



The official newsletter of
San Francisco Bay Area Puppeteers' Guild
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SFBAPG is a charter guild of the Puppeteers of America, Inc., a non-profit, tax exempt organization

July 2014



Making Muppet style TV puppets with Mary Nagler at the guild workshop and meeting, May 31. Read on for more!

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Puppet Building Workshop a Resounding Success!

Lee Armstrong

Mary Nagler led an enthusiastic group of people for her puppet building workshop on May 31, at the Images In Motion studio in Sonoma. Mary came up with a nicely designed mouth and rod puppet and assembled kits, so that each participant would have all the ingredients to make a working puppet. Piles of brightly colored, pre-stitched bodies, rows of arms, piles of hands and mouths gave lots of selection possibilities.

The workshop was well attended with 16 participants paying for kits and instruction. The group was diverse, from teens to grandfathers and from beginning to professional puppeteers. Some traveled in from Modesto, Sacramento and San Jose. The 3 hour workshop moved quickly, as Mary shared techniques which she has learned over the course of twenty five+ years in the business.

"Wish it could be longer," was the overriding comment of the day. Many of these puppets had their debuts in the afternoon workshop "TV Puppets" given by Images In Motion.

"I was delighted by the great turnout and several have kept in touch after the workshop, posing puppet related questions. Many asked for more "hands-on" building workshops. I'm thinking of a foam-carving one, a shadow and a tabletop." Let's hope Mary does more in the puppet building series. There certainly is interest!



Puppeteers learn how to make a puppet with Mary Nagler at the guild sponsored puppet making workshop May 31 in Sonoma.



Dear Lee & Kamela

Thank you so much for the wonderful TV Puppet Workshop that you presented at our May Guild meeting. We greatly appreciated you donating the workshop to the Guild. Thanks for the use of the studio and the great job planning and organizing the day. It was fun to be at your studio and home again. Thanks for your kind hospitality. Elisheva Hart

A FEW MEMORIES OF THE MEMORIALS

by Elisheva Hart

In the evening of June 14 at Children's Fairyland in Oakland, Randal Metz and many helpers held a double memorial service for Lewis Mahlmann, who was Director of Fairyland's Puppet Theater for almost 40 years, and his life partner David Jones, who authored many puppet plays performed there. They passed away last March within 2 weeks of each other.



Fragments from the sharing time, held in Aesop's Theater:

- Fairyland, a place of Gentle Excitement.
- Fairyland and Faith are listed together in the dictionary.
- Lewis and David had faith in children that they would understand Symphony Music! Opera!
- Fairyland, within a necklace of lights (around Lake Merritt).
- When times were tight and staffing was slight, Lewis would fill in as the park train engineer.
- One of Lewis' Lilliputian Players adult shows was 'Psychopath: the road which ran up the hill to the Bates Motel.'

We emerged from Aesop's Theater to the amazing sight and sound of a cafeteria table totally full of flaming tea candles flickering inside clear plastic old fashioned glasses, mirrored in the 1/4 inches of water covering the bottom of each cup. Gently and reverently, our Irish harpist led us in a candle light procession under the full-ish moon back through Fairyland to the Storybook Puppet Theater. Gently and reverently the candles were placed upon the audience benches from front to rear, covering them all. Enchantment! a spirit audience twinkling in homage to its passed Puppet Master and Director plus one of its Play Authors. An awestricken attendee said, "This is magical. It looks like....well.... FAIRYLAND!"

Some traditions believe that the full moon is the perfect and appropriate time for Ending, and Releasing. Which we did. Farewell.

A STARTLING DISCOVERY!

by Elisheva Hart

The children's picture book, "ELIZABITE Adventures of a Carnivorous Plant" could have been the inspiration for Audrey II of "Little Shop of Horrors!" The author? H. A. Rey, who wrote and illustrated the "Curious George" books with his wife, Margaret. "Elizabite" was published in 1942, a full 18 years before the first "Little Shop of Horrors" was released, a black comedy, low budget (\$30,000) film, directed by Roger Corman. It was followed in 1982 by a stage play of the same name, and an American rock musical comedy remake of the film in 1986, directed by Frank Oz.

Many bits (or bites) of this picture book are reminiscent of both the original "Curious George" story (published in 1942) and of Audrey II's misadventures. Elizabite, escalates, progressing from devouring frankfurters, catching a Scotty dog by its tail, nibbling the maid and subsequently is surrounded by barbed wire and her "flytrap" taped shut only to struggle free and half swallow a burglar. She is banished-just like George in his first book-to the zoo and, as the book says, "Here ends the story." A red curtain closes over her cage.

"Little Shop of Horrors" is quite a favorite play on the amateur circuit" community centers, high schools, and community colleges, etc. It frequently provides work for a local puppeteer to build the Audrey plant puppets needed for this comedy. In fact, some clever puppeteers build them rent them out and train the manipulators!

