



# The Atlanta Puppet Press

The Newsletter of the Atlanta Puppetry Guild

Chartered by the Puppeteers of America

September 2004

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## Your Ideas Are Needed!

The Atlanta Puppet Press has the potential to become a great newsletter, but I can't do it alone. You can help by submitting short puppetry related items that would be of interest to other guild members. Here are just a few possible ideas:

News and Events                      How-To's  
Book & Show Reviews              Helpful Tips

If you would like to be a regular columnist, there are many topics that you can choose from. Also, if you can draw or paint, I would love to have some original puppet related artwork to use in the newsletter.

I also need your feedback, so please do not hesitate to let me know what you like or dislike about the new newsletter.

Please send all questions, comments, or submissions to Kevin Pittman at [klp@moonshade.oit.gatech.edu](mailto:klp@moonshade.oit.gatech.edu) and start your subject line with 'APGNL:'

## Meeting Information

**When:** Sunday, September 12th at 4 PM

**Where:** Center for Puppetry Arts, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Classroom  
Corner of Spring St and 18<sup>th</sup> Street

### Directions:

From either direction on the downtown connector (I-75 / I-85), exit at 14<sup>th</sup> Street. Go east to West Peachtree St and take it north to 18<sup>th</sup>. Go across Spring St and turn left at the first driveway (you will be parking behind the building)

### What's Happening:

- **COSTUMING WORKSHOP** – Join Kevin Pittman for a look at performing with costume puppet characters.
- **FESTIVAL FOLLOW-UP** – If you made it to a festival, bring your pictures, souvenirs and stories. If you couldn't get to a festival, find out why they're so much fun.
- **POTLUCK DINNER** – As usual we will be having a potluck dinner so please bring a dish to share.

## What's Your Preference?

The Atlanta Puppet Press is primarily distributed electronically on the Internet. By default, all members will be sent a link to the newsletter file, allowing them to download the file from a web site at their convenience. However, if you wish, you can have the newsletter PDF file sent directly to you. Just email the newsletter editor if you would prefer this option.

# Festival Number One and Counting

*By Kevin Pittman*

Even though I read everything I could find about Puppets on the Ridge, the 2004 Southeast Regional Puppetry Festival in Asheville, North Carolina, I really had no idea what to expect. This was not only my first Puppeteers of America festival, but my first time to visit Asheville as well.

As a puppet builder, I was eager to let the other puppeteers at the festival see some of my creations, so I naively went down to the registration area with a bag containing a couple of my puppets. I thought that registration would be a good time to just hang out with a puppet on my hand, but I ended up juggling a jumble of puppets and papers as I tried to talk to people and verify the times and locations of different activities. Amusingly, I learned firsthand a lesson about not carrying puppets around a festival that was later presented to me at the meeting for first timers.

One good thing did come out of my breaking that rule. While I was in the registration area, I got my wolf puppet interacting with a large alligator puppet that Becky Becker, the volunteer coordinator, was demonstrating and was going to give away to one lucky volunteer. The next day, she asked me if I would demonstrate the alligator for her in the lobby of the main theater before the first show. I was thrilled to do this, as I love doing walk-around characters and I saw it as a great way to help Becky out while getting a coveted chance to demonstrate my puppeteering skills for the majority of the puppeteers at the festival. I fell in love with that gator, and even though I did not win him, I was able to get another like him off the Internet.

While I still secretly wished that I could have my puppets out everywhere I went, I pretty much kept them off my hands after registration, but I never failed to have one with me in my bag. That small effort paid off on the third day while I was waiting to be let into a show at one of the small theaters. I noticed a couple of restless little girls who were waiting with their father, so I pulled Reynard the Red Fox out of my bag and entertained them for a while. The girls fell in love with Reynard and by the end they were hugging him like crazy, squeezing the heck out of my arm, but leaving me with a very special moment that I will never forget.

To start things off in an exciting way, I volunteered to perform my costume puppet dragon, Raxor, in the Mountain Magic parade, the first big event of the festival. It was cool enough and my adrenaline was pumping enough that I was able to bring out the full quality of Raxor's character. He bounced along the parade route, waving and roaring to everyone, and I could tell that the people around me were really enjoying him. Raxor was soon at the front of the parade, in part due to technical difficulties with the lead float. I think it actually worked out well when Raxor went up on the sidewalks and greeted a lot of people in person while that float was being repaired. I received a number of great comments about my costume and my performance, but the one I loved the most was from a mother who told me that the dragon was her daughter's favorite part of the parade.



