

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 2009



In this issue:

- Day of Puppetry at Fairyland Reviews
- From your President
- New Board Officers
- Mug Shots!

- Adventures in Puppetry Continued
- News and Notes
- Calendar
- And Much More!

Butterfly Puppets Take Flight at Fairyland by Lee Armstrong

Colorful butterflies flitted around Fairyland during the Day of Puppetry. Children enjoyed making butterfly puppets, which were simple to construct and use. The design was ingenious. Children colored acetate with markers, precut in the shape of a butterfly. Then a simple criss-crossing of a pipe cleaner shaped the butterfly body. With a finger inserted through the pipe cleaner, the child could make the butterfly "fly" and create colorful shadows as well. This was an original concept by Tia Schmiroff. Tia prepped all the supplies for one hundred butterflies, and headed up the craft table with Elisheva Hart. Other volunteers included Barbara Grillo. A steady stream of families visited the table and walked away with butterfly treasures. A huge thank you to Tia and Elisheva for heading up a very successful puppet making table and thank you to Barbara and others for leading a hand.

Puppet Fair at Oakland's Fairyland Michael Nelson

Sunday, August 30, 2009 - As the puppet festivities continue at Fairyland, I am trying to get at least a little something in the guild newsletter (whose deadline has passed.)

I must admit that our special guest speaker, Bruce Sedley (Sir Sedley to some) was a surprise and a complete delight. Not growing up in the Bay Area, I did not know the TV work of Sedley, but he definitely had crowds of fans come to see him. He was kind enough to take the time to share some of his early puppetry discoveries and revelations with the guild, and by the end he had won over those in the audience who did not previously know his work. He was candid, funny, and brought out some antique puppets and items from 50 years ago that he had constructed or had made for his TV show. He demonstrated his first puppet (a mechanical robot built when he was 14), and an animated thinking cap, complete with tracks and a "train of thought" that ran

around the brim, which all still worked even after sitting idle for decades. Numerous other puppets from the old days were shared, bringing bursts of recognition from the audience as they recognized old friends, and perhaps for the first time, learned how he made them (and out of what piece of toy or kitchen utensil.) The wisdom he sought to pass on to us (the new-comers) was to engage our audience by always looking for ways to interact with the audience, something he managed to do even with the medium of television. At the end of his talk he showed us the original King of Fairyland puppet, whom guild member Kamala Portuges had just given a makeover, donating her many hours in the name of the guild as a thank you for the talk. At the end of his talk he gave everyone a DVD (which I have not had time to explore yet.) It was one of the most delightful presentations the guild had seen, and those that missed it may possibly have an opportunity to see it as Forest Patton videotaped the whole talk.

Hi,

I wanted you to see what I posted to the Vent list as well as what I am putting in my regional news column in Clowning Around Magazine. The meeting was a wonderful treat!! SFBAPG is awesome!!! I am glad I was able to help influence a new member Paul to join. He is going to love what we do!

Nina Dees

Hi Everyone!

I am so excited to tell you at the SF Bay Area Puppetry Guild Day of Puppetry on Sat which was held at Fairyland in Oakland, CA, they had Bruce Sedley. He had a show on TV Channel 2 when I was growing up, where he had his vent figure, King Fuddle as well as many of his other puppets he used on TV. He is now a confessed 84 & flew in from Hong Kong for the celebration. It was actually to celebrate the Talking Storybook which he invented. He said he has not touched his puppets for 50 years! He has been busy with his magnetic key card company which sounded like no small potatoes to me. The figure was recently restored by Images In Motion, a firm that makes TV puppets. The complexion was beautifully flocked so it looked like real skin, and the costume was re-created in the same style as he originally wore. The head and the mechanics was hand carved & was given to him for free originally. Really endearing with real glass eyes. Sir Sedley wore is knight's chain mail and cloak & the king was very kingly in his costuming. A visual treat in terms of "presentation". I have photos but am not sure how to post them. He had his other puppets too and explained how he used them on the show, as well as some of his zany TV inventions, like the "Think-A-Tron" hat with a train track on the brim.

The creativity that Bruce shared with us was very captivating and brought me back to watching him with the same vision I had when I was little. He looked into each child's eye when he spoke & genuinely was happy and gracious upon meeting them. It was very hard to believe he was 84! He went on to show clips of his TV show & gave us all a complimentary CD that was compiled by a local friend that has a music sourcing company (Kaleidosound).

