



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

September 2019

It's time to sign up for the upcoming Nick Barone Workshop which will feature Crankies...what they are, how to use them, and ...Let's make one!

Crankies can take many forms (below is an example). Check out the first article in this newsletter for details. *There'll be cheesecake...*



Inside this issue:

Get ready for the Crankie Workshop in honor of Nick Barone

Review of MALAVIKAGNIMITRAM

A visit to the museum: Bear Flag puppets and performance review

Sesame Street Puppet Stamps

New Show to play this month in SF

College Puppet Class at UCSC

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The Crankies are coming!

Our 3rd annual (ish) Nick Barone Memorial Workshop will be held on Saturday, October 5th at the Veteran's Hall in Benicia. The address is; 1150 First St. Benicia, CA 94510.

A crankie is an old storytelling art form where a long illustrated scroll is inserted into a box with an open front. The scroll is wound onto 2 spools that are hand cranked like an old time film reel. Stories can be narrated or accompanied with music or singing.



Camilla Henneman, whose credits include Ghostbusters 2, Gorillas in the Mist, Harry & the Hendersons, Cocoon, etc., will be leading the workshop. Camilla Henneman (recently retired teacher & special effects artist) has been making crankies with her students for the past few years, as well as creating crankie pieces for puppet slams and potpourri. Puppeteers use crankies as moveable shadow screens, moveable backgrounds for puppet shows, intersperse puppets and a crankie to tell a story and other inventive applications.

In the workshop we will look at examples of performances from contemporary crankie artists. We will explore different types of crankies that you can make with children as well as ones you can perform with on a stage. Participants will have the opportunity to make a full sized crankie in the workshop. Materials will be provided. You are encouraged to bring your own scissors and exacto knives. Feel free to bring other materials and tools (rubber stamps, markers, pens, crayons) that you would like to work with as well. The workshop is open to guild members and non members.

The workshop will run from 10 am to 3:00 pm. The fee (includes all materials!) is for members is \$35 and the fee for non members is \$50. If you'd like to become a member, join at <http://www.sfbapg.org/membership/join/>, then register at the member rate. This low fee is possible through the generosity of the Nick Barone Memorial Fund. Sign up for the workshop at Sign Up Genius, <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20F0A44ACAE2AA7F49-crankie>. You can pay on line or by check. If you want to mail a check, please sign up, and mail your check made out to SFBAPG, to Valerie Nelson (Treasurer) P.O. Box 1258, Vallejo, CA 94590 by Sept 18. If you have any other questions, you can contact Camilla Henneman at camhenneman@gmail.com or Judy Roberto at be_artsy@hotmail.com

At 3:00 we will be treated to the new crankie show from Magical Moonshine theater. We will share cheesecake and memories of Nick Barone, the inspiration for our workshop.

We are looking for a few people to make a cheesecake. Please let Judy Roberto know if you are willing to make a cheesecake, be_artsy@hotmail.com. We will supply the recipe. See you in October!

"MALAVIKAGNIMITRAM" [Sanskrit] a review by Elisheva Hart

This wonderful puppet event is a romantic comedy, and a musical puppet play based on the epic written by Mahakavi Kalidas. The lavish puppet and dance musical show was presented by the Dhaatu Puppet Theatre, an amazing company from Bangalore, India. It was directed by Anupama Hoskere (with commentary-and dialogue-in English) and is part of her successful quest to revive the centuries old traditional marionette style of the Karnataka area.

The 3 hour program is touring 20 cities in the US as a fund raiser for needy children of India. AND the very first performance was in our Bay Area at the Hindu Temple in Livermore on July 13, 2019,

The Sanskrit title links together two names: Angimitra-the Shunga King who falls in love with a portrait of the beautiful Malavika, who is the servant of his wife #1. This Epic takes place during the Shunga Dynasty of the 2nd century.

The show consists of the classical arts of music and dance, along with a unique string puppet production, PLUS the exquisite dancing of Divya Hoskere, a human being of amazing talent who portrays the servant girl Malavika.

