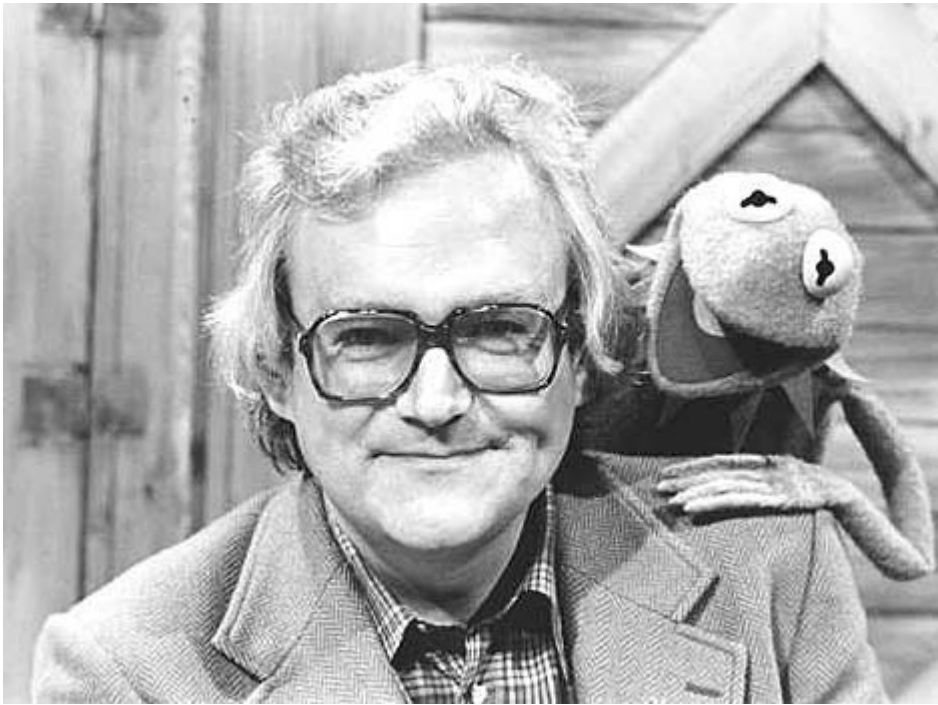




The official newsletter of
San Francisco Bay Area Puppeteers' Guild
Looking for updates and missed information?
Check for it at SFBAPG.ORG

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

November 2005



*Former Guild member Jerry Juhl passed away September 27. Many of us have enjoyed his writing for the Muppet Show over the years. The Emmy Award-winning writer also co-wrote most of the Muppet feature films. He said the Muppets' appeal was that "it crosses over generational lines.... There's a sweetness we get away with without being sentimental." In this issue Lettie Schubert remembers Jerry.
(Photo courtesy of The Jim Henson Co.)*

Inside this issue...

- ◆ Next Guild MEETING
- ◆ Calendar of events
- ◆ Jerry Juhl remembered
- ◆ Report on puppetry in TV in the Bay Area
- ◆ Review of Gathering of Gamelans
- ◆ Puppetuzzle! We have a winner!
- ◆ Film Review
- ◆ November Builder Horror Story

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Jerry

By Lettie Schubert

Those who knew him are deeply saddened by the loss of Jerry Juhl who died September 27. A brilliantly talented, funny, lovable, generous person who will be missed by so many friends and admirers in the mosaic of his life. It is impossible to truly describe him in a few short words.

