



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

October 2014



Elizabeth Leonard's "The Kraken Bell Brothers" will be performed at the next guild meeting on Nov. 1. More info below!

2014-2015 Board of Directors and Officers

President

Olivia Huff
ohuff@dcn.org
916-484-0606

Vice President

Elisheva Hart
ishvahart@yahoo.com
707-978-8309

Treasurer

Mary Nagler
mary.nagler@gmail.com
707 303 0093

Membership Officer

Camilla Henneman
camhenneman@gmail.com
831-359-9761

Secretary

Judy Roberto
judy.roberto@sanjoseca.gov
Lex Rudd
lex@alexisrudd.com
626-224-8578

Tom Crystle

papatomcry@gmail.com
707-359-9761

Gregory Hayes

gregoryhayes@gmail.com
707-874-8378

Newsletter

Michael Nelson
mail@magicalmoonshine.org

Non Board Positions

Librarian

Lee Armstrong
images@vom.com
707-996-9474

Inside this issue...

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- ◆ Guild history: Earthquakes

Looking for the guild calendar? Check out the guild website:
<http://www.sfbapg.org/events/calendar/>

Greetings! Mark your calendars for the Fall SFBAPG gathering, Nov. 1st!

We are trying out a new venue in Pleasant Hill, which is more central to the bulk of us. The address is: 1948 Oak Park Blvd. Pleasant Hill, CA 94523. (Close to Bart) The meeting will start at 4:00 and run 'til 7:30. We will have a pot-luck, so bring your favorite dish and your left over Halloween candy!

Elizabeth Leonard, graphic artist/puppeteer and new member (!) will present her new show: The Kraken Bell Brothers, followed by a talk back in which we can ask questions and learn about her process. The puppets are 2D, beautifully illustrated and the Kraken is really scary!

Following, will be a forum discussion. Select members who run Puppet businesses will briefly share from their knowledge and experience regarding: contracts, dealing with clients, advertising, touring, show development and making a profit! What do you want to know?

We are also trying something new: "Mentor Magic!" It will be similar to the Round robin that starts each session of the O'Neill Puppetry conference, but with a twist. People share their ideas and enlist participants and mentors to talk about or work on their next step. If you don't have any particular thing to work on you can tag onto another's idea, of interest to you and see where it goes!

From Elisheva : A CREEPY SHOUT OUT! Tis approaching the season to conjure up ghosties and ghoulies and things that go BUMP in the night! The end of October signals the time when the veil between this World and Other Worlds is gossamer thin. SO.....for the Puppet Display at our November 1st Guild meeting, strut your most fabulous Fantasy Creations. Along with Halloween Characters we welcome dragons, skeletons, krakens, aliens, faeries, wizards, elves, etc, and those amazing beings who have no names.

Plus, as usual, any puppet you want to show n' tell is welcome, as opposed to just displaying it. Please let Elisheva know ishvahart@yahoo.com so she can schedule it into the program.

BRING YOUR OWN DISPLAY STANDS if you want your puppet displayed in the best possible way. Labeling supplies will be provided or bring your own fancy pre-made ones.

Guild Email Request Generates Some Good Ideas: (Members reply to a middle school teacher looking to use puppets in the classroom.)

Dear Middle School Teacher: I applaud your enthusiasm about using puppets in Middle School. I'm not exactly sure what you mean about using games with puppets and the kids. My first imagining was 2 lines of kids facing each other on the playground, with one of the kids having a green Muppet style puppet dangling from her belt, a "Kapture the Kermit" variation of "Capture the Flag."

I'm not sure what your intention is beyond having a lot of fun, which is enough indeed. The references I have are from 2 books which are basically aimed at using games to teach puppetry skills such as manipulation, voice, etc. Being both a puppeteer and a teacher myself, you don't have to convince me of the educational value of self esteem and practical skills such as measuring, etc. to be gained through puppetry.



Our next meeting will be at the Diablo Theater Company home facility at 1948 Oak Park Blvd., Pleasant Hill, CA.



At the meeting, graphic artist and puppeteer Elizabeth Leonard will present her new show.



