



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

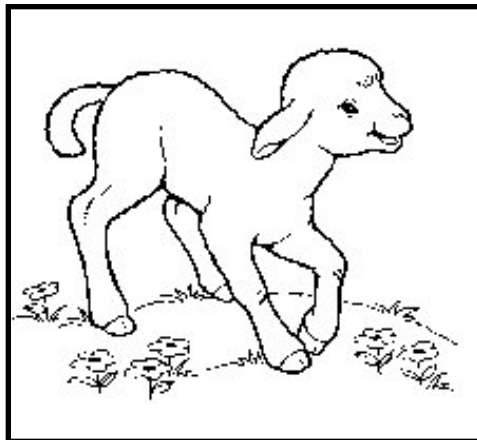
March 2010



March



Meeting!



In this issue:

- Review of the Holiday Meeting
- March Meeting Announcement
- Class Announcement

- Bits and Pieces
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MARCH MEETING

NEXT GUILD MEETING IS MARCH 13TH-- SAVE THE DATE!

We have a lot planned for the March Guild Meeting to be held at Contra Costa College in San Pablo. We have invited students studying early childhood education to join us for an afternoon filled with workshops and performances. See below for a brief outline of what we have planned:

12:30- 1:00 Welcome (and registration if you want to earn .25 unit of credit)

View publicity/advertising table (bring your own information to add!)

View books and cd's from the Guild Library

View puppet display (bring some of your own to add to the display)

1:00 - 1:45 Judy Gregory's performance of PETER AND THE WOLF

Created by the Russian composer Serge Prokofieff in 1936, this musical adventure uses 6 musical instruments, the flute, oboe, clarinet, violin, bassoon and French horn to represent characters in a story of bravery, resourcefulness and daring. Judy Gregory has specially adapted this musical fairy tale to enthrall and educate young children. She plays each character's melody on the musical instruments, and weaves in the story by using puppets, storytelling and creative dramatics.

Judy Gregory is a member of the SFBAPG and developed the PETER AND THE WOLF program through a Cupertino Fine Arts Commission grant. Through the grant she was able to bring the program to all of the preschools in Cupertino. Judy Gregory has been doing her Peter & the Wolf presentations for Music For Minors' docented classes for about 20 years. Music has always been a big part of her life ever since she was a toddler. Her curiosity for anything musical started when she danced to her mother's piano music, watched her grandfather play violin and conduct a men's choir, sang in a cherub choir directed by another relative, and shared sibling musical instrument skills and knowledge. Puppetry was added to the music to keep the siblings interested in their basement productions, using a windup Victrola for overture music. She married her college sweetheart whom she met backstage while they played together in the university band. They've been playing flute and clarinet duets ever since, mostly to accompany the family holiday singing.

2:00 - 3:45 Workshops:

Using Puppets in the Classroom, by Lee Armstrong

This workshop is part demonstration and part "hands-on" puppetry. See ideas for easy ways to incorporate puppets to bring lessons to life. Learn basic puppetry skills and simple puppet routines.

Lee Armstrong has worked with children and educators for over twenty years. She is co-owner of Images In Motion, a company specializing in TV puppetry. Their clients include Disney, Leapfrog and PBS.

or

Making and Using Puppets with Young Children by Elisheva Hart & Tia Smirnoff

This workshop will focus on using puppets throughout the day (transition time, music time, etc) and demonstrations of a few simple puppets to make.

Elisheva Hart brings both a performance and education background to this workshop. For many years, she had a successful touring puppet company and was the Shadow Puppet Consultant for Puppeteers of America. She has taught puppetry to generations of children and educators.

Tia Smirnoff is a Girl Scout leader of many decades, and somewhat of an afterschool expert in Mill Valley. She is a maker of teddy bears, dolls and puppets. When she turned 70 a few years ago the whole town sported signs everywhere wishing her a Happy Birthday! she has had generations of kids in her afterschool program.

4:00 – 4:45 Robin Stevens performing THE GNOME SHOW

One day a Wood-Gnome loses his favorite feather. He sets off on a magical journey and along the way meets a series of hilarious characters. He meets a Mother with a Child that will not sleep, a Knight trying to marry an indecisive Princess, a Dragon with no friends and a thirsty Tree. With the help of the audience and all the different characters, the Gnome is eventually reunited with his beloved feather.

Robin Stevens trained at Cannon Hill Puppet Theater in Birmingham UK for four years. After doing puppetry with Down Syndrome children and doing a one man show, he went on to work as a puppeteer for the BBC and then Ragdoll Ltd making children's TV. He played Grandpapa in the TV show Boohbah and has performed in and written over 800 TV shows in the UK. He is now living in Oakland CA, performing his one man show 'The Gnome Show'

5:00 -6:00 Guild Member Potluck and Business Meeting

POTLUCK SUPPER

Please your favorite dish to share with others. Main courses are always welcome, but everything for appetizers and deserts are always appreciated. Tea and coffee will be provided. Microwave and refrigerator available. Dinnerware will be provided.

