

PUPPETLIFE

THE ZINE

VOLUME

01

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YEAR

2021

COST

FREE!



FEATURES

INDEX



1.

Photo provided courtesy of Brittney Talbot

Brittney Talbot is a member of the LAGP and a performing puppeteer. She is also an accomplished triathlete, representing Team USA and competing at World Championship level. Here's a first look at her Fit for Puppetry column.



2.

Photos provided courtesy of Raymond Carr and via IMDB respectively.

Gopher holes led me to Raymond Carr and Liz Hara. I was chasing after my dog who was sniffing for the little creatures at Wattles Mansion Park in Hollywood. When I overheard two people sitting on the grass near a cluster of gopher holes talking about puppets, I thought, "It's not common to hear two people talking about puppets at a park." So I interrupted them to ask, "Excuse me, I heard you talking about puppets, are you related to the Puppetry Guild?" They both have plenty to share, so in this zine, we'll have excerpts, but please come back to see our next issue for their full interviews!



3.

Pictured puppet created by the late Mark Andresen, via the collection of Baxley Andresen.

Puppet Life hopes to be a reflection of and advocate for Los Angeles puppetry and of the broader world of artists and enthusiasts who strive to produce and promote that work. Please consider submitting writing and imagery for us to include in future editions.

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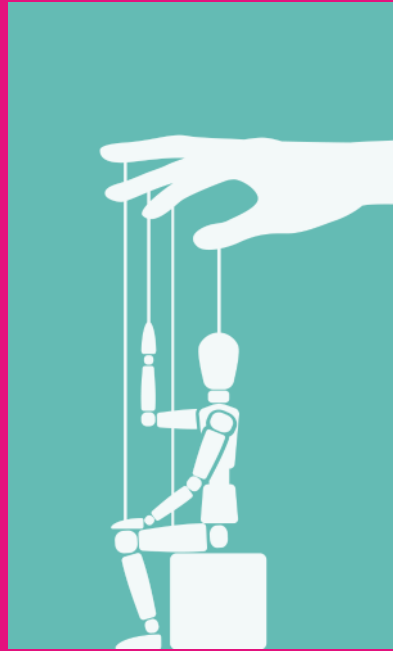
Jen Chang interviewed puppetry artists Raymond Carr and Liz Hara. Read an excerpt of the full interviews here. It begins with gophers.

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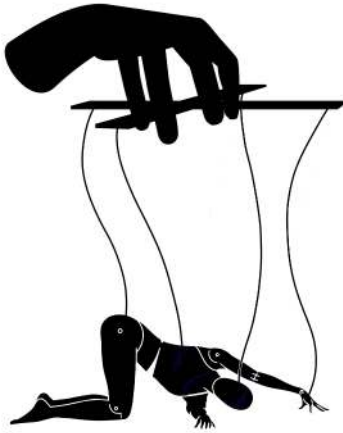
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Everything you need to know about mixing a Burnt Strings vodka gimlet.



EDITORIAL

So why a diminutive Puppet Life zine? Don't worry, we'll still be releasing a full length edition of Puppet Life! We're currently working on the next Puppet Life which we plan to publish in November. That said, it has been a difficult year for many of us and many of you. For some, the October Puppetzilla Puppet Slam will be the first time connecting in person with our community. With that in mind we felt it was important to have something ready in time for this event. This, the Puppet Life zine, aims to give you a preview of where we hope to be headed, while also offering you an opportunity to join us in determining what the future of this publication should look like. Soon it will be Halloween, a day I have always felt to be nearly a high holiday for many puppeteers. In keeping with that, from all of us here at Puppet Life, may your puppet life be grand until we meet again.



FIT FOR PUPPETRY

With Brittaney Talbot

Welcome everyone to the Fit for Puppetry health column! Here's a workout for all levels to help promote wellness, strength, and longevity for performing and everyday life.

