



# San Francisco Bay Area Puppeteers' Guild **CELEBRATING 50 YEARS!**

August 2012



*How good is your  
memory?  
Can you name the  
Regional Festival this  
fellow is from?*

## *In this issue:*

- August Meeting at Children's Fairyland
- Lucy Morton Remembered
- Suddenly, Istanbul!
- Clash of the Condiments
- Calendar
- And a few other things...

### **2012-2013 Board of Directors and Guild Officers**

#### **President**

Art Gruenberger  
PuppetArt@aol.com  
916-424-4736

#### **Vice President**

Randall Metz  
puppetcomp@aol.com  
510-569-3144

#### **Treasurer**

Gregory Hayes  
greg@primalvisions.com  
415-307-2890

#### **Secretary**

Conrad Bishop  
eye@independenteye.org  
707-824-4307

#### **Membership Officer**

Lex Rudd  
lex@primalvisions.com  
626-224-8578

#### **Newsletter Editor**

Talib Huff  
tahuff@dcn.org  
916-484-0606

#### **Jesse Vail**

jessevail@gmail.com  
510-672-6900

#### **Elisheva Hart**

ishvahart@yahoo.com  
707-978-8309

#### **Mary Nagler**

info@whorlsofwonder.com  
860-230-6079

#### **Non-Board Positions**

##### **Librarian**

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

##### **WebMaster**

Position Open

# THE NEXT SFBAPG MEETING!

AUGUST 25, 5:00 PM

CHILDREN'S FAIRYLAND IN OAKLAND

Our next Guild meeting will be held at Children's Fairyland in Oakland on August 25. This is the 56th Annual Puppet Fair with performances throughout the day. The Puppet Fair is co-sponsored by the SFBAPG.

The program is constantly evolving, but so far, we know for sure:

10:00 - 4:30 - Puppet Fair Program:

Make a Puppet with Elisheva Hart and Tia Smirnoff- a fun craft for children making puppets. The Puppet Petting Zoo - presented by Ron and Barbara Johnson of The Motion Maker Puppeteers. A fabulous display of puppets from puppeteers all over the United States! If you're a guild member, please bring your own puppet to display. Contact Randal Metz at (510) 351-4522 to confirm.

Special shows:

- 11:30 - Randal Metz & The Puppet Company
- 1:30 pm - Magical Moonshine Puppets
- 3:30 pm - 4H Puppeteers under the direction of Sharon Clay will perform "Anansi", "Smile" and some great audience participation bits.
- 11:00, 2:00 & 4:00 -Lewis Mahlmann presents "The Three Spinning Fairies." A take off on the famous Grimm tale.
  
- 5:00 - 8:00: Guild Meeting and Events

Larry Schmidt will bring his fabulous marionettes from his show "The Driveway Follies." These marionettes are full animated and perform vaudeville style antics. Guild members Kevin Menegus, Robin Stevens and Jesse Vail have worked with Larry on these amazing puppets. See them in person. Larry will talk about the show and present a DVD of some acts.

Eli Nash will be presenting a short presentation on his fabulous animation/puppetry that he has been diligently working with these last few months. This is a great chance to hear a junior puppeteer firsthand.

Surprise attraction still in the works!

7:00 pm - Fairyland will be catering a dinner for overnight visitors at the park. The guild has been invited to partake in this park cooked meal. Future e-mails will list the price and menu. Contact Jesse Vail at (510) 672-6900 to secure a meal ticket in advance.

8:00 - The Storybook Puppet Theater will present an evening presentation of "The Three Spinning Fairies." This fanciful Grimm tale tells what happen to fairies when all they do is work constantly to spin flax into yarn. A real crowd pleaser.

Information on food and additional programming will be posted to the guild web page soon and sent out over the Yahoo e-mail list.

---

# Reviews and News

## Rossmoor Puppetry Group

Kevin Menegus

I first met Lucy Morton at a guild meeting at Lettie Schubert's house in 1989 when I was a junior member. She was introduced to me as a puppeteer who lived and worked with other seniors at Rossmoor in Walnut Creek. She told me that their group met every Friday morning and that I was welcome to join them any time I had a day off from school. At this same meeting we had a gift exchange, and by chance I received a copy of the marionette book that Lucy and her husband George had written. She was kind enough to autograph the book for me and as soon as I returned home I used the step by step instructions to make my first stuffed marionette. Little did I know that I should never cut the patterns directly from the book!

