



San Francisco Bay Area Puppeteers' Guild

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS!

December 2011

Holiday

Can you hear me now? Can you hear me now? How do you text on this darn thing!?



Hijinks

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Reviews and News

Magical Moonshine Theatre Says It All in Cannibal Island, A Taste of Paradise

My wife used to have a little marketing slogan for selling her company's services to various clients. It basically boiled down to 'Say it with puppets.'

Now, if your first reaction is to think that there is a limit to what you can say with puppets, I'd like to offer a little bit of evidence to the contrary, specifically Magical Moonshine Theater's "Cannibal Island" show.

This show does not shy away from big themes. On the surface, it delves into the mysteries of Easter Island, often portrayed as the remotest location on the planet. We all know about the great stone monuments, colloquially referred to as big heads. In "Cannibals", 'big head' is virtually the only line of dialogue I can recall, but the information it comes to convey is stupefying.

Rank, privilege, arrogance, and the entitlement of the rich and powerful are all easily recognized. There is the destruction of a closed environment through the reckless misuse of its natural resources. There is the inevitable collapse as those resources disappear. That it is all done to such an economy of words is much to the credit of its creators.

And, just in case I've been making it sound too high-brow, the puppets are fun and original, and the show is as entertaining and funny as any I've ever attended. If you get a chance to see it, don't miss it.

Reviewed by Rhys Wade Great photos by Gregory Hayes
Photography at <http://magicalmoonshine.org/cannibal.htm>



A Big Thank You

I wanted to thank Judy Weaser who sent me a huge stash of old Puppetry Journals, Apropos, and Puppetry Internationals. Her mother Betty Stewart a puppeteer saved them over the years and Judy was kind enough to find a puppeteer to hand them on to (me). I am having the time of my life reading them- some go back to the early 1970's which is when I was most active in puppetry. It is a bit eerie but wonderful to read about so many who I met who are now dead as they are very much alive in the pages of these books. I especially love the puppeteer profiles. The life stories and how they got into puppets of puppeteers is fascinating. MOST of them started in puppets as children. It really shows how influential early creative experiences can be. I am struck reading the memorials included by how long lived many puppeteers are- a surprising number of 90 plus! So thank you Judy but also thank you especially to who kept her Journals for all those years.

Terry Ryder Mendocino County
tryder(at)mcn.org 707 894-8429

The Jarvis Conservatory in Napa just held it's little-known-to-our-Guild-members Annual Puppet Festival & Workshop. Held in an incredibly beautiful intimate facility and featuring internationally famed puppeteers. To get advance notice next year about the 16th Annual Puppet Festival, email The Jarvis Conservatory: [info\(at\)jarvisconservatory.com](mailto:info(at)jarvisconservatory.com) To check them out first: www.jarvisconservatory.com

Puppets on the Web

We all find them: websites that are puppet related or show some aspect of design or construction that we bookmark for future reference. Many times we forget what they were about or what folder we squirreled them away in and discover them later like a lost jewel. My "To Read" folder is filled with web archive pages waiting patiently for me to find the time to give them the attention they deserve. So do we really need more? I say yes! Send in the links you find interesting and we can all share them. Here are two about the Muppets that I came across to get us started.

<http://www.collectorsweekly.com/articles/?p=22051>
<http://blog.calarts.edu/?p=20611>

"PUFF THE MAGIC DRAGON"

review by Elisheva Hart

Last July I saw a puppet show photo in "Marin Center Magazine" under "What's New?" at the Marin County Fair. My immediate thought was, "Yah, yah, just another beautiful looking marionette show, but can they do a decent (or better) performance? Looks too good to be true." This can happen, no matter what type of puppetry is used.

However, gazing at the photo, I fell for the camel and decided to take the risk. Yay! Too bad I didn't see them perform the last time at the fair, 10 years ago. "Puff the Magic Dragon", by "The Puppets & Players Little Theatre" is a fantastically professional show in every possibility. Even while performing outdoors at a busy, noisy fair this performance enthralled the audiences of all ages.

There was music, humor, thrills, great sets (palace courtyard, deck of a pirate ship and under water), terrific recorded voices, excellent blocking and manipulation, plus bright colors. Also the performance is held in a self-contained theatre on wheels, which is decorated in red with gold and white trimmings in Baroque style and inspired by an Italian opera house in Milan. Exactly what puppeteers wish for on their birthdays! There is a little door on each upper side of the stage frame where hand puppets of Puff and of Little Jacky Paper can appear to introduce the show and pass the time during the set changes.