PUPPETS: GREAT IN THE CLASSROOM

"Theater Games for the Classroom, A Teacher's Handbook" by Viola Spolin, Dewey Decimal 371.399 is a great book to use.

She wrote the standard "bible" which began the whole Improv(isational) Theater Movement years ago, which she refined specifically for teachers in this book. In fact, Chapter 13 is entitled PUPPETRY. It is basically about teaching the students how to use/manipulate their own bodies like they would a puppet's body. And getting puppeteers to walk like-a duck for instance-is great preparation to getting their puppet to do so. You might have a student think of a character and then

walk like it, while the others guess what it is, then show it as a puppet. I suggest that you check out the book from the library and see what you can get from it. (The book was written several years ago and while the references to puppetry books in the Bibliography are good, there are many more written since that publishing date.)

This next book can work "hand in glove" (a puppeteer's joke-in England hand puppets are called glove puppets) with Viola's book. It is about the handling of puppets. "Making Puppets Come Alive A Method of learning and teaching hand puppetry" by Larry Engler and Carol Fijan. It also is available in libraries, I'm referencing my own copy so don't have the Dewey Decimal number. Both are owned by the Sonoma County Library System for instance so you should easily obtain and peruse them. This book literally has dozens and dozens of photographs which clearly instruct in the ways of manipulating puppets. Chapter 12 and 13 have many suggestions for improvisations with puppets, which could be written down and put into a hat to have the participants draw and enact. You might have 2 or more different kids do the same scenario, their own way.

I have noticed that by grade 3 most boys are over what I call the "fuzzy puppet syndrome" -at least publically- (girls usually are ok with this a few more grades.) One method of puppetry which is technical and therefore not included in the above guy prejudice is shadow puppetry done on the overhead projector. In this day of power point presentations, maybe your school has one gathering dust in a closet. I call it-in terms of the kids- INSTANT ANIMATION. You can easily layer things on it, like landscapes (ground, trees, mountains) some made from colored scraps of plastic, some from paper, translucent and solid, so forth. Guessing games could be played-what have we added/removed from this picture for instance. Or challenges like "you have 5 minutes to create something-not an umbrella or roof-to keep rain off the petunias."

Here is a storyteller's game, "AND THEN..." which might be adapted to the puppets one has: collect a container full of small objects. Kids can help find or bring some. Someone begins a story with picking one object and narrates, "Once upon a time there was a pencil who lost it's eraser. The pencil decided to look around the yard to find its missing part AND THEN"- (the next person grabs something from the container to continue the saga.) Place objects on a tray in the center as they are used. You need to set ground rules on talking too long, possibly 2 sentences. You can vary the catch phrase another time of course to "OH NO!" etc. If someone is really shy, they can say a very few words or manipulate the object without words. Another structure is to hand each person X number of items at the beginning. The story can go around the circle (either continuously or reversing now and then) or popcorn style where they randomly jump in-this might be chaotic to the max though!

Hopefully this will be of use, please keep in touch with our San Francisco Bay Area Puppeteers Guild about your experiences! Thank you again for involving puppets and kids in your classroom. All my best wishes,
Elisheva Hart

Puppet Games with 5th-8th graders: Using blank faced "anything " hand puppets. (This was done at a Summer camp with 5th -8th graders)

I have done the following. There are three paper bags with little strips of paper in them. One holds and is marked "Characters," one holds and is marked "Actions," and the last holds and is marked "Attributes." See attached lists. In the first session we pick and perform for the group depicting a particular character, while the others guess. The person performing can vocalize but not say, "I am ..." They are encouraged to show it through their body language, bearing and actions.

The next session they perform an attribute and the third session show their puppet doing an action. Both done nonverbally, then verbally.

Then it really gets fun when they have to pick something from each bag, and show a character with a particular attribute doing an action. There are many really funny combinations!

From there they move into working in groups making up their own Characters, decorating the anything puppets for their parts and setting up their own situations and emotions.

This is done over a 5 day session. Last day we perform what we have learned!

Cheers!