Raxor the Dragon in the Mountain Magic Parade  
*Courtesy of Wayne Hampton*

This positive experience did nothing to calm my nerves for Potpourri night, for I was planning to do something very different and very new for me. I had wanted to get into doing stand up comedy with puppets, so about four months before the festival I began developing a comedy routine with my red fox hand-and-rod puppet, Reynard.

Even though I had rehearsed the routine extensively, it was still scary knowing that I would be doing this act in front of a room full of my peers and without the comfort of performing behind a screen.

On the night of Potpourri, every little thing seemed to make me more nervous. I ended up being scheduled at the end of the show, so I had to sit patiently and watch all of the other acts. I was wound so tight that I think my heart actually skipped a few beats when a lady doing a number with a Statue of Liberty marionette flung it into the air and hit the ballroom chandelier. Around 12:15 AM, it finally came my turn and I went out on stage. While I am something of a night owl, I am not at all used to performing so late, but somehow I snapped into performance mode and did my act. I honestly do not remember much about my time on stage, but fortunately I brought my video camera so I could tape my performance.

In looking at the tape the next morning, I saw that I had been able to get several good laughs from the audience and a round of applause at the end, but I really did not think I had done that well. Plus, I figured that with many of the puppeteers dead tired from all of the activities, and some partaking from the cash bar at the back of the room, very few would actually remember anything about my act. Boy, was I wrong about that! I do not know how many times someone gave a positive comment about my Potpourri act, because I soon lost count. I was very humbled to even have a couple of the professionals whom I really admire compliment me on my performance.

One of the biggest draws for a puppet festival is the chance to see an array of puppet shows in one place, and Puppets on the Ridge certainly had a wide offering. I am including in this newsletter a section of mini-reviews collected from attendees, so I will not go into much detail here, other than to tell about my two favorite performers. Joe Cashore makes marionettes that are exquisite works of art and his performance with them in *Simple Gifts* simply defies words. Heidi Rugg of Barefoot Puppet Theatre gave an amazing performance with *Galapagos George* (see Carol Daniel's review on the next page) that has set for me a new standard in family-friendly puppetry that I hope to reach some day.

I am writing much of the first draft of this article while sitting on a bench in the middle of the Biltmore Village at six o'clock on Sunday evening, the last day of the festival. Most of the stores have closed for the day, and the area is so quiet and peaceful that it makes for a sharp contrast to all of the hustle and bustle of the festival. I am realizing now that I have been a slave to the schedule for the past seventy-two hours, and it is so strange to not have to pull out the festival booklet to see where I need to be next. I also realize that I have been feeling the small-fish-in-a-giant-pond syndrome throughout the whole festival. Amongst my close friends, family, and co-workers, I am the only one with a strong interest in puppets, but at the festival everyone around me knew something about puppetry. As awkward as it was at times, it was also quite amazing to be so close to professional puppeteers whom I admired and in many cases had only read about in books and reviews.

Without a doubt, I had a marvelous time at Puppets on the Ridge, even if I did suffer a notable lack of sleep and a bad case of sensory overload. I have gained a lot of knowledge, a bag of noisemakers (thanks Peter Allen!) and a healthy dose of newfound self-confidence. I feel like I have just been initiated into the secret world of puppeteers and I am proud to be a part of their fascinating community. I am looking forward to spending a lot more time with them too, for my goal in life since about a year ago has been to become a professional puppeteer someday, and now I feel more certain than ever that I really can reach that goal.

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Pictures from the Puppets on the Ridge Festival are now available online!

<http://www.ashevillepuppetry.org/FestivalPhotos.html>

# Performing *Snip! Snip!* at *Puppets on the Ridge*

By Evy Wright, Curious Moon Puppet Theatre – <http://www.curiousmoon.com/>

As many of you know, Curious Moon Puppet Theatre was selected to perform our adult puppet short titled *Snip! Snip!* at this year's Southeast Regional Puppeteers of America festival in Asheville, NC. Previously, we had presented this show as part of *XPTerror* at the Center for Puppetry Arts in the fall of 2000.