Puff summons Jacky to help him save the Land of Honalee. The Royal Treasure has been stolen. Our heroes are Royally Entertained with song and dance. Eventually they battle pirates, Descending into the sea they meet the watery locals and discover the treasure chest, which contains something more valuable than gold. Interestingly, the show stops here, an unusual concept. Why does it work? Well, we know things are now A-OK in Honalee, and everyone will live Happily E--- A----! so spelling it out is not needed. All the audience realized this. Also, the allotted half hour was over =THE END. Some additional highlights to me were the great use of varying levels (one puppet on the wall, the other on the stage floor, etc); the heart warming rhythmical swaying and singing of the audience to "Octopus' Garden"; plus the amazing sight of Laurie Branham walking Puff into the audience after the performance. Puff's green sequined skin smoothly and totally covered all joints. His movement and design are so believable. It was just as if she were walking a live, friendly dog. In fact I just had to check that the near invisible strings were still attached! The children were awestruck and very respectful as they gently stroked the beast. A nine year old girl and I looked at each other and gleefully agreed this was the most beautiful dragon we had ever seen!



Gil Olin, the other puppeteer, appears out front in costume before and after the performance, besides during the scene changes as the storyteller who is a foil to Puff. This held our attention and I do not know how long the scene changes took, they seemed just a wink of an eye. Gil also makes a terrific pirate during the show! He writes the scripts and credits the "Rocky and Bullwinkle" cartoon shows, which he watched as a young person, with teaching him how to script words and visuals for children while simultaneously entertaining their adults. Many people in children's entertainment also hold "R and B" up as their standard, including some puppeteers in our Guild.

It all began years ago when Laurie's Dad, a movie set designer, on location in London grew bored and began walking around that city in his spare time. He chanced across John Wright's "Little Angel Theatre" when John was still running it. He bought all their posters, brought them back to Southern California, spread them out in front of Laurie and told her they were going to make a puppet theatre! Very soon a model of their present theatre was created. Way to go, Dad! (How many of us were encouraged and supported by our families? Such a blessing.)

I purposefully made the drive to Marin County to see "Puff" another day. The first time I viewed it across the crowded meadow from a slight hill and the show was awesome, aural, and visible. The second time I sat up close which revealed a few more costume details and it still was awesome.

Was there nothing untoward about this show? Yes, during the second viewing one of the marionettes was a wee bit slack momentarily.

"The Puppets & Players Little Theatre" resides in Mission Viejo, in Orange County, California.
puppetsnplayers(at)sbcglobal.netwww.puppetsnplayerstheatre.com

Some Thoughts on Promoting Puppetry

Dear Guild Members,

Laurie and Gil, puppeteers for "The Puppets & Players Little Theatre", asked me to support them in a return booking at the Marin County Fair next year, 2012. This is centrally located for most of our SFBAPG members and well worth the trip (see review of "Puff the Magic Dragon" elsewhere in this Newsletter). At their suggestion I emailed Jim Farley, director of the fair. My email and his reply are below.

They (Laurie and Gil) are going to attend a conference of California County Faire vents directors in JANUARY to promote themselves, showcasing all their shows, etc. Why devote a week to this? Because County Fair budgets are also being severely slashed, why are we not surprised?

WE NEED TO BE SUPPORTIVE OF OUR ART AND OF FELLOW PUPPETEERS. Our Guild used to have business cards to hand out with Guild contact info on them. We were all issued a bunch of them and indeed we did gain new members this way. Of course, an old fashioned phone number was given. We could update this concept with our website info. I'm hoping membership info is listed on our website. Laurie (see above) told me at the 2nd show I attended that we would be seeing a redheaded young man appear at our Guild meetings soon. He's spent a lot of time talking with her and was very keen. Afterwards I thought, "Wonderful, BUT how on earth will he contact us? We've got as low a profile as a sub-basement worm!

Another "gimmick" we used in the last millennium was a "fill in the blank" publicity news release, the old 5 W's (who, what, where, when and why) and H (how). In theory, when we played at a school carnival, public hall, etc we would use this.. The IMPORTANT LAST LINE was ---puppeteer is a member of the SFBAPG-spelled out-, Puppeteers of America, UNIMA (whatever fits.) Newspapers seem a thing of the past. Even so many local papers are still a source of info, even the weekly throw-aways. Lets face it, the computer also makes it very easy to do a mass publicity mailing, doing yourself, your sponsors, and the Guild a big boost.

Is there any interest in the Guild in a publicity panel? Both soliciting work and announcing performances come to mind. We have a wonderful organization and we all need as much help as we can get, especially nowadays.

My Best,
Elisheva

From: Elisheva Hart
To: Jim Farley
Subject: Brilliant Puppet Show at this summer's fair!

Dear Mr. Farley,
This year's puppet show, "Puff the Magic Dragon", as performed by Puppets A& Players Little Theatre is a very wonderful, professional performance which pleased young and old. I recommended it highly to friends and came a second day, just to see the show again. Please book them again next year with one of their other shows.
Thank you,
Elisheva Hart

From: Jim Farley
To: Elisheva Hart
Subject: RE: Brilliant Puppet Show at this summer's fair!

