



February 2013

# Puppets by Howie Leifer



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## Guild Annual Holiday Party

by Elisheva

A Jolly Good Time ensued once again in the recently remodeled Christ Presbyterian Church in Terra Linda. With a removable pulpit, the Magical Moonshine Theater's puppet stage could now be set up on a raised platform, giving better visibility. All the better to charm the audience as they viewed "Puppylocks and the Three Bears." Valerie's vocal rendition of "When you go out in the woods at night...the Teddy Bears' CIRCUS" now ties with my favorite rendition of "T. B.'s Picnic", by Nitty Gritty Dirt Band-on kazoo! Mike strummed away on the uke to accompany Val. There were lots of chuckles and grins, ooh's and ahh's by young and old. The circus tricks-balancing acts, juggling, etc-were based on old



*Some of the raffle items displayed by Art while Lex looks on.*

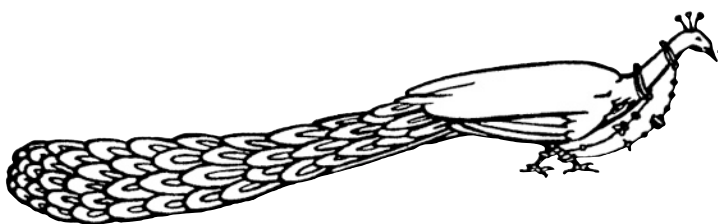
time puppet variety acts. To me, these acts are much more interesting in the context of a good script. And their script is more than good. A delightful shadow show followed, presented by Cam's Puppets. The first act is a silly poem entitled, "My Sister just ate one Hare", the problem is, she can't throw up! It is quite fun, with the inevitable gross visual effects and perfect for the elementary school age audience. The second act was a new twist on "5 Little Monkeys....teasing Mr. Crocodile". Cam teaches art and usually has 20 extra young hands to help her perform. She did an admirable job with only one very capable assistant. Our crowd loved these shadow acts too. No wonder, when I first notified the congregation of their invites to the puppet shows, one woman about my age, said she was terribly disappointed to have to miss them this year. She was going to Bali! I turned her on to the Balinese puppet shows and she was thrilled to have them as her "your local barbershop quartet.]"

The round dinner tables were wonderfully decorated. Featured this year was a tier of Yummy Cupcakes; Veggi-mals (created on the spot!); Mardi Gras, complete with masks, beads, and tales of there of; Spring Garlands with tiny lights; and cookie cutters cavorting 'round a Christmas Tree. The clever creators got to select goodies from the Pixar Prizes Box. Dinner was full of fabulous foods and a delightful first, a huge kettle of cracked crab, brought by Valerie's brother. What a treat for us "starving artists."

Mary Negler was quite surprised by a tree of money and congratulations from guild members. Lee spearheaded this acknowledgement of Mary who has attained an unbelievably high academic (and creative) achievement in puppetry at the U of Conn. This includes some pricey fees to be able to leave with her degree. We are glad to help her attain this goal.

The exhibit of Guild members' puppets was excellent. And a lot of boisterous goofing-off accompanied the drawing of the raffle tickets for the donated items. Thanks all of you. Funds go to the Guild scholarships.

We are all glad that Conrad Bishop and Elizabeth Fuller were able to attend the party, so soon after his surgery. Spouses suffer greatly through these things too. Sad news arrived that Nick Barone was recently diagnosed with lung cancer. Guild members passed around a card to sign and send to him.



*I'm not too proud to admit I'm sorry I missed the meeting. Luckily, the upcoming meetings are listed at the end of the newsletter!*



## Reviews and News

It is with great sadness that we received the news of the death of a long time member of our guild, Howie Leifer. For those of you who were not lucky enough to see his work in person, you can find a few examples online at <http://www.youtube.com/user/Radioboy100>,

### Howie Leifer

Sally Fisher

I first met Howie at a meeting of PGOONY, the Puppeteers' Guild of Greater New York. He performed briefly with his beautiful bag-lady puppet. We talked on the crosstown bus and eventually we became friends and then partners in a piece for the Great Small Works Toy Theater Festival at HERE in 2003. I wrote and designed the piece but Howie contributed many wonderful ideas, like a shadow sequence in the middle of the story, when the two cat puppets meet and pass on a dark stairwell.

Howie was a champion of the small. In theater it was puppets, in music it was the uke, the harmonica, ocarina, the concertina. He had a concertina the size of a hamburger that he used to provide all of the music for another Great Small Works caper, a version of Aristophanes The Birds performed by lawn ornaments.

Howie grew up on the Lower East Side, where he and his brother Neil spent lots of time at the Henry Street Settlement. They were served well by the settlement; Howie in art and Neil in photography. Neil became a well-known sports photographer. Howie became an artist and art teacher. More than once I was with him at some performance or other when a former student from San Francisco would spot him and run up to hug him. As a puppet builder he was superb. He loved sculpting, and was especially gratified to be working on his projects in a welding shop recently.