On my first available Friday I went to visit Lucy and the other seniors at their puppet theater in Rossmoor. They met in a meeting room in the heart of the activities building. They had a large raised floor proscenium marionette stage that measured approx. 12' x 12'. It was constructed of plywood, aluminum poles and hundreds of fasteners, which could be disassembled for travel. I was shown their small storage room, which contained countless neatly organized boxes of props and materials used to create their puppets. There were also many wooden boxes with puppets from other productions.

Lucy had developed her own unique way of stringing marionettes so that seniors who could not hold heavy wooden puppets for long periods of time could operate them easily. The marionettes were sewn and stuffed muslin with small weights in their feet, using the basic Edith Flack Ackley concept. She also had a unique control, which utilized a rocking leg bar, which could not be dropped during a performance.

Most of the puppeteers in the group were women, and their husbands would help on occasion to move some of the heavier scenery pieces or to assist with the lights and sound. Lucy's husband George built many of the mechanisms and props the ladies performed with, when he was not working in the wood shop at the activity center. They performed using an old reel to reel machine and a homemade lighting dimmer board, which looked to be from World War Two.

The Rossmoor puppeteers did wonderful productions of Hansel and Gretel, a large Circus show, Sleeping Beauty and other classics. These were full scale productions all done in miniature using the stuffed marionettes. They also had a smaller stage, which they could use to perform on the floor while leaning over a small backdrop.

Over the years I went back and helped out when I could. Eventually the group got smaller and smaller, until finally they were too fragile to climb up the small steps onto the puppet stage. After George had passed away, Lucy really never had enough support to keep the group together.

We had kept in touch over the years, and she still travelled the world well into her 80's. One of the last times I saw Lucy was in 2004. Tony Urbano and I were getting onto a Holland America

continued on next page

cruise ship in Boston as we were performing on a tour to Montreal and back to New York. After the long flight and loading large puppet cases into the ships theater, we decided to go and have lunch. As we were checking out the food, sitting right there was Lucy and her daughter Grace. I was so surprised to see them and we quickly sat down for a little chat. Unfortunately they were just waiting to get off the ship after a week long cruise. It is a very small world indeed.

Lucy passed away several years ago, but the wonderful memories of her and the Rossmoor Puppeteers lives on to this day. Her entire body of work resides with Alan Cook and the International Puppetry Museum waiting to be displayed.

---

## **Suddenly, Istanbul!**

by Mary Nagler

This month I got a last minute call to go to Istanbul to wrangle a puppet shoot for the FURRY PUPPET CO. based in Brooklyn, NY. Zack Buchman, the owner, had sent me off to London on a shoot last year. This time he wanted me to deliver and adjust, if necessary, two human puppets made by one of his people. The puppets arrived a few days before I was to leave, and I added their wigs and fine tuned them a little, photographed them for the client and packed my wrangling kit.

The production company paid for me to travel "Comfort Class" on Turkish Airlines, which meant I sat in my comfortable reclining chair eating gourmet Turkish cuisine and watching a myriad of movies on my personal monitor. Turkish Airlines was voted best airlines in the world and they are! The Chef, Captain and Steward greet you when you board. Food is cooked fresh on the airplane. The first meal was one of the best I have had in my life! There are complimentary slippers, a travel bag of goodies and the service impeccable. I wax on about the airline because unfortunately time did not allow for any sight seeing outside what I observed from the car windows to and from the hotel. Traveling Turkish Air was therefore a highlight. I left on a Friday and landed on a Sunday after a twelve hour flight; one third around the world! I watched a Clint Eastwood movie that evening at my five star hotel, to familiarize myself with the sound of the language, and was amazed at the lip sync. Apparently this is something the Turkish Film industry is famous for -making every movie look like it was made in Turkei

The next day I sat in the cantina of the production company making small adjustments to the puppets faces that required a serious bit of deconstruction. This was a bit nerve wracking, with twenty or so people