PUPPET DISPLAY

Do you have a puppet that you've made, that you'd like to display? A table will be provided for an informal puppet exhibit, so bring your puppet (on a stand, if needed) and share your puppet(s) with others.

GUILD LIBRARY

The Guild library has hundreds of books covering a variety of topics. Books & DVD's will be available for checkout at the meeting, to people that have been members for at least 6 months. Are you looking for books or DVD on a particular topic? Contact the Guild Librarian, Lee Armstrong, images@vom.com, 707 738-5906. She can email you a book list and/or can bring related books to next meeting.

DIRECTIONS TO CONTRA COSTA COLLEGE

From the North - Hwy. 4/ I-80 (Sacramento, Vallejo, Martinez, Pinole):

- Hwy. 4 to I-80 West
- I-80 west toward Oakland/San Francisco
- Exit at Hilltop Drive, get into the left lane.
- Turn left at Shane Drive (2nd stoplight)
- Follow Shane to bottom of the hill
- Turn right onto Mills, and left into parking Lot 9 (No parking fees on weekends).
- Program will take place in the Health Science & Liberal Arts Buildings.

From the south (Oakland, Berkeley, Richmond):

- I-80 East toward Sacramento
- El Portal Drive exit from I-80, and turn left onto El Portal Drive
- Right onto Fordham Street
- Left onto Shane Drive, to stop sign
- Left onto Mills Avenue, and left into Lot 9 (No parking fees on weekends).

- Program will take place in the Health Science & Liberal Arts Buildings.

From the east (Walnut Creek, Concord, Lafayette):

- From Hwy. 24, take Orinda/ Richmond exit-stay on this road about 10 miles to El Sobrante, Camino Pablo becomes the San Pablo Dam Road.
- Stay on San Pablo Dam Road to El Portal Drive.
- Right onto El Portal Drive, go under freeway
- Right onto Fordham Street, Continue to the second stoplight at a T intersection
- Left onto Shane Drive, about 2 blocks to the stop sign.
- Left onto Mills Avenue, and left into Lot 9 (No parking fees on weekends).
- Program will take place in the Health Science & Liberal Arts Buildings.

CONTACT PERSON

e-mail Barbara Grillo at bgrillo@contracosta.edu if you have any questions or can help out with this event (monitor tables, help with clean-up, and whatever)

REVIEWS AND NEWS

GUILD HOLIDAY PARTY IN REVIEW MICHAEL NELSON

What a simply fantastic holiday event we had January 30. The location was fine, the food good and the company wonderful...all to be expected from a guild event. The turnout was great! Our president told me at one point he counted over 70 but knew there were more. There were some excellent puppets and associated items brought in for exhibit, including some beautiful things from new guild members (see the pictures posted in the photo section of our Yahoo group.) But the performances were the heart of the event, and what a number and



variety there was! First of all we had the unexpected pleasure of Randel McGee and Groak stepping in as MCs of the event. Randel and Groak are celebrating 30 years together, and his documentary crew was set up in a back room interviewing people who have know the internationally acclaimed performer and his reptilian sidekick over the decades. Randel is a master of straddling that line between being laugh-out-loud funny and gently respectful of the audience at the same time, with his material working equally well for children and adults. Our main stage performance was Art Grueneberger with Rachael Malin of Puppet Art Theater, presenting Goldilocks and the Three Sharks. The show immediately captured us with a fantastic set painting of the ocean floor

and a huge sunken ship that held great promise of things to come. The style of the show was black light, a form of puppetry that I have not seen much of lately in the states (although 3 years ago it was very popular at a Puerto Rican puppetry festival I attended.) This technique is where the puppets and sets are painted with paint that glows under black lights, requiring no other lighting to illuminate the show. The puppeteers wore black and were completely invisible as we watched glowing foam mermaid (Goldilocks,) sharks, clam and octopus cavorting underwater. Before the show began we learned from a conversation between the puppeteers that Art was surprising Rachael with the underwater twist in the familiar tale. In this underwater version of the familiar fairytale, Goldilocks, this time a mermaid, chooses not to go to school and instead ends up in the home of three sharks out for a swim while their rather unsavory stew either cools, warms up or dies, depending on which of their bowls we are talking about. When the sharks come home, Goldilocks is saved by one of the sharks from a scary octopus and concludes that she should have gone to school instead. I am not sure, but it kind of looked like she had way more fun playing hooky, but then I don't know what mermaid schools are like. Live voicing and lots of laughs and the fun black light visuals made this an entertaining piece of puppet theater, and young audience members will probably enjoy the illogic of such things as sharks having chairs.