Here is a scrap of Howie's humor: At a Day of Puppetry event at the Donnell Library, I took my 9-foot snake to the corner of 53rd and Fifth, along with some others who had large attention-getting puppets. Howie stayed back to set up his stage for "The Big Orange Splot." When I got back I couldn't wait to tell him that my snake had scared the bejesus out of a German shepherd. Howie said simply, "Your work is done."



Missing Howie Leifer

Michael Nelson

Long time guild members will remember Howie Leifer as an active guild member and the man behind the puppets of Haight Street Puppet Theatre. Howie's puppet work was eclectic and always filled with the casual joviality that was his persona. He did funny variety acts such as a Bob Dylan puppet performing a song, to children's stories full of colorful whimsy. I would not categorize him as a children's performer nor an adult performer. It seemed more that he created the performances he wanted to and invited anyone who was interested to join him on his puppet journey. I recall his apartment on Haight St. in San Francisco being filled with so much "junk" (and by junk, I mean the life stuff of most puppeteers) that you could hardly find a place to sit down without moving some puppet

pieces or a disassembled accordion (Howie, like I, was one of that select group of puppeteers who are also intrigued by the bellowed reeds). Some years ago Howie left San Francisco to work with his brother in the Big Apple but he continued to connect with the puppet community in the NY area. Independently Howie and Valerie and I were drawn towards the little subset of puppetry called toy theatre, and when Great Small Works started having their Toy Theatre Festival in Brooklyn, we had a great excuse to go every couple of years and perform and hang out with Howie in his new haunts on the East Coast. Not only did he perform with his toy theatres, but it seemed that he almost always had something he had made especially for the Temporary Toy Theatre Exhibit that is an integral part of all the festivals. My favorite exhibit item of his was a circus theatre that had delightful mechanical acts worked by cranks and levers. The crowd visiting the exhibit were allowed to work the figures themselves but there seemed to be a general trend, especially among children to turn the cranks in the wrong direction. Valerie and I spent several fun periods over the course of the festival hanging out with Howie, watching him make constant little repairs, and commiserating with him (and he was totally good-natured about it) about the contrariness of people and the Murphy's Law element of being a puppeteer. Valerie and I were greatly saddened when Howie recently succumbed to cancer. We certainly will miss him, as I know many will. One of the lights in our world is no longer shining here.

From Leslie Adams:  
Dear Colleagues and Friends,

We are deeply saddened to announce that on Saturday, January 5th our beloved former art teacher, Howie Leifer, passed away. Howie died peacefully in the company of his brother. We will be hosting a celebration of Howie's life in our Arts Pavilion (66 Page Street, San Francisco, CA 94117) on Monday, March 11th at 5pm. Please join us as we share memorable stories and honor Howie's many contributions to French American and International. Please RSVP to: [crystal@frenchamericansf.org](mailto:crystal@frenchamericansf.org)

If you would like to share your memories or favorite stories of Howie please feel free to send a video or a written piece to [crystal@frenchamericansf.org](mailto:crystal@frenchamericansf.org)

Please pass this message on to others who knew Howie.  
Regards,  
Leslie



## HOWIE LEIFER

*A Celebration of Life*



**MARCH 11, 2013 | 5PM- 8PM**

**FRENCH AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL  
DENNIS GALLAGHER ARTS PAVILION  
66 PAGE STREET**

**RSVP to [crystal@frenchamericansf.org](mailto:crystal@frenchamericansf.org)**

## Images In Motion Adds 3D Printing Services

Images In Motion introduces 3D printing to their service line-up. They have installed two full color, high rez printers a Z510 and 650. These are the same type of printers used to “make” the stop motion puppets for “Coraline” and “ParaNorman”. These printers were installed three weeks ago at IIM and so far they have printed dozens of toy “Cutie Boo” characters for Toy Fair, dozens of dinosaur skulls for a paleontology conference, an architectural invention and more.

Kamela Portuges, co-owner of IIM, explained, “This dovetails nicely with our molding, casting and painting services. However, it’s not as easy as it looks.” Kamela preps the drawings for the printers, converting 2D art to 3D if needed. Once pieces come out of the printer they are extremely fragile, until depowdered and infiltrated with glue or epoxy. However the detail is amazing. The dinosaur skulls, including delicate parts of the interior, are included in the 3D print. The replication of color, without hand painting, is perfect for toy samples.

3D printing technology is used by inventors, the toy industry, movies, jewelry, industrial design, architecture, automotive, dental and medical industries, education, geographic information systems, civil engineering, and many other fields. Analysts predict 3-D printing will become a \$3.1 billion industry by 2016, driven by manufacturers of everything from shoes to sedans.

