

# THE PHOENIX

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

## A letter from the President

Lois Raff Corwin

I've just invested in a GPS and I've got it up and running. YOUR PRESIDENT WILL NEVER BE LATE FOR A MEETING AGAIN. Unless, of course, something that the GPS isn't in charge of blocks my driving plans. At this moment, after having danced a special jig accompanied by magical incantations to beseech the snow spirit to give me a snow day, I have invoked one of the spirits that could completely wreck one's driving time. But my new GPS isn't a perfect system, I found out on my first run. It guided me perfectly to my destination, but then, since I knew the way home on back roads, I just drove the way I knew and the voice kept trying to direct me back to the highway, even when I was within a quarter mile of

my house and to go back to the highway would have taken me out of my way by about 3 miles. Humans are still smarter than machines, I say.

So far I have received only one response to my email inviting members to see Bob Abadou at the Penny Pretzel Playhouse on March 20, followed by a ventriloquism workshop and dinner with the artist himself. I am hoping for more responses, but if none come, I may have to operate like the GPS and do some "recalculating."

I look forward to seeing everyone again at the Chatham Public Library on February 28. I hope you all are thinking about what you can bring to Betty at this meeting for the basket and for the multicultural display case that is on the site of NDOP.

## **Wireless Microphone ALERT!!!**

January 15 2010, the FCC released a Report and Order that requires all low auxiliary stations, including wireless microphones, to cease operation in the 700 MHz band (i.e. channels 52 - 69) no later than June 12, 2010. This action was taken to ensure Public Safety. What does it mean for you? If you use a wireless mic please check: <http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/wirelessmicrophones/manufacturers.html> to see if your system is listed. You may also want to check with the manufacturer of your system to be certain your system can continue to be used after June 12.

## Meeting Notice

The next meeting of the Garden State Puppetry Guild will be on Sunday, February 28, 2010 from 2-4:pm at the Chatham Public Library, 214 Main Street, Chatham, NJ 07928. If you need to inquire about getting to the library their number is 973 635-0603.

We look forward to having a talk and demonstration by Diane Koszarski. In her own words Diane describes her experience and what she hopes to impart in this program to Guild members:

"Public libraries are strongly sympathetic to the art of puppetry. Their patrons constitute an audience worth cultivating. Diane Koszarski, retired children's librarian and current proprietor of Pink Flaming Puppets, looks forward to sharing tips on marketing puppet shows and puppetry workshops to public libraries, and to showing samples of some of her library-based Puppetry Club efforts. Please bring your own experiences with this venue for sharing and discussion."

## National Day of Puppetry

Once again the guild will hold National Day of Puppetry Event at the 4-H Center at 310 Milltown Road, Bridgewater, NJ 08807.

The day will start with workshops conducted by guild members with the capable assistance of 4-H volunteers and staff. Proposals are being accepted for workshops now. The workshops are approximately 45 minutes long and could include as many as 15 children.

Please send your proposals to Betty Sommerville at

[JamesL.Sommerville@onlymyemail.com](mailto:JamesL.Sommerville@onlymyemail.com) or Penny Rapicano at

[MissPenny@FunOnAString.com](mailto:MissPenny@FunOnAString.com) or send directly to the guild e mail:

[gsgpmembers@yahoo.com](mailto:gsgpmembers@yahoo.com).

Betty is collecting puppets for the display case. This year we are going for a multicultural theme. So if you have puppets from other countries or cultures, please help out by sending them to Betty or bring them to the February meeting on the 28<sup>th</sup>. Contact Betty for more information.

## Upcoming Performances:

The Marionette Players and "Brightest Stars" will be performing "Alice in Wonderland" at the Morris Museum. Public performances are March 19 at 4:00 and Saturday, March 20 at 12:00 and 2:30. The show incorporates marionettes and live actors. Call the museum for tickets, (973) 971-3700

Taz Brower

### **A Special Invitation to all Puppeteers and Puppet Enthusiasts**

You are invited to the premiere of PBC Productions' latest film, commissioned by the Puppeteers of America: Puppet Fest '09 - a documentary about the 2009 National Puppetry Festival in Atlanta, GA.

The premiere will be on Saturday March 13, 2010 with two screenings - 1:00pm and 4:00pm. Location: The Carriage House, 225 East 67th St. New York, NY.

