theatre. They are currently in their 10th year at Peewinkle's Puppet Theater. The Melchior Marionettes have been in operation for over 50 years. They also have The Melchior Marionette Theatre located in Nashville, IN. This theatre has been in operation for over 25 years. Shackelford has degrees in Art Education and Art Design. She taught ceramics and drawing for a few years. At the same time she was still active as an individual artist in both puppetry and silk painting. Eventually she decided to stick with her personal artistic career. She still continues to teach throughout the summer working with different camps and offering workshops through Peewinkle's Puppet Studio.

## DePriest Puppets

DePriest Puppets is a Professional performing Puppet troupe based in Springfield, Illinois. The troupe consists of Ollie DePriest, his wife, Bridget, and their daughter, Rose.

They have been working together as DePriest Puppets since their marriage in 1976. Together, they



have over 68 years experience in puppetry and the arts. Ollie is a full-time professional puppeteer, with extensive experience managing and operating a successful puppet company.

He has an extensive background in visual arts, and has studied puppetry for over 37 years. Bridget has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Creative Arts from the University of Illinois at Springfield, and has worked as a graphic designer for 30 years. They perform for: schools, libraries, museums, churches, organizations, park districts, festivals, and corporations. DePriest Puppets is a member of Puppeteers of America, and has received a grant from Puppeteers of America Endowment Fund for their show “Abraham Lincoln: New Salem to Springfield”.

## Chuck & Sandye Voight

The Voights began the “Fever River Marionettes” in Benton, WI, in 1993. Performances have included “Jack and the Beanstalk”, “Rumpelstiltskin”, and original tales like “Wolfie” and “The Cloud Princess”-an African fairy tale. Over the years the troupe included youth and adult volunteers, but currently the Voights perform as a couple.

Sandye is a writer for the Dubuque Telegraph Herald and Chuck is a retired art teacher. The troupe purchased an 1891 opera house, which



became their home in 2004. They changed their name to “*The Fever River Puppeteers*” to include other forms of puppetry. They are members of the Wisconsin Puppetry Guild, and the Puppeteers of America, and they have attended national and regional puppet festivals. The opera house is located in Hazel Green, WI, which is 20 minutes from Galena, IL, Dubuque, IA, and Platteville, WI



## **Puppetry in the Land of Lincoln Workshops**

The festival committee has been working hard to provide a wide and varied offering of workshops for the beginner and the “old hand” puppeteer. Here’s the list so far.

**Stringing Marionettes** – Jim Rose

**Plaster Casting w/ the Rufus Rose String Method-**  
Jim Rose

**Make & Take Puppets (5)** – Debbie (Stutzman)  
White

**Construction of a Rod Puppet** – Ollie DePriest

**Power Tools 101** – Dave Herzog

**Dimmer Switch Construction** – Fred Putz

**Hand Puppet Manipulation** – Fred Putz

**Planning & Performing at Daycare-** Rick Morse

**Cheap Thrills (Theater Effects)-** Nancy Henk

**Cheap Advertising** – Peggy Melchior

**Origami Puppets for Fun** – Tih Penfil

**One Person Puppetry (Simplified)-** Yvonne Amar  
Frey

**To Be Announced** – David Syrotiak

Dave Roz says that the conference committee is still looking for more workshops! If you have an idea, or would like to conduct a workshop, please print out the workshop proposal form. If you need more info, Contact Dave Rozmarynowski at 574-233-3413 or email him at: [roz999@sbcglobal.net](mailto:roz999@sbcglobal.net).

### **Conference program rates set**

The Great Lakes Region Conference Committee is seeking individuals and businesses to sponsor our conference. Sponsorship levels are listed below:

**Angel-\$175** – entitles you to a full page, full color, inside front or back cover ad/message in the official program and acknowledgment on the web site.

**Patron-\$125** – entitles you to a full interior page, Blk & Wht ad/message space in the official program and acknowledgment on the web site.

**Contributor-\$75** – entitles you to a ½ interior page, Blk & Wht ad/message space in the official program and acknowledgment on the web site.

**Friend-\$50** – entitles you to a ¼ interior page Blk &

Wht, ad/message in the official program, and acknowledgment on the web site.

**Poor Starving Puppeteer-\$25** – entitles you to an acknowledgment in the official program and on the web site.

## **Mel & LaVerne Biske take on exhibits**

Puppeteers are invited to bring puppets of any variety and any puppet related item suitable for display.

Tables will be provided to share with other exhibitors or you may choose to bring your own. Exhibitors are encouraged to bring their own stands for marionettes and hand puppets.

Blank exhibit cards will be available for those not providing their own, and exhibitors will be asked to complete an inventory sheet listing all items on display along with a description. The inventory will need to be turned in to Mel or LaVerne. Please note that neither the Great Lakes Region of the P of A nor the President Abraham Lincoln Hotel are responsible for items lost, stolen, or damaged.

