

PROFESSIONAL ARTS ACTIVITIES

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- May 1977-
 October 1984 Troupe Second, Petrushka Puppet Troupe, Chicago. Served as narrator, puppet maker and manipulator, script and publicity co-author and business manager for the troupe. Petrushka performed most of our shows at the Chicago Dance Center's Lincoln Park and Rogers Park locations. The troupe made one road trip to Coffeyville, Kansas for agent Charlotte Britton. Shows: "The Blue Demon Show"; "A Dragon for Christmas"; "The Mouse, the Wolf and Charlie Mann"; "The Missing Ruby"; and "The Pree's Christmas".
- August 1982-
 January 2011 Lead singer and percussion person for the Cooper & Nelson folk duo and the Cooper, Nelson and Early folk trio. Cooper & Nelson issued twenty four recordings, including one LP and sixteen CDs. We averaged 35-70 performances per year singing new and traditional songs from Britain, Ireland, and North America to mixed age audiences at schools, libraries, clubs, camps, coffeehouses, house concerts, festivals, fairs, museums, and retirement homes. Workshop leaders, North American Folk Music and Dance Alliance annual meetings 1997, 1998, 1999, 2001, 2002. Workshops: "On your own nickel: How to record without going broke" and "Presenting traditional music to untraditional audiences". Margaret served as Board President of the Folk Alliance Region Midwest 1999-2002. Booker and host, Sunday Evening Folk weekly concert series, 2003-2005. Recipient of Folk Alliance Region Midwest Lifetime Achievement Award, 2006.
- October 1984-
 present Puppet maker. "MAGGIE'S FANCY HAND PUPPETS" are in toy boxes and art collections in the U.S. and the British Isles. Group gallery show 1997 (puppets), solo show 1999 (puppets, masks, costumes, jewelry) at the Peter Jones Gallery, Chicago. Juried into Illinois Artisans fall 1998. Solo gallery show (hand puppets, rod puppets) at the Illinois Institute of Art, August 2001. October Arts Month duo gallery show "Prints and Puppets for Peace" with printmaker Valerie Richards at Artesian Studio, October 2004. Illinois Artisans Art Sprees, June and October 2006. Illinois Artisans Green Art Spree, October 2008. Staff show, Art Institute
- September 1984-
 present Teacher of puppet making.
- 1984-2002 Fox Valley Folk Festival, Geneva Illinois. Annual Labor Day weekend puppet making workshop for older children, teens and adults. This workshop is being carried on by Vanessa Melson, Margaret's former student,
- 1991 Summer Stringalong Weekend Folk Camp, East Troy, Wisconsin. Puppet workshop for adults.
- 1996 New England Folk Festival (NEFFA), Natick, Massachusetts. Puppet workshop for older children, teens and adults.
- 1996, '97, '98 Goderich Celtic College, Ontario, Canada. Three-day puppet workshops for adults and teens.
- 1997 Renaissance Court of the Chicago Cultural Center. Puppet making workshop for seniors.
- 1997, '98, 2003 Old Songs Festival, Altamont NY. Puppet making workshops for children, teens and adults.
- 2000 Berger Park Fieldhouse, Chicago Park District. Six session, nine hour puppet making workshops (morning and afternoon groups) as the art component of the Berger Park Summer Camp for older children and teens.
- 2000-2003 Geneva Public Library, Geneva, Illinois. Intergenerational puppet making workshops for older children and adults.
- 2002-2003 Illinois Arts Council Arts in Education Roster Artist