*Actor and puppet in the cannons*



*Cameras and crew on location*

continued on next page

Suddenly, Istanbul! continued

standing around waiting on me. Though I was able to bring the details closer to what was expected there was only so much I could do. The next day they would be using just the male puppet, which was a look alike of a handsome young Turkish actor, who would also be in the shoot. Together, according to the storyboard, he and the puppet would be shot from large pink cannons over the Aegean Sea from the Asian side to the European side. They were to be seen flying up and toward camera via green screen, and land at a picnic table where a family was enjoying their noon meal. It is a commercial for a bank. They would be passing interest rates in the air. It is a funny commercial and the crew and clients laughed through many of the playbacks. I did not need to understand the language to get the humor. The puppeteer was a champ and really sold the puppet. He had to be in an uncomfortable position through the whole shoot. Did I mention we were on location in a park in 90+ degree weather? The crash helmet on the puppet had been made of Styrofoam, but the puppets head was too big so they had to substitute a real helmet that was very heavy. Mid shoot I had to rig something in the puppet's head to hold it too the puppeteer's hand because the weight of the helmet was making him lose his grip on the mouth. This made it even more uncomfortable, but he rallied on.

We had breakfast, lunch and dinner at the shoot. I taught the caterer's son some origami while we were both hanging out between things. By the time we got to the picnic scene it was dark so the light people brought in the flood lamps and made it daylight again. Dropping the two performers onto a bench convincingly was cleverly rigged, with the actor dropping from a chin bar and the puppet coming in suspended from strings. When that shot was in the can we proceeded back to the studio, ate a fourth meal, and they proceeded to shoot the green screen shots in a large amazing studio. I was free to go, but stayed until 3:30 am to watch the proceedings. The shoot ended at 7:00am and my driver was almost an hour late picking me up at the hotel because he had fallen asleep. I almost missed my plane going through the 7 check points. I was sad to be leaving so soon. The only shopping I got to do was at a Shell gas station mini mart, where I picked up a little Turkish Delight to bring home.

Turkey is an amazing place with a rich culture flavored by the Persians, Byzantines, Ottomans. The food is fresh and delicious and I did not see one overweight person. But, almost everyone smokes! The people were warm and friendly and all seemed to be in command of some English, though often two shy to speak to me unless addressed. I have a few new facebook friends from there and rich memories. I talked to one of the producers about possibly coming to do a workshop sponsored by the Production Company, so who knows? I might get a chance to return and have a little more time to take a look around.

The Furry Puppet Company is relocating from Brooklyn to San Francisco at the end of August, so you may get a chance to meet Zack Buchman. He is a remarkable young man with a great flare for promotion. His website is translated into many languages which is why he is active in the puppet world the globe over. I look forward to working with him again.

---

## “Clash of the Condiments”

### Costumes Constructed by Images In Motion

The ultimate condiment battle is being waged between Hidden Valley Ranch vs. Ketchup. Images In Motion, a company known more for their TV puppets, built the costumes that duke it out on the streets of San Francisco. Sparked by Ketchups poor sportsmanship over a chess match, the duo comically spars throughout San Francisco. Predictably, Hidden Valley Ranch comes away with the win against the aged generic condiment.

Kaboom Productions, SF, coordinated this successful web commercial for the ad agency,



“Clash of the Condiments” continued

Tribal DDB. Kaboom needed giant plastic bottle costumes capable of taking a beating. Because of the rough and tumble nature of the action, they wanted a hero and a duplicate of each costume, produced in a three week turnaround.

Sonoma-based Images in Motion, using many of the skills employed to create TV puppets, patterned and shaped the bottles out of closed cell foam, smoothing the exteriors with a combination of sanding and filling. Interior harnesses helped the performers balance the lightweight bottles, leaving their arms free for the ensuing conflict. “The most challenging part of the process was getting a durable, smooth coating on the bottles,” explained IIM designer Kamela Portuges-Robbins. After testing many products, the foam received a plastic coating, then was spray-painted with plasticized auto paint.