Mary Nagler

Mary Nagler Helps Students Make Huge Puppet by Mary Nagler

Production: She Kills Monsters, By Qui Nguyen
Sonoma State University March 2014

In the March 2014 newsletter was an article about my work teaching Theater Arts students foam fabrication and coatings at SSU. The task was to build "Tiamat" the Evil 5 headed Dragon and a "Gelatinous Cube," from Dungeons and Dragons role playing game fame. The task was a big one, with many extra hours being needed to complete the task. The student designer, Michelle Dokos, worked tirelessly beside me for much of the time and we were supported by three amazing stage techs there at the school, especially Theo Bridant, Technical Director, from whom I learned as much as the students!

It was very satisfying in the end that the large puppets (My largest to date) were a big success! Tiamot took 9 people to animate her. The Gelatinous Cube wiggled and jiggled with one manipulator, absorbing people and leaving their bones on the stage as it departed! I finally have some good pictures to share of the production; so here are a few favorites. The University has rented the puppets to Piedmont High School for their production of "She Kills Monsters," opening Nov. 13th.



Close up of main head Tiamat the Great!



Tiamot teasing Director Paul Draper (for scale)!



Upcoming Guild Puppet Event:

Avenue Q is being performed at the Novato Theater company from Oct. 9- Nov 9, using puppets designed and built by Mary Nagler, a SFBAPG member. Check the SFBAPG Calendar for all available dates, BUT! We have been offered a discount by the company if we can gather 10 + people for a performance. Tickets are \$22.50 (discounted from \$25.00). We are going to go for two dates:

October 11th, a Saturday evening performance, Curtain is at 8:00, OR you can attend a Sunday Matinee, October 26th, show time is at 2:00.

Novato Theater Company is located at 5420C Nave Drive, Novato, Ca

There are nice eateries around if you would like to come early for dinner or after the matinee with friends. Guests are welcome and would be counted in our 10+. Carl Jordon, award winning Director and Choreographer is happy to do a little talk back after the matinee. If you would like to go but don't have funds for the ticket call Mary and let her know. She has some comps and would hate anyone to miss it if they would like to go. :0)! Please contact Mary Nagler ASAP if you are interested in tickets. Call 707 303 0093 Or send ticket price and # of people in your party to: Mary Nagler 1720 Mission Blvd. Santa Rosa, CA 95409. She will meet you outside before the performance and give you your tickets! There are only 100 seats in the house so don't delay! Thank you, hope to see you there!

Here are the other dates in case you can not make the two dates above, but would still like to go. Performances: Thursdays, Oct. 9, 30, and Nov 6 at 7:30 pm, Fridays, Oct. 10, 17, 24, 31 and Nov. 7 at 8:00 pm, Saturdays, Oct. 11, 18, 25, Nov. 1, and 8 at 8:00 pm, Matinees! Sundays, Oct. 12, 19, 26, Nov. 2 and 9 at 2:00 pm
Novato Theater Company is located at 5420C Nave Drive, Novato, Ca



The heroine faces Tiamat in Battle! (photos from article on previous page)



The Glatinous Cube gets ready to absorb a magician!



Mary Nagler and "jaws."

Meet Guild Member Meghann Jordan who does educational puppetry and videos!

Hi! I'm Meghann and my business is called 5000 Puppets. I build custom puppets, mainly used for educational purposes. I am working on a nutrition project and this is my video for my dairy representative, Martin Milk Carton. I worked with my friend Alison Dale because she has experience with stop motion animation and I love to mix mediums! I built the Milk puppet with this idea in mind. I usually stick to a more plushy, hand puppet style. As for the premise of the video, I tend to go with the literal meaning of the lyrics so I made a plush bone to go with the "bones that make you strong" part and cut to the teeth for the "healthy teeth" line. You can check out more of my videos on my YouTube page at youtube.com/5000puppets and I also have a website at 5000puppets.com.
Meghann Jordan
Owner, 5000 Puppets



Watch Meghann's you tube Martin Milk Carton video at <http://youtu.be/P0vDgDuR99U>

A VERY [after]SHOCKING SEISMOGRAPHIC REVELATION & CORRELATION BETWEEN EARTHQUAKES & SFBAPG! by Elisheva

"Thank you for asking about the Big Rumble...we are fine, it was really wild trying to run out of the house while the walls were shaking like really bad B-movie special effects! (Think Punch and Judy!)