- 2002, '03 Office of Community Arts Partnerships Artist in Residence at Dyett Academic Center, Chicago, Illinois. February-April 2002. Two four-session puppet making workshops for middle school creative writing students. March-April 2003, one puppet making workshop. Students created characters under the tutelage of OCAP writing teacher Maria Smith. Margaret Nelson taught them to make puppet heads. Students wrote out descriptions of their characters' clothing and hairdo. Margaret Nelson then designed and made costumes for the students' puppets.
- 2002 Sun Foundation Arts and Sciences in the Woods Camp. Instructor: Puppet Making; Do It Yourself Harmony; Jinglestick Making; Love, Death and a Catchy Chorus
- 2003 Office of Community Arts Partnerships Artist-in-Residence, Beethoven Middle School, Chicago, Illinois. July-August: Five week, nine hours per week Parade Puppet class. Eleven students earned summer stipends making life-sized rod puppets to march in the south side Bud Billiken Parade. Students designed, made and painted puppet heads and hands, cut and painted control rods, and did design sketches for their puppets' costumes. Costume patterns were created by Margaret Nelson; costume sewing and decoration were done by community volunteers Sheila and Teola Phillips.
- 2003 Milwaukee Irish Fest Summer School. Four day puppet making workshop (morning and afternoon sections) for children, adults and seniors.
- 2004 Dewey Elementary School, Evanston, Illinois. Five week (21 day) School Residency, done in collaboration with writer and performance teacher Tricia Alexander. The entire school (350 kids) made puppets. K-2nd grade students laced felt "ZOOMORPH" puppets and made animal costumes for them. 3rd and 4th graders made 18" hand puppets with mache heads. The 5th graders, working in groups of five, made a dozen life size (6") rod puppets and three animal figures representing persons and animals important in the story of the Lewis and Clark expedition. Body and costume patterns for the ZOOMORPH puppets, body patterns for the 18" puppets, and armatures for rod puppets and animal figures were created by Margaret Nelson. Bodies for the ZOOMORPH and 18" hand puppets, and costumes for rod puppets were cut and sewn by parent volunteers. Wigs and mitts for hand puppets, and wigs for rod puppets were cut and sewn by Margaret Nelson. Puppet assembly was done by Margaret Nelson, art teacher Jill Mickey, and parent volunteers. Parent volunteer and carpenter Emerson Nagel made drying racks and a stage for the hand puppets, and display racks for the rod puppets.
- The Dewey residency culminated in a morning puppet parade through the school by the K-2 classes, followed by a puppet presentation in the gymnasium by the 3rd, 4th and 5th grades. This performance was organized and directed by collaborating Artist Tricia Alexander. Native American puppets made by the 3rd graders acted out stories from the Shoshone, Pawnee and Lakota tribes. Animal puppets made by the 4th graders acted out "Glooscabi and the Magic Game Bag," an Iroquois tale. Fifth grade teams prepared narratives for each of their puppets describing the character's part in (or reaction to) the Lewis and Clark Expedition. The narratives were read by one team member as another animated the team's big puppet. The audience for the performance included the Dewey K-2 classes, teachers and school staff, and 50 parents. Volunteer Melissa Kirk arranged to have ten of the rod puppets, plus a selection of the smaller felt and mache puppets, displayed during the month of March in the Children's Room of the Evanston Public Library, Downtown Branch.

