

J. Randel McGee



Education: BA, BYU, 1979

Job Position in 2006: Artistic director of McGee Productions

Family: Randel McGee and his wife, Marsha, have five children. They live in Hanford, CA.

Career: Randel McGee is an international performer, teacher, and artist. He is known for *Randel McGee & Groark* and his portrayal of Hans Christian Andersen.

Randel McGee & Groark is a unique puppet/ventriloquist act for children and adults that has been performed across the United States and in Asia (Japan [four times], Korea, and Singapore). The live performances are a high-energy blend of stand-up comedy, original songs, and storytelling that appeal to all ages.

McGee has been a featured performer at puppetry and storytelling festivals, schools, conventions, libraries, and special events. He has presented his shows in Spanish, Japanese, and Dutch.

McGee teamed up with Live Wire Media to produce *Getting Along with Groark*, a video series for young children on conflict resolution, which has won several awards. Groark also appears in the *Popcorn Park: The Six Pillars of Character* series produced in association with Live Wire Media and the Character Counts Foundation.

McGee also portrays Hans Christian Andersen as he shares some of Andersen's most loved stories. He is also an accomplished paper cut artist and is able to produce fascinating pictures and designs as he tells some of the stories, just as Andersen himself did. He has performed as Andersen at storytelling venues from New York to Hawaii, Salt Lake to Singapore.

McGee is also a motivational and keynote speaker. He presents the "Story Santa" holiday program, displays his storytelling and paper cutting skills, does silhouettes, and is also a popular workshop and in-service teacher in how to use storytelling, ventriloquism, and puppetry in classroom and library settings.

Web site: www.mcgeeproductions.com

Other Sources of Information:

www.LiveWireMedia.com

www.storyteaching.com

Questions and Answers:

What Web sites do you recommend for those interested in this field?

The Puppetry Homepage <http://www.sagecraft.com/puppetry/>

The National Storytelling Network <http://www.storynet.org/>

What do you consider "must reading, hearing, or seeing" in this field?

Must Read: *Self Promotion for the Creative Person* by Lee Silber

The Art of the Puppet by Bil Baird

Must See: *The Muppet Movie*

Any episodes of the *Muppet Show*

As many puppet performances from as many cultures as you can

As many storytelling performances as you can

What advice would you give to an up-and-coming student of this area, particularly regarding achieving success in the professional world?

Do your research. Visit libraries. The Internet has opened the whole world at your fingertips.
Do your homework. Practice and improve your craft. Emulate those that you admire.
Treat your art as a business. Try to appear as professional as other artists that are succeeding in similar endeavors.
Become a master of self-promotion. The Internet can make contacting potential clients so much easier than in any time in the past.

What brings you the most happiness or satisfaction in your career?

Knowing that an audience has been thoroughly entertained by what I have presented is extremely satisfying. I also enjoy those times when an adult admits that he was surprised that my program was enjoyable on an adult level.

What frustrates you the most?

When my programs are relegated to "sideshow" status at a large event or when people underrate me as a "kiddie show."

How has being an active member of the Church affected your work?

A gospel perspective should affect every aspect of our lives. In 2 Nephi 32:9, Nephi counsels that you should not perform anything without praying that the Lord will consecrate your performance for the welfare of your soul. Though I am sure he is not referring to a stage performance as I do, still the word is there, and so I think of this scripture before almost every show I do. As Latter-day Saints, we have a charge to uplift our fellow men and women. In my own small way I am doing this by bringing a moment of wholesome, happy laughter to my brothers and sisters. Some have described my programs as spiritual experiences.

How and why did you choose to work in this field?

Due to a lack of other marketable talents...but seriously...

What I am doing is a culmination of all the talents that I feel the Lord has blessed me with. This is the path the Holy Ghost has directed me to time and again. We LDS artists, of all people, should be making the efforts and sacrifices required to provide the world with wholesome, uplifting messages and entertainments.

Additional Information:

Featured performer at

Chunchon (Korea) Puppet Festival —Korea 1991

“I Love You” Puppetry Festival —Japan 1991, 1992

National Storytelling Conference —San Diego, CA 1999

National Puppeteers of America Festival—Tampa, FL 2001

Japanese Ventriloquist Festival —Tokyo, Japan 2001, 2002

Three Rivers Storytelling Festival —Pittsburgh, PA 2002

International Ventriloquist Festival—Las Vegas, NV 2004

International Storyteller’s Showcase—Singapore 2005

Williamsburg Storytelling Festival —Williamsburg, VA 2006

Featured performer, cowriter, and lyricist of award winning video series *Getting Along with Groark*

Featured performer for *Popcorn Park: The Six Pillars of Character* video series

Professional Organizations:

Past president of UNIMA-USA (International Puppetry Organization)

Past regional director for Puppeteers of America, Inc.



Groark and Randel McGee

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