Some of you may not know that he joined our guild as a teenager. In my clipping files there is a newspaper article about three teen-aged boys who had formed the Menlo Marionettes: Lee Donaghey, Flemming Heegaard and Jerry Juhl. Jerry's family moved from St. Paul to Menlo Park when Jerry was a teenager, already interested in puppetry. A group photograph taken in mid 50's of the San Francisco Bay Area Puppeteers Guild gathered at the front of the Story Book Puppet Theatre at Children's Fairyland includes the Menlo puppeteers. Another photograph shows the various puppet companies (Menlo Marionettes included) and puppet makers exhibiting their work at that same Puppet Fair. After high school Jerry went to San Jose State, and during several summers I was fortunate to have him as my assistant with the Vagabond Puppet Trailer of the Oakland Recreation Department. (The Recreation Department was an entity of its own at the time, later merging with the Park Department.) We really should not have been paid because the puppetry and drama specialists were having too much fun. We were a bunch of talented inventive zanies. While in college he developed his own local television show "Sylvie & Pup". When he worked with me, he built props, audio tape-recorded the sound tracks for shows, drove the ancient city car that pulled the puppet trailer where we had many hilarious mishaps, and performed. Jerry was wonderful to work with, never complaining even when I didn't let him write any of our productions. Little did I know. I also told him not to go into television

because it was such an uneven way to earn a livelihood. This advice came because I had several shows cancelled or my act dropped in favor of network cartoons and I had a hard time with the roller coaster ride. Thank goodness Jerry didn't listen to me. And that he found the right place in the Muppets. At the end of the 1960 summer season I decided to resign from ORD. As I remember it someone else was hired but he didn't work out. Jerry and Frank Oznowicz got the job. We were about to have the 1961 National Puppeteers Of America Festival at Asilomar, California and as director of the Festival, I could choose performers. I had loved my years with Vagabond Puppets and thought a performance would be a unique experience for Vag Pups as well as Festival goers. I wasn't sure the old trailer theater would make it to Asilomar, but it did and Jerry and Frank performed a play by Jerry. Attending the Festival were Jim and Jane Henson and by now, if you have followed the history of the Muppets, you know what happened.

I hope some of you newcomers were fortunate enough to take his writing workshops. Or got to know him at the St. Paul Festival this past summer.

We kept in touch all these years. A friendship to be treasured. I will remember Jerry as always laughing, making wonderful remarks, joking, approachable, besides being willing to teach workshops on writing, being a gentle critic and above all being a warm and generous spirit who will

be sorely missed. Our condolences go to his wife Susan and his brother Phillip and to all he thought of as friends.

October Guild Meeting & Performance: "Lovesick Sea Play"

On Saturday, October 22, a group of gaily dressed pirates (including software pirates, who are harder to recognize by their clothing) gathered in the charming, little Fort Mason Gatehouse for a guild meeting (scurvily well led by President Tim Guarrghni) and a most delightful performance by Janaki Ranpura called "Lovesick Sea Play." Lovesick Sea Play is a one woman show played in the open, a mostly shadow play played without a screen. In the tale, Sue, a love sick spinster, stows away on Billy's pirate ship as a means to follow him (her love) to sea. When she is revealed, Billy leaps into the sea and swims off. A storm sinks Sue on the ship and she is drowned (brilliantly enacted by Janaki...never have I seen a better drowning) and grows into a coral reef and eventually an island where Billy ends up (I won't tell you the surprise



Pirates at the October Guild meeting...a swarthy group!



Janaki Rampura manipulating Billy and Sue shadow puppets.

ending because you should see this show for yourself.) Using a free standing light, a white wall, and a series of beautiful white card shadows and scenery, Janaki takes us on this unexpected and magical voyage. Her use of foley sound effects created with pots, a bottle, water and other household items added a wonderful watery texture to the show. Janaki switched effortlessly between using the puppets and her own body to tell the tale (at one point her head becomes the island, with trees and land forms created in card on what might have been a headband (see photo.) At other times she used a flashlight to “spotlight” various parts of her body that became ‘characters’ or at least parts of the characters, displaying the emotions of Sue and Billy, and the flashlight combined with the sound of blowing across a bottle top as Janaki slowly rotated created a very effective lighthouse (or buoy). Her creative ingenuity kept the audience guessing and always delightfully surprised and her introducing the show by guiding the

audience in creating sound effects that were later used in the show welcomed us to her world of ships, seafarers and tropical sanctuaries that aren’t always safe.

