

# THE PHOENIX

The newsletter of the Garden State Puppetry Guild  
Chartered by Puppeteers of America 2002

## A Message from the President

Dear Members,

As this new season begins, I am aware that there are many exciting emails and notices I am getting about puppetry events in the tri-state area, metropolitan NYC and NJ mostly. There is a favorable climate for certain types of puppetry, it seems, although the financial decline all around us is severe. I hope for this coming year we can bond together and be of help to each other, doing what guild members are supposed to do; i.e. bounce ideas off each other, gain inspiration from talking with each other, share experiences, and grow. I am painfully aware that our membership is shrinking. One only has to read the minutes to realize that we are in trouble for members who will actively participate. I ask everyone to please be willing to do a small part, come and share what you are doing with us for your own benefit and your fellow members benefit. I am most sincerely involved in keeping our guild alive for this reason. I have gained so much from talking to others and listening to

their wisdom and suggestions.

I'd like to personally thank Penny for doing such a wonderful job in 2008-09. Without her we would have fallen apart, I feel sure. We got new life during her term and I hope I can do as well. Thanks also to Steve Hollow who did and continues to do such a fine job as treasurer. We have had a difficult time getting a place secured for our meetings, and in the past Steve has been our main man for this task, but now we are going to shift to meeting at The Chatham Library in Chatham, NJ. Again I owe huge thanks to Joyce Reilly for getting the Chatham Library to allow us to meet there. One last thought as we begin our year together, "Be very nice to each other for you never know who is having a hard time in his or her life." That is a rough translation of a quote from Plato.

Puppet Solidarity, Lois Raff Corwin, President.

## The Next Meeting of the Guild

The next meeting of the guild will be very exciting!!! We learned about a performance by Joe Cashore scheduled for Sunday, November 29<sup>th</sup> at the Raritan Valley Community College in Branchburg, NJ. Lucky for us, the guild was able to get half off the \$25.00 ticket price for the performance. Then to add more incentive the guild is kicking in \$6.00 per guild member towards the ticket price. That means guild members will pay only \$6.50 to see a fantastic performance. In the afternoon Mr. Cashore will be holding a

workshop and many of the guild members will be attending. Performances are at 2:00 and 7:00, but the evening show will conclude with a question and answer session. Between the workshop and the evening performance Betty Somerville will be hosting the guild at her home for a short business meeting (and some refreshments). If you would like to come to join us please contact Penny at [MissPenny@FunOnAString.com](mailto:MissPenny@FunOnAString.com) or call 973-586-8412.

## Recent Meetings

See what is happening with the guild

The first meeting of this year for the Garden State Puppetry Guild was 9/27/09 and thanks to our own, wonderful Joyce Reilly, we met at The Chatham Public Library. We were informed that Steve Hollow is busy building a GSPG website at [www.Gardenstatepuppetryguild.com](http://www.Gardenstatepuppetryguild.com). Due to dwindling numbers of members and fewer than that, members willing to take on responsible positions with the Guild, Lois Corwin, yours truly, was appointed President, Penny Rapicano graciously accepted 2 positions as Membership Chairman and Vice President, and Steve Hollow, thank heavens, agreed to be our Treasurer again. The position of Secretary was unfilled and the editor of the newsletter was not filled. Our new member, Steve Kritzberg, discussed asking his friend Wayne May to be editor of our newsletter. Penny reported that an article she read from POA said

that membership increased when guilds held monthly meetings, more meetings rather than less. The members present decided to try this suggestion and meetings for the rest of the year are set for the fourth Sunday of every month from 2-4:00pm. It was announced that April 24, 2010 will be NDOP. We discussed possible themes for the day such as a "Green" or "Multicultural" focus. It was suggested that some of our meetings could be workshops to work on large puppets or puppets on sticks to take to NDOP. The meeting was adjourned and each member had some puppet project for show and tell. Penny brought part of her new show "Stone Soup." Lois brought the beginning of a dolphin puppet for the "Razzle, Dazzle Water Show." Joyce gave a brief explanation of the materials she used in her puppets, natural fibers and dyes, and the educational philosophy she follows.

The second meeting of the year was held on 10/24/09 at The Baird. The members in attendance were just four, Lois, Penny, Steve H., and Paul. Formalities of the meeting were dropped and we had a lively, more personal discussion among ourselves. The topics ranged from parenting, to schools, to the daily stresses we are all feeling and that our families and friends are feeling. Steve Hollow agreed to check the POA charter to see if we have enough members to qualify to be a chapter in POA. One of POA's requirements is that a chapter have a newsletter. We decided to take turns writing the newsletter. We must put out 4 newsletters per year to qualify to be a POA chapter. Penny will put out the first newsletter and submissions for this newsletter must be in before 11/22/09. Steve H. gave out schedules for the Penny Pretzel Playhouse that were printed as yellow bookmarks. Apparently

November 5 is a school holiday throughout NJ and many places will have puppet shows or entertainment on that day, including the Penny Pretzel's first show of the season. Our next meeting will be 11/ 29/09 (Thanksgiving weekend) - Program to be announced. The December meeting will be a holiday party on 12/27/09 and we will have Improvisational performances from members as well. All the meetings for the rest of this year and next will be held at The Chatham Public Library, Chatham, NJ, thanks to the generous arrangements made by Joyce for us.

Respectfully submitted, Lois Raff Corwin -  
Temporary Secretary.

The Garden State Puppetry Guild is open to all puppet enthusiasts, amateur and professional.