## **News from around the GL Region**

### **Champaign woman takes act to India**

Wherever Ginger Lozar travels, she puts on a puppet show – even in foreign countries! Lozar has entertained children and adults in China, Mexico, Argentina, Thailand, and now in India. In October she put on a “Punch & Judy” show in a little town near Jaipur and in another village in central India she presented “The Very Hungry Caterpillar” Her tour guide translated into Hindi even when it wasn’t always



necessary. Like music, puppets are universal. “It’s the sense of play and theater”, Lozar said. “If you bring out a puppet, the barriers break down.”

That was true in the tiny village near Jaipur where 12 families of snake charmers lived. Lozar, her husband, and other members of the tour group walked down a path to discover their unusual community. While there Ginger put on her act and after that 5 of the snake charmers reciprocated.



The tour group was unaware that the number of snake charmers is dwindling as a result of wildlife protection laws and animal rights initiatives instituted in a government crackdown in 1972.

### Western Michigan going strong

Guild President Joanne Schroeder and Secretary Bill Henderson send me updates like clockwork of the events and activities of their guild. This small but mighty group gathers on the first Sunday of every month usually at the Saugatuck Masonic Lodge near the Kalamazoo River. In December Schroeder presented *The Nutcracker* and Ginger Miller conducted a workshop on script-writing. In the picture below, guild members had a blast using hand puppets



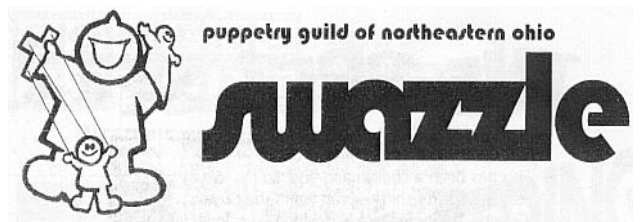
and acted out "Old MacDonald Had a Farm".

Recently, the guild received a letter from one of their members, Robert Engle, who is in Thailand. He is putting together a three-skit variety show but he reports that his sound system gave up the ghost! He's trying to figure out how to transfer his LP music and CDs into the newly purchased PA system. As if travel isn't difficult enough!

In February guild members, spouses, relatives, and friends attended a performance by internationally acclaimed marionette artist Joe Cashore. After the show the guild hosted a wine and cheese reception for Cashore.



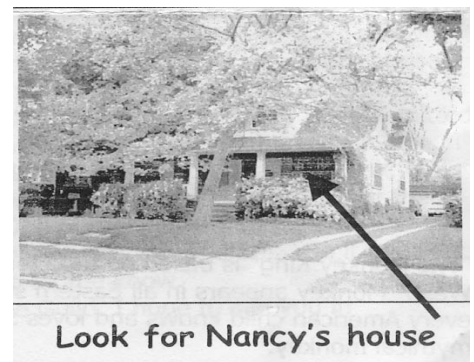
Bill Henderson wrote this about the experience. "Throughout my life there have been certain key experiences that I will never forget – many of them in the theater. One of these was seeing a Cashore performance twenty years ago at a P of A festival. Normally, money can't buy experiences like this, but when it can, don't pass it up! It enriches you with treasure far beyond its monetary cost..."



### PGNO attends Sander show & museum

While the winds were howling and the snow was flying outside I'm sure the atmosphere inside Grace Presbyterian Church was warm and cozy as Nancy Sander presented "The Monkey King" – her annual donation to this church's fund raiser. This story is based on a Chinese mythical saga called, "Journey To The West". The monkey appears in many eastern stories and is commonly called Hannuman. Just as American children have their super heroes, so Chinese children love the magical mythical monkey.

Then in late February Nancy and Eric Sander opened their home to guild folks and friends to see the "whole collection" of show and tell puppets that our beloved Nancy has gathered over the years. It was a good thing it was a pot luck event! I'm sure it took some time to see it all!



## Cincinnati has busy fall and winter

A long-time CAPG member Sister Esther O'Hara recently celebrated 60 years as a Benedictine sister at St. Walburg Monastery.

A party in her honor was held at the Crescent Springs-Villa Hills Fire Dept. where she volunteered her puppet skills over the



years. She was an elementary school teacher with a suitcase full of puppets, effectively carrying her performing "children" in the trunk! Besides puppets she uses balloon figures to entertain and to tell stories. Sister Esther celebrated her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday on Dec. 14.

In February the guild enjoyed a Hobey Ford puppet performance called "Anamalia" at the Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park. The show uses carved foam bunraku style rod puppets. Following the performance, Hobey joined the guild at the Mt. Adams Bar and Grill to do a little "show and tell".