After the performance Janaki invited the audience to share their comments, and a lively and supportive discussion followed that we all learned from.

Recommended Movie:Mirrormask

by Elisheva Hart

Years ago I heard the delightful expression, “She’s running away from the Circus to join Home” and have quoted it often. But what if Dad and Mum owned the circus...where exactly could she run to?

In “MIRRORMASK”, a new movie from Jim Henson Company the answer is an amazing dream world designed by Dali, Bosch, Svankmyer, and the girl’s own art work. The creatures and people wear masks

which are a cross between those worn by Commedia del Arte players and Bauhaus designs. If surrealism turns you on, this treat’s for you. If giant spiders with one big eyeball each are a problem, stay away.

TV Puppets In the Bay Area

Lee Armstrong

Guild member Lee Armstrong is Video Production Consultant for puppeteers of America and a driving force behind puppet video production company Images In Motion Inc.

Michael Nelson asked me to do a column on what is happening in the realm of puppetry for TV and film in the Bay Area. If anyone has any announcements or information to report, please email me or you can send them directly to Michael. I haven’t gotten any news from other companies and don’t want this to be a self serving column, but Images In Motion has been busy with video productions this year and a number of local Bay Area

puppeteers have been involved in IIM projects. Some of these shows haven’t been released, so photos from some projects are unfortunately unavailable until that happens.

In January, Images In Motion started on a DVD for the National Marrow Donor Program (NMDP). Images In Motion was selected from a national competition to create a video using puppets, animation and real interviews to help young children and their families understand the long and difficult process of receiving a bone marrow transplant. This was a very rewarding project as we gathered hours of interviews with children, families and medical teams across the country. The puppet portion of the shoot happened in March at our studio in Sonoma. The script, puppets, sets, animation, editing and DVD authoring were all done in house, as well as a 32 page, full color companion booklet. The client was “extremely happy with the final products” and is busy distributing them across America.

In February, IIM built over 30 puppets and 6 large sets for “Groovy Baby”, a half hour children’s music pilot. This was shot with three Beta SP cameras at our studio in Sonoma. The second in the series, “Rockimals” had another 20 puppets added to the cast and was shot, 2 cameras, in July at Goalline Studios in Pleasanton. Puppet builders (and Guild members) for this large project were Michael Wick, Mary Nagler, Kamela Portuges and Lee



Illustration for "Discovery to Recover" for NMDP

Armstrong. Kamela also did some animation and compositing using Flash and After Effects. Lee was the local Video Production Coordinator. Local Guild puppeteers, Kamela Portuges, Mike Wick, Mary Nagler, Anita Coulter, Mike Quinn and Lee Armstrong were joined by puppeteers from LA (Greg Ballora, Kristin Charney, Christine Papalexis, Kevin Carlson, Alison Mork), from New York (Michael Zigfield) and Toronto (Frank Meschuleit). It was a great cast and these two shows will be released soon.

The second set of Round Table Pizza commercials were shot in May in LA. The agency (Siltanen & Partners) and the production company (Japanese Monster) gave the puppets a chance to move. In one spot, the puppets were zipped one way on a dolly while the camera sped by on a dolly in the opposite direction. Lots of fun! Puppet builders were Mike Wick and Mary Nagler, puppeteers Kamela Portuges



Clay maquette for "The Creatures Got To Go"

and Lee Armstrong.

One of the cutest games coming out next year for babies and toddlers has to be the new DVD interactive game (working title of "Sunrise") that Leapfrog Toys is developing. It's a combination of puppetry, animation and real people. The puppet portion of the project was produced by Images In Motion. Puppets and sets were built in Sonoma and it was shot, in Sept, one camera DigiBeta, at GGP Studios in Corte Madera. Puppeteers were Anita Coulter, Mike Wick, Kamela Portuges and Lee Armstrong. The Director was Steve Feldman, LA, a veteran of Sesame Street and many Muppet productions. Coincidentally, Steve directs the puppets Vernon and Rat for Cartoon Network, puppets built by Images In Motion. It's a small world!