This was an experience to be remembered!

As for me, I did a little walk-around puppetry with Tookiss, my Axtell Bird & arm, allowing the kids to feed him chinese noodles which looks a lot like bird nibbles. I didn't want to miss any of the performances so Tookiss & I watched the shows together reacting as appropriate.

Any of you see Sir Sedley on Channel 2 TV?

From Ernie Fosselius

Dear Guild Officers, Fairyland Staff, and Other Responsible Parties,

Thank you so much for yet another wonderfully enjoyable and inspiring Guild meeting/special event.

It was a thrill to be back in the birthplace of Bay Area puppetry and to be there at the same time as Sir Sedley and King Fuddle was a real nostalgic rush! I think the last time I was there was the last time they were there... decades ago.

The highlight of the day for me was meeting the charming and inspirational Bruce Sedley, who still had that mischievous spark, and ad lib quickness, as he so generously revealed all his puppetry secrets ("Interaction!").

But as he brought out all his puppets and mechanical props and carefully explained their workings, it slowly began to dawn on me. These were more than just very clever props and vintage puppets. I have seen these before. Many years ago...These were deeply familiar icons.

Then when I saw the "Think-A-Tron Hat" it hit me. He was to blame! While I was rotting my brain watching Three Stooges on his TV show, he was cleverly planting creative seeds in my impressionable young mind that would grow into a lifelong calling to make puppets and build mechanical sculptures. I wonder how many other budding artists had been inspired in that same way. And here I thought the whole time I was just passively watching Skipper Sedley and eating Laura Scudders potato chips! So thank you Bruce Sedley, Childhood Hero.

And no offense Sir, but I think I'll always be more impressed with the Think-A-Tron Hat than the electronic card key.

PS - I confess that I was the kid that sent in too many paper clips for the chain mail suit. My apologies also to the Oakland Post Office.

FROM YOUR (STARTLED NEW) PRESIDENT

At today's Board Meeting, the SFBAPG Board took the risk of consulting the bylaws (at Michael Nelson's behest) and discovered that Michael is term-limited out of the Presidency, having served three years - most nobly and effectively, we should add.

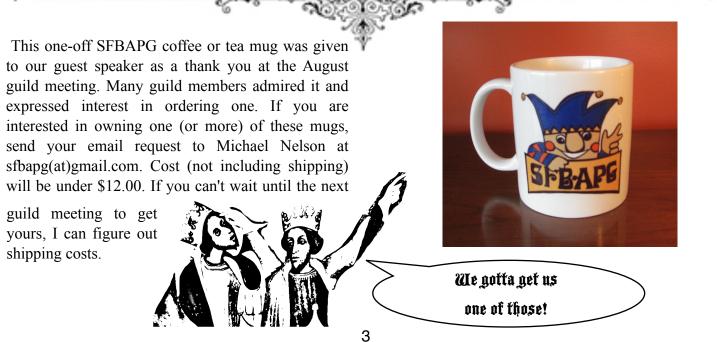
After much debate, it was determined that I, among all present, had the fewest excuses to decline to serve, and so I'm it. My bad angel is muttering, "I needed this?!" But my good angel is thrilled.

I have trepidations. Though having done puppetry since 1969, it's only recently that I've entered the puppetry "field," migrating from the world of ensemble theatre, as well as the mainstream variety. But I'm a pretty fast learner; I can move vehemently through an agenda; and with the support of our new VP Lee Armstrong as well as Michael and our very gung-ho Board, I'll do my best.

Our main challenge is to continue and expand the advances over the past couple of years, including the evolution of programming, workshops, our lending library and education initiatives; and through those to increase both the number and variety of our membership. My own particular gig is more experimental adult work, and I'd like very much to form links with other Bay Area artists bridging the fields of theatre & puppetry. But I'm also very much attracted by the "big tent" of American puppetry today, bringing a huge range of values, temperaments, styles & tastes together through a love of the art itself. As varied as we are, we all have a lot to contribute to one another through our work and our presence.

Right now I'm in the intense throes of The Tempest, opening Sept. 18 (see Calendar), but as soon as Prospero has drowned his book, we'll be moving ahead on all fronts. Meantime, I'd like very much to hear from you: your thoughts about what the Guild is doing, what you'd like to see us doing, what would serve you personally, confidential information on where the bodies are buried - whatever might help us move forward. And if I don't hear from you, well, you'll probably hear from me.