A little over a year ago the puppet community was saddened to hear of the passing of Daniel Llords and recently an auction took place to sell his estate. Linda Mason saw the listing and made arrangements to take some photos of his puppets to be preserved in our puppet history. Also of concern was the possibility that many beautiful marionettes could be lost to folks who had no idea of their value. Linda said, "On the third



Daniel's House

floor of this Victorian home built in 1880, there were boxes filled with professional studio shots from films he had been in and puppets

everywhere." When Mason went into the garage that was once a carriage house she saw tables with 109 marionettes along with more boxes of puppets.

Mason discovered on the day of the sale that Peter Allan had purchased a number of puppets and a woman from a historical society was out-bidding Allan for the scrap-books. So we can only hope that history will be preserved.



Puppet sale

The Cincinnati Guild printed a wonderful tribute to



Carolyn Schmidt put together by Peggy Schmidt. But, due to a lack of space here I will ask that you email Linda Mason for a copy. [LMASON18@cincinnati.rr.com](mailto:LMASON18@cincinnati.rr.com)

Events being planned for the summer are, a tour of Ventriloquism the ventriloquism museum, and the third annual Puppets & Pasta or was it Pancakes & Puppets? Also, I need to remind all of you that there is a **Guild Challenge** by Cincinnati for the **2010 Potlatch** and it is **Wearable Puppet Art**. Figure that out!



Ah, and then there is Detroit. I was hoping to get everything to fit into seven pages, but alas, I guess it is just not meant to be!

### Howdy comes to life

Howdy Doody came out of retirement to appear at the Detroit Inst. of Art last fall to kick off a set of stamps honoring the famous TV show.



Ed Kean, one of the original writers and composers of the show was present and helped a small group of children sing the Howdy Doody song. Besides Howdy, the stamps will also feature Kukla, Fran, and Ollie.

### Fred Piatt remembered

Last fall, the family of Piatt contacted the guild to see if they would accept a donation of his puppets and props. What the guild found was a collection of hand-carved wooden circus characters which had performed on a metal grid. The guild accepted some puppets which will be put up for sale. Check the guild web site for details, please



## Shadow puppetry delights group

Twenty lucky people attended the guild's January meeting at the Berkley Library and got a triple treat.



First of all, long-time Member Carol Reed talked a bit about her shadow puppetry and performed "The Cremation of Sam McGee" for a delighted audience. Next Nancy Henk demonstrated some different approaches to shadow puppetry using an overhead projector and three dimensional

materials. And, finally, new shadow puppeteer Laura Little showed us her work-in-progress, inspired by a painting of Rousseau's.

And there was more: Mary Ellen Clark conducted a hands-on session in shadow puppet-making. Ten members who made the puppets for "The Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly", and then rehearsed and performed the show.



In the "show and tell" segment, Natasha Khusid showed us some of her hand ballets, Mary Ellen Clark had some members model her colorful Chinese dragon parade figure, and new member Melvin Czerkis showed us his English gentleman hand-in-mouth puppet.

## 2010 Day of Puppetry

The Detroit Guild will hold this event on April 24 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Puppet Art Theater in downtown Detroit. There will be two workshops for children and two for adults. At 2 p.m. there will be a performance of "The Crane Maiden" and there will be a puppetry store run by the Boatmans. As a special treat Rus Gordinier has agreed to make a puppet which will be given away through a raffle (tickets \$1 each).

## Day of Puppetry anniversary or not

At a committee meeting Igor Gozman mentioned that, since this would be the tenth Day of Puppetry, the guild should have a special celebration. Nancy Henk questioned his thinking, "I think we invented the Day of Puppetry in the 70's", she said. Sure enough, when she did some research she found a 1979 issue of the news

letter that confirmed what she said. What may have misled Igor was the fact that although the PofA has been holding National Days of Puppetry for about ten years, the Detroit Guild's go back to 1974. SO THERE!

## Wisconsin holds DofP at opera house

The second annual Day of Puppetry at the Hazel Green Opera House will take place June 5 this year with guest puppeteers Monica Leo, Steve Mark, and Pam Corcoran. The event will include the winning puppet writing play by an elementary student performed by the Fever River Puppeteers. Also, included in the day long celebration is a make and take puppet workshop, and a parade after lunch on Main Street.



## Potlatch 2010 assignments noted

While it is necessary to focus on the "Puppets in The Land of Lincoln" conference, we don't want to forget that Potlatch will be NOV. 5, 6, and 7. Here's the ASSIGNMENTS FOR 2010

**EXHIBITS:** . . . . . IN/TR/Cen. IL/W. Mich  
**PERFORMANCES** . . . Detroit  
**WORKSHOPS** . . . . . Columbus  
**REGISTRATION** . . . . Chicago  
**POTPOURRI** . . . . . P G N O  
**ICE BREAKER** . . . . Cincinnati (Wearable Puppet Art)  
**TRADING POST** . . . . . Wisconsin

*I hope you will forgive me if I slighted you or your guild in this last news-letter. It was not my intention to do so. God's peace to all. Chuck Voight*