First - get your blood flowing and warm up. Some light jogging, jumping jacks, running in place or even a brisk walk for 5 to 10 minutes will make a huge difference in your mobility. Once you are feeling warm perform these strength and mobility exercises.

Hip Bridge - 30 seconds

Start lying down on your back, knees bent and both feet on the floor about hip distance apart. Take a breath in and on the exhale lift your hip towards the ceiling, thinking chest to chin, and chin to sky. Hold at the top of the range for a second then slowly reset to your back.

Repeat for 30 seconds.

The goal of the hip bridge is to activate the glute and hamstring muscles as well as the surrounding muscles of the lower posterior chain. So your butt and the backs of your legs will probably feel some heat. If your lower back is aching, slow the movement down or stop completely and hug your knees to your chest.

Bridge + Clam - 30 seconds

At the end of the 30 seconds, stay in the lifted position. Keep your feet where they are but gently press both knees out slightly and then bring them back to parallel.

Repeat for 30 seconds.

By adding the "clams" you are targeting more of the medial glute which is great for developing more stability!

Advanced Bridge with Leg Extension - 10 on each side

Perform a hip bridge but lift on foot off the ground, extend that foot to the ceiling, then return and switch sides. Try to keep your hips as stable as possible, especially during the switch.

Advancing this move helps to create more challenge for the posterior chain, promote symmetry and prevent injury, along with strengthening coordination among all the activated muscles.

Repeat the 3 moves 1-2 times.

To be continued in the next issue...

INTERVIEW EXCERPTS

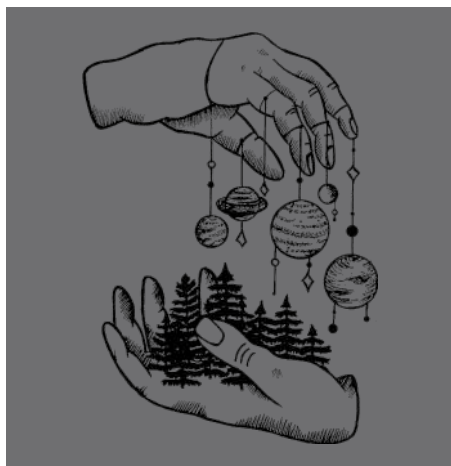
Raymond Carr and Liz Hara share a few thoughts on their life and work as puppeteers.

By Jen Cheng

Gopher holes led me to Raymond Carr and Liz Hara. I was chasing after my dog who was sniffing for the little creatures at Wattles Mansion Park in Hollywood. When I overheard two people sitting on the grass near a cluster of gopher holes talking about puppets, I thought, "It's not common to hear two people talking about puppets at a park." So I interrupted them to ask, "Excuse me, I heard you talking about puppets, are you related to the Puppetry Guild?" They both laughed warmly and introduced themselves.

I quickly found out that Liz Hara and Raymond Carr were both mentors in the mentorship program of the October 2020 Puppetzilla. They remembered seeing my first puppet act as a mentee in that program. I was bewildered that such accomplished people remembered my beginner's work. We were all wide-eyed about this chance meeting. Raymond was on a visit from Atlanta and remarked, "This is only happens in L.A.!"

When the Puppet Life committee asked who we could interview for this issue, it only made sense for me to take this excuse to interview these two friendly puppeteers to mark this anniversary of Puppetzilla. They both have plenty to share, so in this zine, we'll have excerpts, but please come back to see our next issue for their full interviews!





RAYMOND CARR

For the month of October, Raymond was performing with Puppet Up doing spooky adult puppet improv at Knotts Scary Farm. His short film “Joyriders” is currently circulating the festivals. More about his accomplished background as a filmmaker, designer, and puppeteer can be read on the internet, so we can jump right into what is fresh on his mind here:

How did you get started with puppets? Is there a philosophical approach?