Next yours truly performed, and although I didn't get to see the show myself, some said it wasn't all that bad.

After the intermission, which gave families with younger children a chance to exit before some more adult material, there was another set of shorter pieces of such variety and creativity that one would be hard pressed to find anything like it elsewhere in the Bay Area. Ernie Fosselius presented a selection from his Circus Ole. Ernie's puppets are wonderful creations, carved of wood, painted and clothed. The style in Circus Ole is small, overhead rod/marionettes, that manage to be rough and refined at the same time. His presentation is loose and

somehow constrainedly wild, and one gets the impression one is watching a mad genius at work, moving from one strange vignette to another, all the while creating a fantastical, improbable and very funny circus. As in the past, Ernie again reminds us just how good puppetry is at taking us into little bizarre worlds sprung from the creative imagination. He creates places we love to visit, and come home from as well.



Eli Nash presented a short show on his new stage. His presentation was simple and clear (both good things) and his combination of hand puppets and flat paper rod puppets for a dream sequence was a fun combination. The audience especially appreciated the “counting sheep” sequence as one character tried to sleep and sheep kept jumping over his head. I am sure that many will echo my delight at having this talented junior member developing his talent in the guild! I will not be surprised to see the day when we can brag and say we knew him when....

Next came Daniel Krakauer, a newcomer to the guild, who took to the stage with his own unique take on toy theatre, presenting a dark tale of revenge while he delivered an acapela version of “The Mariner’s Revenge” by The Decembrists. In a tiny, tabletop stage of card and wood he revealed frame after frame of illustration, each with some surprising moving part, much like looking at a popup book. This is a show that deserves to be seen rather than described! The art work was reminiscent of Edward Gorey’s work, and the black and gray images, the dismal tale, combined with the plaintive singing worked perfectly together to create a unforgettably haunting performance piece.

Finishing up the night was Brian Narelle with his canine poet, Warren Peace. Warren is a beautifully made mouth puppet that Brian works in the style of a ventriloquist puppet although Brian moves his lips (and we still think Warren is talking!) Warren is a well developed character that talks to the audience and reads his poetry. Much of his humor has to do with the fact that he is looking at the world through a dog’s eyes (and thus tennis balls play heavily in his writings) but there is a truth underlying the dog’s verse that peaks out at you when you least expect it, leaving you wondering if during your enjoyment of the moment you might have just been tricked into having a mystical experience.



Recent guild meetings have showcased such an exceptional level of talent that it seems surprising that each one can continue to be better than the last, but so it has been for the last several meetings. I, for one, look forward to what will be next with great expectations.

ITEMS LEFT AT GUILD HOLIDAY PARTY

- A black Saturn Bag containing a box with 4 "Dolls World" figures, from the 2007 Global Puppet Theatre Festival, Kaohsiung County (China?). there's a jester, a princess, a devil and a "Safari guy".
 - A gift bag with a tall glass and votive candle, plus 3 full boxes of Cracker Jacks.
 - Also a long metal flashlight tube (about the size of a quarter around) with 3 led lights at the end. Although this might belong to one of the delighted children who came to the show.
- email Elisheva ishvahart@yahoo.com or 707)763-3810 to claim your belongings.

FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

Personal News Note

We're now back in rehearsal for THE TEMPEST, in a condensed version that'll tour to 10 high schools in Sonoma County, with funding from the National Endowment for the Arts, beginning mid-February. Selections are now up on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/user/indepeye#p/u/0/jSlcZ1Lx0wo>. The full DVD will be available for purchase in a few weeks; meantime, a copy is in the Guild Library. The Independent Eye has just received a seed grant from the Henson Foundation for development of a new puppet version of FRANKENSTEIN, which we staged with live actors in 1998. It'll be redesigned and partly rescripted, and will open somewhere, somehow, in 2011. We hope to report on a puppet festival in Lima, Peru, where we're visiting Jan. 19-27. And Elizabeth celebrates her 70th birthday on Feb. 15th.

Conrad Bishop - The Independent Eye

LEARN MUPPET-STYLE PUPPETRY

Emmy Award-winning puppeteer, Michael Earl (formerly Mr. Snuffleupagus on Sesame Street), will be teaching a Muppet-style puppetry workshop in the Bay Area on Saturday April 3rd, 2010 from 10AM-5PM. Over the past 22 years, Mr. Earl has taught and/or mentored the who's who of TV and film puppet performers. Now it's your turn! You will expand your acting and improv skills by learning a proven technique in this all day on-camera class. Behind-the-scenes Muppet stories and secrets, career tips, and much more! The fee is \$275 for this intensive yet fun all day workshop. Space is limited to 8. To learn more or to reserve your spot, please visit www.teachingtour.com.