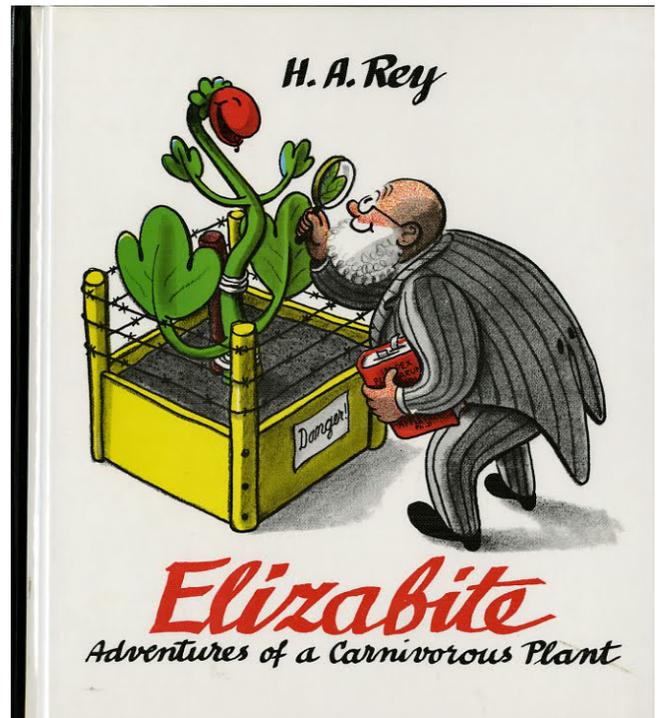
The book, "Elizabite" came to my attention in the children's selection of my local Sonoma County Library under E for picture books. It is also listed on Amazon.

A CUTTING EDGE TIP!

from Elisheva Hart

At a recent art workshop I was asked if I knew how to cut duct/duck tape in a straight line without the tape clogging up scissor blades or wadding up. I had just discovered that an exacto knife does the trick. It works both if the tape is lying smooth side down on an old magazine or a cutting board. It also works when the tape is already wound around or (purposely) stuck to something. I'm not sure what technique robbers use!

ADVICE WANTED from anyone having experience working with teaching drama, puppetry, storytelling, etc. with groups or even with mainstreamed individuals having developmental disabilities. I work at an organization which offers day services for adults with many different types of disabilities such as autism, Down's syndrome, brain injuries, etc., all in the same class. A real variety of unique individuals for sure. One size suits all certainly does not apply to teaching techniques here!



We offer once-a-week, self-selected classes, for 4 months in a row. Drama is a new class which will begin very soon. There has been a lot of interest by the participants in signing up for it. I have some ideas (of course) using puppetry and storytelling, rhythm and movement as well as "just" drama. I'd really like to hear from you any- successful and not so good-experiences which you have had with any age groups, preschool on up. Also references for books, stories, DVDs , etc. which could be used to instruct me or become useful for us as a group to hear, see, and otherwise experience. Or an intro to someone you know who has also walked this path would also be a blessing.

Thanks for your help. Prayers too. Elisheva Hart [707\) 978-8309](tel:7079788309) ishvahart@yahoo.com 1405 Caulfield Lane # B, Petaluma, Ca 94954

Delights at Portland Puppet Museum

Lee Armstrong

I was visiting friends in Portland, Oregon a few weeks ago. They had planned a jam packed day, with a hike, the Rose Garden, a festival. but they saved the best for last. We hiked up from the river in the Sellwood section of town, turned a corner and there was a beautiful, inviting puppet museum, with Indonesian rod puppets beckoning from the window. The interior was overflowing with puppets, including rare early puppets of Albrecht Roser - and there was Steve Overton to greet our party! I knew Steve when he and Martin Richmond ran the Olde World Puppet Theatre out of their studio in Pacifica. In the '80's, they were Macy's puppet company for 11 Bay Area stores, toured extensively, did TV appearances and were recognized for their beautifully crafted marionettes incorporating jewel-like colors. In 1992 Steve and Martin moved to Portland.

Steve showed me around "Ping Pong's Pint Size Puppet Museum" filled with puppets, the videos they have produced, and a stage set for performance. Then, he offered our little group a peek at



Early Albrecht Roser hand puppets.



Pong's Pint Size Puppet Museum.

his house. What an amazing opportunity. Inside were rare puppets by American masters. Downstairs were racks of beautiful marionettes, build by Steve and Martin during a career that spans over thirty years.

Steve sends his good wishes to the SF Guild. For more information on their work, go to <http://www.puppetmuseum.com/>. They also have their DVDs for sale at the site. The Guild library has a DVD of their "Witch Key" a renaissance marionette fantasy, which I'll bring to the next Guild meeting. I highly recommend a visit to "Ping Pong's Pint Size Puppet Museum" if you are in Portland. Thank you Steve and Martin!