Images In Motion will finish out the year building additional puppets for Cartoon Network and a history video shoot for "Find the Fun Productions". This production will incorporate simple puppets and animations to bring history to life for students. Kamela is hoping to find time to develop a story she has written "The Creature's Got To Go", an alien tale with a twist, as a storybook and video. She has the main character sculpted and will be working on the illustrations for a "pan and scan" shooting. I'm heading off to Vancouver, from Nov. to Christmas, to puppeteer on a new PBS series "Mustard Pancakes", where I'll be a new age beagle, Tiny Tina Ten Toes.

While in Canada, I hope to find time to write an article for the newsletter on connections and the 6 degrees of separation in getting TV jobs. How do companies hear about you, why do they hire you, what can

puppet companies, builders and puppeteers do to increase their chances of getting TV work? If you have any thoughts that you'd like to share on this topic, please send me an email this month.

lee@imagesmedia.com
www.imagesmedia.com

November Builder Horror Story

Michael Nelson

So far in these pages we have enjoyed a number of puppet performance horror stories sent in by Guild members. To encourage you puppet builders to send in your horror stories as well, I am initiating the Builder Horror Column with the following story:

Many years ago I was constructing a production that included puppets and masked characters. As I was to play a masked character for one part, and wanted a mask that fit my face closely, I decided to make a life mold of my own face that I could then sculpt the mask over, ensuring a perfect fit. I knew that to make a plaster mold of my face I had to Vaseline myself up well to keep the plaster of paris from sticking to my skin, eyebrows and lashes, etc. Since I had a full beard at the time, I also took the precaution of securing saran wrap with scotch tape over all of the areas with exposed facial hair, as well as the hair on my head. I am used to working solo on projects and decided to undertake the plastering task at a time when I was home alone, feeling confident enough with my mold making skills that I could mix the plaster of paris and apply it to my own face without help. All went well, and I constructed a strong mold with about 1

Calendar Listings, On-going events:

NEW EXHIBITION, ASIAN ART MUSEUM, 200 Larkin Street in San Francisco: "Shadows, Masks, and Music: Aspects of the Performing Arts in Asia." April 23, 2005 through January 22, 2006--"The Museum's sampling of artworks and objects related to drama, dance and music. Instruments, masks and shadow puppets highlight both the entertaining and the transformative aspects of performing arts in Asia." Tue. through Sun. -10:00 am - 5 pm -Thur. Evenings 'til 9:00 pm. \$10 adults; \$7 Seniors; \$6 youths 12-17 and college; free members, under 12 and SFUSD students.



November Horror Story: "The Mask"

inch of thickness on my face without suffocating myself. It was hot inside the plaster and the added weight was uncomfortable to my neck and shoulders, so I was looking forward to removing the mold. Imagine my surprise and horror when I realized that due either to sweat or Vaseline, the scotch tape had slipped during the application of the plaster and my beard on both cheeks was firmly embedded in the plaster. I was alone. I could not see. I had a stone mask on and I was stuck firmly in it. When I could not get loose after 30-40 minutes of trying (with much resting and thinking) I decided that my best hope was to work a long kitchen knife up under the plaster, next to my face, and cut the hair off. I had been at this quite a while when my wife, Valerie, finally returned home to see her husband encased in plaster, shoving a large knife into his face, with blood running down his neck from under the plaster mask. Did I mention the pain? Of course, now I not only had to deal with my own blind efforts to free myself, I also had to calm her and keep her from calling 911 (I could not imagine having to explain my predicament to anyone!) I finally decided that my only hope was to cut

myself out of the mold using a coping saw. To save what was left of my face, I could only cut off a small chunk at a time. After several hours of sawing and resting, I managed to get down to where I could use the knife to cut the beard hairs and finally got the whole thing off. Just so you know it was not a total loss, I did manage to put the mold back together and make the cast of my head for the mask (which I still have, lo these many years later.)

