

**Judith J. Johnston**  
2 Mountain View  
Brewster, WA 98812  
509-689-2348 jj@uccash.com

## **Theater Arts and Children's Literature**

### **Residencies offered:**

#### Playing With Puppets

This workshop consists of three components: an introduction to the art of puppetry, developing your own puppet, and performing a simple puppet play. Each component can be geared to a grade level from early elementary to high school. Early grades will create simple puppets made with minimal supplies such as paper plates and Popsicle sticks or foam balls and fabric scraps. Older students might use paper mache and sophisticated mask techniques. A variety of puppet plays can be chosen. For young students, adaptations of fairy tales that involve minimal dialogue and have broad comic elements can be used and for older students, more sophisticated stories with extensive characterization and deeper messages are possible. Students will be introduced to the many forms of puppetry from simple sock puppets to marionettes. They will be shown how puppets are used in theatrical presentations and how they express a character. The goal is to provide an opportunity for each child to experience dramatic play without extensive memorization or lengthy rehearsal and is especially geared to give an equal opportunity to the shy and introverted child who might not normally become involved with drama activities. For the older student, preparation and development of the role will be emphasized and will easily carry over into other theatrical activities the student might want to participate in.

#### Preparing the Comic Role in a Play

This workshop will explore the genre of comedy by examining the laughter impulse, the construction of action and dialogue that instigates laughter, various acting styles for comedy, timing and physicality in comedy, and an overview of the actor's steps for role preparation. Time permitting, performance of short pieces might be included. Most appropriate for Middle to High School.

#### **Preferred Age/Grade level: K-12**

**Supplies, Equipment, Space, and Time Considerations:** Instructor is not available until after January 2006 and will need some preparation time to design the workshop to your special needs. Some afternoons are not available. Other considerations are flexible and adaptable to what is on hand or can be purchased locally. Each program can be done in one 3-5 hour block or extended over however many days/instructional periods as you wish.

**Teaching Experience:** I am a librarian with North Central Regional Libraries and have been actively involved in puppetry and storytelling for 9 years. Many stories I perform are adaptations from traditional literature or written by me. I have a Masters of Arts degree in Theatre and have lectured and taught many workshops. Over the last 20 years I have concentrated on Directing for community theatre which involves many teaching opportunities. A partial list of the shows that I have directed in the last decade include: *Arsenic and Old Lace*, *Guys and Dolls*, *Hello Dolly*, *Camelot*, *Fiddler On The Roof*, *A Funny Thing Happened on The Way to The Forum*, *Crazy for You*, *My Fair Lady*, *Oklahoma!* and *South Pacific*. I am also a singer and performer and recently appeared as Mrs. Mayor in *Seussical!*.

**Artist's Statement:** Working with children and teens has been one of my greatest joys in recent years. Imaginative play is at the heart of doing "a play" and children haven't forgotten how to do that! Puppetry provides a place to begin with all ages and they easily step over the line from listener to performer if given the chance. I am always amazed how skills gained by students at all levels

in the dramatic arts are used by them in all varieties of professions they might choose. Witnessing the blossoming of an artist is what drives me.