I started making shows when I was a kid with my family. We used to do the church puppetry. But when I started doing my own work with the Center for Puppetry Arts in Atlanta. That was the first time I started directing my own pieces. They have always lean towards the weird, kooky avant garde space. I had a friend who was like a co-collaborator and his philosophy was, make your show like you're playing a practical joke on the audience. Even in what I'm doing various serious pieces that are heartfelt, there's always a bit of, “I just don't take myself too seriously.” And I don't take my work too seriously. So I think that is the balance. I come from like the absurdist kind of theater where it does feel like “Wait, am I being punked right now?”

What is your creative process?

“Joyriders” was just an idea that dropped

into my head. When I know when I have a pocket of time or I haven't done anything in a while, I know I need to get back out there. I'll start looking. Try to open my receptors a little bit better, but it's hard to force that kind of thing. If you want to be a professional creative, you do have to exercise that muscle, and know that it's not just a lightning strike moment. You have to just turn that thing on. Just because if you are constantly waiting for inspiration, it may not come. We are all creative people, we all can dream and have imaginations. And it's just a matter of exercising that creativity, whether that is reading books about the thing that you were trying to do, or recreating the same kind of concepts that you are inspired by. Don't be too precious with any one thing, because you have to move forward and do the next thing.

You work in different genres. When do you choose to tell a story with puppets, and do puppets have an advantage in storytelling? Honestly, they can say a lot of things that people can't. If it's two lizards talking as puppet lizards...they can talk about eating birds or something like that, or get in a weird fight with another animal. If there is some sort of bar fight and it's between a lion and the zebra, maybe the lion eats the zebra or maybe the zebra eats the lion. You know, like all these kinds of crazy things that you can do, that only puppets can do.



LIZ HARA

Liz shared some exciting news: she recently wrote and shot a short film in New York City, directed by Stacy Weingarten with puppets built by Puppet Kitchen. Liz has also been working on a top-secret project she can tell us about in a few months, so we'll get more scoop from her and hear about the behind-the-scenes details soon! For now, when you google Liz, the first thing you see is that she is listed on Muppet Wiki, adored by fans of Sesame Street. She is a L.A.-based writer, builder, and puppeteer.

How did you get started with puppets?

I got started in high school as a prop builder. I was working in local theaters in Minneapolis, and Minneapolis has such a great theater scene. So I was able to work in really cool places, just interning. And there was a show that came through from London, called Shockheaded Peter by the Improbable Theatre Company.

It was horrible and hilarious. Like, this little kid is told not to suck his thumb by his mom. And he's like this huge Marionette. And she's like, if you don't stop, second, your thumbs, the Tailor's gonna come and cut them off. So the Tailor comes and cuts off his little puppet thumbs and he bleeds to death on stage. And everyone's laughing.

Puppets, this is it. This is my life now. And then I got an internship at Henson in college. With my internship, I got to work on the Broadway version of Little Shop of Horrors with Marty Robinson. And that was it. It was so much fun.

Do you have a certain methodology or a perspective you apply to your work with puppets?

I like to do stuff that is where the characters are really extreme. That's really affected my writing both in puppetry and animation and live action. And

then just also, when I do my own, like short term things, I always tried to pick one specific skill or, like physical thing, or just like one weird new puppet surprise, that I kind of want to base a story around.

I would say my signature is crazy characters. This show that started me and it was I did a puppet piece that I turned into a TV pilot. And that's the pilot that started getting me TV writing work. The TV project itself never sold but it was a slam piece that I started called "Bully" and it's Teddy Roosevelt being an asshole to Taft. That's a piece that everybody's seen a million times. I'm sure everyone's sick of it. I do it at slams a bunch, but that's one of my favorite pieces. And the puppet for that is so stupid. It's made out of a ball of newspaper, it has little rubber band legs. And what I really love is that the puppet is garbage. But it's exactly all you need to tell the story.

Garbage is all you need to tell the story.

It describes most of my puppets. They're just so dumb, but they're just silly. That's what I love about puppetry is that you're able to get so much life out of so little. And I think it's actually very often more effective than really beautiful puppets because it requires the audience to buy in so much. So it's this really great, shared experience where everybody kind of gets invited to play along and emotionally invest in the storytelling.