The purpose of the Center's XPT series is to present "works in progress," so it was exciting for us to be able to remount this production incorporating the feedback we'd received four years ago. Before presenting this piece to a room full of puppeteers, we were able to remount it first in June, again at the Center for Puppetry Arts, as part of their *Evolutions* series.

Since two of the four cast members were new to the project, our remount involved a good deal of rehearsal time and the run at the Center in June helped to ease the tension of performing for our peers in Asheville. Still, we were anxious to see how these puppeteers who have seen it all would react to our black comedy.

We were fortunate to be placed in 35 Below, a black box theatre space that was perfect for the intimacy of *Snip! Snip!* The theatre sat around forty-five audience members, and we performed the show three times in a row so that as many as possible of the festival participants could see it. (The afternoon was organized so that festival-goers could see about three of five simultaneous short offerings.)

As the lights went out, the four of us entered the pitch-black theatre space and took our places. Therein followed approximately 20 minutes of table-top puppetry which was met with laughter at the funny parts and absolute silence during the lengthy, wordless burial sequence. After the show, we were able to greet our friends in the audience, get feedback, and briefly tell them about how we built the show before ushering in the next audience.

For me, performing the show three times in a row was a blessing as it allowed us to retain our momentum from one show to the next. It was disappointing that we were unable to see any of the other offerings that afternoon, but it was definitely worth it for the experience of presenting at a regional festival.

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## Puppets on the Ridge: Show Reviews

**Bremontown Musicians** – Crabgrass Puppet Theater

*Reviewed by Kevin Pittman*

Between its cast of lovable and silly characters, and its hilarious songs set to well-known melodies, there is plenty in *Bremontown Musicians* to draw in kids and adults alike. The clueless farmer is a wonderful character, but it was when I saw the donkey stand up on his hind legs and start to talk that I knew this was going to be a really good show. I can still remember the song "I Got it Off Your Clothesline", set to the tune of "I Heard it Through the Grapevine", and sung by the three escaped convicts. With its very clever use of marionettes and shadow puppetry to tell a wacky story about a stolen farmhouse, this show is not to be missed.

*Continued on Next Page*

# Puppets on the Ridge: Show Reviews

*Continued from Page Three*

## **Galapagos George** – Heidi Rugg of Barefoot Puppets

*Reviewed by Carol Daniel*

My favorite kid's show was *Galapagos George*. Heidi is an excellent performer, and did incredibly good voice work. I loved how she captured the slowness of the tortoise, George, in her voice. And yet, it did not feel slow, but just right for George. The puppets were well constructed, and the set was beautiful. Her story was well scripted and full of solid information, yet it never felt "teachy" to me. I had so much empathy for poor George, the only remaining creature of his kind. From an ecological standpoint, it was clear how bringing new animals into an existing ecosystem can upset the balance of nature. But again, she didn't have to explain that to us, it was perfectly clear in her show. It was obvious that she had really done good research and she presented all the material beautifully. I was totally engaged throughout the entire production. Kudos to Heidi.

## **Ananse! Early in the Day** – Wood and Strings

*Reviewed by Kevin Pittman*

While I usually find myself enjoying any puppet show I can get to, *Ananse!* left something to be desired. Certainly, a lot of work went into the visual appearance puppets in this show, and I was quite impressed with the giant puppets representing the two godlike beings. What detracted most from the show was the way that nearly all of the large animal puppets and all of the human puppets were moved around the stage on rolling stands, making their "walking" movement seem far from life-like. And then, there is Ananse herself, the spider who is the title character. In large part I found it hard to get into the story because I could not figure out how to feel for this unusual spider. A title character is usually either clearly a protagonist whom you root for, or an antagonist whom you root against, but Ananse really does not fit into either role. Other characters often played tricks on her, which made me feel sorry for her at times, but at other times she very arrogantly tries to trick those around her, which made me dislike her as well. There are some good elements here, but others could use improvement.

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## Pacific Northwest Regional Puppetry Festival

*By Lee Bryan, That Puppet Guy* – <http://www.puppetguy.com/>

I recently had the good fortune to attend the Pacific Northwest Regional Puppet Festival held in beautiful Spokane, Washington at Gonzaga University August 6th thru 9th. The festival was very affordable (\$240 for everything) with informative workshops, top-notch performances and nice cool weather! Turned out to be a hidden gem of a festival!