Peace & joy in the art of bringing strange little creatures to life-Conrad Bishop



NEW BOARD OFFICERS

In accordance with the bylaws, new board officers were elected at the last board meeting. Conrad Bishop agreed to take the leadership role of president with Lee Armstrong assisting him as vice-president. Sharon Clay will continue as secretary, as will Valerie Nelson as treasurer. Michael Nelson has taken on the role of membership officer. We would like to congratulate all of the incoming and continuing officers and also send out a great big Punch THANK YOU! to those who served the last term. Our Guild couldn't run without the dedication of these individuals.

ADVENTURES IN PUPPETRY CONTINUED By: Chase Woolner

Returning to June, 2008 as the school year ended my friends and classmates prepared for finals and graduation while I skipped out early and attended the O'Neill National Puppetry Conference in Connecticut instead. The O'Neill was really a life changing event in what is disguised as a 2 week summer camp for puppeteers and attracts the who's who of the puppetry world. On one of my first days there I sat at a small table having breakfast with Philip Huber, Jane Henson, Paul Mesner, Jim Rose and Martin P. Robinson discussing Burr Tilstrom. That experience was truly amazing as a puppeteer and native to Chicago, I was surprised I could finish my eggs let alone speak. The best part of breakfast was that I was a part of the conversation and they all appreciated what I contributed. The O'Neill if full of opportunities like this during its 2 week intensive gathering where participants grow by leaps and bounds in many ways. During my time at the O'Neill I studied mechanisms with Jim Kroupa (Eureeka's Castle, Gullah Gullah Island) during the 3-day pre-conference and built a wrist mechanism utilizing his "keep it simple" technique. Jim is a great teacher with loads of fun and interesting stories and his knowledge about his craft is amazing. I have been able to ask him many questions about problems I might have with a puppet I'm designing and he is always is able to provide many different simple approaches to solve whatever issue I may be having. (Editor's note: This is a continuation from last newsletter. Look for the next installment in October)



Don't be sad. An announcement about the next Guild meeting will be in the upcoming newsletter!

2008-2009 SFBAPG Board of Directors and Staff

BOARD Lee Armstrong, Vice President, Librarian, Future Meetings 720 Ladera, Sonoma, CA 95474 707-996-9474 * images(at)vom.com

Conrad Bishop, President, Calendar Editor 502 Pleasant Hill Rd., Sebastapol, CA 95472 707-824-4307 * eye(at)independenteye.org

Sharon Clay, Secretary 925-462-4518 * sharonlclay(at)comcast.net

Mary Decker, E-mail Coordinator, Procedures C. 650-361-1310 * marydeck57(at)sbcglobal.net

Barbara Grillo 510-964-1513 * bgrillo(at)contracosta.edu

Talib Huff, Newsletter Editor 916-484-0606 * tahuff(at)dcn.org

Randal Metz 510-569-3144 * puppetcomp(at)yahoo.com

Valerie Nelson, Treasurer & Guild Roster Box 1258, Vallejo, CA 94590 707-363-4573 * mail(at)magicalmoonshine.org

Michael Nelson, Membership Officer, Box 1258, Vallejo, CA 94590 707-363-4573 * mail(at)magicalmoonshine.org

STAFF Matt Baume, Webmaster 415-688-7679 * mattymatt(at)gmail.com

4

CALENDAR ____

Magical Moonshine Theatre http://www.magicalmoonshine.org>

Performances

Sept. 5-6 Mammoth Lakes Labor Day Arts Festival, Mammoth Lakes, CA

A variety of performances all day Saturday and Sunday. FREE

Little Elephant Has A Ball Monday, Sept. 14, 7:00-8:00 p.m. Hercules Library,109 Civic Dr., Hercules, CA FREE

Little Elephant finds a ball, but Monkey and Zebra are better players and Little Elephant has trouble keeping up. Finally all the animals figure out a fun way to play together. Recommended for ages 2 and up.

