



The official newsletter of
San Francisco Bay Area Puppeteers' Guild
Looking for updates and missed information?
Check for it at SFBAPG.ORG

SFBAPG is a charter guild of the Puppeteers of America, Inc., a non-profit, tax exempt organization

September 2005



San Francisco Bay Area Puppeteers Guild member Luman Coad performed at the Puppeteers of America National Puppet Festival in July. Photo Credit: Tim Giugni

**Day of Puppets at Fairyland
BIG THANKS TO:**

Puppet making table: Tia Smirnoff

Puppet store: Mary Decker

Exhibit: Randal Metz

**Puppet Petting Zoo: Barbara & Ron Johnson
Cathy Dodge**

**Saturday performers: Herbert Lange, Tim
Giugni, Randal Metz, Lewis Mahlmann**

Inside this issue...

- ◆ Next Guild MEETING
- ◆ Guild VS. Homeland Security, an editorial
- ◆ Calendar of events
- ◆ NEW FEATURE: **Puppetuzzle! A puppet puzzle**
- ◆ A History of Radical Puppetry, conclusion
- ◆ New puppet books, DVDs, magazines
- ◆ September Puppet Horror Story
- ◆ Post National Festival Blues, by P of A Humor Consultant B. Nathanson

**From Your President:
“Hey, you! Yes, you. Come
here.”**

I need your extra involvement to help with some things that I think you might like to do. If I were an octopus or twins maybe I could do this by myself but...

Committee for SFBAPG LIBRARY

Acquisitions, selling, storage, check out and tracking.

1 to 2 additional members to focus on the trials and tribulations of the Guilds most valuable asset and its use in this decade.

Time required: 3 to 5 hours of contact time, either by phone, email or in person.

Report due at October meeting.

Committee for PuppetSLAM Bay Area

A committee of persons interested in an evening of eclectic puppetry at some venue someplace in the Bay Area.

3 to 5 members to focus on Budget outline, Location, Date, Scope and General Feasibility of a SMALL

**2005—2006
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From Your President, from page 1

SCALE puppetry SLAM.

Time required: 3 to 5 hours of contact time, either by phone, email or in person, with additional time needed to contact venues, presenters and general research.

Report due at November meeting. Members of this committee may be asked to continue to the action committee for this event.

Committee for Christmas/Holiday/Hana-ram-kwanza-mas Party

A committee of interesting people that are interested in setting up our Holiday Party in the frosty month of January. 3 to 5 members to focus on Budget, Entertainment, food and location of the event.

Report due in October.

Members of this committee may be asked to continue to the action committee for this event.

Action Committee for Guild Meeting Events, Performances and Lectures.

A committee of detectives that are interested in ferreting out talent, persons that are doing new and interesting things, people that are finding the Lord's words in a cloth and paper hand puppet, that are new to the art, that have something to say about the art of puppetry. Workshops, performances, lectures for the guild at meetings.

This will be a rotating Action Committee of 3 to 5 members to focus on Workshops, performance acquisition, lectures and out reach to community members that use puppets or puppetry as part of their job. Contact- Yes, the President. Reports are monthly.

Committee for Guild Events, Performances and Lectures.

A committee interested in reviewing talents and assets in the guild for purpose of expanding into community involvement.

This Committee of 3 to 5 members to focus on drawing out the talent in all of us, getting some money for those talents and making the world a nicer place (for puppetry).

Committee will present its findings in 2006.

Locations Committee

Finding places to hold meetings through out the Bay Area.

Our membership is vast and spread through out the land. We need to find those places that could house events, programs and meetings for the guild.

This Committee is made up of all members of the guild. If you want to have a meeting closer to you, then you've got to help me find these places. Diverse locations make the guild stronger and encourage membership. Committee will present its findings as they become available.

For all of the above committees, please contact your President, Tim Giugni at either tim@teatrocalamari.com or 707.963.8259.

Children's Fairyland

Thanks to all of the members that came and gave us a day to raise \$500 for the guild. It was nice to work in a shady spot and see some delightful puppet shows in a great setting on a beautiful day. Thanks for bringing your puppets and stories to share to this long time SFBAPG event.