Stuff fell down but no big deal.

We didn't get to see the Burning Man film after all."

from an email written by Tom Crystle, dated August 29, 2014. He and Bethmarie live in Sonoma.

At 3:20 a.m., August 24, 2014, a 6.0 or 6.2 (depending on source) magnitude earthquake, epicenter near American Canyon and the Napa-Sonoma-Vallejo area, followed a MERE 7 hours and 20 minutes after the closure of the participation of our Guild in Fairyland's Annual Puppet Fair and SFBAPG meeting.



Puppets teach earthquake preparedness in Long Beach.

In August, 1989, a "fore-shake" in San Francisco spewed our SFBAPG library all over the hall, where it was housed.

Then Librarian-me-had finally resorted and reorganized the books when: at 5:04 p.m. on October 17, 1989, a 6.9 earthquake, epicenter at Loma Prieta, once again spewed the library all over the hall.

A mere 48+ hours before, carloads of Guild members were driving back to the Bay Area from Santa Cruz. They had attended a weekend workshop on October 14 and 15th at the vacation home of Kitty Adams. When Kitty was finally able to contact neighbors (travel to and fro was "impossible" at the time, ditto phone communications) she found out only a few bricks had fallen from the chimney, nothing major. Guild members could easily have been stranded in downtown Santa Cruz (which was trashed) or traveling home/crossing the Bay Bridge if the Big-Enough Quake had upped it's schedule. [Big-Enough as a reply to those who said it was not the Big One.]

Kitty's Aunts built this vacation home in the "Fresno Beach" area, between Santa Cruz and Capitola-a very foggy area which was a treat for those who lived in Fresno b.a.c. (before air conditioning). They adored having to put a sweater on in the summer. The home was a short walk to the ocean. *This well constructed vacation home was built in.....1906!*

POSEIDON, ancient Greek god of the Sea, has an attribute name of EARTH-SHAKER. So, are we in his favor or out? Do we need to take the "Bay" out of our Guild name? Leave it in? Coincidence? or Conspiracy? At least California hasn't fallen into the Sea yet like it was predicted in the 1970's.

CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS (more calendar listings at sfbap<http://www.sfbapg.org/events/g.org/events.htm>)

PUPPET RUCKUS! A Family-friendly, Short-form Puppet Variety Show. Featured Guest: Tony Borders. Sat, October 18 12pm, (doors open at 11:30) General Admission: \$7 Bring your own chair for \$2 discount! Kids 4 and under are FREE! Put on by Infinite Potential Academy, 2301 Longport Court, Elk Grove, Ca
www.facebook.com/PuppetRuckus Puppeteers new and old - JOIN US!! Email eo@ElizabethanDesign.com for more info.



The **scholarship committee** is gearing up to give away money! We are finalizing the guidelines, but here is a heads up. Members in good standing for at least two years are eligible. The scholarship will help pay for registration at a puppet festival or workshop. Deadline is March 1 and recipients will be informed by April 1. Look for more information in future newsletters or email Valerie Nelson at magicalmoonshine@gmail.com for more details.

Stanford: Blind Summit Theatre, Oct 30 – Nov 2, 2014, Bing Concert Hall, Stanford Campus, Stanford, CA , The celebrated British puppetry theater group Blind Summit, which set out in 1997 to subvert and reshape ancient Japanese Bunraku puppetry for contemporary audiences, performs its acclaimed 2011 production, The Table, which was a hit at the prestigious Edinburgh Festival Fringe. It stars a cantankerous two-foot cardboard character named Moses, who lives on a table. He's a funny, if easily distracted, philosopher who wants to tell you an epic tale about God and Moses, life, death, and puppetry. Details: <http://www.sfbapg.org/events/>

~ Participant Registration begins January 2015 ~



puppetfest@uconn.edu

nationalpuppetryfestival2015.com

join us on facebook for updates, volunteer opportunities and more:
Puppeteers of America 2015 National Festival at UConn



San Francisco Bay Area Puppeteers Guild
PO Box 1258
Vallejo, CA 94590