Send in YOUR puppet builder or performance horror stories to your newsletter editor (aka the Man in the Plaster Mask) at mail@magicalmoonshine.org (or snail mail address on newsletter cover)

Survey Results:

After the September guild meeting scheduled around the Jarvis Puppetry Festival in Napa your newsletter editor sent out a survey for input on what kind of meetings guild members would like. I was pleasantly surprised at the number of thoughtful responses. Here is what you said in a nutshell:

In answer to the question is \$25.00 too high to pay for a performance in association with a guild meeting, most said it was not too high (though one thought it was and one was not sure.) The general feeling was that guild meetings did not always have to be free. Four that had an opinion about the price

one might pay for a show associated with a guild meeting panned out as follows: one said \$20-25 was the upper limit, one felt \$10-15 was appropriate, one said \$75.00 was not too much if it was a good show, and one did not set a limit but preferred lower priced events. The biggest reason given for not attending the September meeting was distance and Bay Area traffic on a Friday evening, with the second biggest reason being people already had plans or did not hear about the meeting soon enough to plan for it. A number of members felt that meetings in the Central or South Bay would be better attended, and there may or may not be evidence to support that. One member did not attend the meeting because of lack of a car, and would be interested in car pooling, something that the guild members might consider organizing as it makes good sense for everyone.

In answer to the question "What is your idea of a must-attend guild meeting?" The following suggestions were given: Most popular was guest performer... (SEE NOVEMBER GUILD MEETING NOTICE!) guild members have a real interest in performers from out of the area, in attending their shows, back stage tours, workshops taught by them. Other must-attend suggestions included something for children or beginners (2 people

Upcoming Guild Meetings

Last Guild Meeting this Year!

November 19, 5:00 to 7:30. We will have a guest puppeteer from Eureka, California. Corey Stevens Shoe Box Puppet Co.

www.shooboxpuppets.com

Next Guild Meeting in January!

Classifieds

WE'RE LOOKING FOR TALENTED STUDENT PERFORMERS!

Walt Disney World® Resort near Orlando, Florida has room for more characters. Disney Animated Character and Parade Performers, that is. Your talent plus our "World" equals a semester of opportunity and adventure you won't want to miss! Casting is underway for the Disney College Program. Paid internships are available at all four

Walt Disney World® Theme Parks for Spring and Spring Advantage Programs 2006. Special consideration will be given to Disney Animated Character "look-alikes" and individuals 4'8" – 5' and 6' – 6'3".

Check out our web site at www.disneycollegeprogram.com/entertainment for further details and online application.

WE STRONGLY ENCOURAGE PERFORMERS FROM ALL CULTURAL BACKGROUNDS TO ATTEND.

mentioned that), and workshops (one would pay extra for a good workshop.) Workshop topic suggestions included light, sound, breath and voice, improvisation, script development, humor, shows for adults as well as specific puppet topics. One member wished for workshops that spanned more than one meeting, as it is so easy to miss a meeting.

In conclusion, it would seem that meetings planned well in advance, on low traffic times on the weekends, preferably within 30 miles of all guild members' homes, that included a guest performer with ticket prices in the zero to \$20.00 range, who after the show teaches a workshop for children, beginners, or performers who want to improve their skills, would be ideal.

Review of "A Gathering of Gamelans..."

by Elisheva Hart, former Shadow Puppet Consultant for

CALENDAR LISTINGS

(If your show is not listed here, and it isn't, it is because your newsletter editor did not know about it! Send in your listings to mail@magicalmoonshine.org !)