Animal Folktales of the Americas Saturday, Sept. 19, 1:00-2:00 p.m. Newark Community Park, Newark, CA FREE

Animal Folktales of the Americas Sunday, Sept. 27, 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. At Sacramento World Music and Dance Festival, Eagle Theatre, Old Sacramento. More info at http://www.sacramentoworldfestival.com

Performances on the Children's Stage Sat, October 3, 1:30pm - 4:30pm at the Hoes Down Festival, Full Belly Farm, County Road 43, Guinda, CA

Last year was our first time at this festival. Valerie and I both were delighted with it and wished we could have taken our son there. It is a really great harvest festival, and we highly recommend it (even apart from the fact that we will be performing there!). Check it out at <http://www.hoesdown.org/ >http://www.hoesdown.org>. Camp overnight and stay the weekend, watch shows, carve pumpkins, tour gardens, listen to music, eat good food, take workshops on various gardening activities!



Little Blue Moon Theatre (Michael and Valerie Nelson)

The Barbie Diaries: A Barbie Puppet Theater Thursday, Sept. 17, 5:00-10:00 p.m. at the Altered Barbie Festival: Barbie's 50th Birthday, Shotwell 50 Studios: 50 Shotwell between 14th & 15th St., San Francisco, Ca.

Happy 50th Birthday Barbie ARTISTS RECEPTION!! Come dressed as your favorite Birthday Barbie or Ken and meet the artists who have resurrected and reinvented Ken and Barbie into art and performance.

The Barbie Diaries: A Barbie Puppet Theater Thursday, Oct. 1, 7:30-8:30 p.m. at the Altered Barbie Festival, Shotwell 50 Studios: 50 Shotwell between 14th & 15th St., San Francisco, Ca.

Offers an intimate view from a dolls perspective, humorous, yet with more depth than you might expect from a blond, plastic, fashion icon.



Storybook Puppet Theater Children's Fairyland - Oakland Sept. 5-6, 12-13, 19-20, 26-27 11am & 2pm & 4pm

Babes In Toyland. Good and evil will clash in this tale of love, magic and the best wishes of the heart. Join your favorite residents of Mother Goose Land as they join forces to help the Master Toymaker produce toys for the holidays. Puppets and script by Randal Metz.



The Tempest - The Independent Eye Sept. 18-19, 24-27, Oct. 1-4, 8-11, 15-18 Thur-Sat, 8:00; Sun 2:00 p.m.

Shakespeare's classic comedy/drama of redemption, newly envisioned as a live theatrical animation with puppets, masks, live actors, and a rich audio score. Created by The Independent Eye in collaboration with Sonoma County Repertory Theater.

Sonoma County Repertory Theater 115 North Main St., Sebastopol, CA

Reservations: <http://the-rep.com>

Directed and designed by Conrad Bishop, music by Elizabeth Fuller. Featuring Bishop, Anthony Abate, Jessica Bauman, Benjamin Stowe, and Jan Freifeld as the actor/animators of Shakespeare's unforgettable panoply of magician, spirits, slaves, courtiers and lovers.

Visit our weekly weblog - <http:// www.independenteye.org/news/index.html> - for photos, storyboards, director's notes, and on-going reports on the evolution of this work.

→·<³

Meet the Samsas

Boxcar Playhouse, 505 Natoma, San Francisco, CA

October 12, 14-17, 21-24

8pm Wed-Sat, 10pm Fri-Sat

Adult, Experimental

Meet the Samsas is the story of the family from Kafka's "The Metamorphosis" as if they are stuck in their own reality television show. When the oldest son transforms into a monstrous bug, the cameras close in to capture every moment and ratings go through the roof. Told with string puppets and video.

Visit boxcartheatre.org. for more information. We may be able to get a special discount of \$12 per ticket, if we have enough people for a group rate. Boxcar Theater is completely booked for the Saturdays October 17th and 24th. SB Parks has offered to give a question and answer in addition to an 8 pm show on a night other than Sat. If you are interested, contact Lee Armstrong, images(at)vom.com, 707 738-5906, and we'll try to find a date that works for the most.



Fox Hunts and Freedom Fighters: Korean and Western Women in Seoul 1894-1920 by Chan Park and Kathy Foley (For a description, see below in News and Notes) Sept. 14-15 8pm

NOHspace 2840 Mariposa St. SF, CA 415-621-7978 (see also www.theatreofyugen.org)

BIRTHDAY SHOUT-DUT!

Elisheva Hart (once known to very old timers as Betty Polus) had her 70th birthday in August. Congratulations Elisheva!!!