...PAUSE PLEASE...you are highly recommended to first watch the video [here](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F_19F3rb2-8):
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F_19F3rb2-8

After seeing 2 min 50 sec. of tidbits, you can give yourself a back drop of full color, action, and music, for the rest of the article. Things to look for in the video include:

1. Lovely colored "ground fog" and the live dancer.
2. The King's Jester. Not an Elizabethan one with bells and coxcomb hat, but dressed in a red cap with gold seams. He is a comedian, and the only puppet who has jointed wrists as well as jointed elbows and shoulders. He keeps the plot moving.
3. For several nanoseconds a puppet manipulator's hand dips down into sight, giving us a view of the controls. And once again.
4. SHADOW PUPPETEERS DELIGHT! During a shadow battle with Greek invaders, the shadow screens-placed end to end-give the illusion of looking through many windows in a long passenger train, as the army advances.

Did you enjoy the video? Our audience did not have the fog machine or the colorful fog, possibly because of needing to streamline the luggage -but- unless we had already previewed this video we didn't know what we missed.



Besides the puppets were there. The stages worked. Dancing and music were superb! That's what mattered..

The plane-with the performers, equipment, and so forth-was 7 hours late arriving here! I got to the auditorium "early", expecting to get a seat close to the stage so I could fully report the event, only to find the seats filled almost to the back wall. Not only touches were being finished here and there on stage, but the electronics were "not behaving"!

It was quite a wait until the program began. The audience, including small children, were very calm and understanding of the delays, spending the time connecting with friends.

And soon Anupama Hoskere, the director, came out and told us about the story we were to see, where it fit in history, and about the celebration at the end of monsoon season where participants would circle up in groups of about 20 and dance. She and another puppeteer demonstrated this with 4 marionettes.. Her tip for the audience is "Being a Puppeteer requires a lot of Strength and a lot of Patience." There are 4 puppeteers in the troupe, including her daughter, the dancer! [Talk about multitasking!]

Since the event was a 'Support A Child' fundraiser, once the electronics behaved we saw a well made video of the great work which this charity is doing in India.

The participants in the program performed a traditional ritual to bring favor to the event while the audience was encouraged to participate with clapping the beat.

STAGE SET UP

Three puppet stages, all in a row side by side, were set up on the auditorium's built in stage. Years ago, in a world wide puppet book, I read that in areas where saris are worn-especially where the shadow puppets are extremely large-the stage's screen is measured in sari lengths. Perhaps this was a similarly measured.

To my amazement the performing areas kept changing shapes and levels as the play progressed. Usually the top half of the fabric shielded the puppet manipulators from view. The marionettes performed in a recessed area defined by the bottom half of the fabric. Sometimes the top half was open, which allowed for shadow puppet screens, etc. These switches and changes in the performing areas are all done perfectly in sync, and without stage blackouts! Rehearsals have really paid off in all areas of this very professional troupe.

And the intermission allowed more time to rearrange things where necessary. At each end of the row of stages was a tree with a large hole the trunk, symbolizing a forest at the end of the play, and giving the puppets a place to peer out of.

TO BE CONTINUED IN THE NEXT ISSUE



Review of Magical Moonshine Theatre's Bear Flag Show Puppet Exhibit and

Reception by Elisheva Hart

Several puppeteers (including Mary Nagler on a quick stop to the Bay Area en route to the P of A Festival), friends of puppets and puppeteers, and local Vallejo friendly families gathered on July 6, 2019, at an Afternoon Reception for the Magical Moonshine Theatre's California Bear Flag Puppet Show Exhibit. Appropriately this took place at the "Vallejo Naval and Historical Museum" located at 734 Marin Street, Vallejo.

Mike and Valerie Nelson hosted us, giving us a synopsis of their California history show which is set in the town of Sonoma, in 1848. The story is humorous, and based on a true story of Yankees [not the ball team] who took locals hostage and declared themselves >"THE REPUBLIC OF CALIFORNIA."<

During the Sesquicentennial Celebration of the raising of the first California Bear Flag, this show toured many 4th grades as part of our state curriculum, a year long unit on the history of California. On display at the museum were some photos of these performances, including one of 10 year old Benjie Nelson (their son) blowing a long horn as part of the show during this performance in his 4th grade classroom! [Nowadays Benjie's oldest child is almost this old.]