Please join us in the next issue to hear more from Liz Hara and Raymond Carr.

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Puppet Life wants to include the writing of our LAGP members. Start out by submitting to one of our new sections!



CLASSIFIEDS

Do you have an extra theater taking up precious storage space? Searching for that mysterious and perfect glue you used once and could never find again? Perhaps you've got a self ambulant puppet that just won't stop leaving the lights on. The Puppet Life Classified Section is just for you!

FINEST HOUR

What was your finest hour in puppetry? Let Puppet Life: The Puppet Quarterly know! Share your personal, puppet related stories of triumph, bravery, perseverance, ingenuity, and wonder with Puppet Life for FINEST HOUR.

PUPPETRY CONFIDENTIAL

The pursuit of puppetry often leads us to strange places and compromising positions. Whether it's doing our best impression of a contortionist in order to remain hidden from a camera, wearing eighty pounds of foam latex on a hot august afternoon, or watching in horror as our puppets unintentionally disintegrate onstage - life as a puppeteer leads to a few good (and mortifying) stories. Share your story of puppet and performer hijinx with Puppet Life - we'll make sure everyone knows all about it, in PUPPETRY CONFIDENTIAL.

Contact lagp.puppetlife@gmail.com with submissions, questions, and comments. Please include Puppet Life Submission in the email subject heading.

JESSE KINGSLEY PRESENTS: PUPPET LIBATIONS

Today's cocktail comes from a cherished Halloween memory of yesteryear. My puppet team was providing immersive entertainment for a Caltech student Halloween party (a household of Astrophysicists and Engineers.) This household had helped us a lot in the past w/build space, and technical advice, ect. so our performance that night was one of gratitude and a repayment of innumerable prior favors (also, a Caltech puppet party is a pretty great way to spend Halloween!)

We showed up a little early to set everything up- most of the work was to finish converting a big scaffold structure they had in the back yard into a kind of marionette bridge. I was setting up another effect in their kitchen- a puppet creature under a glass table that could be operated to bang on the underside of the table when people were getting snacks. While putting this together, I noticed a large glass cylinder of liquid in the kitchen. This stuff glowed with an ominous orange hue, and when I got closer to check it out I noticed what looked like pale foetal animals floating in its waters.

One of the astrophysicists informed me that this was experimental vodka that had been infused with habanero peppers about a week ago. Over time, all the color and potency of the peppers had leached out into the vodka, leaving only white husks behind.

I was given a shot of this vodka right before performing, and it was astonishing. Immediately upon taking it down, my body seemed to react as if I had placed myself in danger of an almost cosmic scale. Warmth and endorphins flooded my system- the spice of the fluid became light, my eyes watered and then became clear, and I was good to go! I think I ended up piloting a full scale dancing foam skeleton late into the night on the power of that shot.

This Burnt Strings Vodka Gimlet is my toast to that night. I have attempted to scale back the potency of the habanero infusion to less weapon-grade levels, but it should still put some spring in your step on an Autumn night.

The Orange Fear (Habanero infused Vodka):

To a quart jar add:

1 to 2 "grilled" habanero peppers (don't have to get fancy here, you can just get some tongs and rotate it a little over a gas stove burner.) Careful.

3.75 cups of vodka. This should not be incredible vodka, but it should also not be garbage. Stoli or Русский Стандарт (Russian Standard) Platinum is fine.

Let sit for at least 24 hours. Taste a little after that point. This stuff will keep getting hotter and hotter the longer you let the pepper(s) sit in there so it's up to you, tiger! When it's hot enough for your purposes, pluck out the sodden pepper and throw it in the back yard to mutate animals.

Honey Syrup

.5 cup of honey

.25 cup of warm water

Mix it up. You did it perfectly.

LOS ANGELES

GUILD



OF PUPPETRY

FOUNDED 1956