



The official newsletter of  
**San Francisco Bay Area Puppeteers' Guild**  
*Looking for updates and missed information?  
Check for it at [SFBAPG.ORG](http://SFBAPG.ORG)*

*SFBAPG is a charter guild of the Puppeteers of America, Inc., a non-profit, tax exempt organization*

## MARCH 2020



*What has your wonderful Programming Committee been cooking up for you for upcoming events? Check it out in this newsletter; there's some amazing don't-miss stuff coming up, starting in March with One Puppet Magic with Lee Armstrong (sort of pictured above but that's not really what she usually looks like!) Making puppets out of wool felt is something many have wanted to learn (environmentally friendly, non-toxic and fun!) is also on the slate, as well as a special performance workshop. Read about them all, below, and enjoy some of the many talents and skills of our Bay Area puppeteer community!*

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## Upcoming Guild Meetings & Events

Lots of exciting programs and events coming up!

### MARCH GUILD MEETING

“One Puppet Magic!”

Sat. Mar. 21 2 - 5 pm

Sonoma Valley Regional Library, Sonoma, 755 W Napa St, Sonoma

This free workshop covers the basics of bringing a hand puppet & a “muppet-style” puppet to life & simple ways to use one puppet with small group audiences. Hand puppet technique will build on UNIMA award-winning Nikki Tilroe’s “4 Basic Principles.” Nikki Tilroe was the Director of Frog Print Theatre, Toronto. She was a dancer who combined this training with Czech hand puppet techniques and mime and was a master of puppet movement. Lee worked with Nikki for 5 years in Toronto.

The “Muppet-style” puppetry will add mouth sync., etc. to the mix of hand puppet techniques. Lee will share tips from 3 years working on the Muppets “Fraggle Rock” to make your puppetry shine.

Part demo & part “hands-on,” this workshop is packed with ideas for teachers, librarians, storytellers, youth group leaders & puppet enthusiasts from teens to adults. Good for beginners, but also useful ways at exploring puppet movement for the more experienced puppeteer. Then explore simple routines that can be adapted for libraries, classrooms, etc. for fun, and to bring stories and curriculum to life.

Optional: Make a sock puppet (1:15-1:45) or bring a puppet to the workshop, or puppets will be available for use.

**Lee Armstrong** will be leading the workshop. She is co-owner of Images In Motion, [www.imagesmedia.com](http://www.imagesmedia.com), whose clients have included Cartoon Network, LeapFrog Video, Goodby-Silverstein, ESPN, USDA Forest Service, LucasFilms, etc. She teaches “Jim Henson and the Art of The Muppets” to 300 students at UCSC and credits include Jim Henson’s “Fraggle Rock” the cult classic “Being John Malkovich” and numerous commercials, TV and film projects.

**As of March 2<sup>nd</sup>, this registration will be opened up to the public.** Registration is limited. To guarantee seats for you and your friends, sign up now at <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20F0A44ACAE2AA7F49-onepuppet>.

GUILD EVENT: FELTING WORKSHOP Sat., Apr., 18, 9am to 4pm at the Early Learning Center Contra Costa College, 2600 Mission Bell Dr., San Pablo, CA

(1 hr lunch break noon to 1pm. Bring lunch, or find eateries nearby)

Create a unique wool felted puppet for your classroom or show. Attendees will learn a shortcut method to create a puppet head from wool fleece, using a needle felting technique. Both “dry felting” and “wet felting” techniques will be learned.

A total of 30 participants will be accepted for this workshop. Until April 11, 15 spaces will be held for SFBAPG members, and 15 spaces will be held for Contra Costa College students. We will accept names for a wait list if necessary. On April 11 we will fill from the wait list.

**There will be a fee for the workshop,** to be announced.

Reserve your seat now at <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f0a44acae2aa7f49-guild>.

Certificates of Professional Development hours are available to attendees.

Parking is FREE

**Judy Roberto** will be leading the workshop. She spent 30 years as an Arts and Puppetry educator in K-12 classes in Los Angeles, San Luis Obispo, and in San Jose, where she directed the Happy Hollow Puppet Theater for 10 years. Credits include puppeteer in *The Muppet Movie*.