We saw a hilarious performance of *George and the Dragon* from Peter Allen of Parasol Puppets, and Peter also gave a fantastic workshop on "Sounds for the Live Puppet Stage". We were also treated to the UNIMA award winning performance of *Dance Macabre* from Hobgoblin Puppets. And in addition to a really fun improv/writing workshop, Bill Woodburn of Random Acts Puppet Theatre gave a splendidly homespun performance of *American Tales*. And, of course, Tears of Joy was there with their great visuals in their show, *Ride the Red Mare*.

If you've never visited another region's festival I encourage everyone to do so – it is very rewarding.

# A Cinderella Story

By Peter Schaefer, Tanglewood Marionettes - <http://www.tanglewoodmarionettes.com/>

It all started on a four-week road trip to Georgia. I had been touring almost nonstop since December, so my trip to Georgia was going to be luxurious. Stephen Hancock (our long time friend, scenic painter, illustrator, puppeteer) and I were scheduled to perform Hansel and Gretel for a week at the Cultural Arts Center in Roswell, GA, then Cinderella for three weeks at the Center for Puppetry Arts in Atlanta, GA. One show a day in Roswell and two or three shows a day at the Center, and at the end of each day we could go back to the hotel and have most of the afternoon to do a movie, have a nice dinner, or just loll around the hotel and catch up on long over due sleep.

This was our first time performing in Roswell, and after unloading into the theater I decided to unhitch our trailer at the loading dock of the theater and leave it for the week. Who wants to pull a trailer around a city if there is a good place to park it? The loading dock was well lit, the neighborhood looked okay, and when I asked permission no one thought it would be a problem. Of course, Cinderella and her entourage were in the trailer just hanging out. Most of our show marionettes tour hanging on special 'flip over' racks for faster set ups and strikes, and our back drops usually take some form of 'Book' style that when the page turns a new scene is revealed.

Our shows in Roswell ran from Monday through Saturday. On Wednesday we needed to move our stage to the side for a dance rehearsal. While we were at it we also removed our Cinderella 'Book' scenery from the trailer to take to the hotel for some touch up painting. The puppets were there, hanging on the inside and nothing seemed amiss.

On Saturday we needed to have a quick strike to make room for that evening's performance, so we arrived at the Cultural Center early. We reset the puppets for our last performance and announced that the house could be opened. I went outside to hitch up the trailer, but first I needed to replace the Cinderella 'Book.' While manhandling the book into its storage space I noticed there were no puppets. All of our props were there, but the two touring racks of hanging puppets we travel with were gone. I thought Stephen must have moved them into the theater, but when I asked him he replied, "What do you mean they're not in the trailer?"

Panic. Disbelief. Shock. A quick search of the theater, trailer, and surrounding area turned up no puppets. The back door of the trailer was not latched, but the padlock was still there unlocked. Twenty minutes to show time was when I started making frantic phone calls. First to the police to report stolen property, then to the Center for Puppetry Arts, where we were going to be performing Cinderella for three weeks without any puppets. What a Nightmare!

Five minutes to curtain was when I saw a police car pull past the front doors. I ran through the building to meet the officer at the loading dock and had a few minutes to give him the basics. As I was getting to the puppet descriptions I heard Stephen shout, "That's your cue!" I dashed back into the building leaving Stephen to finish up with the officer. I was hoping that Stephen would be backstage by the time I finished performing our pre-show puppet demo. He was, and despite our distress, we had a bang on excellent show.

After the performance we rushed through our strike and then resumed the frantic calls. I finally got in touch with the production staff at the Center for Puppetry Arts to plan the next move there. Our sponsor in Roswell printed up posters with a photo and reward and circulated them to pawn shops and bulletin boards across Roswell. I called the TV news crews and finally got one to come down to do a plea on air to find the puppets.

The TV crew came and I gave them the sad story. Three Cinderella puppets were missing, one in rags, one in her white ball gown, and one flip over. Four Stepsisters, two in house wear with really big feet, and two in ball

gowns also missing. Our Stepmother, Prince, Chamberlain and a short strung Lackey for our puppet demo were all gone. We used some of the puppets for Hansel and Gretel for the camera plea, and made it on air for the ten o'clock news. The story was repeated a number of times on Sunday, and was even picked up by other stations.

