



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

March 2006



Why is there a picture of an Elvis dress in our guild newsletter? The answer is in this newsletter and could make you thousands of dollars. Read on!

Inside this issue...

- ◆ Upcoming guild meeting (next guild meeting April 23rd)
- ◆ Calendar of events
- ◆ Summer puppet festivals
- ◆ Elvis sightings
- ◆ Summer festivals
- ◆ Puppetuzzle
- ◆ Much More!

More on the Jan. 28 Guild Holiday Party

ALOHA! I was transported to Hawaii last night by driving to Fort Mason to attend the SFBAG Luau Xmas party. The stark barrenness of a Fort Mason room was totally transformed by Mary Decker's bringing fish nets, lobsters, and setting up colorful tables covered with bright flowers and palm leaves. There was even a palm tree with coconuts! Genuine live ukulele music was provided by Kathy Dodge and her husband, Al. And it was a PARTY! There were prizes for talent (brought by Tia and Elisheva) which included Emily Giugni, Benjie Nelson and his fiancée Stephanie Holdermann who impressed us with hula hoop skill, Kathy Dodge, who manipulated a hula woman marionette and Valerie Nelson (whose mother lived in Hawaii as a young girl) charmed us with her "story of my life" <that's a joke, folks> hula dancing. The food was yummy and the Magical Moonshine show "Cirque du Cafe" was **formidable!** Who would
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(Guild Party, continued from 1)

believe that our hearts would break when an egg failed to succeed in its roly-poly act and be punished by the ring-master egg-beater? Or, that we would cheer wildly when another egg was successful?

The raffle was filled with tension and excitement as toddler Sammy Bloom reached into the raffle ball to pull out tickets. Tim Giugni added humor with his dramatic flair as MC. There were some very exciting raffle items and wonderful presents in the Xmas gift exchange.

In this time of war and cultural estrangements, and as I get older, I find myself treasuring extended families and belonging to communities. Puppeteers are certainly a sub-culture worthy belonging to! I am so glad I braved the rain.

Ruth Stotter

Bits and Pieces

from Elisheva Hart

Not Puppetry, but KISSING COUSINS!

Recently releases DVDs are "**Tim Burton's Corpse Bride**" which includes a production featurette on the puppets. Another one you will enjoy is "**Wallace and Gromit-the Curse of the Were-Rabbit**".

China is reputed to be one of the cradles of shadow puppetry. (India being another). Chinese theatrical events (operas, dance, 3-D and shadow puppets) all use the same colors, characters and symbolism. They share the same stories too. One famous source is "Monkey King's Journey to the West". (This similarity between many media was reported in last fall's articles on the Indonesian Gamelan Festival organized by Larry Reed.) On April 18th, the Chinese Cultural Center, located on the third floor of the



All holiday party pictures in this issue provided by Paul Bloom, pictured top with family (Margaret and Sam), below Sam (again) Patty and Mike Wick with Ruth Stotter in-between.

newly renovated Hilton Financial District, will open **An Exhibit of Chinese Theatre** that runs through October. The exhibition will feature historic artifacts and memorabilia dating from as early as the Han Period (25 BC-220 AD. There will also be workshops in opera movements and opera face painting plus in May, 4 opera performances. For more info, call 415/986-1822 or visit the web site at <http://www.c-c-c.org>. Whether or not there are puppets, this exhibit will be of interest to those interested in Asian Theatre.

Maurice Sendak, author/illustrator of many wonderful children's books including "Where the Wild Things Are" has just finished his first pop-up book, "Mommy?," with a text by Arthur Yorinks, for release this fall.