“Today, 3D Printers have evolved to make a variety of objects using a laser or extruder (the material output part of the printer, best described as a futuristic hot glue gun) that move along an X, Y and Z axis to build an object in three dimensions, layer by layer, sometimes only microns thick at a time, depending on the desired resolution of the object. This method eliminates a lot of wasted materials, as any leftover powdered substrate can be immediately used on another project, alleviating the need for injection molding, setup costs, cutting, sanding, drilling and having scraps of material left over, as is common with traditional manufacturing methods. The most impressive part: economies of scale cease to be an issue, as costs for single parts become standardized in relation to the costs of the material being used. But the most stimulating possibility of this technology is unlimited customization. If you don’t like a feature of the part or object you are creating, simply tweak the CAD drawing to include your improvement and print another one. “ (<http://www.forbes.com/sites/gcaptain/2012/03/06/will-3d-printing-change-the-world/>)

There are many applications for 3D printers in the puppet world, from printing puppet heads, props, and scenery to toy replicas of puppet characters. We will bring some of the 3D prints in to the next Guild meeting for all to see. If you can spread the word that 3D printing is available at IIM, that would be great!





### **Puppet Art Theater**

February 15, 10:00 am  
"The Boy Who Cried Wolf"  
El Dorado Library  
Francie Dillon Fundraiser

February 16, 11:00 am  
"The Boy Who Cried Wolf"  
Portola Library  
Dad and Me at the Library

February 23, 1:00 pm  
"Peter and the Wolf"  
Davis High School  
With Davis High School Symphony

### **Fratello Marionettes**

February 23, 11:00 AM  
"Aladdin"  
Windsor Library @ 9291 Old Redwood Hwy.  
Windsor, CA

### **Storybook Puppet Theatre**

Saturdays and Sundays  
11:00 am, 2:00 pm, 4:00 pm  
The Enchanted Well, Feb. 15–March 31  
Beware the Bogart, a mischievous Scottish imp that likes to live in a well and echo people who talk into it. And the water from his well is enchanted—if you spill it on yourself, you can't stop talking. When this happens to poor Meg she's forced to try and out-talk the Bogart. Can she do it? Come visit the Scottish Highlands at Fairyland and find out. Script by David C Jones. Puppets & scenery by John Gilkerson

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Book Review, "CABINETS OF WONDER: a Passion for Collecting"

Text by Christine Davenne. Photos by Christine Fleurent. Translated from French. Another treasure found in the Sonoma County Library System. Published by Abrams, 2012.

Steampunkers, puppet slammers, and puppeteers with a taste for the unusual as well as the dusty and melancholy should love this book. It is a virtual treasure trove for the eye and the brain, and quite inspirational. Enter the World of the Curious. Peruse antiquities through the ages then enter "Cabinets of Wonder Today." [A chapter heading.] Take a side journey through Victoriana and a chapter entitled "The Cabinet of Wonder as Theater of the World."

Over 200 full color photographs are included, most of them full page (14" x 8 1/2"). Lots of bones and skulls. Text too. Tour this book and remember to return to this century and reality, please.  
submitted by Elisheva Hart



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This was sent in by Ron Coulter of Coulter and Star ventriloquists. <http://www.CoulterandStar.com>

Here is a link to a puppet flash mob:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EF7-Ln0vcNo>

It may be of interest.

And this is the description from the Youtube page:

From November 2 thru the 4, 2012, puppeteers from the Great Lakes Region of the Puppeteers of America gathered together at the Potawatomi Inn in Angola, Indiana. While there, they celebrated their Annual Puppet Potlatch. The opening event - called an Ice Breaker - was a Puppet Flash Mob.

# February 2013

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
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
					The Boy... Cried Wolf	The Boy... Cried Wolf
					The Enchanted Well	The Enchanted Well
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
The Enchanted Well					The Enchanted Well	The Enchanted Well
					Alladin	Peter and the Wolf
24	25	26	27	28	1	2
The Enchanted Well					The Enchanted Well	

San Francisco Bay Area Puppeteers Guild  
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## *Save the Date(s)*

The Programs committee has agreed on the following dates and locations for 2013:

- Spring Meeting on Saturday, April 6 at Happy Hollow Park and Zoo in San Jose
- Summer Meeting/Puppet Faire on Saturday, August 24 at Fairyland
- A Mini-Meeting with Lee Armstrong for TV Puppetry and Movie Night is penciled in for September -North Bay
- Mini-Meeting to attend open dress rehearsal for “Driveway Follies” on Wednesday, October 30 - Oakland
- Fall Meeting on Saturday, November 9 -San Francisco
- Holiday Party 2014 on Sunday, January 26 -North Bay

If anyone has a suggested meeting place for the November meeting in San Francisco, please contact Jesse Vail.