The hardest part for me was calling my wife, Anne. Between the desperate meeting and phone calls, it was hard to reach her. When I finally talked to Anne and gave her the low down, she was supportive but worried. "What," she wondered, "are you going to do at the Center for Puppetry Arts?"

The staff members at the Center were asking themselves the same question. They made phone calls, held meetings, and brainstormed to come up with a solution for the puppet-less puppet show, and they came to this bottom line: Can the show go on? Though we still had the props, scenery and audio recordings, I couldn't imagine how we could perform without our marionettes. But the Center had a solution. In their storage room they had a set of Cinderella marionettes from a previous show. "Would you," they asked, "consider using our puppets?"

On Sunday I went into the Center's puppet storage facility to see if we could cast the ten missing characters from our show. We found replacements for every one of our characters, except there would be no costume changes. I set up the skeleton of our stage to restring the puppets from their sixteen-foot height down to our six-foot string length.

Once we had the characters, I knew we could technically do the show – but what would it look like? Everything was slightly varied from what we were used to: the size, weight, costumes, and even the controls were subtly different. We had to find out what these new puppets could do to make the scenes work as we had originally envisioned them. It was frustrating being unable to get the new characters to do exactly what the old characters could do. I asked the Center's staff to preview a performance. I needed an objective viewpoint to determine whether the show would look good. Our private rehearsal had been abysmal, but our preview for the staff went very well. It was a go – we would perform Cinderella using the Center's puppets.

At the end of each show, we made a plea to our audience to keep an eye out at pawnshops, flea markets, yard sales, and even on e-bay for a set of Cinderella puppets. The weeks passed and we heard nothing, so we started planning to rebuild all of the puppets. We discovered that the molds for the heads were lost in one of our moves over the last ten years and we would have to re-sculpt most of them. Our projected timeline for replacing them was woefully short of the time actually needed. Our plans to begin yet a new production were put on hold.

Finally our run of shows in at The Center for Puppetry Arts was at an end, though they were probably happy to see us jinxed puppeteers go. While we were there a small fire was precipitated by a power surge forcing the evacuation of the building just before a performance. One cancelled performance due to a power outage, and oh, yeah, our puppets had been stolen.

We returned home without a hope of seeing the puppets ever again. A week after we returned to New England we got the call. THE PUPPETS HAVE BEEN FOUND!

This is the story as I know it: Rob Cloangier, a Duct contractor, had gone to a metal recycling dumpster two blocks from the Roswell Arts Center to retrieve a hammer that was mistakenly thrown away. While scrounging in the rain he glimpsed some hair out of the corner of his eye. He dreaded looking into the bag, thinking it was going to be a grisly discovery. Instead, to his relief, he was looking at one the Stepsister puppets. When he returned to his house he told his family of his bizarre discovery. His eleven year old daughter Emily pleaded with him to go back and recover the puppets, so in a torrential downpour they returned to the dumpster and retrieved them.

They took the puppets home and hung them up to dry in a play shed. Rob went to the police station to report the discovery, and was told if no one had claimed them in ten days he could do what he wanted with them. Weeks later he was on the phone to his mother-in-law in North Carolina and told her the story of the puppets he and

Emily had rescued. She told him she had seen news reports on TV that puppets had been stolen from the Cultural Arts Center in Roswell, his town, and suggested he should go over and see if these were the same. Somehow he had never seen any of the posters in town, or the news reports, and the police had never made the connection between the found puppets and the stolen puppets!

A week later, we received our puppets in the mail in better condition than I thought possible. It took me an hour to unpack the puppets from the three UPS boxes, taking each one out of the packaging, un-bagging it, untangling the strings, and assessing the damage. Two heads had come off, one tongue and a groove knee broken, some white stockings stained, some fading damage, some rust on Cinderella Rags (appropriate), and some wrinkled costumes. But, after only four hours in the shop, the show is now back on the road.

Throughout this ordeal I never really had a chance to get upset about the theft of the puppets. From the moment of discovery I needed to be focused on each step. Getting the word out, getting the next show settled, working out the details, and getting a plan together for the future. After a few weeks settling into a routine, I was past the emotional hurdle of attachment to the stolen puppets and on to the daunting task of replacing them. When that phone call came, however, it was such a relief. No matter what condition they were in, our job had just gotten a lot easier, and thanks to Emily it was a breeze.