This event is free and open to the public, however due to limited seating reservations are required.

If you would like to attend please make an online reservation here:

<http://www.puppeteers.org/puppetfest09.html>

Copies of the documentary will be on sale following the premiere, for \$20 each. All proceeds go to Puppeteers of America

If you are unable to attend, but would still like to view the film, the DVD can be purchased online through the Puppetry Store, run by Puppeteers of America:

[http://store.puppeteers.org/index.php?main\\_page=product\\_info&cPath=23&products\\_id=668](http://store.puppeteers.org/index.php?main_page=product_info&cPath=23&products_id=668)

The film has been a labor of love over the last few months. Directed by: Z. Briggs Edited by: Chad Williams Shot by: Chad Williams and Brett Vanderbrook

A special thanks to our sponsors for helping to make this event possible: Puppet Heap

## Notes from the January Meeting

The following notes are what I jotted down at our last meeting on 1/31/10, although I missed the first part of the meeting:

-Lois suggested that she could show her Punch and Judy show at NDOP, and ask the audience to come up with some solutions on how to change the actions so that it would be non-violent. Penny suggested this might work for the afternoon venue.

-Diane suggested that we could help the kids make self portrait puppets but Penny cautioned that we have a 45 minute time limit.

-Joyce showed the group a small figure she brought back from Kenya (Masai) who is "Grandfather". Since Grandfather tells stories, perhaps we could use this as a vehicle to make up stories for puppets with the children.

-Multicultural puppets were requested to put in the display case. Puppets should somehow be delivered to Betty by March so that she can arrange the display before NDOP.

-Discussion of Steve Hollow's arrangements to find members to go to dinner with Bob Abadou after his show on March 20. Lois agreed to find out the particulars and email everyone.

-Treasurer's report. We have a balance of \$1,254.54.

-San D showed the membership a "Waiting for Godot" puppet she is working on and asked for advice on how to work the arms and where to connect the legs.

-Diane brought up some issues that concerned her about audience (kid) participation at NDOP and members discussed how to handle different kinds of behavior.

-On February 17, Diane K. will be performing "Simba Laughs" at the Teaneck Library.

-San D described some of the things her group will be doing at "Teen Arts" at Union County Community College on March 17 and 18.

Members in attendance at this meeting were: Penny Rapicano, Laura Graham, Betty Sommerville, San D Hasselman, Dolores Morris, Pat Morris, Joyce Reilly, Lois Corwin and Diane Koszarski.

Lois Corwin, President

## The Cashore Marionettes

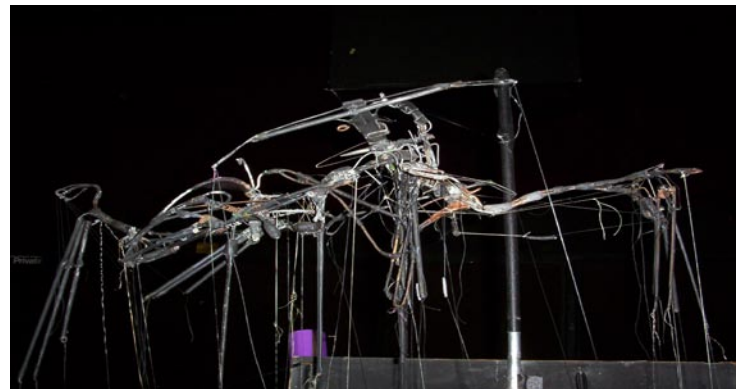
Last November some guild members attended a performance of The Cashore Marionettes. The show was truly amazing! Beautiful puppets, fantastic manipulation with heartfelt themes. Here are a few pictures by Penny Rapicano from the workshop also attended by guild members.



Willie Sommerville with Cashore Marionette



Elephant Marionette



Controls for elephant –42 strings – comes apart into three sections for transporting.

### Puppets for gift basket

The guild is collecting puppets for a gift basket to be raffled at an upcoming 4-H fundraising event. Since the 4-H supports the guild for NDOP with space, publicity, volunteers and even food, we would like to help in the cause. Please give puppets, books or puppet related items to Betty Sommerville at the next meeting or contact her and send them in the mail. Thank you for supporting the guild and our puppetry partners!!!