From Lettie Schubert:

George Speaight Dies-

George Speaight, author, historian, puppeteer, toy theatre performer, mentor, member of honor of UNIMA, much respected and loved member of United Kingdom and international puppet communities, died on December 22 at the great age of 91. His wife Mary had died five weeks earlier. His books, "History of the English Puppet Theatre", "History of the English Toy Theatre", "Bawdy Songs of the Early Music Hall", "Punch and Judy: a History", "The Book of Clowns", "A History of the Circus", and "John Wright and the Little Angel Theatre" belong in every fine collection of puppetry and theatre books. When he performed toy theatre at a PofA Festival, he and Mary had an early plane to catch the next morning, but didn't have an alarm clock. I was able to loan them mine, and was told to visit when next I was in London. They probably thought they would never see me again but I took them up on the invitation tracking Mary down at the London Museum. Percy Press senior was performing at a school and at their suggestion I met them there, enjoying the performance (the only time I ever saw the consummate Punch man Percy senior in action), and then we sped on foot across Kew Garden to their home on Maze Road where I was to be a guest for dinner. George gave me one of the greatest treats of my life although he didn't know it. It was going to be a while before dinner would be ready, so he asked if I would like to look at his library while he assisted Mary. I'm sure he thought it might be of mild interest to me and would save them from having to make civil chitchat with a tongue-tied stranger while we waited. I reveled in looking at books I had heard about, books I didn't know existed. Dinner was ready much too soon. I could have spent a week in Speaight's library.

Thank you, George and Mary, for a grand day out. I'm sure you had no idea how much it meant.

This may not interest more than a few Guild members, but it could be a point of inspiration for them. I think we all need more training and exposure in design. In Berkeley classes are offered to adults at a place called **Castle In The Air**. The most recent catalog offers two that might intrigue someone as a take off place for a more traditional toy theatre.

One is Paper Theatres. I think these are more wall pieces than performing theatres but might be adapted. On Monday April 10th from 10 am - 5 pm Ulla Milbrath will instruct a group limited to 8 students. These magical theatres, inspired by fairy tales and fables, charm all who look at them. Using a variety of papers, mixed media and a large flat box, you'll create your own personal theatre with fanciful characters chosen by you and featured center stage. You'll create a proscenium to highlight your theatre, and finish it off with fanciful curtains. Fee \$105; includes all materials. You're encouraged to come with a theme in mind, and to bring any favorite papers, matte photos, or ephemera that inspire you.

The second is **Easter Egg Theatres** Come create a magical little egg theatre inspired by the old fashioned, hollow sugar eggs contains scenes inside. Using three-dimensional German paper mache eggs, faux flowers, Dresden trims, and other delightful ephemera, you'll create an enchanting Easter theatre sure to delight a child (or the inner child in any adult!) Sunday, April 2nd 11 am - 4 pm Fee \$100; includes materials. Ulla Milbrath is the instructor.

If you are interested call soon because the classes are small. 1805 Fourth Street Berkeley 94710 (510)204-9801 www.castleintheair.biz.

The film "**MirrorMask**" from the creative minds of Neil Gaiman and Dave McKean and the Jim Henson Company is available on DVD. I purchased mine from Amazon. I wanted to see the film when it was released in Marin County theatres but it had an astonishingly short run. Elisheva saw it. So I was delighted to see it listed last week on Amazon. I paid about \$19 for it, but I get all kinds of great discounts from them. Haven't seen it yet. All kinds of interesting Special Features. Hope it lives up to my expectations. Lettie

From Mary Decker:

Big Bird Puppeteer to Receive Lifetime Achievement Award

Caroll Spinney, the puppeteer who performs Sesame Street puppets Big Bird and Oscar the Grouch, will receive the lifetime achievement award at this year's Daytime Emmy Awards. Said Spinney, "I am elated and amazed to receive this honor from those who are committed to the best of what television and media have to offer, for doing what I've always wanted to do,"

Spinney has played the very familiar Big Bird and Oscar the Grouch characters since Sesame Street debuted in 1969.

The 33rd Annual Daytime Emmy Awards will air April 28 from the Kodak Theatre in Los Angeles on ABC.

Where Are They Now Dept. (and where did they get all that money?)

Mary Nagler

(editor's note: Last fall the guild

voted to give guild member Mary Nagler a modest scholarship to help with her expenses at the University of Connecticut's Puppetry Program. This inspirational story is a follow up written by Mary.