Thank you Emily. And Thank you to everyone who helped us though our trying summer.

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## Vocal Warm-up Tips

By Lee Bryan, That Puppet Guy

For those of you who provide live vocals in your shows, I have a tried and true list of vocal exercises (courtesy of Rosemary Newcott of the Alliance) that have always worked for me. It only takes about ten minutes to save your voice a lot of damage, especially performing first thing in the morning.

1. Start by massaging your face, temples, jaw, neck, sinuses and nose
2. Humming - up and down scale, varying pitch and tones.
3. Practice elongated vowels sliding up and down scale smoothly
4. Alphabet - over enunciate the complete alphabet - funny faces!
5. Sliding scale - siren sound up and down - smoothly
6. Elongate vowels - chant your vowels smoothly

Tongue Twisters - I typically repeat each tongue twister a minimum of FIVE times - and I find it is helpful to try them in several different character voices a few times as well.

The Big Black Bug Bled Black Blood (blast the b's)

Red leather, yellow leather, red leather, yellow leather (stretch face wide and over enunciate)

Unique New York, Unique New York  
You know I need unique New York.

Whether the weather is cold  
Or whether the weather is hot,  
We'll weather the weather  
Whatever the weather  
Whether we like it or not.

(To the tune of William Tell Overture)

Many men, many men, many men, men, men  
Many men, many men, many men, men, men  
Many men, many men, many men, men, men  
Many m-e-n, many men, men, men.

And don't forget to do some sort of physical stretching/warm-up too! Early in the morning after several hours with your muscles at rest would be a prime time to hurt yourself...even doing the simplest of things. I have a physical warm up I typically do but it doesn't translate very well to print and is better shown in person.

# Puppet Fest 2005

The next national festival of the Puppeteers of America will be an event not to be missed. Make your plans today to spend July 24 - 30, 2005 in St. Paul, Minnesota. The facilities of Concordia University and the Four Points Sheraton hotel provide unique opportunities for this festival. You can choose to stay in a dorm room or a hotel room.

The modern and well-maintained facilities on Concordia's compact campus will be wonderful settings for the workshops, exhibit, store and especially the performances. A state of the art theater with perfect puppetry sight lines and a comfortable, acoustically marvelous concert hall will host some of puppetry's finest national and international performers.

Because of limited theater seating, we can accept a maximum of 600 registrants. Reserve your spot today. A no risk deposit of \$150 will hold your place. Deposits are fully refundable until January 1, 2005.

Now is also the time to apply to perform or present a workshop. The performance application deadline is September 1, 2004. Workshop applications are due October 1, 2004. Mark your calendar or, better yet, apply today. Registration, workshop and performance forms are available for download on the festival website, <http://www.PuppetFest2005.org>.

If you have suggestions or questions, feel free to contact any of the festival staff listed below. We hope to see you at Puppet Fest 2005.

Kurt Hunter, Festival Director



## Puppeteers of America Scholarships

Youth and adult scholarships are available for the 2005 Puppeteers of America, Inc., National Festival to be held in St. Paul, Minnesota (Concordia University) July 24 through 30, 2005. Deadline for completed applications is February 1, 2005. For information and/or application, please contact:

Aretta Baumgartner  
P of A Scholarship Committee  
5097 Sumter Ave.  
Cincinnati, OH 45238-3824  
513-471-2579  
[hensonfan@fuse.net](mailto:hensonfan@fuse.net)

## Join the Puppeteers of America!

To find out about the many benefits of Puppeteers of America membership, including consultants in every area of puppetry, visit the Puppeteers of America website: <http://www.puppeteers.org/>

If you do not have Internet access, you can also request information by U.S. mail:

The Puppeteers of America, Inc.  
Joyce and Chuck Berty  
PO Box 29417  
Parma, OH, 44129-0417  
888-568-6235

# The Boy From Barrow Street

Peter Baird (1952-2004)

By Steven Widerman

As a puppeteer, you can easily appreciate the special person Peter Baird was. How lucky to be the son of the famous puppeteer team, Bil and Cora Baird. He spent his teen years living in a New York apartment building that was also home to his parents' puppet factory, warehouse for thousands of exceptionally beautiful puppets, movie studio/rehearsal studio and gem of a permanent puppet theater at 59 Barrow Street, in Greenwich Village. That theater was a dream come true for the Bairds, made possible with funds earned from both their exhibit for the New York World's Fair Chrysler Pavilion, and the unforgettable puppets built and manipulated for the motion picture "The Sound of Music." Sadly, his Mom passed on after only a few years living there.