Post Fairyland Chat

I would dearly love to chat with those involved with the CF Event and get their input on how to make the event more fun and enjoyable.

Contact Tim Giugni

A Presidential Message - You're membership saves you money.

So, far you have saved \$8. Between seeing a great collection of puppets and



Photo from National Festival from Tim Giugni

being treated to a special visit by Alan Cook at the Museum of Craft and Folk Arts and the Children's Fairyland Puppetry Day you have, with your membership to the San Francisco Bay Area Puppetry Guild, saved nearly one quarter of the general membership price. Think what would happen if at each event you saved ooooh, \$5? That would be a savings of \$55 per year. We're not counting December because of that whole Hana-rama-kwanza-mas holiday-family thing.

Well, I've thought a great deal about membership and what we get and give.

What do you get for your membership? Discounts. I am actively seeking, and getting, discounts for members. Members, not the general public, but members. These discounts start at discounts for local shows and exhibits, to finding businesses that are willing to discount supplies to members. This program is in it's first steps. It's a seed, not a mighty tree that spans the globe, crushing all that dares to oppose it. Yet. BUT. Without water the seed will die. You glorious members are the water. I am asking you to keep your eyes and ears open to events, companies and the likes that MIGHT be willing to give us discounts.

Here is what I need from you. One; get the contact information from the business or event that you know should give us a discount, include a name of the person that you talked with. Two: Send the information to me. Three: You are done. That's it. I will report to the guild on who gave me the lead and where the lead went.

"But what do I get?" Besides the discounts you get a stronger guild, more shows, more demand for our services. How? We are a large audience block. Look at the Blacklight Show. We filled a row. A big row and some additional seats. We got a discount and got to chat with the performers. If there are big audiences for puppet shows, then presenters will get more puppet shows, if there are more puppet shows and more seats being filled then I think you can see where this could lead. We are a very powerful block of tickets, especially in those smaller houses like the Marsh in San Francisco, and now Berkeley.

This will not happen over night. It will not happen this year. It's part of a process. There will be gripes. There will be nay sayers. There will be Republicans and Democrats, puppies and kitties, monkeys and more monkeys. But, with your help, one day we might just look around and say, "Wow, there's a lot of puppet stuff going on in the Bay Area".

We do ourselves no good by playing small, by not letting the public know that we exist as a group and not just

separate puppet companies, fans and lovers of theatre in general. By this time next year, I will be telling you how we saved TWICE the amount as last year. Yes! \$16, maybe more.

Editorial Homeland Security vs. SFBAPG

According to Mary Decker, on Saturday, August 20, 2005, Puppeteers of America president Paul Mesner arrived in the Bay Area, entered a taxi and announced that he was going to Oakland's Fairyland to meet with the San Francisco Bay Area Puppeteers Guild. The taxi driver said, "Oh, that's the group that's being investigated by Homeland Security!" So how did our guild get so infamous so quickly?



***What have you heard about SFBAPG?
Investigated by the government?***

National Festival Photo by Tim Giugni

story was a series of new regulations involving information about our organization and some of its members that the bank was required to collect by Homeland Security. During the three week period when the board scrambled to collect and supply all of the information (unfortunately, revealed to us by the bank not all at once, but one requirement at a time, thus slowing down the process measurably) the guild funds were frozen by the bank, unavailable to us. At the time of the

printing of the August newsletter, the funds remained frozen and thus that is how the article ran.

Brian Stokes, a former guild member and former president of the guild got wind of the goings on and published his take on the event on a web-log (blog) and all of a sudden the guild and its financial confusion were getting international attention. According to Matt Baume, our guild webmaster, traffic on the guild website increased suddenly and exponentially. Board members, and particularly treasurer Valerie, were interviewed by MSNBC and National Public Radio's "All Things Considered." Emails came from as far away as South Africa (where South African puppeteer Gary Friedman published his version of the event on his very nice puppet blog, worth checking out at www.puppetrynews.com -it also includes the full text of Brian Stokes original posting.) Emails with offers of financial assistance began to come from outside the puppet community, and puppeteer Nancy Lacher of www.amalgamatedpuppetworks.com offered stamps, polyfoam or advil to help us through our crisis.

Ultimately the requirements from Homeland Security were met, the bank thawed our account and all was well with the guild finances (and the government has a fatter dossier on SFBAPG.) The phone interviews from MSNBC and NPR did not air to my knowledge. In the end I think this became a non-story. It was only one small incident that caused a bit of a stir among a community of friends, neighbors and concerned citizens who are bonding together to support each other during difficult times. Babies listed on no-fly lists and puppet guilds whose finances are threatened are getting more commonplace as our freedoms are slowly eroded. We can take heart that there are still those who feel outrage at what has and is

happening to our country everyday. Without them the freedoms we have known in our lifetimes and the America we grew up believing in and loving will be changed resulting in a society where we accept such governmental intrusions as commonplace, inevitable, out of our control and “for our own protection.” A puppeteer from Argentina once told me how he kept his liberty during Argentina’s darkest days of government oppression even though he continued to perform political and social material. He said it was because what he was doing was “just puppets” and thus overlooked by the powers that be. The powers that be may be looking at puppet organizations in this country now, but we are still “just puppets.” Maybe we can yet use our small, humble puppet voices to say big, important things.

History of Radical Puppetry, Part 5 Conclusion

(Part 4 appeared in the July newsletter and can be found archived on the guild website.)

By K. Ruby

K Ruby is a visual and performing artist with 25 years experience in the arts as a performer, director, designer, consultant, builder, costumer and teacher. Ruby is one of the original members and current artistic director of Wise Fool Community Arts, a giant puppet theatre recognized for its dedication to community, celebration and social change. Since 1997 Ruby has been integral to the production of the annual PuppetLOVE!, Festival of Radical Puppetry. This text, and an accompanying slide show were developed in part for this event. If you are interested in hiring Ruby to present the lecture and slide show live, please contact her at wisefool@lmi.net.

1980s

Arm-of-the-Sea based in the Hudson River Valley in Saugerties NY features

magical realism that marries the mythic and the everyday, humanity and the earth, visual arts and natural science, poetry and politics. Large-scale productions incorporate ancient theatrical devices, music, gesture and stunning visuals, they illuminate the links between human communities and the life-support processes of this living planet. With a bus powered by bio-diesel (a fuel made from vegetable oil) they tour the Eastern US extensively with works like Seed Story which deals seeds, grains and how their control relates to the global economy; City That Drinks the Mountain Sky, the story of NYC's water supply. And At the Turning of the Tide - A paper mache expose' of the Hudson River Estuary

1990s

On the West Coast, Wise Fool Puppet Intervention got started at the Nevada Test Site actions in 1989, while the protests against the Gulf War in 90-91 firmly established them as part of the west coast radical scene. Wise Fool's work has encompassed a visual support project, bringing puppets to dozens and dozens of demos, coalition work with other bay area social change groups, tours to Europe and Chiapas and the creation of several dozen full-length and short theatre works on diverse themes such as living with HIV, 500 years, white privilege and the history of the Tenderloin.

Spiral Q, founded by Mattyboy Hart in 1995, started as a shadow puppet theatre which also created puppets, props and effigies for social change. In 1997 they began to focus on neighborhood activism and eventually created Peoplehood, “An All-City Parade and Pageant,” as a culminating event for their free neighborhood puppet building workshops. The event brings together more than 3000 people, in six delegations from throughout the city, to celebrate community, diversity and the challenges and triumphs of life

in Philadelphia and its neighborhoods and is the most visible a measure of their progress toward fulfilling the vision of an Urban Arts Democracy. Cry of the Rooster founded by Nathan Scott mid 90s is a performing arts collective specializing in creative and provocative presentations of folklore from around the world. Cry of the Rooster has traveled extensively doing cultural exchange throughout Mexico and India.

In 1996 members of Wise Fool worked with other activists at the democratic national convention in Chicago and



Drawing of Bil Baird's "Wiseman" puppet by Guild member Joe Leon. Check out his wonderful puppet festival drawings at <http://homepage.mac.com/joeleon/Dr>

from this union Art and Revolution as born. The first official Art & Revolution Convergence was a three-day skillshare held at PRAG tree farm near Seattle, WA with a subsequent Human Needs Not Corporate Greed tour of the city of Seattle. As well as the beloved SF contingent Art and Revolution projects have sprung up in urban centers all around the country.

Into the New Millennium And then there was Seattle N30, 1999. Despite vast media coverage of police violence

only, Seattle was truly a carnival of resistance, resplendent with puppets, masks, dancers, creative roadblocks, banners and music. Folks from Art & Revolution, Bread and Puppet, Wise Fool and many others came together at a convergence center and made art for days. This lovely chaos continued into Washington DC the following spring during which time our convergence center was closed and the puppets held as weapons. The concept of the Puppetista was born.

The energy continued into the following summer at the Republican and Democratic National Conventions. In Philadelphia at the RNC the violence against puppetry escalated when police engaged in a full-scale siege against the puppeteers. They surrounded the puppet warehouse, also known as the Ministry of Puppetganda, mounted the roof and refused to allow the 80 Puppetistas inside to leave. An hour or so later, after they had obtained a warrant, the cops broke down the door, arrested everyone in the building and destroyed all the signs, costumes, and artwork, including throwing over 100 skeleton puppets--one for each person executed by GW in Texas--in a trash compactor.

Later that summer in LA the convergence center sought a received a writ of protection, forbidding the police access to the convergence center, however the demonstrations themselves were cordoned off by huge police presence isolating the demonstrators from the public in designated "Free Speech Areas" Since that time many emerging groups have taken to the road including the Insurrection Landscapers, The Liberty Cabbage Theatre Revival, and the Puppetal Motion Cycle Circus who caravanned across the corn belt, educating and entertaining their way to Washington DC for a biotechnology conference.

Jan Berger, an amazing banner artist who also worked with Bread & Puppet, now runs Paper Hand Puppet Intervention in North Carolina. These show some of the most impressive artistry I've seen. Every summer they put on a big show at the outdoor Forrest Theater in Chapel Hill NC. In 2003 the show was called the Dream and the Lie, and it featured an animation of Picasso's Guernica. At Bush's inauguration they brought a show about Caribou and the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to Washington DC. In Florida the Free Carnival Area of the Americas was hosted by the Lake Worth Global Justice Group (which formed to take part in WTO demos in 99) to build puppets for the FTAA meetings.

While there seems to have been a surge in political puppetry that started in the

Calendar Listings, On-going events:

NEW EXHIBITION, ASIAN ART MUSEUM, 200 Larkin Street in San Francisco: "**Shadows, Masks, and Music: Aspects of the Performing Arts in Asia**," April 23, 2005 through January 22, 2006--"The Museum's sampling of artworks and objects related to drama, dance and music. Instruments, masks and shadow puppets highlight both the entertaining and the transformative aspects of performing arts in Asia." Tue. through Sun. - 10:00 am - 5 pm -Thur. evenings until 9:00 pm. \$10 adults; \$7 Seniors; \$6 youths 12-17 and college; free: members, under 12 and SFUSD students.

Upcoming Guild Meetings

The **September Meeting** date is **To Be Announced** at this time. The Jarvis Conservatory in Napa is putting on its annual Puppet Festival (each year they feature Peter Allen's Parasol Puppets and another troupe. This year Phil Huber Marionettes will perform). Your president is working on organizing a meeting in conjunction with the festival (and negotiating a special guild discount off of the ticket price.) The dates of the festival are September 23-25. You will be notified by email (or by phone for those without email) of the exact details as they are set. For more information contact Tim Guigni (contact info on page 1).

OCTOBER HALLOWEEN NEWSLETTER REQUEST - DO YOU HAVE PICTURES OF SCARY HALLOWEEN THEMED PUPPETS? YES? SEND A LOW REZ VERSION OF YOUR HALLOWEEN IMAGES TO YOUR NEWSLETTER EDITOR (CONTACT INFO ON PAGE 1) OR MAIL A COPY OF A PRINT. ALSO, SEND A LISTING OF YOUR HALLOWEEN SHOWS (AND NON-HALLOWEEN SHOWS AS WELL FOR THE CALENDAR!

mid 90s, the form has certainly become more visible since the Seattle WTO protests. There are dozens of groups around the country Shoddy Puppet & Ramshackle Enterprises in Philadelphia, Redmoon Theater and Environmental Encroachment in Chicago, Great Small Works in New York City, Clare Dolan's work in Vermont. There has also been a surge in small alternative festivals: Puppet Uprising and the Black Sheep Festival on the East Coast, Puppetropolis, the Combustible Puppet Cabaret and Theater Dank's Puppetry Festival in Chicago and PuppetLOVE! on the west coast to name just a few.

There are dozens and dozens of people out there all around the world making puppets for social causes at greater or lesser levels of skill. At convergence centers, Art and Revolution workshops or with only the Wise Fool book in hand their staple, cut and paste and carry their creation with pride. Just do an image search for "radical puppet" or "political" puppet on the net and see what turns up.

So here we are today! We continue forward in history as the unnamed puppeteer, hidden behind the mask of the puppet, giving voice to the people. Educate. Agitate. Animate!!

CALENDAR LISTINGS

Puppeteers to perform at the Mill Valley Fall Arts Festival, located in Old Mill Park, on the weekend of September 17 and 18. Guild member TIA Smirnoff with her Richardson Bay Girl Scouts will precede the performances with free arts and crafts both mornings from 10 to 12:30. On Saturday, the 17th the Fratello Marionettes (Kevin Menegus and Mike Burroughs) will perform at 12:30. At 1:30 Tinker's Coin (Olivia and Talib Huff) will perform their delightful handpuppet show "The Gardener". At 2:30 Benjie Nelson will perform his

new show "The Littlest Big Top". In between the puppet shows will be a story teller, singers and a magician. On Sunday the Fratellos will perform at 1:00 pm and at 2:30 Benjie Nelson will repeat his "Fowl Play". Former guild member Blake Maxam will do his Wizard of Ahs magic at 2:00. The Mistress of Ceremonies on Sunday will be Fairyland's Blue Fairy (Jacqueline Lynaugh). According to the Festival's website, Bob Hartman will be performing as well, doing 45 minute shows at intervals starting at 11 am. His theatre can be found in the grove behind the food booths.

Attendees are urged to look for signs for free parking and free shuttle buses to ride to and from the Festival and allow plenty of time to get to the park. Lettie Schubert repeats her volunteer coordination of Children's Entertainment which she has done for 20 years.

New Book on the Maker of Hazelle's Marionettes

For those puppeteers who own any of Hazelle's Marionettes, a history of them and the woman who started it all has just been published. "*Hazelle and Her Marionettes*" by Mike Joly is available in a hardcover first edition, Coffee table sized (9"x 11"), 199 pages, over 200 photographs, 150 in color, only \$39.95 plus shipping and handling. Shipping/Handling is \$4, and you can obtain your copy from the Puppetry Arts Institute, 11025 E. Winner Road, Independence MO 64052. Questions? Call the institute at (816)833-9777. Credit cards accepted. *(thanks to Lettie Schubert)*

New DVD releases: "The Muppet Show- Season One (Special Edition)"

Vaudeville lives again in Jim Henson's

comfortable, funny and wholesomely entertaining variety series featuring Kermit the Frog, Miss Piggy, Fozzie Bear and a host of other muppets. Plus there are guest stars such as Rita Moreno, Vincent Price and Florence Henderson. This first-season package includes 24 episodes, the pilot and Henson's amusing, inventive pitch reel shown to network brass.

(thanks to Elisheva Hart)

Scott Radke Marionettes in Doll Quarterly

The Autumn 2005 Art Doll Quarterly features a long article with many photographs of the "marionettes" of Scott Radke. I doubt that they are really workable marionettes, instead are dolls hung on strings, but the artist says they really do work. According the article "Some people think Scott's puppets are eerie, creepy - perhaps a little macabre. While he admits that some of them do reflect a more melancholy side of this personality, he finds this dark interpretation of them bemusing, given their genesis." There is a Tim Burton quality about them, all dressed in black with odd white faces. Very interesting.

(thanks to Lettie Schubert)

Post National Puppet Festival Blues

By Bob Nathanson, Humor Consultant to Puppeteers of America

After returning from puppet festivals, be they regional or national, the comment I most often hear is how difficult it is to return to the "real" world.

We puppeteers do, indeed, suffer a form of withdrawal upon our return to reality. I have given this matter some serious thought, mostly while setting up



P. of A. Humor Consultant Bob Nathanson (on right) shown here in a less than humorous moment at the National Festival, with Drew Allison (on left, by default). Photo by Tim Giugni

or striking my stage, and even occasionally while actually in the midst of performing. (WARNING: This activity can be dangerous, and should only be attempted by a professional!)

I am happy to announce a solution that will make PFW (Puppet Festival Withdrawal) as rare as parents reading to their kids. The answer is to have a number of halfway, or "safe," houses located in the various regions. Here, within four walls (there should be a minimum of four walls, although there can be as many as eight), the puppeteer can slowly be brought back to the world of full-sized people, real food, and somewhat normal lighting conditions.

Immediately upon arrival at a halfway house, the puppeteer should sit in a darkened room and watch several puppet shows consecutively, this to avoid sudden decompression. After the second or third day, where only one show per day will be viewed, real food can again be safely introduced into the diet. On the fourth day, let there be light. Gradually, the eye of the puppeteer will remember what natural sunlight is. By the fifth day, the puppeteer will again be ready to tackle the "real" world, the world of nine-to-five, traffic congestion, and unsettling world events.

Hurry up and bring on the next festival!!

Alameda County Fair Horror Story

Your column headed "What if you held a puppet show and no one came" is a true "horror story" of our recent puppet show at the Alameda County Fair.

Our Saturday show, starting at noon did fairly well. We had a pretty good sized audience, but I noticed that the tumbling group ahead of us (whose show started at 11:00), didn't do as well. Their audience consisted mostly of the parents of the dozen or so kids that participated in their tumbling demonstrations. So, I was quite concerned that our show for the next day would have the same audience. Well, my nightmare came true. The stage we were assigned was in the "Children's Park" area of the Fairgrounds, and that didn't open until after 11:00 on Sunday morning. So, in spite of our announcements to "Come One, Come All to the Puppet Show on the Children's Stage, starting in just 10 minutes", there were no people in the area to "Come One....." or at all. Our entire 35 minute show was played to our families. As Lettie said, "we learn from our mistakes".

I was the one who had selected the time (back in April) - thinking we could do our performance before it got too hot in Pleasanton, and would allow the families of our team members to do other things that day. I didn't know where we would be performing, or that the area would not be open that early. It would have been far better to have selected a 3 or 4:00 PM time, when the Fairgrounds had time to fill and the kids and families wanted time to rest in a shaded area, while watching our puppet show. Next year, I'll know better.

Sharon Clay, Alameda County 4-H Puppeteers

Do you have a work in progress, completed work, workshop, lecture or know of a puppetry event that is happening in and around the Bay Area? Is there a location that could house a Guild Event or Meeting? Is there a mysterious 'other' or 'not listed here's presentation that you would like to deliver to the guild? If so, please contact Tim Giugni, your president, and discuss the hows and whens you could present. tim@teatrocalamari.com or 707.963.8259



September Puppetuzzle!

Mystery Photo:

What is it? What country is it from? What is the customary use? What is the tradition (hint: this puppet is not made for performance)?

THERE WILL BE A SURPRIZINGLY GOOD PRIZE FOR THE BEST (AND POSSIBLY FOR THE MOST CREATIVE) ANSWER!

Send answers to your newsletter editor (contact info. on page 1. **Answers must be received by September 25th!** Enter as often as you wish. In case of a tie, winner will be decided by drawing.



San Francisco Bay Area Puppeteers Guild
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Guild member Joe Leon's drawing of Guild president Tim Giugni, from Joe's website at <http://homepage.mac.com/joeleon/Drawings/PhotoAlbum55.html>

Your annual DUES ARE DUE IN SEPTEMBER!

You should have gotten your renewal form in the mail. It needs to be filled out and returned to maintain your guild membership. If you did not get one or need another copy, email or write your treasurer Valerie Nelson (contact info on page 1).