Hi Elisheva,

Thank you for your kind comments about the Puppets & Players Little Theatre – their presentation of "Puff, the Magic Dragon" was a hit with our 3 ½ year old! Gil and Laurie are hard-working, imaginative puppeteers!
With best wishes,
Jim Farley

Storybook Puppet Theatre

Children's Fairyland - Oakland

Dec. 3-4, 10-11 at 11:00 am, 2:00 pm, 4:00 pm

Dec. 16-23 at 2:00 pm, 4:00 pm, 6:00 pm

Dec. 31 & Jan. 1 at 11:00 am, 2:00 pm, 4:00 pm

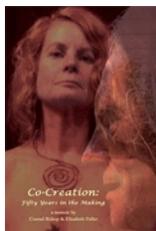
The Velveteen Rabbit.

Based on Margery Williams' lovely tale of "How Toys Become Real", this is the story of a special relationship between a young boy and his toy bunny.

Independent Eye

Co-Creation: Fifty Years in the Making

In the course of their fifty years of marriage, Guild members Conrad Bishop and Elizabeth Fuller have collaborated as performers, playwrights, and puppeteers in bringing hundreds of stories to thousands of audiences. Now they tackle their own story of quests, changes, and perpetual improvisation.



Free reading and reception, book sale and signing. Refreshments served.

Sunday, Dec. 4, 4:00 pm at Occidental Center for the Arts, Occidental, CA. For excerpts, visit <<http://www.independenteye.org/co-creation>>.

Nick Barone Puppets

"Holiday Treats"

A half-hour comedy variety Christmas show. This show may have only 7 puppets, but they are the wackiest puppet cast ever!

Saturday, December 3 - 10:30 am

San Leandro Manor Branch Library
1241 Manor Blvd., San Leandro, CA

Sunday, December 4 - 11:30 am

Cheeky Monkey Toys
640 Santa Cruz Ave., Menlo Park, CA

Thursday, December 8 - 4:00 pm

Walnut Creek Library
1644 N. Broadway, Walnut Creek, CA

Thursday, December 15 - 10:30 am

Morgan Hill Public Library
660 W. Main Ave., Morgan Hill, CA

Saturday, December 17 - 10:15 am

Morgan Hill Public Library
660 W. Main Ave., Morgan Hill, CA

Saturday, December 17 - 2:00 pm

Pleasanton Library

400 Old Bernal Ave., Pleasanton, CA

Monday, December 19 - 10:15 am

Sausalito Park & Recreation Holiday Magic
420 Litho Street, Sausalito, CA

Tuesday, December 20 - 11:00 am

Larkspur Public Library
400 Magnolia Avenue, Larkspur, CA

Wednesday, December 21 - 5:30 pm

Winter Festival at Children's Fairyland
699 Bellevue Ave., Oakland, CA

Thursday, December 29 - 11:30 am

Fremont Main Library
2400 Stevenson Blvd, Fremont, CA

Puppet listings from sfgate.com:

The Gnome Show presented by Robin Stevens

Saturday, Dec 17 4:00 pm

San Francisco Public Library - Potrero Branch, San Francisco

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.

Bird Puppet-Making Workshop for Adults With Dax Tran-Caffee

Sunday, Dec 4 9:30 am

Exploratorium, San Francisco

Were you charmed by puppets as a kid? The joy of crafting an object, that you can then animate and play with, need not be for just the very young.

Puppet Company Presents: The Nutcracker

Monday, Dec 12 7:00 pm

Martinez Library, Martinez

Ventriloquist Steve Chaney

Friday, May 4 10:00 am (? this is what was on the webpage)

Danville Village Theatre, Danville

Superstar Ventriloquist Steve Chaney and his puppet partner Cornelius Crowe are two of the Bay Area's most popular acts.

Holiday Puppet Shows at Gamble Garden

Saturday, Dec 10 10:00 am

Gamble Garden, Palo Alto

Families will enjoy the traditional story of "The Nutcracker" brought to 'life' by The Puppet Company.