Peter had a true talent for Puppetry and he worked very hard in the family business his entire life. True to his name, he was a real life "Peter Pan," who embodied an adorable auburn-haired, bright blue-eyed boy, unlikely stretched into a handsome six-foot plus man. In his presence, you were transformed into a mischievous "Lost Boy," conspiring unbounded fun together. If you knew him, you loved him. His quick, dry wit was stunning in its abstract associations and incisive edge. Your stomach muscles would soon be begging for mercy from laughing so hard.

His performing career was quite extraordinary, but his humility and copasetic manner belied any notion of it. His portrayal of "Piglet" in the Baird version of "Winnie the Pooh," was exceptional. He was master of that unique puppet instrument, the swazzle, evidenced in the "Flute Player" routine, where he performed a worm puppet's swazzle-voice live, accompanied by his own flute playing on a recorded soundtrack. He took a major role in each of the Baird Theater's large marionette productions. He worked on countless live shows, commercials, films, and TV shows. He co-wrote, produced and performed in the film "Davy Jones' Locker," and co-performed Howard the Duck in the movie "Howard the Duck."

Peter was very nimble, quite at home negotiating the 31-inch gap of the double bridge marionette stage, often while wearing cowboy boots. He seemed fearless of heights, whether playing marionettes on 15-foot high bridges for the film "Davy Jones' Locker" or strolling over to the precipice of Scott's Bluff, Nebraska, to get a good look over the edge.

I regret how difficult his final days were. Certainly, he deserved twenty or thirty more years to accommodate a chapter of new love in his life. I am told he maintained his humor and optimism throughout his struggles. I like to think he is now freed to ride faster than the speed of light forever on his motorcycle.

He was like a brother to me and I will miss him profoundly.

# Puppet News and Happenings

Virginia Peterson attended the Vent Haven Ventriloquist Convention in Kentucky. The entire convention was filmed by CBS's 60 Minutes with Candace Bergen as the emcee. Look for Virginia and Wally in the background when Candace interviews Jeff Dunham. Also, while at the convention, Virginia and her ventriloquism character Aunt Margaret were interviewed and filmed by Jeff for a DVD he is producing.



Virginia Peterson's Ventriloquism Character, Aunt Margaret

Lee Bryan and Gregg Wallace have created a custom show for the Hemophilia of Georgia Foundation to promote awareness and acceptance of kids with Hemophilia. It is called the *Hemophilia Hoedown* and it is due out this fall. The show features three original songs by Atlanta composer Clark Taylor and a specialty puppet by Darren Casteel.

Long-distance APG member Bob Abdou has found a great company for producing full-color brochures inexpensively: <http://www.brochureplace.com/>. This company is located in Canada and batches jobs together to keep the cost down. Typical cost for 5000 full-color two-sided pages is \$395 + \$75 S&H. Lee Bryan has tried this company and reports that the results are very good – he will be bringing samples of his new brochures to the September 12<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Jon Ludwig and Jason Hines's new masterpiece, *Avanti, Da Vinci!* opened at the Center for Puppetry Arts on August 5<sup>th</sup> and ran through August 22<sup>nd</sup>. They will be bringing the show to the 14th Annual Festival of Puppet Theatre in Slovakia in Sept. The Center is the first western company to be invited to perform at this festival. The cast also includes Reay Kaplan, Lorna Howley, and Michael Haverty.

Kevin Pittman is teaching a free four-week Introduction to Puppetry class this September at Georgia Tech for students interested in learning more about puppetry.