## Review of "Flahooley"

Many years ago, when I was a beginning puppeteer and there was no New Jersey Guild, I joined the Puppetry Guild of Greater NY (PGOGNY). Well, I guess I wasn't looking in New Jersey for a Guild because I lived in NYC at that time. When I joined, the President was Lea Wallace and I talked to her about the beginnings of her career. I'll never forget that she told me she was in a short lived play that ran on Broadway in May, 1951. Other dignitaries in the cast were Bil and Cora Baird and Carl Harms. It was a musical and the Bairds made marionettes that danced and sang in the show. I often wondered, with a cast like that, why did the show have only a short run?

I was delighted to read that "Flahooley" was being resurrected at the Theater for the New City, 10th Street and First Ave, NYC, at the end of December 2009. A man named Daniel Fergus Tamulonia (MFA U Conn) produced the show, played one of the leads (B.G. Bigelow), and made the puppets. This time hand puppets were used. I invited Lea to go with me but she is now in a nursing home and was unable.

I know now why the play had a short run. The songs were lively, the cast of singers and dancers were wonderful, the puppets had a great cameo purpose, and there wasn't a dull moment. All of the characters were well defined and by turns, zany, romantic, fearful, and exponents of the mess in the McCarthy era. Ah, the McCarthy era, therein lies the rub! Flahooley, believe it or not, is the name of a best selling doll in the script. It's a talking doll, and guess what it says! "DIRTY RED." So, now you know, because the sub-plot was so blatantly anti-McCarthy while the protagonists, the workers in the doll factory, were acting pro-McCarthy that this play could not last long on Broadway.

The play begins with B.G. Bigelow, owner of the magical, most profitable toy factory, singing a song whose chorus lines substitute Bigelow for Figaro, as in the famous operatic aria. The toy factory workers bow and scrape whenever Mr. Bigelow enters the factory. One toy inventor shows Mr. Bigelow the Flahooley doll he has made, hoping to make his fortune and enough money to marry his girlfriend who works at the factory. The plans, however, are stolen by another factory, and Flahooley dolls are flooding the market. At this point, the producer had to buy at least 500 dolls to have on the stage, falling from a net near the ceiling, on shelves, strewn on the floor, etc. I never saw so many dolls, all alike. A Genie appears and needs repair because he no longer works when he's rubbed. He makes promises to the lovelorn inventor if he can get his "rub" fixed. The play has a happy ending, the romantic couples get together and the Flahooley from the Bigelow Company wins out over the competition. The Genie stays as a free man in America and doesn't have to go back to the Middle East Sultans controlling the oil fields. The puppets sing, "Every one's a Puppet somehow." There's not a big moral message but there is plenty of poking fun at the witch hunt that was embedded in the McCarthy era against "Reds." It was too much of a dangerous subject then when now it's a great farce dealing with that period of history.

The highlight of the evening was after the bows, when the daughter of the original cast

member who played the Genie, stood up and introduced her father. It was an intimate theater and everyone could go and shake his hand. He was, of course, a senior citizen, but his voice was strong and young. He said to the audience, "I just got out of the hospital to come here. They said they don't have my blood type anymore." And still the same type of humor tickles our fancy.

by Lois Raff Corwin

## **E mail concerns**

It has been brought to the attention of the officers that some people may be uncomfortable receiving e mails from members who they do not know. If you would like to send an e mail to members of the guild, please send them to the guild e mail or one of the officers, the messages will then be sent to the membership. Efforts are being made to conceal individual e mail addresses on the headings of e mails sent by the guild. Thank you for your corporation. Guild e mail: [gsgpmembers@yahoo.com](mailto:gsgpmembers@yahoo.com)

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Puppeteers of America is our parent organization, if you are not a member, check out the benefits of membership at: <http://www.puppeteers.org/membership.html>

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The Garden State Puppetry Guild is open to all puppet enthusiasts, amateur and professional. Membership is only \$15.00 per year for individuals, \$25.00 for troupes.

Contact an Officer:

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

**The guild could use your help, so if you are able to put together a newsletter or come to a meeting and take notes -- that would be GREAT!!! Our guild is only as active and vibrant as we members make it. Lets all work together to make our guild fantastic!!!**

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