This puppet show has a big cast of characters from L O N G ago, which would be unfamiliar to young children. So to help the audiences identify who was who, the Nelsons placed the table top puppets-who were not performing-into little name labeled portrait galleries on the side of the stage. This helped the onlookers identify each character by reading its name as it was lifted out of the gallery and placed on stage. The faces of the main characters are based on actual contemporary portraits of themexcept for one rascal who was a very unique



fellow-living rough, stained ragged clothes, uncombed shaggy hair, enormous beard, etc. There are no portraits of him, (probably for good reason)-so the Nelson's invented one! During the museum display, copies of the contemporary portraits were put inside the galleries with the full length puppets on display.

Three types of puppets were utilized-each type having its own performing area. Some of the puppets appeared on different stages, and these duplicates are therefore scaled proportionally.

Hand puppets performed within the proscenium of the massive main stage. The lovely curving arch at the top of the backdrop of the hand puppet stage is a copy of the original proscenium of the 19th century Napa opera house. [During and after the gold rush many small new towns wanted to prove how cultured they really were and bankrolled opera houses, including San Francisco.

Table top puppets performed on 2 trunk-shaped platforms equipped with wheels, which could be rolled to and fro in front of the width of the hand puppet stage. The trunk tops are at a lower level than the stage. These table top puppets are the tallest puppets of all. For instance John Fremont, when performing on the wagon, is 3 feet tall.

The 3rd grouping is a motley combo of shadows, and flat cutouts-who could turn their heads side to side and/or flop down as needed. This gave a little spice to the battle scenes.

The heads and hands of tabletop puppets and hand puppets were cast in plaster of Paris molds, using a mix of latex rubber and clay called Flexible Slip or Mannequin rubber. The sculpture of the faces appropriately look a little hand hewed-appropriate to the era and the portraits. Valerie demonstrated the table top puppet of Benicia Vallejo (General Mariano Vallejo's wife), performing on top of the trunk-wagon. Benicia sang an exquisite lullaby (with the help of Val) to her pink blanket swaddled infant-in-arms. The Vallejo family ultimately had 16 offspring! The song "they" sang to the child was "La Primacera", historically appropriate, and from the wonderful resource songbook "They Came Singing-Songs of California History".



Unfortunately, this exciting show has not been performed recently. It takes a lot of complex rehearsing to prepare it and would need a terrific sponsor with many bookings encouraged by the clamor of 4th graders throughout our state, or at the invitation of the Annual California State Fair!

[SFBAPG NEWSLETTER, May, 2019, pages 9 and 10 have more details of this hard-to-believe history plus photos of the Bear Flag and the stage full of puppets!]

Next we went up the museum stairs and elevator to a lovely small room set up with approximately 120 folding chairs, creating an intimate auditorium. Just a perfect size for puppet performances! Along the walls were beautifully displayed antiques arranged in vignettes, such as a lady's dressing room.

We had the pleasure of seeing a "vintage" Magical Moonshine Theatre shadow show from 1994. It is of an ancient coyote creation story entitled "Coyote brings Fire". It is from indigenous people of the Klamath River area. This tale explains how Coyote brings Fire to The [human] People. The puppets are made of raw hide (the only time they used this material for puppets.) The shapes of the puppets are very simple, without decoration.

[AND the flowing outlines of many of the puppets reminded me of the endless pages of loops which we made in grammar school in the 1940's with straight pens dipped into inkwells. We were learning to form cursive letters of the alphabet. Seeing the puppet shapes was a lot more fun! And not so messy!]

Mike was the Orchestra and the Story Narrator. Besides a wooden flute he mostly used thumpers, shakers, or percussive "stuff". This included a fantastic drum "tree" contraption which he had whipped up from a mic stand, some pvc pipe covered in gaff tape plus paddle drums which were sprouting out sideways in many directions from the mic stand.