Joyce Reilly puppets

*"Beyond the High Valley", by Ralph Lee*

By Lois Raff Corwin

One late summer eve, chilly and the ground fresh with rain, I sat on the grounds of St. John the Divine, 110th St. and Amsterdam, and was in the audience of *Beyond the High Valley*, a Ralph Lee production. Ralph Lee has had several productions on this location and it is a preference of his to set the stage in natural surroundings, outside, rather than inside. The stage setting itself was made of raffia or burlap type material stretched between graceful branches to suggest the high Andes Mountains that composed the background for the story. This story in particular floated as the wind on the wings of its protagonist, a giant bird who flew down from the Andes, transformed himself into a tantalizing man, and when the young maid was seduced, magically changed himself back into the giant bird and swept her back to the mountains top and his nest for her. The many puppeteers, about 6, opened the show by putting together the large bird that was made of bundles of twigs, and then gently moved him aloft. Ralph Lee himself and two other musicians composed music that perfectly fit the flight. The Giant Bird changes



Lois Corwin and a new creation

into a man, and the pace of the show hastened, as if human action was less ambling and more quick and purposeful than a bird in flight. The woman was swept up, all the while screaming during her abduction, and was then deposited on the mountain top (a place where puppeteers had to climb a short ladder to get to). The woman was not seen, however, until two puppeteers floated two clouds by the mountain top, and at the moment the clouds parted, the woman was framed in her new home, agonized as she was, on the mountain top. It was a beautiful moment, the natural elements used as a picture frame. The story continues so that the woman befriends a small cuckoo bird and the small bird manages to safely return the maid to her parents in the valley below. The parents protect

Please see Performance Review on page 4

## Upcoming Performances

The Penny Pretzel Playhouse

South Orange, New Jersey

<http://www.pennypretzelplayhouse.com/>

Storybook Puppet Theater – The Princess Dragon

Tuesday, December 29<sup>th</sup> 2:00 pm

What is the Queen going to do with her ill-tempered and mean spirited daughter? The Princess, the most beautiful maiden in the land, is mysteriously turned into a dragon. A brave knight vows to capture the dragon and imprison it forever. To save herself she must prove to herself, her mother and the prince that she is truly a princess at heart. Her only friend turns out to be a fat, fuzzy rat. Join Paul Fantini, founder of Storybook Puppet Theater for this charming tale of friendship and bravery.

Tucker Tales Puppet Theater – The Bookaneers

Saturday, January 23, 2010

The search for the source of all knowledge has been an age-old quest of the human race. But when a crew of mixed-up pirates set off to conquer the world on board the good ship Dictionary, learning becomes a hilarious adventure! Will they ever discover the treasure cove of Wisdom and Facts and rule the world? Join Captain Dewey and First Mate Decimal as they sail the seven seas toward true knowledge, and considerable laughter.

## *Puppeteers of America*

<http://www.puppeteers.org/index.htm>

Puppeteers of America, a national nonprofit organization founded in 1937, provides information, encourages performances, and builds a community of people who love puppet theatre.

Two great reasons to join today! If you are already a member of Puppeteers of America – please take advantage of these fantastic features:

### [Audiovisual Library](#)

- Established in 1979, the library is a resource center and archive for the recorded history of puppets. A number of these video recordings are now available in DVD format and can be borrowed through the [Puppetry Store](#).

[The Puppetry Store](#) stocks a variety of books, videos and instructional materials of interest to the puppet enthusiast.

- DVD's featuring a variety of performers and techniques are available through the [Puppetry Store](#).

## Garden State Puppetry Guild needs you!!!

The guild still needs to fill some offices for this year. We are in need of a Secretary and a Newsletter Editor. Please consider helping the guild by giving some of your time and talent back.

“What makes the difference between wishing and realizing our wishes? Lots of things, and it may take months or years for a wish to come true, but it's far more likely to happen when you care so much about a wish that you'll do all you can to make it happen.”

Fred Rogers

### *Performance Review* from page 3

their daughter and her child, the child of the Giant Bird. It is a South American legend with beautiful touches such as many, marching llamas accompanying the young maid as she walks in her family's pasture. The action of the puppeteers was beautifully fitted to the characters, as was the musical accompaniment. The story was slow moving and almost lost my interest in the beginning but regained momentum as the Giant Bird tricked the maid and abducted her. In the end, Ralph Lee's production has a unique flavor and makes the most of every breeze, every floating cloud, the great heights of the mountains and depths below, the contrast between the big, giant strength in the Condor, and the small, intelligent twist of strength to suit his purpose by the cuckoo.



Joyce Reill ith silk marionette.



Penny Rapicano with Stone Soup



Steven Hollow and a creation at a past guild meeting



**Guild contact information:**

President: Lois Corwin [raff170@aol.com](mailto:raff170@aol.com)

Vice-President / Membership Penny Rapicano [MissPenny@FunOnAString.com](mailto:MissPenny@FunOnAString.com)

Treasurer: Steven Hollow [smhollow@pipeline.com](mailto:smhollow@pipeline.com)

Secretary: open

Web Master: Steven Hollow [smhollow@pipeline.com](mailto:smhollow@pipeline.com)

Newsletter Editor: open

OK -- this is my first try at putting together a newsletter and I hope you liked it. I do not consider myself to be very computer savvy, but I gave it a try. If you would like to get into publishing -- this is the way to do it. You can be the new Newsletter Editor or try your hand at the next issue to test your skills.

It was very good for me to try something out of my comfort zone so I thank you for indulging me in this experiment.

Penny J. Rapicano

---

**We're on the Web!**

Visit us at:

<http://www.gardenstatepuppetryguild.com/>

---

