

INTERVIEW WITH AMY WHITE

Amy White is a children's literature specialist at the Orem Library and an experienced puppeteer. She recently co-authored *Dressing the Naked Hand: The World's Greatest Guide to Making, Staging, and Performing with Puppets* with Mark H. Pulham and Dallin Blankenship. To learn more about their book, visit dressingthenakedhand.com.

Tell us about your book and what it teaches.

Dressing the Naked Hand is a comprehensive how-to book on everything puppet—from turning stuffed animals into puppets, making/using hand puppets and advanced puppets, making stages, and performing with puppets. It is everything I wanted to know when I decided to make puppets, but couldn't easily find. It includes over 2 hours of DVD instruction and entertainment, and is written at an adult level, but is for immature audiences—mostly.

How did you come up with the title?

In the book, there is a letter to the reader from a rather pompous puppet professor. In his words, the relationship between people and puppets is one to be treasured and nurtured. It is a fallacy that puppets aim to take over the world, for what is a puppet if not a dressing for the naked hand?

How long have you been involved in puppetry?

I am a 20-year veteran librarian who fell in love with all things puppet. I bought my first puppet in 1995 and quickly became a puppet addict, but it took until 2010 for me to make my first puppet. When I insisted that the Timpanogos Storytelling Festival should sell puppets, I was assigned the task of finding, ordering, and manning the sales area. My love of the puppets made this an easy yearly task.

What do you like most about creating/performing with puppets?

I'm such a crafter at heart that I love figuring out and making the puppet characters I can't find anywhere else. I'm also cheap, and making puppets is usually less expensive than buying them. I'm also finding that puppets are a great outlet for all the characters that reside in my head.

Why are puppets so often used to educate in libraries, schools, and TV programs?

Puppets can voice what the educator can't—things that the listener is thinking, but is usually too polite to say out loud: doubts, fears, and even boredom. Not to mention the unabashed exuberance and unrestrained joy puppets are so good at! Oh, and they make the most embarrassing of mistakes, so you don't have to.

Apart from your book, what resources are available to budding performers, makers and writers?

Go to your local library! We are experts after all. Read folktales, picture books, and *Plays* magazine for story and program ideas. Check out the 745.5992 and the 791.53 sections on making and performing with puppets. We also highly recommend Pro-

jectPuppet.com website for patterns, tips, and inspiration.

What are you currently working on? Any upcoming projects or performances?

We are making some super-sized puppets, a soon-to-be stuffed bookworm, a stage that looks like a giant book, and creating our upcoming shows. Also, our publisher has asked us for a second book. Watch for a 2017 release.