The Story-which is possibly thousands of years old-was smoothly manipulated by Val.....In the beginning The People and Animals were friends. It was COLD. Fire was given to The People to warm them. BUT the Yellow Jacket People stole Fire and kept it for themselves. (The Yellow Jackets had a perfect sound effect as they flew....a rattle combined with a whirring sound-sort of like a mini bull roarer, only high pitched!)

Coyote snatches Fire and runs with it until becoming exhausted, then passes Fire on to Mountain Lion, who runs as far as possible and then passes Fire on to Beaver, who passes it to Rabbit, and then to Frog. Frog swallows Fire!!!!Frog spits out the last Spark onto the bank of River. The Spark goes into a piece of Wood.

Thus The People could recreate Fire from Wood, thanks to Coyote and other Animal Friends.

The audience enjoyed the show very much. Val was praised for her manipulation of the characters, especially the adroit way she handled the passing of Fire from one Animal to the next. And Mike was praised on his narration and accompaniment of the Story. All well deserved by this creative team. I had a bit of extra excitement-being interviewed as an audience member immediately after the performance by a woman reporter from "Vallejo Times-Herald!"



Next, on this day's menu of delightful events was celebrating General Mariano Vallejo's 212th birthday which happened 2 days before the reception on July 4th! Sr. y Sra. Vallejo (AKA Mariano and Benicia Vallejo) were at the museum for the Reception in the form of Giant Parade Puppets which are featured in Vallejo's annual 4th of July Parade. Many members of SFBAPG yearly assist with this portion of the traditional celebration by also wrangling several other giant puppets during the parade.

The Nelsons had selected a favorite Californio birthday song with which to serenade Mariano. But after rehearsing it the gathering kind of dissipated....OOPS....and we didn't sing. The giant puppets were very stoic about this omission, especially the Birthday Boy. They made no comment when asked....on or off the record. We humans however dug into 2 yummy vanilla flavored cakes smothered with white frosting and glazed cherries on top. And drank punch.

We Guilders who have attended other events produced by Mike and Val-for instance Puppet Cabarets-as well as those who had not, were delighted to see Val leading one of their 'trademark' Make-A-Puppet 'free' workshops. Mike was upstairs also being interviewed by the Vallejo Times-Herald reporter and striking the set, packing puppets and disassembling the Orchestra, etc.

Val deliberately set the work tables directly in front of the white painter wall, leaving room for her to stand behind the tables, facing the participants. The supplies included various small precut paper shapes , skinny BBQ skewers (with the points removed), and small cardboard open top food trays-like for french fries-purchased at a Smart & Final grocery store. These were used by the kids to hold the shapes they had collected for their puppets-to-be. Glue stix were used to fasten the puppets together.

Three completely different characters-assembled using the above "stuff"- were brought as examples to seed the children's imaginations, also insuring that everyone wouldn't make the same character.

Their creations could be used both as stick puppets and manipulated above the rim of a table, or, under the influence of "Coyote Brings Fire", used as shadow puppets.

Val had deliberately set up in front of the biggest space of white wall in the room, just for the use of shadows. To light the shadows, small handheld tubular LED flashlights (like those sold at check-out counters for impulse sales) were focused, as an intense spotlight, onto the white wall so the stick puppets could become sharply defined shadow puppets.

Mike says that RECHARGEABLE ones can be purchased for about 12 dollars!

At least one of the participants had made 2 puppets and Guilder Tia "jumped in" to coach the novice puppeteer on ways to have the puppets interact with each other.

One little girl actually turned her "shapes box" into one of her puppets! To me it resembled an indigenous tule



boat cruising through the California marshes with its poles resting across the open top. She must have really tuned into the shadow play!

Val is very grateful that the Guilders pitched in to help clean up after the workshop.....many hands, etc. We Guilders are very glad to attend this wonderful afternoon of many treats. It was the ending to a very sweet gathering of many people-but not too many to relax and enjoy each other- and of course all the wonderful events. THANK YOU VALLEJO NAVAL AND HISTORICAL MUSEUM, AND ESPECIALLY THE ARTISTS! A BIG ROUND OF APPLAUSE FOR FELLOW GUILDERS, VALERIE AND MIKE NELSON OF MAGICAL MOONSHINE THEATRE!

(NOTE, this exhibit continues as a special, semi-permanent exhibit)

ARE YOU A SESAME STREET FAN??

Add to your Muppet Stuff Collection! Rush to a post office and buy a set of lovely tiny portraits, featuring 16

named actors in the recently issued "Sesame Street....50 Years and Counting". These Forever stamps are about 1 x 1 1/2 inches. The end of their folder has a cute pile of Muppets, 6" tall and 3" wide-not to use as postage, just decorative. This



panel is also sticky-backed, although a little difficult to peel. So use scissors and glue if needed. We'll never tell. The price: a mere \$8.80. Such a deal.

Here is a question to ponder when stuck in traffic....or not.

Q. Since human beings have to be dead to be featured on a US Postage Stamp, do puppets have to become alive to appear on a stamp? (An answer might be...."Only the Velveteen Rabbit Knows!")

If you are not a collector go ahead and play "Match the Muppet Stamp to the Contents of the Envelope". For instance, I used "SNUFFLE-upagus' stamp on my Kaizer bill. If you are a collector, yet still want to play this brain game, buy 2 sets.

Thanks to Guilder Pam Wade for turning this reporter on to this exciting news! Elisheva

For Sale, best offer (Money will be donated to SFBAPG)

Complete Shadow Puppet Show for Preschoolers through third graders. Works well for birthday Parties, Preschools, Libraries, and Elementary School Classrooms, even senior facilities or Convalescent Homes.

Shows included: Nursery Rhymes, The Very Busy Spider, The Old Lady Who Swallowed the Fly, John Jacob Jingle Hymer Schmidt, The Three Billy Goats Gruff and The Tears of the Dragon (with Script). Show lasts about 45 minutes if you do all stories. Some of the stories/songs include audience participation.

Included: Wood framed hinged fold up stage, curtains, shadow screen, lights, puppets, packing box to store puppets, rolling box for storage of puppets and equipment and show set up, extension cord, light switch box that is foot controlled, carrying bag for the light poles and curtains. Everything is included, nothing else is needed except the puppeteer!



FYI: Takes about 30 minutes to set up and tear down and needs about a 6 foot square space to set up in with an outlet to plug into nearby . It is a one person show and takes two loads from the car to the space you set up in. The stage folds up to about 4 foot square 7 inches wide.

It's a great show for teaching school age children how to do a shadow puppet show themselves. You can use the stories to: encourage using simple songs or stories and how to add surprises, to teach voices, how to make and move a shadow puppet, and how to make a simple stage from a cardboard box and sunlight.

Contact: Pam Wade 916 634 6539 if you're interested or have any questions.

abalonepam@att.net. The stage is in Sacramento right now, but we can work out how to get it to its new owner.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is a very generous offer from Pam Wade. She is donating the proceeds to the guild, so make your offer generous as well! Imagine how long it would take you to make all this stuff! And THANK YOU, PAM!

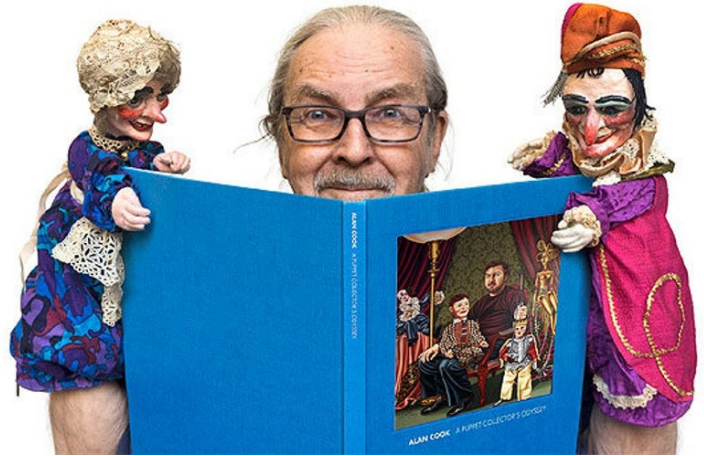
In Memory of Alan Cook

As many of you may already know, Alan Cook, the storied puppet historian and puppet collector, died in Los Angeles on July 10, 2019. Alan's family would love to celebrate his life with his beloved puppet community. If friends would like to send cards or photos or some other expressions of love, they can send them to:

Alan's Memorial
c/o Phil Morrison
371 West Palm St
Altadena, CA 91001

If you would like to email a memory about Alan or any words of support, Alan's niece, Barbara Edmunds, would love to receive your email and she will make sure it is posted at Alan's Celebration of Life.

Barbara's email is info@wildflowerconfections.com



CALENDAR <http://www.sfbapg.org/events/calendar/>

NEW SHOW: The Fasting Girls

Written by Amanda Jane Shank

Directed by Alexis Macnab

Friday, 09/27 8pm

Sat., 09/28 2pm & 8pm

Sun., 09/29 2 pm

at Z Space, SF

To escape a future determined by others, a young woman chooses to disappear entirely.

The Fasting Girls is a new play told in puppetry about the fragile tether between body and soul, power and powerlessness. While Eva is courted by a suitor twice her age, her younger sister notices that she has stopped eating. A private investigation of endurance becomes a public act when Eva's caretakers praise her as a local miracle. Using shadow, Bunraku-style puppetry and miniatures, *The Fasting Girls* asks: what would you give up in order to preserve your personal sovereignty?



Puppets are built by Guild member Nao Kobayashi and both Nao and Fred Reilly will be performing. Lee Armstrong will be attending the Sat., 2 pm show and encourages others to get their tickets at www.zspace.org and join the Guild group.

Jim Henson and the Art of the Muppets - Only at UCSC

There are very few opportunities to study puppetry in the Bay Area. Outside of Guild workshops and the occasional West Coast P of A Festival, people generally head to the East Coast for courses at the University of Connecticut, and to centers such as the O'Neill and the Atlanta Center for the Puppetry Arts.

Conceived by Professor Kathy Foley (Current president of UNIMA-USA), **Jim Henson and the Art of the Muppets** is a very popular course at UC Santa Cruz, with about 250 students taking the course each Fall. It's a large lecture class, exploring the work of Jim Henson, contextualizing his work in the spheres of world puppetry (theory and practice), popular culture, and developments in television/film. Students will gain an understanding of theory and practice of puppetry in America and be exposed to the variety of puppetry styles in other countries. It ends with Henson's continuing impact on American puppetry and object theatre, work of artists funded by the Henson Foundation and Heather Henson's IBEX Puppetry projects such as Handmade Puppet Dreams & Puppet Slams.

It course also has practical aspects, with most lectures including demos on...

- Basic Stage and TV Puppet Manipulation
- Writing for the Puppet Theater
- Puppet Building Techniques

Students finish with a creative project: building a puppet or creating a live or video puppet vignette. The enthusiasm of the students and the variety of the creative projects is quite amazing.

Students leave with an appreciation of the work of a master artist who used the power of the media to make a better world, and will hopefully become eager audience members for traditional and experimental puppetry. The course demos encourage this next generation to use their new puppetry skills, such as leading a youth group puppet activity or as a parent who makes and uses puppets in creative play with their own children.

I know that Santa Cruz is a bit of a commute (although I did have a Muppet aficionado who drove in from Walnut Creek for this course) but if anyone is interested, you can find more info at <https://catalog.ucsc.edu/en/Current/General-Catalog/Courses/THEA-Theater-Arts/Lower-Division/THEA-80L>. If you're interested in auditing or visiting this class, you need permission from the lecturer, so you can email me at ldarmstr@ucsc.edu.

If anyone else is teaching any puppetry courses, I encourage you to let the Guild know about them. Let's encourage puppetry courses on the West Coast so we can grow our own puppet enthusiasts!

Lee Armstrong, Lecturer, Theater Dept., UCSC, [SFBAPG Librarian](#)

Send newsletter articles to newsletter@sfbapg.org and calendar listings to events@sfbapg.org



Photos (above) are from a UCSC Student Puppet Exhibit