The IIM team included Kamela Portuges-Robbins, Kieron Robbins, Lee Armstrong & Mary Nagler. Kamela and Lee worked the shoot, on location in San Francisco, maintaining and switching out costumes as the battle progressed. “Because the play was improvised, I had no idea that the costumes would be slammed to the ground and rolling down hills. They held up remarkable well!” commented Ms Portuges-Robbins.

The costumes chased each other through the Financial District, boxed down sidewalks filled with startled citizens, slid down the great slide at Dolores Park. The actors, Andrew Bancroft and Brian Dawson, brought the costumes to life with great physical comedy and their verbal sparring added to the humor of the piece. The project was directed by Matt Fackrell, an old hand at "comedy with costumed characters" from his experiences as a director/editor for Yo Gabba Gabba. The action, spontaneous and out in the streets had a great slapstick quality. We have never laughed so much in the making of a commercial,” exclaimed Lee Armstrong.

The spot that already has 95,000 YouTube hits. Watch Ranch and Ketchup's city-wide battle for dipping dominance at the Images In Motion website [http://www.imagesmedia.com/TV\\_Film.html](http://www.imagesmedia.com/TV_Film.html).



---

From Mary Nagler:

The last two performances of the AVE Q Show I designed and made all the puppets for are August 10 and 11 at 8:00 At the Santa Rosa Junior College Burbank auditorium. Information and tickets available at <http://www.summerrep.com/avenue.html>

---

**Your article could have gone here! Don't miss another month! Start writing it now!**

Calendar

**Puppet Art Theater**

August 1, 10:30 am  
The Boy Who Cried Wolf  
Los Altos Library

August 1, 3:00 pm  
Tommy's Space Adventure  
Los Altos Library

August 1, 4:00 pm  
Tommy's Space Adventure  
Fair Oaks Branch Library, Redwood City

August 1, 7:00 pm  
Tommy's Space Adventure  
Redwood Shores Branch Library, Redwood City

August 2, 11:00 am  
Jack and the Beanstalk  
Belvedere Tiburon Library

August 4, 7:00 pm  
Tommy's Space Adventure  
Union City Library

August 6, 7:00 pm  
Little Red Riding Hood  
Atherton Library

August 8th, 2:30 pm  
Hansel and Gretel  
Rincon Branch Livermore Library

August 14, 3:00 pm  
Tommy's Space Adventure  
West Sacramento Library

August 15, 11:00 am,  
4:00 pm, 7:00 pm  
The Boy Who Cried Wolf  
Whittier Library, So Cal

August 16, 11:00 am and 4:00 pm  
The Boy Who Cried Wolf  
Whittier Library, So Cal

August 26 and 27, Showtimes TBA

San Jose Children's Fun Fest

**Fratello Marionettes**

August 1, 3:00 pm  
"Carnival of the Animals"  
Menlo Park Library  
Menlo Park, CA

August 2, 1:30 pm  
"The Vaudeville Follies"  
Belle Haven Library  
Menlo Park, CA

August 11, 2:00 pm  
"Carnival of the Animals"  
Belmont Library  
Belmont, CA

August 25, 2:00 pm  
"The Vaudeville Follies"  
IAHF Italian Family Festa  
Guadalupe River Park  
San Jose, CA

August 26, 3:30 pm  
"The Vaudeville Follies"  
Puppet Fair  
Children's Fairyland  
Oakland, CA

August 26, 12:30 pm  
"The Vaudeville Follies"  
IAHF Italian Family Festa  
Guadalupe River Park  
San Jose, CA

**Magical Moonshine Puppet Theater**

Saturday, August 4, 2:00 pm  
The Puppet Man  
Natomas S. Branch Library, Sacramento

Saturday, August 11, 12:00 pm  
Little Elephant Has A Ball (bilingual version)  
E. Palo Alto Library

Tuesday, August 21 6:30 am  
Shadow Tales at San Carlos Library

## Calendar continued

### Storybook Puppet Theatre

Saturdays a Sundays in August

11:00 am, 2:00 pm, 4:00 pm

“The Three Spinning Fairies”