For the last several months, I have been struggling here financially to keep my head above the water. My savings were depleted in the move, and I have had to break into the performance scene slowly here...takes time. Unable to secure even a bad, low paying part time job; in desperation, I turned to selling some things on ebay to generate some cash.

Two of my friends at school, while in a Goodwill store, saw something they thought might sell on ebay, so they



A bit of guild holiday color: top, Valerie and Benjie Nelson flanking Stephanie Holdermann. Below our VP and regular contributor to the newsletter Elisheva Hart. Note that her drink sports an umbrella!

bought it for me. It was a little felt jumper, with a silk screened picture of Elvis Presley on the front (see pics). It had red plastic buttons with rhinestones in them. The original tag from the store was still on it, from 1956! The lady at the Goodwill store said they had a hard time deciding whether to put it on the rack or throw it away! Sarah Beth Parks, and Mary Greggens bought it, and gave it to me. They would not even let me give them the \$8.00 it cost them. "Put it out there", they said, "and let's see how it does!"

So I did. I decided to list it on Saturday at 11:30PM EST, so it would be 8:30PM on the West coast, (Prime time!). Within 20 minutes someone wanted to know what I would take for it right now! As I had no idea, I told them I was planning to let it take its course. The next morning someone offered \$250.00 for it. Then another offered \$500.00! I was tempted- I needed to pay my car payment, that would cover it, but by then, someone had bid the opening bid (\$24.99). I told them all I was going to let it run its course. WE felt like we were on to something! I got an email from a collector of Elvis paraphernalia who told me what I had was rare, and valuable. "Do not cave in to people who want to buy it outside the auction format.", he said. "I will be bidding on it, and I am planning to bid high!" I told him I would let it run its course. It slowly started to rise and by mid week had plateaued at \$764.00. We were amazed the bidding got so high! (I was relieved it had passed \$500.00 so I didn't have to feel bad!) There it stayed. I sent out emails to The Elvis Fan Club, Elvis Collectors Club, to Graceland (why not?), and the Graceland archives, alerting them to the auction. The watchers increased but the amount stayed the same.

The night the auction ended, Sarah Beth came over. We watched the final moments together. At a minute and 15

seconds it was still at \$764.00. I kept hitting the "refresh" button to see where it was going...\$2, 187.00 flashed by and we both started screaming!! Time was up! Final total \$4,449.99.! I was in shock! I was shaking. It was slowly dawning on me what I could pay beyond my car payment. Other friends from school, who were following our adventure, started calling in. Sarah Beth's Mom said we shouldn't blow all the money on a party or risk spilling anything on the dress! We laughed! WE were delighted, we were very excited! (squealy, squealy, dancey, jumpy,... laughing!) Whew!

Neither Sarah Beth nor Mary would share in the winnings. "The Cosmos wanted you to have that dress", Sarah Beth told me. Both of them suffered tongue lashings from their families for their generosity. (Later I did give them a finder's fee which was a nice return on their \$8.00) When I woke up the next day (I had a hard time getting to sleep!) I realized... I could breathe again. Couldn't thank them enough. Going to take them both out to dinner at a nice place!

I waited 'til today to tell you, because I still didn't believe it. The chap who bought it, lives in Massachusetts, and couldn't wait to drive down and get it! Today we met at Starbucks, across the street from the Drama Department, and minutes before the start of the first class of the semester he handed me the means to stay in... and keep going (at least a little further)! I don't think it was the Cosmos. I think it was something much bigger! I think it was God! Last semester I got so low in funds I had to take out other loans to finish the semester. I had exhausted ALL the possibilities. I registered in Faith, that something would break. I needed a miracle. I got one. Good timing too! I also got a part time job that fits into my weird schedule!-- I will be selling more

things on ebay.

The chap who won the high bid on the dress, has the framers standing by to frame in and protect his treasure. He was going to take it straight to them. When it is framed, he will send me a picture. It is going to hang in his foyer. It is the most valuable thing in his collection! Aren't people funny? Praise God. I have a new fondness for Elvis too! (But he is not MY King!) Very happy to be back in the black!