- 2004 Edison Regional School for Gifted Students, Chicago, Illinois. Nine-session Oppenheimer Grant School Residency, teaching puppet making and performance to gifted third graders. Working with student teacher Mary O'Sullivan and teacher Cynthia Levin, the students selected and wrote adaptations of fables from around the world. Under the direction of Margaret Nelson, they made puppet heads for characters from the stories. They also drew detailed pictures of their characters, which served as a reference for the costumes designed and sewn by Margaret Nelson. Parent volunteer Gordon Straw built a stage frame for the puppets. Parent volunteers also assisted with puppet making sessions, "dressing" the stage frame with fabric panels, and show rehearsals. Culmination of the project was a performance of the stories in front of parents and other Edison School classes.
- 2004 Beaumont School Summer Arts Camp, Cleveland Heights, Ohio. Two-week Summer Arts Camp for 36 seventh and eighth grade girls. Five sessions (ten hours) with each group of twelve girls. Session one, students marked, cut, and sewed felt ZOOMORPH puppets. Session two, they made animal costumes for the ZOOMORPHS. Sessions three and four, the girls built, revised, and painted papier mache hand puppet heads. The final class session, they embellished the costumes of their puppets. Margaret Nelson did final assembly of the hand puppets. Finished puppets were displayed at the end-of-camp reception for parents and family, along with the beadwork, cooking projects, and clothing the students had made in their other arts camp classes.
- 2004 Bonifas Arts Center, Escanaba, Michigan. Five day Puppet Making and Performance residency in collaboration with writing and theater teachers Kathryn Morski and Jolie Dzanbozoff. The residency was an offshoot of "Just Kidding Around," a show of three Michigan children's book illustrators at the Bonifas Gallery. Art Center staff selected Fritz Seegers' unpublished story "The First Night" as source material for a puppet show. Monday and Tuesday evenings, adult and teen volunteers made puppet heads of characters from Mr. Schuler's story. Tuesday and Wednesday, Margaret Nelson and Kathryn Morski selected incidents from the story and wrote a narration for a puppet performance while Jolie and Pete Dzanbozoff made a puppet stage frame. Wednesday evening, volunteers read through the script. Thursday, Margaret Nelson made costumes for the puppet characters. Jolie Dzanbozoff sewed the cloth "skin" for the stage. Thursday evening, volunteers painted props and scrim for the show. Friday morning, the stage was "dressed". Friday afternoon, volunteers ran through the show, with Margaret Nelson narrating. Friday evening, "The First Night" premiered before an audience of adults, teens, and kids, mostly friends and relations of Art Center staff and the puppet volunteers. The residency was sponsored by Friends of the Escanaba Public Library, The Michigan Council for the Arts and Community Affairs, The Upper Central Peninsula Planning and Development Regional Office, and the National Endowment for the Arts.
- 2005 Ridgeville Park District Summer Arts Camp, Evanston, Illinois. July/August, 2005. 48 campers aged 8-12, five counselors and two adult staffers made papier mache hand puppets. The Parents' Night festivities at the close of the camp opened with a grand Parade of Puppets.
- 2006 Evanston Neighbors for Peace Puppet Project. Eleven adult volunteers worked under Margaret Nelson's direction to make a set of one-person parade puppets. Three puppets participated in the March 18 demonstrations marking the third anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Iraq. Eight student puppets, and four of Margaret's puppets, walked with peace contingents in the 2006, 2007, and 2008 Evanston, Northbrook and Highland Park, Illinois Fourth of July parades.

- 2006 Big Hand, Little Hand puppet class, Ridgeville Park District, Evanston, Illinois, January-March 2006. Eight 1 ½ hour class sessions. Students made felt "ZOOMORPH" puppets with interchangeable animal costumes and 20" papier mache and cloth hand puppets. Class culminated in a public performance of "THE SCHOOL FOR INTELLIGENT ANIMALS," an original play written for the students' hand puppets.
- 2007 Big Hand, Little Hand Puppet Class, August 5-10 at Augusta Heritage Workshops, Davis and Elkins College, Elkins, West Virginia. Five-day puppet making workshop for adults and teens. Students made felt "ZOOMORPH" puppets, with animal costumes; and 20" papier mache and cloth hand puppets. Thursday evening, class students displayed their finished puppets and demonstrated the puppet making process for the public.
- 2008 Puppet classes for Fleetwood-Jourdain Community Center After School Program, Evanston, Illinois, April-June 2008. Began with Parade Puppet class for middle school boys, later added "ZOOMORPH" and 20" papier mache hand puppet classes for younger students.
- Taught puppet classes at Mason Park, September-October 2008. Also returned to teach second "ZOOMORPH" puppet class for K-2 kids at Fleetwood Jourdain Center.
- Illinois Artisans Green Art Spree, James Thompson Center, Chicago Illinois, October 15-16. Demonstrated making of felt ZOOMORPH puppets. Displayed hand puppets and life-sized rod puppet with peace banner.
- 2009 Goderich Celtic College, Goderich, Ontario. Three-day hand puppet workshop for older children and teens, making a drive of (small) dragons for the Celtic College end-of-week theatrical presentation