This Grimm fairy tale centers on a young girl who spends her time reading. Her stepmother thinks she is lazy and tells Queen Cinderella that Marlene can spin straw into gold. That’s when a girl needs a fairy godmother. Marlene gets three! A family comedy about the complications of getting what you wish for. Design and scenery by Lewis Mahlmann. Script by David C. Jones. Children's Fairyland - Oakland



### Nick Barone Puppets

August 4, 2:30 pm

15th Annual San Francisco Aloha Festival

San Mateo County Event Center, 1346

Saratoga Dr., San Mateo, CA

August 5, 2:30 pm

15th Annual San Francisco Aloha Festival

San Mateo County Event Center, 1346

Saratoga Dr., San Mateo, CA

### Can you identify us?

We were found in a guild member’s collection and he has no idea where we came from. There are no tags or identifying marks. Our heads appear to be painted clay or plaster. If you know who we are or where we came from, please email your answer to [bosotro@me.com](mailto:bosotro@me.com)

A Paragraph of Possible Amusement to Puppeteers,  
from "River Ghosts", a novel, by B. R. Robb

Jack nudges his elbow into my side. "So I think to ask my son, I mean I'm just playing, but I ask him, 'What do you want to be when you grow up?' All of a sudden, the boy stops singing, and his face gets this real stubborn look. He tells me."

"Good."

"A sock puppet."

"What?"

Jack lowers his head and pinches the bridge of his nose. "Tyler, my only child, told me he want to be a sock puppet when he grows up."

"Your son's two."

"Almost three."

The door beside Jack's chair opens and Marla leans her head forward. "Mr. Schumacher will see you now."

Marla Weist has been around a while. Prehistoric, Jack likes to say. ....Jack asks the top of Marla's head, "What do you have on tap?"

She thuds into her chair and hisses at him, "All men grow up to be sock puppets."

submitted by Elisheva



# August 2012

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

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
Three Spinning Fairies Aloha Festival	Little Red Riding Hood		The Boy...Cried Wolf Tommy's...Adventure Tommy's...Adventure Tommy's...Adventure Carnival of Animals	Jack and the Beanstalk Vaudville Follies		Three Spinning Fairies Aloha Festival Puppet Man Tommy's...Adventure
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Three Spinning Fairies		Hansel and Gretel			Little Elephant Carnival of Animals Three Spinning Fairies	
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Three Spinning Fairies	Tommy's...Adventure	The Boy...Cried Wolf	The Boy...Cried Wolf		Three Spinning Fairies	
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Three Spinning Fairies	Shadow Tales				Vaudville Follies Three Spinning Fairies	
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
Vaudville Follies Three Spinning Fairies						

San Francisco Bay Area Puppeteers Guild  
5137 Robertson Ave.  
Carmichael, CA 95608



#### Directions to the next Guild meeting at Fairyland:

##### If starting from...

Marin, Richmond: Take 80 west to 580 east (toward Hayward).  
San Francisco: Take the Bay Bridge to 580 east (toward Hayward).  
Walnut Creek: Take 24 through the Caldecott Tunnel to 580 east (toward Hayward)  
Berkeley: Take 580 east (toward Hayward).

Then from 580 east:

Take the Harrison Street exit in Oakland and turn right onto Harrison. Turn left at Grand Avenue. Fairyland is one block away, at the intersection of Grand and Bellevue. Turn to the right and park.



##### If starting from...

Hayward, San Leandro, and Pleasanton: Take 580 west to the MacArthur/Harrison exit in Oakland. Turn left on Harrison and left on Grand Avenue. Fairyland is one block away on the right, at the intersection of Grand and Bellevue.  
San Jose, Hayward, and Fremont: Take 880 north to the Oak Street exit in Oakland. Turn right on Oak, which becomes Lakeside Drive. Turn right on Grand Avenue. Fairyland is located one block away, at the intersection of Grand and Bellevue (right side).

#### Transit Directions

On BART: Get off at the 19th Street station. Take the 20th Street stairway to street level. Walk on 20th Street to Harrison Street. Turn left on Harrison. Turn right on Grand Avenue. Fairyland is one block away, at the intersection of Grand and Bellevue (right side).

On AC Transit: Take the #12 bus from the 19th Street BART station to Children's Fairyland.

**Parking on Bellevue Avenue is \$5.00 for the day.**