CORRECTION

In the last newsletter the date of Steve Meltzer's Celebration of Life was incorrect. It was held at the Bob Baker Marionette Theater on December 13, 2009. We regret the error.

2009-2010 SFBAPG

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THANK YOU'S!

What a great turnout for the Guild Holiday party. A huge thank you to all the performers and volunteers who made this evening memorable.

Thank you to Art Grueneberger & Rachael Malin of Puppet Art Theater. Not only was Art willing to donate a show, but he wanted it to be his two person "Goldilocks and the 3 Sharks" black light extravaganza. Therefore Rachael graciously volunteered her time as well (3rd show of the day!). Great theatrical experience! Thank you Art and Rachael. Randel McGee & Groak (festive in a Santa cap) MC'ed the evening and regaled an enthusiastic audience with songs and stories. Michael Nelson, of Magical Moonshine Theater continued in the holiday spirit with "Christmas Capers", playfully presented in his walkaround stage. Mike even drew philosophical comments from the children in the audience. They informed Mike's puppet that the difference between a toy and a puppet is that puppets can talk, but toys can't. Now we all know! Thank you Randel and Michael. After a brief intermission, Ernie Fosselius presented vignettes from CIRCUS OLE', with puppet creations that included everything from a man fairy to a senior citizen acrobatic team. Thank you for such an amazing variety of unusual vignettes. One of our teen Guild members, Eli Nash, preformed "The Very Sleepy Boy" with humor (and a great use of stick puppets in the dream sequence). Daniel Krakauer, one of our newest members sang accapella "The Mariner's Revenge" written by The Decembrists, as he animated his original artwork. Thank you Eli and Daniel. Closing out a very full evening was Brian Narelle with the poetry of Canine Poet Warren Peace. Warren shared some doggie wisdom with the very receptive puppeteers. Thank you Brian. And a big thank you to Jesse Vail, who was the stage manager of this evening.

Thank you to all who worked behind the scenes. A special thank you to Elisheva Hart, who arranged for the space, coordinated all the details, was first in to setup and last to leave. Hospitality, headed up by Valerie Nelson, rocked. Thanks to all who helped with food setup and cleanup, including Donna and Dennis Marvin, Sue Brinton, Barbara Grillo, Tia Smiroff, Mike Wick and many others. Festive tables were decorated by Nina Dees, Sue Brinton, Padmini Sökkappa and Ravi O'Brien. Mary Decker held a very successful raffle. In true Puppet Guild tradition, everyone lent a hand to make the Party a success. Thank you!

The Programming Committee: Lee Armstrong, Sharon Clay, and Barbara Grillo

CALENDAR

Storybook Puppet Theatre
Children's Fairyland - Oakland

March 6-7, 13-14, 20-21, 27-28
11 am, 2 pm, 4 pm

The Princess and the Unicorn. The only thing that will stop the wicked count and countess from ruling is if the princess marries her handsome prince. Realizing this, the count turns the hapless prince into a unicorn. And worse, all who try to help him are sent to the dungeons where the "wallow-crunch" lives. Can we save the princess and turn the prince back into himself? Puppets and script by Lewis Mahlmann.

"The Tempest" Continued

The Independent Eye's puppet staging of Shakespeare's "The Tempest," premiered at Sonoma County Repertory in Sebastopol last September & October, will play at ten high schools and middle schools in Sonoma County from February 25 through March 12. The tour is funded by a "Shakespeare in American Communities" grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, one of only 30 such grants in the USA.

The Independent Eye also has published a DVD of the full production - 107 minutes of puppetry & Shakespeare for \$16.95. Information is available by emailing eye@independenteye.org.

Please note: Since the listings are so light this month, there is no tear out calendar this newsletter.

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San Francisco Bay Area Puppeteers Guild



FROM OUR FRIENDS AT PUPPETEERS OF AMERICA

If you have recently joined Puppeteers of America-Welcome Aboard!

If you have recently renewed your membership-Welcome Back!

Right now, until March 29, you can join both national puppetry organizations; [Puppeteers of America](#) and [UNIMA-USA](#) at a 25% discount.

Membership in both includes 4 issues of [Puppetry Journal](#) and 2 issues of [Puppetry International](#) to provide an excellent well-rounded view of the world of puppetry.

[Join PofA at 10% discount, UNIMA-USA at 10% discount or join both for 25% saving](#)

Please visit the [Puppeteers of America website](#) and let us know if you have any questions about Puppeteers of America.

We email information about [puppetry festivals](#) and about books and DVDs available from the [Puppetry Store](#).

Once again-We appreciate your interest in puppetry. We are here to serve the community of puppeteers. Contact us if you have ideas or questions.

Steve Abrams
Email Coordinator,
Puppeteers of America