**MAY GUILD MEETING** Sat., May 30<sup>th</sup>, 3-5:30 pm. Benicia Public Library, the Dona Benicia Room, 150 E L St, Benicia

**Puppet Show. "Stinky Tales" at 3 pm** is an interactive storytelling experience bringing children and puppets together to explore the everyday social problems of childhood. And the creatives, **Doug & Annie Zesiger**, will share their new web series, <https://www.stinkytales.com>, bringing big laughs while teaching empathy and confidence to 3-6 year olds. Bring your friends and family. Great for all ages, 3 to 103! Guild meeting after the performance

**Doug** is a master classroom teacher, storyteller and puppeteer. **Annie** is a puppeteer and music teacher who writes original children's music.

Guild social and meeting will be from 4-5:30ish pm.

EVENT: PUPPETS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS at Contra Costa College, Sat., May 9

Using a variety of puppet types, including hand puppets, shadow puppets and rod puppets, this workshop will focus on learning and teaching students how to make puppets become "alive". Puppet movement and staging will be explored, with hands-on activities, and staging options. Certificates of Professional Development hours are available to attendees.

**Pacific Northwest Region PUPPET FESTIVAL: Left Coast Puppet Love Fest – Aug 6-9, Portland, Oregon.** Fun-filled days of workshops and shows, with puppet exhibit, puppet store and more! Festival Directors: Mary Nagler & Dustin Curtis

**Annual Puppet Faire at Fairyland, Oakland, Sept. 5-6.** Two days of puppet shows, a puppet exhibit and lots of fun to celebrate Fairyland's 70th birthday (opened 09/02/1950) and the Guild's 65th!

**Please note** that Guild Meetings are free. Guild sponsored Events have a small fee to cover the cost of the leader/performer, venue and supplies, if needed.

## PROGRAMMING HELP WANTED!

- ⌚ Would you like to suggest a program for a Guild meeting?
- ⌚ Do you have a show or skill that would be of interest to our membership?
- ⌚ Would you like to have a Guild meeting in your community and could provide your home, your local library, church, community center or...?
- ⌚ Would you like to be on the Programming Committee?

If so, please contact Lee Armstrong, [images@vom.com](mailto:images@vom.com), cell 707 738-5906 or anyone on the Programming Committee or Guild Board.



## Unbridled Thanks

The Programming Committee would like to thank the performers of our annual Holiday Party. Artists are given an honorarium as a way of thanking them for their show or workshop. However, both the shows for the party were donated. Michael and Valerie Nelson of Magical Moonshine Theatre offered their delightful “The Gunnywolf” and donated their honorarium back to the Founder’s Fund. This supports scholarships to attend puppet festivals or workshops. Camilla Henneman gave us her amazing popup book setting for “Anansi Tales” and donated her honorarium back to the Nick Barone Memorial Scholarship which

supports an annual workshop teaching in-depth puppet building or manipulation. We thank you for generous gift of time and talent!

## 65TH ANNIVERSARY PARTY FOR SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA PUPPETEERS GUILD!

Elisheva Hart

Once again-after a few years of partying at various other venues-we returned to Christ Presbyterian Church [CPC] In the Terra Linda section of San Rafael to celebrate our yearly Holiday Party!.

Many guilders indicated it definitely was a "Party Central Home Coming!". The buzz is, if we start early enough on a January Sunday afternoon, we can comfortably finish, clean up, and return to our various Bay Area home locations and still get a good night's sleep.

(MEMO to organizers: when checking the calendar for a suitable January date in the future, be aware that Chinese New Year Celebrations cause a lot of traffic jams. Luckily this is a Lunar holiday and the calendar date varies each year.)



Party attendees began arriving at 3 pm so they had time to check out the puppet displays, to decide which prizes to buy "lucky" tickets for, to ooh and ahh at the table decorations.....AND especially to locate FRIENDS-old, new and future ones!!

One lucky young girl arrived with her parents in time to create a dragon puppet, with the guidance of our Guild President, Judy Roberto. And an appropriately glamorous, fierce dragon it was indeed. Gung Hay Fat Choy!!

At 3:30 people found chairs for watching the highly anticipated performance of "The Gunny Wolf", presented by the Magical Moonshine Theater and performed by Valerie and Michael Nelson. Most of the children preferred sitting on the carpet of course.

Mike gave us a brief intro into their newest show. He explained about the Bohemian style marionettes they were using, which have a rod out the top of their heads for the puppeteer to hold, and demonstrated how the limbs etc., are controlled with strings.

