



The Phoenix

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

Volume 1, Issue 3

Spring 2009

Member Spotlight on Lois Raff Corwin

Lois Raff Corwin, founded her one-woman theater, Double Ducky Puppets, in the 80's. Her impetus to found Double Ducky Puppets includes both her proudest moment and fondest creation.

Lois recalls, "My firstborn, Julia, had a favorite toy, Ducky. He was gorgeous, fluffy and yellow and plush. After Julia loved him to death, and his head hung low from lack of stuffing, and his matted yellow faux fur was stained with libations of apple juice, I was beginning to plan her second birthday party. What would I do to entertain the guests? A puppet show, I thought. A friend gave Julia a new "ducky" just like the old one once was. Julia was puzzled and rejected "new Ducky." And so the first puppet show I did, I did for her birthday party was inspired by this very rejection. It was a story about 2 ducks — one lucky and rich, and one



Lois Raff Corwin with Babe the Blue Ox

seemingly a failure. I still believe that this show is my best as I infused the 2 ducks with lots of quirky character traits and tons of energy born of adrenaline only a mother trying to perform in front of all the little guests for the first time can have. The show was performed in a decorated refrigerator box and the puppets were

National Day of Puppetry Creates Adventures in Puppetry at 4H!

Saturday, May 2, 2009

\$15 Per Child ❖ Adults are FREE when accompanied by a child.

Ted Blum 4-H Center in Somerset County

310 Milltown Road

Bridgewater, NJ 08807-3587

For more information call (908) 526-6644 or [click here](#) for a registration form for your child, friend or neighbor.

Building on such a great success last year, we will once again team up with Somerset County 4-H for a full day of workshops and performances. Below is a list of tentative workshops and performances we hope to present. We look forward to you helping out and volunteering your time. Please contact chairperson Betty Sommerville at JamesL.Sommerville@onlymymail.com with ideas for workshops and volunteers to perform.

- Mask workshop
- Make and take puppet workshop
- How Rabbit Fooled Whale & Elephant performance
- And more giant puppets!!!

From the President's Playboard



I grew up in Pennsylvania so Groundhog's Day was something special. Every year in the middle of winter, a small town would celebrate the weather predicting abilities of a groundhog. Yes, Punxsutawney Phil would magically predict the arrival of spring based on seeing or not seeing his shadow when he emerged from his den. I was always hopeful that he would pre-

dict an early spring. It seemed that Phil was not the best weather predictor. There were a few years when he was correct. Those were the years when he predicted 6 more weeks of winter. When Phil predicted an early spring, it never seemed to happen. How disappointing! But I did learn some lessons from Phil:

1. Any idea, no matter how far fetched, can be realized.
2. People get excited about things that are different and out of the ordinary.
3. I don't trust ground hogs.

The town of Punxsutawney has built an industry around this one day event. It's amazing! Every year people flock to the town to see the critter and to buy ground hog souvenirs. Townspeople get in on the action by renting rooms, selling parking spaces, coffee, snacks, and posing people with ground hogs for pictures.

"My hope is that our guild will continue to nourish current members and build a foundation for future puppeteers to stand upon."

So what does this have to do with puppetry? Well nothing -- and everything. Punxsutawney was not always like this. It has taken a lot of work and a lot of dedicated people over the past 120 years. Our guild is like that too. It takes work by dedicated people to continue growing. Volunteering for the guild is not always easy or convenient. For me, networking, learning at workshops, seeing performances, and being active in the puppetry community makes it worth the effort. My hope is that our guild will continue to nourish current members and build a foundation for future puppeteers to stand upon.

Oh -- and I think groundhogs are really cute...in fact I always spot them alongside the Garden State Parkway grazing or standing up watching the traffic go by. I've had it in my mind to do a puppet show featuring a ground hog for a while too. I guess all that hype from Punxsutawney sunk in!

Sincerely,

Penny J. Rapicano

Spotlight...

(Continued from page 1)

forward to creating a puppet show that would highlight these concerns. Meanwhile, she has turned to playwriting as an avocation and produced a one act play last spring at The Leonia Players Guild. Her day job as a social worker has influenced the subject matter for these plays.

Though she has had unforeseen challenges, she hopes to produce her play, *John Henry, A Steel Driving Man*. The show is a big one with music, dancing (with life size puppets) and a shadow sequence inside a cave. At the climax of the story, John Henry races the steam drill for first place in dynamiting and clearing rocks for the railroad. It is unclear when this project may be completed, but Lois wanted to use this opportunity to thank a few people for their participation. She said, "Penny [Rapicano] and her husband, Chris, and brother Ed Sheehy have already lent a hand with ideas for construction of hand puppets and shadow puppets and script changes as well as technical solutions. Hopefully we will get a chance to move forward."