OVERHEARD AT THE GUILD MEETING

As we went around the gathering of guild members and guests and each introduced ourselves, a guest to the meeting (who is now a new member) told about his childhood interest in puppetry, which temporarily faded when he became a teenager and "too cool" for puppetry. Immediately following his self-introduction came junior member Eli Nash who announced, "I'm Eli Nash and I'm not too cool for puppets," winning happy approval in the form of laughter and applause. Keep an eye on Eli, one of the guild's coolest members and a regular at our guild events! Eli has wonderful puppetry mentors in Joe and Ronna Leon of Caterpillar Puppets, who are long time guild members and great folks that we can only hope to see more often. Cudos to the Leons for encouraging puppetry in the new generation.

GUILD WEBSITE AT TOP OF GOOGLE

SEARCHES: GET LISTED AND GET WORK! Part of the goal of our guild is to promote the art of puppetry in the Bay Area and environs. HOW CAN YOU, AN ORDINARY GUILD MEMBER HELP PROMOTE PUPPETRY? It's easy and fun, and you are probably already doing a lot without even trying! Being a part of

the guild is an excellent step. Going to see puppet shows and attending puppet events shows your support to the performer, the presenter and to the audience. Helping the professional and semi-professional puppeteers and builders in the guild to get work is also an excellent way to help support puppetry and your fellow guild members. Recommend your fellow guild members when someone in your community asks you about a company or puppeteer or puppet maker. Use your connection to the guild to bring people together, to the benefit of all concerned. HOW CAN YOU KNOW WHO IN THE GUILD IS OFFERING PUPPETRY SERVICES? CHECK OUT THE GUILD MEMBER SERVICES SECTION OF THE GUILD WEBSITE AT www.sfbapg.org/members.htm. There you will find the listing of guild members offering shows, puppet building and other puppet services. Refer people to this page to connect with puppetry in the Bay Area and beyond. DO YOU OFFER SERVICES BUT AREN'T LISTED

ON THE GUILD PAGE? A Google search for "San Francisco Puppetry" puts the guild website, sfbapg.org, at the top of the list. Google "bay area puppetry" and we are at the top as well. Search on "puppet shows bay area" and the guild is 4th on the list. DO YOU BELONG ON THE LIST? Send your info to sfbapg(at)gmail.com and get listed at the top!

PUPPET-STORYTELLING PERFORMANCE

Fox Hunts and Freedom Fighters: Korean and Western Women in Seoul 1894-1920

by Chan Park and Kathy Foley

Korean pansori story singing, porcelain dolls and powerful acting bring to life tales of remarkable women: martyred Queens and Victorian women who defied gender to help change their world, and a straight-laced missionary trying to curb her radical student as she called for national independence at the first Korean school for girls. Cross-cultural encounters fuse Korean and American arts in this new work from the renowned pansori singer Chan Park and puppeteer-director Kathy Foley.

Noted Englishwoman geographer Isabella Bird came to Seoul as Korean Queen Min struggled with Japanese and Western colonialism as the "hermit kingdom" was forced to open to Western trade and missions. The women's friendship grew even as a plot for the assassination of the queen, "Operation Foxhunt," was being hatched. The history of early Korean-Western exchange is seen in the lives of two women who redefined what it meant to be female.

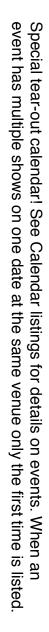
Exploratory encounters deepened in the early twentieth century. American missionary Jean Walters taught the fiery Yu Kwan Sun, a female revolutionary who lived to oust the Japanese. While the mission lady saw her school, Ehwa, as a site to "uplift Korean womenhood, Yu Kwan Sun saw it as the site to organize and agitate for change. Korea's "new woman" sparked the flame that was the 1919 Independence Movement. Christian hymns and the noted pansori of Yu Kwan Sun, intertwine to tell of a young girl whose self-liberation far outstripped her teacher's.

Chan Park performs extensively in the US and around the world. Her unique blending of Korean singingstorytelling (pansori) and her western training in theatre have made her renown. She frequently performs all over the the country and has collaborated with companies in Hawaii, Alaska, California, and Central Asia to create new works. She teaches at Ohio State University. Kathy Foley regularly performs puppetry, mask, and dance work in the Sundanese style of West Java. She is a director (Ramayana, Nicolas Nickleby), actress, and author (Farewell to Manzanar, based on the life of Jean Houston). She is a professor of theatre arts at UCSC. The pair first worked together as graduate students at the University of Hawaii and bring their voices together to animate the words and actions of women whose lives intertwined on the cusp of modernity.