Sunday, December 4, 2005 - Special performance of Magical Moonshine Theatre's new production, Cirque du Café, a table top circus where the ordinary performs the extraordinary. Live French accordion music and café performers doing real acts on real tiny equipment! A delightful show for all ages. In Yountville at Wine Garden Restaurant (6476 Washington St., zip: 94599) at 5:00. Tickets \$20.00 (and 20% discount for guild members if you get your tickets through Michael or Valerie at 707-257-8007.) See the show, and then stay for a wonderful dinner afterwards, if you wish (optional.)

Puppeteers of America

Three styles of Indonesian puppetry, three dalangs (puppeteer and director of the performance), three gamelans (orchestras), and three parts of one continuous tenth-century Hindu story (the "Arjuna-Wiwaha" trilogy from "The Mahabarata") launched the two week Gathering of Gamelans at Cowell Theatre, Fort Mason, San Francisco last month.

SFBAPG member Larry Reed, of ShadowLight Productions, fulfilled his long held dream of offering local audiences the opportunity to experience the music, dance and shadow theatre of five Southeast Asian countries plus a showcase for his large screen production of "A (Balinese) Tempest", combining Shakespeare, shadows, and live gamelan music. This extravaganza will be reviewed next month.

THURSDAY

Arjuna is the greatest human hero, who achieved his power through meditation. The first of three parts opens with him meditating to gain the power which he and his four brothers (the Pandavas) will need to defeat their one hundred cousins the Kuraras in the struggle for balance in this world. Part one, "Arjuna's Meditation" presented by I Nyoman Sumanthi used wayang kulit Bali (Balinese shadow puppets) and was accompanied by ShadowLight musicians playing gender wayang, traditional shadow puppet music. All the dialogue was delivered in Balinese

and English.

The audience was thrilled with the light source for this show, living fire. Even when these intricately carved flat leather puppets were not manipulated but just planted in the banana log at the bottom of the screen, they "breathed" and came "alive" due to the flicker of the oil lamp's flame.

Laughter is provided by the antics and words of the clowns, who clarify the plot, make quips about local news, and translate the high and ancient language into the vernacular, English in this case. Excitement is raised when the King of Demons sends his minister to kill Arjuna by transforming into a giant feral pig. Of course Arjuna kills the pig, proves himself worthy of becoming the champion of the world, and is rewarded by the gods with 'the weapon of all weapons'...

INTERMISSION (reset stage with the next show)

Part two, "The Death of Niwatakawaca" presented by Kathy Foley of Santa Cruz (and board member of UNIMA-USA) used wayang golek purwa (3D wooden rod puppet theatre from West Java) and was accompanied by the UCSC wayang ensemble, under the direction of master drummer Undang Sumarna. This village folk style of puppetry is performed without a screen or a backdrop. The dalang's head, shoulders and hands are in view of the audience. The dalang of any tradition must be able to use dozens of distinguishable voices. Despite

knowing Kathy for many years I was impressed to realize once the story was progressing, I no longer heard her “doing” voices, but heard the puppets themselves speak (mostly in English). Towards the end of her performance, during a long passage where the audience could zone out and miss the message (dalangs often present moral and spiritual viewpoints, political too), the gamelan players would mumble an echo, like this: Puppet, “No, that’s not it.” Musicians, “What’s it?” My favorite line, delivered by the clown about his sons was, “You can take your children to the puppet shows, but you can’t make ‘em think!”

In this episode, Arjuna does a favor for the gods by fighting Niwatakawaca, the King of Demons. Our hero borrows a beautiful celestial nymph to seduce the king into revealing his “Achilles Heel”, the back of his throat. After a thrilling battle the king is “encouraged” to laugh at Arjuna and he is easily killed.

THE NEXT NIGHT, FRIDAY

The trilogy concluded with Dalang Midiyanto and Gamelan Sari Raras presenting wayang kulit from the courts of Central Java in “Arjuna’s Wedding.” In English.

Traditionally the Javanese shadow plays run all night until dawn. This version was condensed into two hours. The Balinese wayang kulit is over at midnight.