Lois currently resides in Teaneck, NJ. She is a Taurus about which she notes, "The only thing I think that fits me from the astrological sign is that I like to sing." This author is quick to note that that is such a Taurus thing to say!

Good luck in all your endeavors Lois. Your time spent with guild members is very much appreciated.

What's Up At Penny Pretzel Playhouse

Barefoot Puppets

Galagos

George

Saturday March 21

@ 2:00 pm



Based on the true story of *Lonesome George*, this show tells the tale of a truly one-of-a-kind tortoise from the Galapagos Islands. Described by The Smithsonian as "an uplifting eco-fable," this engaging theatrical piece shares an important lesson about man's impact upon the environment. This show was funded in part by a grant from the Puppeteers of America Endowment Fund and was awarded an UNIMA Citation of Excellence in 2005.

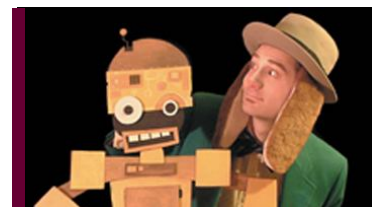
Puppetree

The Carrot

Salesman

Wednesday April 15

@ 2:00 PM**



Inspired by the art of pop-up books, *The Carrot Salesman* is the original story of a rabbit trying to sell carrots to all the wrong animals. This show is filled with enough visual surprises to captivate even the youngest children while older kids learn to think critically about advertising. After all, a jellyfish needs a carrot about as much as it needs a bicycle. Performed by Brad Shur.

Penny Pretzel Playhouse

@ The Baird
5 Mead Street
South Orange, NJ 07079

- For Information or advance ticket sales call 973-378-7754
- Tickets \$9.00 for all children's programs.

The Carrot Salesman offers a special bonus. Right after the performance the audience will be invited to make their own puppets.

***The original performance scheduled for this date was "Caps for Sale," which PPP hopes to present either this October or November 2009.*

Garden State Puppetry Guild Membership Application and Renewal Form.

Chartered by the Puppeteers of America 2002

Don't delay! Renew today! Our current membership year ends May 31 so please take a moment to print this page and cut out this form. Mail this form and a check, made payable to **GARDEN STATE PUPPETRY GUILD**, to Treasurer Steven Hollow at 159 Academy Street, South Orange, NJ 07079. Your interest in, and participation with, GSPG is sincerely appreciated.

Please check the membership category below that applies to you:

- \$15 Adult Membership \$10 Junior Membership
- \$25 Family or Troupe Membership

Comments:

Please check what best describes your interest or experience in puppetry (check all that apply):

- Amateur Performer Professional Performer
- Therapeutic Puppetry Puppets in Education
- Puppet Collector Puppet Making
- Puppet Enthusiast Note Other

Name _____

Address _____

email _____

Phone _____



Garden State Puppetry Guild

C/O Penny Rapicano
12 Brookview Road
Denville, NJ 07834



Next Meeting: A Micro-Festival!

Sunday, March 22, 2009 @ 2:00 PM

**At the home of Penny Rapicano,
12 Brookview Rd., Denville, NJ 07834**

We will be having a micro-festival! So if you can't attend this year's festival or you have never been able to attend a festival, now is your chance!! On hand we will have films, books, a make-n-take puppet project, a swap of your extra supplies with other members — and a few surprises. This meeting will be fun for everyone!! Light refreshments will be served. Watch for e mails with more details. Please RSVP to this meeting to misspenny@funonastring.com or call Penny at (973) 586-8412.

TO:

.....
.....
.....



The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe

The Marionette Players

Friday, April 3, 2009 4:00pm

Saturday, April 4, 2009 (call for time)

Bickford Theatre at The Morris Museum
6 Normandy Heights Road
Morristown, NJ 07960
973.971.3700



Three children discover an old wardrobe in an ancient house that transports them to the bewitched land of Narnia. Only the children can break the spell with some help from Mr. & Mrs. Beaver and Aslan the Lion. Long-time GSPG members Taz Brower and Penny Rapicano join a cast of live actors and marionettes to perform this endearing and exciting C. S. Lewis classic.

Marionette Players performs each year at the Bickford Theatre as a fundraiser for the Morris Museum. They have raised thousands of dollars for the Museum and have introduced countless children to puppetry.

Don't forget to check out the Puppeteers of America National Festival in Atlanta, July 14-19.

For registration materials and more information...[click here](#).