The story is of the folktale/Little Red Riding Hood genre. A n upright, bouncing Bunny hops on stage into the flowery garden in front of her home. She was hopping along to the folk tune, "Little Liza Jane". This was the first of several folk songs sung by Val and Mike and played by Mike on a banjo ukulele (Ed. Note: the instrument was among several that Mike inherited from guild member Howie Leifer). Later he also switched to harmonica as needed.



Being a good bunny, Liza tried to find amusement in her front yard by walking up one end and down the other end of her teeter totter and back again-and again. She called for her Mom, who was busy cleaning inside their house, to come play with her, etc. Mom was too busy right now. Hank, a colorful, medium sized frog hops into the yard, all excited to tell his friend Liza that he is going to be in the Frog Town Talent Show!!! and WIN with his Hopping Ability! Realizing that hopping is not unique among frogs, Liza offers to come sing so Hank can dance. Obviously since Liza is a rabbit, this won't "fly, eerrr, hop, eerrr win"! Soon Melville, another, larger frog buddy ( who has a differently brightly colored skin) joins them. Finally after a lot of funny trial and error, Hank winds up on top of Melville and they create a singing cowboy act! \*Spontaneous applause\* from the audience! Mom reminds Liza Jane NOT to go into her favorite place to play- - - the forest--- because of the Gunny Wolf! Her daughter agrees. But..... Liza gets very involved following a monarch butterfly. Without realizing it she goes deeper into the woods while picking flowers.

The scenery of the house and garden then folds and changes into Gunny Wolf's area of the woods. He hears Liza singing and...then he asks her to sing a song for him! "Not the loud one, the sweet little one." As Liza sings Gunny Wolf falls asleep. Quickly (and quietly) she runs part way home before Gunny Wolf awakens. This part is repeated until Liza finally arrives safely at home. Her frog buddies triumphantly hop-gallop on stage, thrilled at winning the talent contest, and all is well again.

Since Mike and Val work live [not prerecorded] they have a wonderful opportunity to reply to comments by the kids-incorporating their answers into the performance All their puppets' bodies and costumes were repurposed out of sweaters or sweater-like -used-garments purchased at thrift shops! Gunny Wolf inhabits an amazing patchwork of stylish geometrical shapes.

This folk tale is possibly Appalachian---or African! All the illustrated picture books that the Nelsons viewed had Liza and the other characters as very white people. So they decided to use animals for the characters, which gives opportunity for all the members of the audience to identify with the puppets, and with the story.

Our puppeteers did not want Liza Jane to learn to be frightened of her play ground, the Woods. (Like Little Red Riding Hood!) Lisa needed to use her wits and talents (and sometimes her friends) to help herself solve problems.

The next event was new to our party, The Puppeteer Scavenger Hunt! Guilders had a list of several puppeteers to find by interviewing each other. For instance, "Find a puppeteer from the East Bay." Thanks Lee. This fun mixer helped us find new friends and connect with old ones as we raced around asking questions from everyone. There were unverified reports of puppets also joining into the active group!

Next we had a short Guild meeting-mostly introducing ourselves, and listening to a list of well planned meetings for the year 2020!

We had an early 5 pm delicious potluck dinner, and enjoying the tables which were wonderfully decorated in a holiday scheme by enthusiastic Guilders. Suddenly a lovely Happy Birthday Cake appeared-in honor of our Guild's 65 years! It was presented by Guild President, Judy Roberto, and Lee Armstrong who did the honors of cutting the cake while we sang "Happy Birthday, Dear SFBAPG!" [cha, cha, cha!] Our February 2020 SFBAPG Newsletter has a color photo on the front page of Lee cutting the cake! Also see pages 7 and 8 for more photos of our party.

While we were digesting our fab food, Camilla Henneman (Cam) presented the World Premier of her latest show, "Anansi Tales". It features Anansi, a trickster spider from Africa. The stage is very interesting and made as a pop-up book, which easily lends itself for scenery changes---and back again! Cam was inspired by Monica Leo's workshop at the 2018 National Puppeteers of America Festival.