Mellow-ahoha from Guild Prez Tim Giugni and wife Emily, Guild Secretary, (can you guess which is which?)

CALENDAR

Kathy Foley Indonesian Puppetry: March 1-3, Seattle, WA Kathy Foley will be joining the gamelan from Cornish Institute of the Arts to present the story of Sunan Kalijaga the inventor of Indonesian Wayang at the Northwest Puppet Center and on Sunday evening at University of Washington. On March 10 at 7pm UCSC students will do wayang wong ("human wayang"--where dancers imitate the puppets) in a performance of Damar Wulan, the Grasscutter Who Became King. The dance drama will be in the Theatre Arts Center Second Stage and is free. Kathy Foley Professor, Theatre Arts

WAYANG BALI: ARJUNA SAVES THE UNIVERSE (with a trick)
Performed by Larry Reed
Of ShadowLight Productions
with live Wayang Gender musical accompaniment

SATURDAY, MARCH 11, 2006
8:15pm

NOE VALLEY MINISTRY
1021 Sanchez St
San Francisco, CA

A Mighty demon has fallen in love with a Daughter of Heaven. The Gods refuse to hand her over. Heaven is under siege. Only a human can save the universe - but first he must pass the test.

Shadow Master. Larry Reed has worked in theater for over three decades and is one of the first traditionally trained American performers of Balinese shadow theater, or wayang kulit. The improvisational element of Balinese theater makes each performance a unique event.

\$14 in advance, \$16 at the door
www.noevalleymusicseries.com
415 454-5230

Tickets also available at: Streetlight Records, Down Home Music and Tickets.com

ShadowLight Productions
22 Chattanooga St.

San Francisco, CA 94609
(415) 648-4461 phone
(415) 641-9734 fax
info@shadowlight.org
www.shadowlight.org

Magical Moonshine Theatre presents "Coyote Sings"

("Coyote Sings" is a part of Magical Moonshine Theatre's Animal Folktales of the Americas series, and is a bilingual (Spanish/English) collection of SW Native American coyote stories)
Saturday, March 18, at 3 San Francisco Public Libraries:
11:00 am at Ortega Branch, 3223 Ortega St. at 39th Ave.

APRIL GUILD MEETING. MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

VIDEO PUPPETRY

Sunday, April 23rd, 2-5 pm
Images In Motion Studio
720 Ladera Dr
Sonoma

Don't miss the April Guild meeting, on Sunday, April 23rd at the Images In Motion video studio. This is a "hands on" workshop to practice video puppetry. Kamela Portuges and Mike Wick of IIM will cover basics and more advanced techniques. Kamela and Mike have just completed the next round of Round Table Pizza ads. IIM is currently puppeteering, building puppets and writing scripts for a variety of TV shows. Clients include Cartoon Network, Leapfrog Toys, Pixar Films, etc.. There will be lots to do and see. BYOP (Bring Your Own Puppet) or IIM will have some on hand. Clips of puppet videos will also be shown.

2:00 pm at Main Library Children's Center (2nd floor) 100 Larken at Grove.

4:30 pm at Potrero Bance, 1616 20th near Connecticut.

Saturday, March 25, "Coyote Sings" at Cesar Chavez Health Fair, Roseland El., 950 Sebastapol Rd., Rohnert Park

Magical Moonshine Theatre presents "The Bear Flag Show"

April 2, 3:00 pm at the Sonoma Community Center, 276 E. Napa St, Sonoma, Ticket info at: 707-938-4626

This is a rare performance (only the second showing in 9 years) based on a true and hilarious incident in California history that took place in Sonoma in 1846. Using large doll-like puppets of historical figures such as Kit Carson,

John Fremont, and General M Vallejo, as well as hand puppets and flat, animated folk figures, live music and actors, the Nelson's tell the story of the raising of the first California Bear Flag.

Flying Teapot Puppets presents "Three Short Stories"

Saturday April 15, 2006, 11:00 a.m.
Willow Glen Branch Library, San Jose
1157 Minnesota Ave.
San Jose, CA 95125

Puppetuzzle In memory of George Speaight PUNCH AND JUDY!