Puppet Art Theater

The Boy Who Cried Wolf (Holiday Version)

December 3rd 10:30 am

Half Moon Bay Library

3:00 pm
Northwest Regional Library (Santa Rosa)
December 13th 4:00 pm
Sausalito Library

December 17th 11:00 am
Petaluma Library

2:30 pm
Rohnert Park Library

December 28th 4:00 pm
Salida Library

Jack and the Beanstalk (Holiday Version)
December 8th 7:00 pm
Rancho Santa Margarita Library (Orange County)

Hansel and Gretel
December 10th 11:00 am
San Carlos Library
Dad and Me at the Library

Little Red Riding Hood
December 15th 4:00 pm
Arcade Library

Three Little Pigs
December 28th 11:00 am and 12:30 pm
Turlock Library

Fratello Marionettes
"The North Pole Review"
Monday December 5 4:00 pm
Vineland Branch Library @ 1450 Blossom Hill Rd.
San Jose, CA

Monday December 5 7:00 pm
Hercules Library @ 109 Civic Drive
Hercules, CA

Tuesday December 6 4:00 pm
Moraga Library @ 1500 St. Mary's Rd.
Moraga, CA

Wednesday December 7 6:00 pm
Hanford Library @ 401 N. Douty Street
Hanford, CA

Wednesday December 7 6:00 pm
Hanford Library @ 401 N. Douty Street
Hanford, CA

Friday December 9 4:00 pm
Willow Glen Branch Library @ 1157 Minnesota Ave
San Jose, CA

Tuesday December 13 6:30 pm

Kensington Library @ 61 Arlington Avenue
Kensington, CA
Wednesday December 14 6:30 pm
Cambrian Branch Library @ 1780 Hillsdale Ave
San Jose, CA

Thursday December 15 11:30 am
Pearl Avenue Branch Library @ 4270 Pearl Ave.
San Jose, CA

Friday December 16 6:30 pm
Visalia Library @ 200 West Oak Ave.
Visalia, CA

Saturday December 17 11:00 am, 1:00 pm
Burlingame Library @ 501 Primrose Rd.
Burlingame, CA

Saturday December 17 3:00 pm
Belmont Library @ 1110 Alameda de las Pulgas
Belmont, CA

Wednesday December 21 6:00 pm
Edenvale Branch Library @ 101 Branham Lane East
San Jose, CA

Thursday December 22 3:30 pm
Rose Garden Branch Library @ 1580 Naglee Ave.
San Jose, CA

Wednesday December 28 6:30 pm
Dublin Library @ 200 Civic Plaza
Dublin, CA

"Peter & the Wolf"
Saturday December 10 3:00 pm
Ortega Branch Library @ 3223 Ortega St.
San Francisco, CA

Tuesday December 20 3:00 pm
Lafayette Library @ 3491 Mount Diablo Boulevard
Lafayette, CA

"Carnival of the Animals"
Monday December 12 7:00 pm
Concord Library @ 2900 Salvio Street
Concord, CA

"The Vaudeville Follies"
Tuesday December 13 4:00 pm
Danville Library @ 400 Front Street
Danville, CA

Thursday December 15 4:00 pm
South San Francisco Library
South San Francisco, CA

Special tear-out calendar! See Calendar listings for details on events. Due to space limitations, not all times or show titles are listed here.

December 2011

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27	28	29	30	1	2	3
						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Boy Who Cried Wolf • Holiday Treats • Velveteen Rabbit
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Velveteen Rabbit • Holiday Treats • Puppet Making • Co-Creation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Pole Review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Pole Review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Pole Review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jack and the Beanstalk • Holiday Treats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Pole Review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hansel and Gretel • Velveteen Rabbit • Holiday Show • Peter and the Wolf
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Velveteen Rabbit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carnival of the Animals • Nutcracker 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vaudville Follies • The Boy Who Cried Wolf • North Pole Review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Pole Review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vaudville Follies • North Pole Review • Holiday Treats • Little Red Riding Hood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Velveteen Rabbit • North Pole Review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Gnome Show • North Pole Review • The Boy Who Cried Wolf • Holiday Treats
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holiday Treats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peter and the Wolf • Holiday Treats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Pole Review • Holiday Treats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Pole Review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Pole Review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Velveteen Rabbit 	
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three Little Pigs • The Boy Who Cried Wolf • North Pole Review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holiday Treats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holiday Treats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Velveteen Rabbit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Velveteen Rabbit

San Francisco Bay Area Puppeteers Guild
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Carmichael, CA 95608



A few words regarding the calendar:

You may notice that there are more calendar postings this month than usual. Are there more shows in December than other months? Perhaps. Did more of our members decide to send in postings this month? The answer to this question is 'no.' In fact, we only recieved two calendar items this month (I won't tell you who), so I went scouring the web for listings from puppeteers who had sent in postings in the past. Now, massaging that data into a consistent form took some work (who knew there were so many different ways to organize a calendar list!), and, in the process, I may have mangled some dates and/or times. For that I apologize in advance and advise you to always check with the venue before traveling too far for a show. But I would like to extend an invitation to all performers who post their schedule on the web: if you send me a link to your calendar, I'll include you in our listings. I'm building a set of links that I can pull up each month and draw from. Remember, we want to see your shows, but we can't show up if we don't know about them.



You humble Editor