Then adding to the splendor of the scenery, once we were introduced to Anansi himself (and he had figured out how to trick hard earned food from his fellow animals,) there was a charming (spaced out) parade of African animals: a little bush deer, an antelope, a zebra, a giraffe, and the hero, the Wart Hog....all created by Cam, using needle felting. Of course Anansi got his just desserts at the end of this amusing story. [Notice: Judy Roberto is presenting the guild with a much requested all day \*Felting Workshop\* at Contra Costa College, Sat. April 18th! See events listing at beginning of this newsletter for more information!]

We also enjoyed singing along with the songs Cam has picked, like "Down By the Banks of the Hanky Panky" which is familiar with most of us. She used a sound effect at one point, which sounded like farting..."to please the boys" (in the audience). Once Anansi has been put in his place, a surprise ending has a voice saying, "Does anyone have a melon ball to eat so we can get some sleep?" Then 3 or 4 spectators sitting in the front row took this cue and threw "melon balls" (cotton balls) at the stage. It was a very funny surprise indeed. And we, the audience was honored to be the first spectators of this new show.

Cam had opened her show with a brief bio, revealing she wanted to be a puppeteer since her childhood! And now she is retired and finally can concentrate on this. (Another great reason to invite children to see the puppet show(s) at our holiday party!) Cam is aiming this show for kid audiences at schools, and libraries and encouraged us to spread the news!

Raffle tickets were pulled=happy winners + happy scholarship funds!

A short puppet slam was next. Dusty Dutton did a musical number "You're the one that I want" from the musical "Grease," using 2 hand puppets she had designed at the FAO Schwartz web site several years ago. They take the parts of Danny and Sandy. Dusty said, "It's just for fun."



The other "Slammer" [is that a word?] was "Making Friends", by Ilene and Michael Kennedy, of the "Kennedy Puppets." This is a topic we all approve of.....and certainly was happening at our party. [Check the green curtain underneath the photo of Dusty on page 8, Feb. 2020 Newsletter].

Ilene has requested photos of either her "Making Friends" skit, OR her fantastic table decorations, (the table was located just by the drinks area-you all were there!) Please send to her at [hope922000@yahoo.com](mailto:hope922000@yahoo.com)

She's the fabulous person who not only is co-vice president, but also collects puppets year around to donate to high risk children. (Editor's Note: See Article "Extraordinary Puppet Project," below) Please send her some photos if you can. Thanks.

#### Some feedback from the church congregation and neighbors:

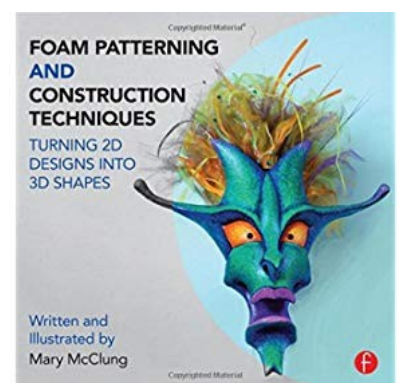
*"I was SO touched to hear Cam's story about finally becoming her childhood wish, a puppeteer!"*

*"Next year I will wait until I hear from you when the Puppet Party is. I am a teacher of 5 year olds, in the San Rafael Canal District (low income) and am in the middle of a several week puppet project. I hear so many people in the congregation who came this year rave about the shows. I could not come because we had an annual party on that day at our place. NEXT YEAR I AM GOING TO CHECK WITH ELIZABETH (AKA ELISHEVA) FIRST BEFORE WE PICK A DATE FOR OUR FAMILY GATHERING!" ---So be it.*

## New Books in the Guild Library

Come to the Mar. 21 meeting to be the 1<sup>st</sup> to check out our new Guild Library books!

**NEW! Foam Patterning and Construction Techniques: Turning 2D Designs into 3D Shapes** by Mary McClung explains how to create your theatrical prop, puppet, or costume design using the unique and tricky medium of foam. Step-by-step instructions, photographs, and explanations illustrate how to translate your design from paper to reality by creating custom "skin" patterns, followed by creation of a foam mockup. The book details how to bring your project to life with varied finishing techniques, including using fur and fabric coverings and





dying and painting foam. Numerous supplies, tools, and safety procedures and protocols are also covered. This book is recommended by our Guild member, Mary Nagler.



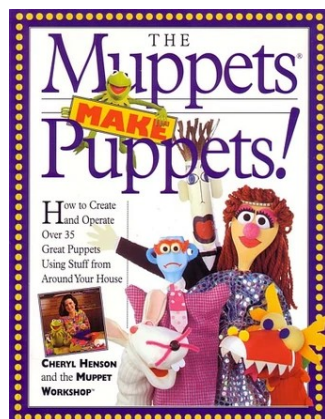
**NEW! Puppetry: How to Do It Paperback – by Mervyn Millar:** Written by an experienced theatre and puppetry director, Mervyn Millar's *Puppetry: How to Do It* focuses on the performer and the craft of bringing any puppet to life. No puppet-making is required to use this book: starting just with simple objects, it lays out the skills required to unlock a puppet's limitless potential for expression and connection with an audience. Inside you'll discover fifty practical, easy-to-follow exercises – for use in a group or on your own – to develop elements of the craft, build confidence and help you improve your puppetry through play and improvisation. Also included are sections on different types of puppet, thinking about how the puppeteer is presented on stage and how to direct and devise puppet performances.

**NEW! Puppet Planet: The Most Amazing Puppet-Making Book in the Universe by John Kennedy.**

There's a whole new world of puppets out there! In *Puppet Planet*, John Kennedy offers you the insight, tips and trade secrets that only a professional puppeteer can. Learn how to make 12 brand new puppets, then learn how to perform with them! Discover professional staging techniques, as well as ways to make the puppets come alive for your audience. Look inside to:

- Create the muscle laden, but amazingly soft, Stuffed Strongman
- Craft the delightfully sweet Pillow Buddy
- Build Professor Foaman, the smartest puppet on *Puppet Planet*
- Make the Shoe Box Monster, a fellow with a surprise hidden inside
- Plus so much more!

With variations for every puppet, tips, new techniques, complete material lists and easy to use patterns, you'll be ready to perform in no time! Peer behind the curtain with *Puppet Planet* and discover a world waiting to delight, amaze and thrill.



**NEW! Muppets Make Puppets: How to Create and Operate Over 35 Great Puppets Using Stuff from Around Your House:** Cheryl Henson, daughter of Muppets founder Jim Henson, along with the Muppet' Workshop (and Kermit the Frog), shows kids how to make over 35 puppets using stuff from around the house-with a little help from the googly eyes, funny noses, feathers, and fuzzy fur included. There's Dixie Dragon (principle ingredient, a sock), Jughead (small plastic jar), Spidey Jones (old work glove), Metalmouth (bandage boxes), Princess Esterrilla (wooden spoon and chopsticks), and Pinky Roach (pink eraser). In addition, the authors show how to talk the puppet talk and walk the puppet walk, how to write a script and put on a show. It's a complete kit. Just add glue, and a little imagination. Selection of the Book-of-the-Month Club.

And a selection of Guild books to go with the March Workshop including Jan VanSchuyver's excellent book "Storytelling Made Easy with Puppets." The Guild library has hundreds of books covering a variety of topics. Are you looking for books or DVD on a particular topic? Check out the Library List at <http://www.sfbapg.org/resources/library/>.

Books & DVD's are available for checkout at the meeting, to people who have been members for at least 6 months. Contact the Guild Librarian, Lee Armstrong, [sfbapglibrary@gmail.com](mailto:sfbapglibrary@gmail.com), 707 738-5906, and she will bring related books to the next meeting. If you have checked out any materials, please return them at the March meeting or mail them back to Lee at 720 Ladera Dr., Sonoma, CA 95476.



## Call for Nominations for Guild Board of Directors

Do you share our common goal of promoting the art of puppetry in the Bay Area? If so, you might be interested in serving on the SFBAPG Board. If so, please contact the Nominating Committee before April 15<sup>th</sup> for more information.

Eligibility: Candidates must have been members of the SFBAPG for at least one year prior to the elections.

Term limits: Each Board member shall serve for three years. Each Board member shall be allowed to serve no more than two consecutive three-year terms. Each Board member must want to be an active volunteer, taking on such positions as President, V.P., Programming, Membership, Publicity & Social Media, Hospitality, etc.

Candidates need to provide a short bio and photo to the Nominating Committee, prior to April 25<sup>th</sup>, to be published in the May newsletter. Elections will be at the May 30<sup>th</sup> Guild meeting in Benicia.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Your Nominating Committee

Judy Roberto, Judy Roberto [be\\_artsy@hotmail.com](mailto:be_artsy@hotmail.com), 408 981-7898

Elisheva Hart, [ishvahart@yahoo.com](mailto:ishvahart@yahoo.com), 707 978-8309

Another Guild member: To be appointed shortly

## Extraordinary Puppet Project

By Lee Armstrong

Ilene Kennedy of Kennedy Puppets does something quite extraordinary with her “spare” time. She has provided hundreds of puppets for children in need and for charity auctions. She does this with the assistance of her husband, Michael and daughter, Hope. Her house is brimming with fabrics, furs and puppets of all sorts. Some puppets are donated to her, which she refurbishes as needed, but the majority are her own creations.

Ilene was fascinated by puppets and started puppeteering at thirteen. With chronic health issues, puppets became her hospital companions. In 2009, she met her husband, Michael, who supported her interest and Kennedy Puppets of Vallejo was formed.

Ilene was part of Peace Puppets and helped organizations provide puppets to children overseas. Over 1500 puppets were given to children in Gaza, Iraq and other war-torn countries. She also established a puppetry 4H program when Hope was a child.

Closer to home, Ilene works with Bay Area organizations to provide sick, homeless and at-risk children a puppet for their Easter basket or under the Christmas tree. As she explains “I like to make children smile and give them a friend. Sometimes a commercial toy will be sold by a parent for drugs, whereas I find that a puppet guarantees that the child will have a gift that lasts.”



Kennedy Puppets has an active performing schedule and they also make custom puppets. Some of these larger custom puppets are donated to charity auctions for the homeless, animal shelters, the 4H, Teen Challenge, and more. Her puppets have ended up across America from Louisiana to Hawaii.

For Easter, she plans to donate 75 puppets for local Easter baskets and as soon as that's done, she'll move on to Christmas puppets. This means that she's designing and sewing puppets on a daily basis. Michael helps with cutting, turning & stuffing and Hope helps with cutting, then designing expressions, and applying faces and hair.

If you'd like to help with donations, Ilene says she can always use puppet patterns suitable for kids, fabric, fur, fleece, yarn, thread, trim, foam, glues and other puppet building supplies, also new and gently-used puppets. You can reach Ilene at [hope922000@yahoo.com](mailto:hope922000@yahoo.com) or call or text her cell 707 731-3232. She is usually at Guild meetings, which could be a possible meeting place to pass donations, to help kids in need of a "friend."



## From DELUX Puppets-a visit back to the Bay Area with show!

We will be in town on March 22 back with our stage version of Peter Pan! We have a public performance on Sunday March 22 at 2pm at the Leshar Center in Walnut Creek! For tickets- <https://lesherartscenter.showare.com/eventperformances.asp?evt=1278>

Hope to see some guild members there! --Derek Lux

**Of Possible Interest, performing at a wake...**Over the course of 40 years of performing puppets, I have performed at weddings, birthday parties, peace marches, parades, holiday events, schools, festivals, theaters and opera houses, retirement homes, churches, museums, libraries, restaurants, night clubs, puppet slams, and even malls and retail stores. A couple of weeks ago I performed at my first wake. It started with a phone call from an SF man who said his mother had died (98 years old) and she had been involved in puppetry at one point in her life and he wanted a puppet show at her wake. Puppetry being the small world it is, it turns I knew her through the guild: Edith Hartnett who performed with Robert Leroy Smith in Parnassus Puppets in the Bay Area in the 90s. I had not seen nor heard from her in decades but agreed to figure out something to perform. Parnassus Puppets had done fine marionettes in a variety show format and I initially tried to find someone who did that style of puppetry that might want to take on the wake performance but, lacking a brave volunteer for that, I took my one man show and did a sketch on marionettes vs hand puppets. In the skit it turned out that one of my hand puppets had a marionette that he brought out. It was actually a marionette that was donated to the guild in a hilariously tangled state and Chester brought it out and asked Uncle Carl (my puppet characters) to untangle it (it obviously was not going to happen.) Then they presented a poem by Edith (who, it turns out, had written several books, including poetry and original fairy tales). I was pleased that the skit, light and funny but also respectful, was very well received by the attendees of the wake. (from your newsletter editor, Michael Nelson)

**Send Newsletter articles to [newsletter@sfbapg.org](mailto:newsletter@sfbapg.org) and calendar listings to [events@sfbapg.org](mailto:events@sfbapg.org) -**