## Showing in September, October, and November at the Center for Puppetry Arts

[\(http://www.puppet.org/\)](http://www.puppet.org/)

Pinocchio by Lee Bryan, That Puppet Guy	Mainstage Theater	August 24 <sup>th</sup> through September 19 <sup>th</sup>
Charlotte's Web	Mainstage Theater	September 21 <sup>st</sup> through December 12 <sup>th</sup>
The Velveteen Rabbit	Downstairs Theater	November 23 <sup>rd</sup> through January 2 <sup>nd</sup>
Spooky Puppet ... The Beginning (18+ only)	Downstairs Theater	October 13 <sup>th</sup> through 30 <sup>th</sup>
Mighty Nice by Paul Zaloom	Mainstage Theater	November 12 through 14 <sup>th</sup>

# Pictures From The June APG Meeting



Virginia Peterson with a new vent character



One of Lee Bryan's puppet stages



A simple ladder stage and a rolling box-seat



Pegg Callahan checks out Virginia's new character



Marionettes brought in by Theresa Moreno



Kevin Pittman with Jaspur Jaguar

# Summary of Minutes of the Last Guild Meeting

Saturday, June 13th, 2004

- **Attendance:** Fourteen members were present at the meeting held at Lee Bryan's home.
- **National Day of Puppetry**
  - Jeff Cornett reported on our National Day of Puppetry held at Discover Mills on April 24. We decided we will do it next year. Kevin said he will send a report to Puppeteers of America on our National Day of Puppetry. All members were invited to give any feedback to Jeff. It was felt that perhaps we should find a way to more effectively promote our guild at the next one.
- **Treasury:** Tricia Barrett reported that we have around \$2,000 in the bank, and we have eleven paid members at this time. Carol Daniel tried to call all members to remind them of the June meeting. It was difficult to determine who really wants to remain in the membership, so we will work on that.
- **Regional Meeting:** Carol Daniel offered to replace Lee Bryan at the regional meeting at the puppetry festival in Asheville.
- **Newsletter:** Kevin Pittman indicated that he really needs people to contribute to the newsletter. He needs content to produce a newsletter.
- **Workshops:** We discussed having Andy Bremer conduct a construction workshop for a future meeting, there was a lot of interest in that.
- **Next Meeting**
  - Greg Wallace will contact the Center for Puppetry Arts about having a meeting there.
  - We discussed Kevin Pittman doing an introduction to puppetry workshop at Georgia Tech the last four Thursdays in September, and that he could invite his class to a guild meeting.
- **Show and Tell**
  - Theresa Moreno showed us some very interesting marionettes that she uses in her job teaching at the Waldorf School.
  - Virginia Peterson showed us two of her vent style puppets.
  - Kevin showed us three hand puppets he had built: a jaguar, a horse, and a timber wolf.
  - Several people brought their stages for show and tell.
- **Summary**
  - We had great food and a great time.
  - The next meeting will be on September 11 or 12

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## Atlanta Puppetry Guild Officers

### President

Lee Bryan  
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### Vice President

Gregg Wallace  
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### Treasurer &

### Membership Director

Tricia Berrett  
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### Secretary

Carol Daniel  
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### Newsletter Editor

Kevin Pittman  
klp@moonshade.oit.gatech.edu

## Guild Related Web Sites

Atlanta Puppetry Guild: <http://www.atlantapuppetryguild.com/>

Puppeteers of America: <http://www.puppeteers.org/>

UNIMA-USA Website: <http://www.unima-usa.org/>

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## About The Newsletter and the Guild

The Atlanta Puppet Press is published four times a year by the Atlanta Puppetry Guild. A new edition of the newsletter will be available approximately one week before each guild meeting.

Chartered in 1974, the Atlanta Puppetry Guild is dedicated to bringing together artists, educators, librarians, hobbyists, professionals and everyday people who share an interest in the art of puppetry. Current activities include potluck socials, field trips to view and discuss adult puppetry presentations, occasional workshops, and participation in the National Day of Puppetry on the last Saturday in April.

Members receive notifications of meetings, new newsletters, and other local puppetry events via e-mail. They also receive discounts on tickets and in the gift shop at the Center for Puppetry Arts in Midtown Atlanta. The cost of a membership is \$10 for an individual or \$15 for a dual membership. The membership year runs from May 1<sup>st</sup> through April 30<sup>th</sup>.

Please send membership application and a check payable to "Atlanta Puppetry Guild" to:

Atlanta Puppetry Guild, 2510 Sunset Drive NE, Atlanta, GA 30345

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## Atlanta Puppetry Guild Membership Form

Name/s \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number (home unless you prefer to be contacted at work; please indicate which number you're listing):

Also member of  Puppeteers of America  UNIMA-USA

Special interests or other information: