



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

July 2007



Some like it HOT!

The relationship between puppets and people is a complex one that begs deeper exploration. And what better place to delve deeper than at one of our summer puppetry festivals or at our summer guild meeting at The Puppet Fair at Oakland's Fairyland?

*The Puppet Fair at Oakland's Fairyland will be the weekend of Aug. 25-26
Thanks to Mary Decker for the fun photo of Marilyn Monroe and Charlie McCarthy*

Inside this issue...

- ◆ President's message
- ◆ **SUMMER MEETING DATE: weekend of August 25-26 (more later)**
- ◆ Summer Festivals
- ◆ Proposed changes to guild structure
- ◆ Review of "Rex and Boots, Super Sleuths"
- ◆ July Calendar, Classifieds and More!

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From Your President: Guild news- Changes come to the guild

Guild elections have happened (by mail, email and at the last meeting). No doubt you are all on pins and needles (strings and rods?) waiting to hear the election results! The (uncontested) slate of candidates that the nominating committee offered to the guild was elected, and your new officers are Michael Nelson as president, Herbert Lange and Mike Wick as co-vice presidents, Sharon Clay as secretary, and Valerie Nelson as Treasurer. Big thanks go out to all of the guild members who voted, to the new board for being willing to serve the membership as board members, and to retiring board member Elisheva Hart who is being replaced by Herbert Lange as co-vice president. Great thanks also to the nominating committee of Lee Armstrong, Mary Decker, and Talib Huff who took the time to find qualified candidates to run for the guild board. Speaking for the board, we appreciate your confidence in our abilities to serve the guild and look forward to working with you in the coming year to continue to improve and support the puppetry guild of the Bay Area.



At the June guild meeting at MOCHA, Mike Wick demonstrates how to bring puppets to life in the second puppet manipulation workshop in this series.



June Meeting: The highlight of the June meeting was the wonderful performance given by Anita Coulter and Tim Sweeney of Swazzle (more later in the newsletter on that) and the workshop on making puppets come alive given by Mike Wick. In this, the second installment of this workshop series, Mike focused on hand puppets manipulating objects. Puppets were passed out (to those attending) and members practiced manipulation techniques as veteran TV puppeteer Mike showed us various tips and tricks on making our puppets come alive. Another highlight was getting to check out the MOCHA facility as a possible future meeting space. MOCHA stands for Museum of Children's Art, is in Oakland, and is a wonderful, creative space for young people to go and create art. While there are some performance and special event spaces there, the main

focus seems to be rooms filled with tables and art materials where children can come, hang out (for free) and create art. What a fantastic idea! And the MOCHA staff was welcoming, friendly, helpful and want us to come back again (and no charge to the guild!) The Swazzle show that the guild saw was also open to the public, and a nice audience of young families gathered to enjoy the show, allowing the guild to help promote and create puppetry in the community and allowing guild members to see the show with its intended audience. It was a total win, win, win situation and the guild should definitely consider this space again for future events.

Also of note at the June meeting: A wonderful array of snacks represented the summer season with fresh strawberries and cherry tomatoes from the farmers market and some nice pound cake to compliment it. There was also an impromptu show-and-tell (someone recently lamented that we used to do that all the time) with Kathy Dodge bringing in a large and amusing collection of paper automata (little creature or person machines that move and do funny things when paper cranks are turned) and yours truly brought in a giant puppet head that I have been working on, to share.

GUILD BUSINESS: At the June meeting there was some interesting discussion on the future of the guild. It was pointed out that puppetry guilds and other types of theatre organizations all over the country are experiencing small turn outs at meetings, and a seeming lack of interest in the way the organization is being run. It was suggested that internet forums and communication are starting to fill the need formerly filled by guild meetings, as people find their interactions and support on line. Guild members in attendance commented on the work that goes into organizing a guild meeting (performers, workshop leaders,

hospitality, publicity, facility coordination, etc.) versus the numbers of members that are actually attending (for the last several meetings, apart from the organizers, workshop leaders and performers, and not counting the general public, I would estimate an average of 2-5 guild members attending.) As a result of this discussion it was moved, seconded and passed that the guild will go to quarterly meetings, with the winter meeting being the annual guild holiday party, the summer meeting the day of puppetry at Oakland Fairyland, and a Fall (possibly Halloween) and Spring meeting to be planned. The idea is that with fewer meetings more guild members might make it a point to attend, especially if the programming for these fewer meetings is of a more extensive nature. Of course guild members are welcome to organize gatherings on their own. Should you wish to have a group of like minded persons to participate in some puppet related activity, you can use the guild email list to advertise and network, or use the guild roster. Should you have an idea for a great guild meeting you can contact one of our guild meeting planning committee (Herbert Lange and Lee Armstrong, contact info for both is listed on the newsletter masthead.) Hopefully we can come up with some meetings that guild members will want to attend, and plan them far enough in advance that members can reserve the dates on their calendars.

STARTING THE NEW

GUILD YEAR. I realize that you all have just elected your new board but I am about to propose something that would make the board you elected obsolete.

This is my second stint as president of this guild (the first being years or decades ago.) During my first presidency my recollection is that meetings were attended by 15-25 guild

members on a regular basis. There was a large enough body of members at meetings to discuss and vote on guild business and feel that we were representing a significant percentage of the guild membership. Recently, with only a (small) handful of members attending meetings, I have not felt comfortable with the group making important decisions, especially relating to the use of the guild monies. It is for this reason that I would like to see a guild board of directors that is larger and thus more representative. I would like to propose that the guild consider adopting a nine member board, with board members' terms being 3 years each and three new board members being elected every 3 years. This board would then be charged with making the guild decisions that in the past were done in the town meeting style of membership meetings. A 9 member board would offer more diverse points of view during discussions as well as spread out the work load of the guild among more people. Meetings could then be less frequent (as the guild just voted at the last meeting) and when we have general membership meetings they could be more program and social oriented, and not have to include business meetings. The board could communicate with the membership through the newsletter, the guild website and the guild email list. And, of course, guild members could take any business they wished to be considered either to the board or the membership at large (there would still be at least one regular guild membership meeting a year and possibly short meetings as needed or requested at any regular guild event.) Guild officers would be elected by the board, from within the board, for 1 year terms. This is a change in the basic structure of the guild, but it is a change to a model that many other similar organizations already use with much success.

I am proposing this suggestion in the



Cover photo follow-up: The actual puppeteer for Charlie McCarthy, Edgar Bergen, attended Northwestern University, but did not graduate. The school later gave him an honorary degree as "Master of Innuendo and Snappy Comeback." (from Wikipedia)

newsletter and on the guild email list (which will then put it onto the guild website.) Let me know your thoughts, concerns, or ideas. It is my thought that should the membership look favorably on this idea, that when the guild membership renewal forms are mailed out in August, there would also be a proposition ballot updating the bylaws of the guild to make this change in structure. This gives us some time for discussion before making our decision. You can find contact information for me (Michael Nelson) on the front of the guild newsletter and in your guild roster.

Rex and Boots, Super Sleuths' Review

by Michael Nelson

At the May guild meeting, Swazzle, represented by Anita Coulter and Tim Sweeney, performed for the guild and for the general public at the Museum of Children's Art in Oakland. As soon as Anita came out to introduce the show, guild members knew they were in for a well honed, professional performance. In a very warm and friendly manner Anita prepared the young members of the audience with some quick suggestions as to the kind of noises that were appropriate to the puppet show (laughter and applause) and then gently prepared the adults by mentioning the



Anita Coulter and Tim Sweeney of Swazzle reveal behind the curtains at their performance of "Rex and Boots: Super-Sleuths" at the June guild meeting.

wondered if there was a way that the show could have prepared this age group for the sudden head removal. It is a tricky question because the whole plot resolution revolves around the head removal being a surprise (as in the stereotypical English detective story surprise ending), and I think an older audience would have found the huge sheep dog body with the tiny mouse head absurdly funny as intended. This is always the challenge faced by the family puppet show writer: having to find material that all ages can watch and enjoy. And while very young children may not completely follow the nuances and satire of this story, Swazzle has produced a very attractive and high quality puppet show. If you missed it at the guild meeting, I highly recommend you check their performance schedule on their website and try to go see it this summer while it is touring in the Bay Area. For more info on Swazzle, including their complete schedule, pictures of the puppets, behind the scenes videos, and episodes of "The Swazzle Workshop" visit www.swazzle.com. For more on the behind the scenes of "Rex and Boots, Super Sleuths," see the interview with Anita. below.

A big thanks to Anita Coulter, Tim Sweeney, and Swazzle, for their generous donation of their show and time to our guild, and for making our June meeting a very special event.

Interview with Anita Coulter of Swazzle

Anita Coulter is a long time member of the guild and past president. She performed "Rex and Boots: Super-Sleuths" at the May guild meeting at MOCHA (Museum of Children's' Art in Oakland), along with her partner, Tim. Below is an email interview in which Anita talks about her company and the creative process. M: Tell us about your

one noise that you never want to hear during a puppet show (cell phone or pager). Then we were off, entering the world of an upper class mouse (Lady Fromage) who for some reason I missed, had to move from her mansion (at least the lovely set décor led one to believe it was a mansion). During the move, a prized gold fish (real gold) turns up missing and detectives Rex (a hound) and his side-kick Boots (a cat) show up to do some sleuthing. The puppets were beautifully made, moved very well, had personality and expression. This was partly due to the quality construction of the puppets and partly to the exceptional manipulation done by Tim and Anita. The characters always seemed alive and distinct from each other, and the live voices were very good. The design of the puppets and sets were nicely integrated. It was interesting to compare this production to the performance of Herbert Lange's at last month's meeting. We had two very enjoyable and equally successful shows, with the Swazzle show looking very slick and polished compared to Herbert's almost rustic and very old fashioned looking puppets and sets; one looking very commercially produced

and the other very home-made, yet both quite enjoyable. After the Swazzle show there were some comments from guild members about the "wordiness" of the show; it was somewhat on the verbal side which was accentuated by being a one scene play, so there was never a change of set, just characters coming in and out of the same drawing room. Another script question that was raised in my mind had to do with the world experience of the audience; the script was a spoof on the standard British detective genre, including a sheep dog who claims to be from Scotland Yard. I had to wonder whether the 3-5 year olds in the audience were familiar enough with those references to get them (or was it even important?) The children, while watching enrapt, did not laugh at most of the mildly satirical jokes that the adults were appreciating, and at one point, a head (a disguise "mask") is ripped off of the large sheep dog revealing the tiny head of the mouse hiding within, and one child burst into tears and had to be taken out of the show (she later returned.) I feel certain that the "scared child" must happen to all performers once in a while, but I

performing partner.

A: Tim Sweeney is the name of the performer with me on Saturday. He has worked with Swazzle since its inception in 2004. Tim is originally from Atlanta (and worked at the Center for Puppetry Arts) but has since made his home in SoCal. Tim is touring with me this summer (last year he was with Patrick, the year before that was with Sean, and in 2004--ME!).

M: How did "Rex and Boots" come about? Who made the puppets, who wrote the script, who directed? What are the creative details?

A: The show details--well, as with all creative endeavors, there are many "parents" That bring it to life. For "Rex and Boots: Super-Sleuths" I wrote the first draft and sent it to Sean and Patrick. They, in turn, gave me notes on the script with suggestions for improvements and I wrote it again (and again, and AGAIN!!). Patrick designed the "look" of the characters and both Sean and Patrick built the show (that year Swazzle also designed "B.A.R.K, the Robot Dog for the Summer Reading Program theme "Paws, Claws, Scales, and Tales"). Sean painted our

awesome background and Patrick painted the side set panels (on an aside here - I LOVE the painting of Uncle Horace Fromage so much that I want to frame it and hang it in my house once the show retires!). As for directing a Swazzle show? That is also collaborative. For the initial season of "Rex and Boots" - Sean and I toured SoCal with the show last summer - Patrick directed the show. During that initial run Sean and I made some tweaks to the show that, hopefully, made it funnier! For this summer tour of "Rex" Sean directed the show. In general I am at all the rehearsals for our new shows (we have two this summer but, I was only able to direct Sean in "The Case of the Elephant Trunk").

M: You live in the Bay Area, but do a lot of your work in Southern California. Tell us about your connection with Southern California, Sean and Patrick (the Johnson brothers, former guild members) and Swazzle. How much time are you in the Bay Area and how much in Southern California?

A: The connection I have with Sean and Patrick (beside friendship :-)) is that the three of us formed Swazzle in 2004. We perform live puppet shows at schools and libraries (at this

time our primary venues are libraries). Usually I spend the bulk of my summer in SoCal but this year has proven to be the exception. Tim and I are spending the entire summer touring the Bay Area. Sean and Patrick are both in SoCal and EACH of them are touring with separate shows. Sean has "The Case of the Elephant Trunk" (written by me and built entirely by Sean). Patrick is touring with "Bugsy Brown, Private Fly" (written and built by Patrick).

M: How can people find out more about Swazzle?

A: For more info on Swazzle, including our complete schedule, pictures of the puppets, behind the scenes videos, and episodes of "The Swazzle Workshop" visit www.swazzle.com. The blogs (Sean, Patrick, and I each have a blog) are accessible from the main page. My blog is Puppet U (<http://swazzle.com/blogs/puppetu.html>).

CALENDAR

NICK BARONE PUPPETS JULY SCHEDULE:

Nick Barone Puppets present, "T-Rex Thunderlizard's Wild West Review" tour of Sonoma County Libraries:
Thursday, July 5, 11:00 am, Sonoma Valley Regional Library, 755 West Napa Street, Sonoma, CA -- Monday, July 9, 2:00 pm, Cloverdale Regional Library, 401 N. Cloverdale Blvd., Cloverdale CA -- Tuesday, July 10, 11:00 am, Sebastopol Regional Library, 7140 Bodega Ave., Sebastopol, CA -- Tuesday, July 10, 2:00 pm, Windsor Regional Library, 9291 Old Redwood Hwy., Bldg. 100, Windsor, CA -- Wednesday, July 11, 11:00 am, Santa Rosa Central Library, Third & E

Guild member Nina Dees gave the guild a great idea along with a puppet DVD.

Nina had a Paul Mesner performance DVD that she donated to the guild library. Her thought? She was done watching it for now, and by donating it she doesn't have to store it, others get the chance to watch it, and if she ever wants to see it again, she can check it out from the library at a later date!

WHAT A GREAT IDEA! THANKS, NINA.

Do you have a puppet book or video that you want to donate? Get it off your shelves and share it, and you can always check it out again when you need it. It's generous and it's recycling.

Guild members have been taking advantage of our guild library by borrowing books and DVDs at the guild meeting. Borrow one, read or watch it, and write a review for the library archive and/or guild newsletter.

Streets, Santa Rosa, CA -- Wednesday, July 11, 2:00 pm, Healdsburg Regional Library, Piper & Center Streets, Healdsburg, CA -- Thursday, July 12, 11:00 am, Rincon Valley Library, 6959 Montecito Blvd., Santa Rosa, CA -- Thursday, July 12, 2:00 pm, Northwest Santa Rosa Library, 150 Coddington Center, Santa Rosa, CA -- Wednesday, July 18, 11:00 am, Guerneville Regional Library, 14107 Armstrong Woods Road, Guerneville, CA -- Thursday, July 19, 11:00 am, Petaluma Regional Library, 100 Fairgrounds Drive, Petaluma, CA -- Thursday, July 19, 2:00 pm, Rohnert Park-Cotati Regional Library, 6250 Lynne Conde Way, Rohnert Park, CA --- Nick Barone Puppets present, "Tales from the Enchanted Forest", Thursday, July 26, 7:30 pm, Marin County Free Library Fairfax Branch, 2097 Sir Francis Drake Blvd., Fairfax, CA --- Nick Barone Puppets present, "Puss In Boots", Tuesday, July 31, 3:30 pm, Fairfield Cordelia Library, 5050 Business Center Drive, Fairfield, CA --- for more information, visit Nick Barone Puppets at:

<http://puppetbuilder.com/shows/Public.html>

Saturday July 28 & August 25
Caterpillar Puppets 12 noon and 1:30pm, Children's Garden, Yerba Buena Gardens Festival
 Yerba Buena Gardens is located on Mission Street between 3rd & 4th Streets in downtown San Francisco.

CLASSIFIEDS

Veteran Actress seeks puppet designer/puppeteer to collaborate on production of new script, A JOURNEY WITH THE WOMEN MYSTICS. It's a new work based on the tales and poetry of women mystics from Hindu, Bhakti, Sufi and Taoist traditions. Contact: Susan Sturn: suzansturn@sbcglobal.net.

<http://www.ybgf.org/Calendar.html>
<http://www.caterpillarpuppets.com/>

SWAZZLE JULY SCHEDULE:

07/05/07, 2:00 pm: [Rex & Boots Super Sleuths](#), Dixon Library, 230 N. First St., Dixon, CA 95620
 07/10/07, 10:30 am: [Rex & Boots Super Sleuths](#), Royce Library, 207 Mill St., Grass Valley, CA 95945
 07/10/07, 1:00 pm: [Rex & Boots Super Sleuths](#), Madelyn Helling Library, 980 Helling Way, Nevada City, CA 95959
 07/10/07, 2:30 pm: [Rex & Boots Super Sleuths](#), Madelyn Helling Library, 980 Helling Way, Nevada City, CA 95959
 07/11/07, 9:30 am: [Rex & Boots Super Sleuths](#), Napa City-County Library, 580 Coombs St., Napa, CA 94559
 07/11/07, 10:45 am: [Rex & Boots Super Sleuths](#), Napa City-County Library, 580 Coombs St., Napa, CA 94559
 07/11/07, 2:00 pm: [Rex & Boots Super Sleuths](#), Yountville Library, 6548 Yount St., Yountville, CA 94599
 07/12/07, 10:00 am: [Rex & Boots Super Sleuths](#), Calistoga Library, 1108 Myrtle St., Calistoga, CA 94515
 07/12/07, 2:00 pm: [Rex & Boots Super Sleuths](#), American Canyon Library, 3421 Broadway, American Canyon, CA 94503
 07/18/07, 3:00 pm: [Rex & Boots Super Sleuths](#), San Bruno Library, 701 W. Angus, San Bruno, CA 94066
 07/19/07, 3:00 pm: [Rex & Boots Super Sleuths](#), Richmond Library, 325 Civic Center Plaza, Richmond, CA 94804
 07/24/07, 1:00 pm: [Rex & Boots Super Sleuths](#), Frances Albrier Community Center, 2800 Park St., Berkeley, CA 94704
 07/25/07, 10:30 am: [Rex & Boots](#)



Valerie Nelson poses with a new Magical Moonshine Theatre creation. General Mariano Vallejo, larger than life, will appear in the Vallejo and Sonoma 4th of July parades this year to celebrate his 200th birthday. How will he manage two different parades at the same time, you might ask? There are two of these giant puppets, one commissioned for each city's parade!

The puppet stands over 10 feet tall and weighs 25 lbs. His head and much of his clothing is designed to be light and porous so wind can pass through. He also has a built in stand so that during those non-moving parade times the puppeteer inside can set him down and rest, standing inside the body. In addition to the puppeteer inside, there will be a manipulator for each arm.

[Super Sleuths](#), Spring Town Library, 998 Bluebell Dr., Livermore, CA 94551
 07/30/07, 4:00 pm: [Rex & Boots Super Sleuths](#), Santa Clara Library, 2635 Homestead Rd., Santa Clara, CA 95051
 07/30/07, 7:00 pm: [Rex & Boots Super Sleuths](#), Santa Clara Library, 2635 Homestead Rd., Santa Clara, CA 95051

07/31/07, 2:00 pm: [Rex & Boots Super Sleuths](#), Vineland Library, 1450 Blossom Hill Rd., San Jose, CA 95118
 07/31/07, 4:30 pm: [Rex & Boots Super Sleuths](#), Calabazas Library, 1230 Blaney Ave., San Jose, CA 95129
 07/31/07, 7:00 pm: [Rex & Boots Super Sleuths](#), East Palo Alto Library, 2418 University Ave., East Palo Alto, CA 94303

FRATELLO MARIONETTES JULY SCHEDULE:

July 2007 Thursday . July 5,
 "Art of the Puppet" -3:30pm
 Maya Angelou Branch @ 2324 Pock Lane
 Stockton, CA
 (Southeast Stockton)
 Thursday . July 5
 "Art of the Puppet" -6:30pm
 Troke Branch Library @ 502 W.Ben Holt Drive
 Stockton, CA
 (North Stockton)
 Thursday . July 12
 Peter and the Wolf" -3:30pm
 Walnut Creek Library
 1644 N. Broadway
 Walnut Creek, CA
 (East Bay - San Francisco Bay Area)
 Information: 925.646.6775
 Monday . July 16
 Fresno, CA
 Tuesday . July 24
 "Peter and the Wolf" -7pm
 San Carlos Library @ 610 Elm Street
 San Carlos, CA
 (6 Miles South of San Mateo)
 Thursday . July 26
 "Vaudeville Follies" -3:30pm
 Chico Library @ 1108 Sherman Avenue
 Chico, CA
 (90 miles North of Sacramento)
 Friday . July 27
 "Vaudeville Follies" -3:30 pm
 Rancho Cordova Library @ 9845 Folsom Blvd

Sacramento, CA
 (Sacramento / Rancho Cordova)
 Tuesday . July 31
 "Vaudeville Follies" -4 pm
 Martin Luther King, Jr. Library @
 7340-24th Street
 Sacramento, CA
 (Sacramento / South of Florin Road
 between I-5 and HWY-99)
<http://www.fratello.com/index.htm>

NATIONAL FESTIVAL OF PUPPETRY:

ROCK WITH THE PUPPET RAMPAGE! IF YOU DARE!

July 17-22, 2007
 St. Paul, Minnesota
Performances by:
 Frogtown Mountain Puppeteers (Maine): The Legend of Banana Kid
 Teatro Tinglado (Mexico): Troka the Powerful
 Chinese Theatre Works (New York): Chinese Opera to Go
 Leonidas Kassapidis (Greece): The Metamorphosis of Karaghiosis
 Ulrike Quade (Netherlands): Me Too - A Sideshow
 Kahn, Novak & Provost (New York): Adventures of Charcoal Boy
[Michael & Valerie Nelson's Little Blue Moon Theatre \(SFBAPGuild Members!\)](#)
 OVER 30 LIVE PERFORMANCES & 12 FILMS, OVER 70 WORKSHOPS, 3 EXHIBITS & THE PUPPETRY STORE
 Late night events will have alcohol available.
 Visit www.puppetrampage2007.org right now!

**PuppetFest MidWest
 July 10 - July 15, 2007 at
 North Central Missouri College &
 Grundy County Jewett Norris
 Library
 Trenton, Missouri**

**Fandango Puppets;
 Make Them Yourself
 (sort of)**

The on-line movie ticket vendor, Fandango, has popularized or re-popularized the paper bag puppet. Guild member Joe Leon of Caterpillar Puppets sent the following link to the Fandango website where you can digitally play with adding features to a bag image to create a puppet character: <http://games.fandango.com/http://games.fandango.com/>
 From our point of view it would have been better if they had given instructions to actually make a bag puppet, perhaps people will be inspired to make one after playing with the video game version.

PuppetFest MidWest is an independent, annual puppetry festival that is presented, organized and financially supported by puppeteers as a gift to other puppeteers. It is an affordable puppet festival, with an emphasis on showing and teaching the traditional skills of **good puppet theatre**.

Attend the festival, participate in a 4 day in-depth workshop, and treat yourself to world-class puppet performances. The intimate setting workshops and performances will be lead by some of the top puppeteers working today.
<http://www.puppetfestival.org/>



San Francisco Bay Area Puppeteers Guild
PO Box 2296
Yountville, CA 94599



ROCK WITH THE PUPPET RAMPAGE! IF YOU DARE!

July 17-22, 2007

St. Paul, Minnesota

<http://www.puppetrampage2007.org/>

Register today and guarantee your spot!