Actually the whole story of “Arjuna Wiwaha” was played out in this performance. It was interesting to see the way this dalang interpreted the parts we had already seen. At the end the gods reward Arjuna for ridding them of the King of Demons by appointing him king, and husband for a year, of all the nymphs in heaven.” This part is left to our imaginations.

I was thrilled with this performance because I studied Javanese wayang kulit for a week two summers at Mills College about thirty-five years ago. We learned the ending sequence of the battle. I was amazed at how much I remembered of the movements, even predicting the entrance of a character,



September Puppetuzzle!

We have a winner!

Guild Member Talib Huff sent in the correct answer to the September Puppetuzzle (the puzzle was to identify the photo of the wooden shoe puppet that was pictured.) Below is the text from his email and the photo he sent above is Cloppy.

It is called a "Hanske Knap" and is (was) used in Belgium on Twelfth Night by children to beg pennies. Made from a wooden clog, they were sometimes decorated with fur and horns. I have been using mine, (named Cloppy), at Renaissance Faires for the last six or so years. Cloppy gets to say things that would be too impolite for me to utter, and takes great delight in chasing people down the road.

Thanks to all of the participating Guild Members with some very creative guesses (of course, we are a very creative group!) If we had not gotten the actual correct answer we would have had the challenge of choosing which whimsical, fictional custom to honor as the winner.

As his prize Talib will receive an all expense paid vacation for two in Nepal, touring with a traditional Nepalese puppet company for 2 weeks, estimated value: \$4300.00. In case the guild will not spring for that as a prize, the second choice is a very cool textile wall hanging from Japan depicting various Bunraku puppet heads.

perhaps cued by the music. I love the elegance of the figures (sort of refined ant like, the Islamic influence prohibited depicting human forms. This did not happen in Bali, so the shadow figures there are not stretched out.) The music and singing stirs my soul. Alas, the light was not the living flame, but an electric light, which made a “hot spot” (point of steady glare) right into my eyes.

SATURDAY, I went back to see the gamelan and dancers from Cambodia. I hadn’t seen this form before. It was lovely. The second part of the program featured Pusaka Sunda and Burham Sukarma with Gamelan Degung, performing music and dance from West Java. The masked dancer, Ben Arcangel, mimicked the movements of

the puppet theatre in Tari Topeng Gatotkaca. So “for dessert”, I got to see the movements of the warrior preparing for battle which I knew from studying wayang kulit at Mills College! He adjusts his headdress. He reties his sash around his waist. He and the gamelan are manipulated/directed by the dalang. I wish there had been other dances. By now, I felt as if I had been on a very special, magical journey.

TO BE CONCLUDED NEXT ISSUE

Last Note: Alan Cook sent the following book notice: *It's Not Easy Being Green And Other Things to Consider*, by Jim Henson, the Muppets & Friends, includes quotes from Jerry Juhl & Frank Oz. Edited by Cheryl Henson. 197 pp, Hyperion New York, 2005. \$16.95.



San Francisco Bay Area Puppeteers Guild
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GUILD DUES WERE DUE IN SEPTEMBER!!!

Have you renewed your membership yet? If you have not yet renewed (that's 40 of you), do so today so we can be sure to get you listed in the new Guild Directory! A delay may leave you left out in the cold!

San Francisco Bay Area Puppeteers Guild
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION & RENEWAL

Date _____

NEW? _____ RENEWAL? _____

Name _____

Troupe _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Day Phone (____) _____

Night Phone (____) _____

Email _____

Check one category:

General \$20 _____ Couple/Family \$25 _____

Senior \$15 _____ Junior (under 16) \$10 _____

Overseas/Foreign \$30 _____

Are you a member of Puppeteers of America? Yes _____ No _____

Check if you want more info on PofA _____ UNIMA _____

Clip this form and mail with your check (made out to SFBAPG) to:

Valerie Nelson, Treasurer
P.O. Box 2296
Yountville, CA 94599