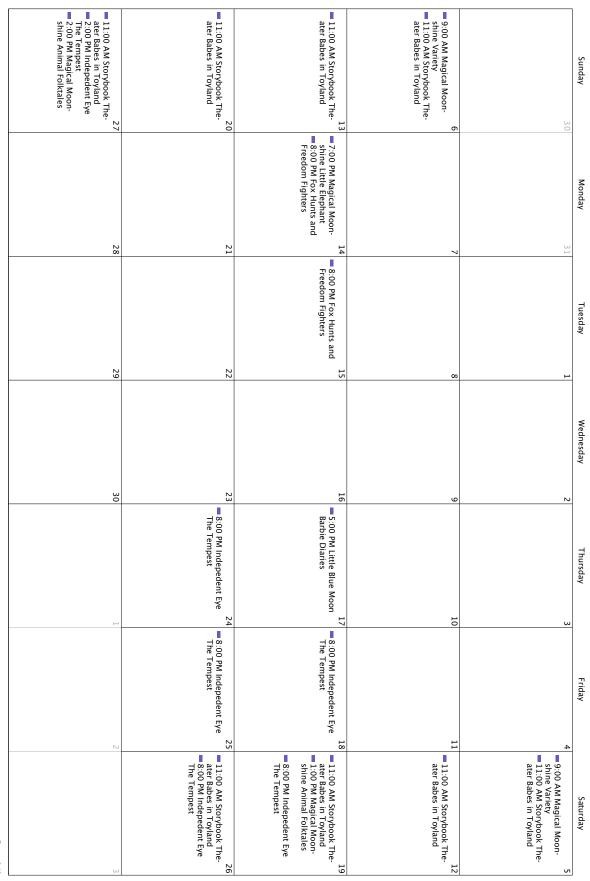
A PUPPETEER FRIEND IN NEED

I received this from Jerry Layne and wanted to pass it on to Puptcrit... Steve Axtell

I'm writing to inform you of a tragic situation regarding my good friend, puppeteer and performer, Steve Meltzer. Steve has been running the Santa Monica Puppetry Center for ten years. He has done thousands of marionette and vent shows, and hosted Paul Winchell's last public performance there. At the con-VENT-ion, he has lectured, and been a dealer. Steve's love of puppetry, vent, and support of the convention has been a major force in his life. Due to the economy Steve was forced to close the doors to the theatre following his last show on Sunday, August 16th, 2009. Two hours after the closing Steve suffered a stroke, and was found by close friend, Mike Clark. After tests at the hospital, it was determined that Steve had a brain tumor. Two days later surgery was perfomed to remove the tumor, which was then sent for a biopsy. The results were not good. Steve has a Stage 4 Melanoma, which has spread to his lymphatic system. Steve has gotten his speech back haltingly, and his left side is partially paralyzed. He is facing Chemo, and a long and challenging rehab. Throughout this ordeal Steve's outlook and sense of humor is positive, and he has received many visits from friends and members of the Los Angeles Puppetry Guild. I'm letting you know all this because Steve is a great friend and in need of all the support and prayers he can get. If you feel like sending a card, I'm sure it would brighten his day, and strengthen his spirits. You can send it to Steve Meltzer, c/o The Santa Monica Puppetry Center,1014 Broadway, Santa Monica, CA 90401. Thanks!



September 2009



Page 1/1

Bruce Sedley with King Fuddle





San Francisco Bay Area Puppeteers Guild 5137 Robertson Ave.



Guild member Ernie Fosselius poses some queries to Sir Sedley (aka Bruce Sedley) who is a legend of early Bay Area TV and the manipulator of the Kind of Fairyland. Under his cape Sir Sedley is wearing a vest of chain mail made from paper clips individually sent in to KTVU by his young viewers...he claimed the vest weighed more than 15 pounds. Those of us who lifted it later thought it must be quite a bit more than 15 lbs.



Magical Moonshine Theater's delightful Preschool Show



For guild member Ron Johnson's birthday, his wife Barbara made a most wonderful birthday cake with our guild mascot on the top. In spite of how beautiful it was, we cut into it and ate it with relish!

Thanks to Lee Armstrong for the photos from Fairyland!



In his charming presentation to guild members, Bruce Sedley demonstrates his first puppet, a robot and robot dog.