Steve Overton and Martin Richmond of Olde World Puppet Theatre.

Where is the Newsletter Calendar)and how can you help?)

Your guild is looking to make the guild calendar more dynamic, more useful and of better service to our membership. We have been working on reviving and updating the calendar on the guild website. In summer months there are too many listings to run them all in print so we are looking to have an online resource where you can find out what is going on near you. As you can see now, Magical Moonshine listings dominate the calendar. This is for 2 reasons; one is that I, your calendar and newsletter person, also am Magical Moonshine Theatre, so am using our listings as what we hope will be the start of a comprehensive listing of member shows. The other reason is that MMTheatre uses Google calendars on our website, and the guild also is using Google calendars, so it is much simpler to transfer over the listings. In addition to listings in our guild calendar, we are also looking to list links below the guild calendar to members' calendar webpages.



Ronna Leon writes: "Hi, In SF for an event and saw these music boxes with Lotte Reiniger art at Cliff's Hardware on Castro." Not sure who Lotte Reiniger is? Time for some shadow puppet research, then! It's worth the journey.

So here is how you can help with our new calendar efforts:

1. If you are a performing group that has a calendar page on your website or online, please send us the link so that we may include it on the guild calendar page. This is a perk of membership. Send it to sfbapgcalendar@gmail.com.
2. If you use Google calendar for your performance listings, and if you share your performance calendar with the guild, we can easily import your events to the guild calendar. Again, let us know at the same email address above.
3. If you hear of a show with puppets, let us know by emailing the info to sfbapgcalendar@gmail.com. This is especially useful for special shows that are not listed in our usual member calendars, such as when Berkeley Rep has puppets in a production, or Leshar Center for the Arts in Walnut Creek is hosting a live show of Sesame Street puppeteer Leslie Carrara-Rudolph performing on July 19 (thanks to Joe and Ronna Leon for letting us know about this special event...it's on the calendar now--see below for more details.)
4. Let us know your ideas about how the calendar can better serve you and puppetry. We are trying to find what works, both in terms of the ideal calendar, and in terms of volunteer-person power and what we can ask and expect from our helpful members. Send your ideas and suggestions to sfbapgcalendar@gmail.com. Our challenges all have to do with information sharing; how do we get the listings, how do we get them listed, and how do we get them to those who want to know about the shows and workshops?

Thanks, Michael Nelson, Newsletter and Calendar (for the moment)

Special Calendar Listings (for other listings, check the guild webpage calendar at <http://www.sfbapg.org/events/calendar/>):

Our next Guild Meeting is Saturday, August 23, after the Annual Fairyland Puppet Fair closes for the night. Our main event, "The Magic Teakettle"-an ancient Japanese fable- will be performed with hand puppets by The Puppet Company. Puppeteer Randal Metz, inspired by a script (circa the 1950's) by Lettie Connell Schubert, has adapted it to his own lively style. It features a traditional raccoon-like animal called a "tanuki" which shape-shifts into a Magic Tea Kettle!

This brand new version of "The Magic Teakettle" is the combined efforts of Randal of Fairyland and Annie Wong, an animation student who researched the visual development and scenery for the show. Together they built the heads.

8th Annual Chevron Family Theatre Festival

Bring your family for a fun-filled day of affordable world-class family entertainment at the 8th Annual Chevron Family Theatre Festival to be held **Saturday, July 19 from 10 a.m.-4 p.m.** at the **Leshar Center for the Arts in Walnut Creek.**

Ticketed performances include: **The World Famous Popovich Comedy Pet Theater**, a family-oriented blend of the unique comedy and juggling skills of Gregory Popovich, and the extraordinary talents of his performing pets. Each of the show's animals were once strays, rescued from animal shelters. Now, they love to show off onstage - by performing a variety of stunts and skits!

Also performing are: **Leslie Carrara-Rudolph** a Sesame Street puppeteer, **Fantasy Forum Actors Ensemble** performing *Cinderella*, **Pushcart Players** performing *Little Red Riding Hood and Other Stories*, and **Alex Ramon Magic!** Tickets are just \$5 for each performance.

News From Conrad Bishop, Independent Eye-

The Independent Eye's Elizabeth Fuller and Conrad Bishop will be traveling east to present a performance & concert reading based on their memoir CO-CREATION: FIFTY YEARS IN THE MAKING at the Ko Festival of Performance in Amherst, MA, July 25-27, and a workshop, "Shape-shifting Your Story" July 28-Aug. 2. They'll also present their play GIFTS for house concerts in Bloomsburg, PA, Holyoke, MA, and Goshen, IN.



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