Questions:

- 1. In England, Punch and Judy shows were traditionally political performances for adults. Punch represented 'everyman.' Who did Judy represent?**
- 2. What is the 'title' of a Punch and Judy performer?**
- 3. Punch often speaks with a funny sounding voice created by a reed or membrane held in the puppeteer's mouth. What is the name of that device?**
- 4. What California puppeteer had his Punch and Judy show stopped when a parent in the audience called the police because she felt the show was too violent?**

National Day of Puppetry Coming In April

(The National Day of Puppetry is celebrated on the 4th Saturday in April each year (or thereabouts). Since the Guild will not be hosting an official Day of Puppetry this year, Guild members are encouraged to celebrate in their own ways in their own communities, and then report back to your newsletter editor. The following is from the Puppeteers of America National Day of Puppetry Handbook)

Puppetry in America is older than the various countries on this

continent themselves. Until the beginning of the 20th century, puppet shows were not common. Even then, puppeteers kept their art a closely guarded secret, certainly not shared with the public. In the first half of the 20th century, some puppeteers (most notably, Tony Sarg) helped to lift the veil of secrecy, sharing information about their work, which led to the formation of the Puppeteers of America in 1937. Today, almost three quarters of a century onward, puppets hold a place in the public's heart that is rivaled by few other arts. They appear on stage, in movies, on television, and now, on the Internet.

The National Day of Puppetry grew out of an idea presented by Carol Fijan to a guild presidents' forum at a Puppeteers of America National Festival. Her dream was for a puppet on every street corner on the same day, filling our lands with the joy and inspiration this liveliest of Arts brings. The Puppeteers of America is proud to present a National Day of Puppetry taking place all over North America and presented by the local Puppeteers of America Guilds.

MORE ADO ABOUT "MUCH ADO"

Hear ye! Hear ye! Banners are waving, drums are beating, and cymbals are clanging for "MUCH ADO ABOUT PUPPETS." I ask thee, Puppeteer, what could be more appropriate for our medieval puppet festival than Coad Canada's latest production, "Harlequin's Cloak"? It's on the performance list! Plus, we've just confirmed that Mallory Lewis, Sheri Lewis's daughter, will be performing with Lamb Chop and bringing an exhibit of Sheri's original puppets. And the artistic directors report that current negotiations for other shows appear to be every bit as promising. Furthermore, the guild's master craftsmen will be sharing their talents in a diversity of workshops focusing on, among other topics: marionette construction, masks, ventriloquism, creation of a one-person musical revue, and the puppetry of "Team America" by participants of same. Through the PUPPET RAFFLE, registrants will have a chance to win, among other treasures, a walk-around stage, a Bev London Collectable bear, and other goodies. Surely thou can't not resist sending in thy registration soon?

Check on the web site www.muchadoaboutpuppets.org for further developments, registration forms, etc. for the Pacific NW/Pacific SW Regional Festival, Aug 4 - 7 2006

PUPPETFEST MIDWEST

Every year, for one week in July, a group of puppeteers get together to share their expertise and their passion for live puppet theatre. PuppetFest MidWest (July 11 - 16, 2006 in Trenton, Missouri) is an independent annual puppetry festival that is presented, organized and financially supported by puppeteers as a gift (*editor's note: actual cost according to their website is \$545.00 per person*) to other puppeteers in the hope that it will inspire, strengthen and renew our commitment to Puppet Theatre. Wouldn't you like to join us? We have workshops every day and performances every night. Everyone spends a total of twenty hours (during the week) studying one aspect of live puppet theatre. At the end of the week, we have a "show and tell" recital where everyone performs or displays what they have created during these intensive sessions.

PERFORMANCES AND WORKSHOPS

The performers/workshop leaders include:

- Drew Allison of Grey Seal Puppets, North Carolina
- Nick Barone of Nick Barone Puppets, California
- Luman Coad of Coad Canada Puppets, BC, Canada
- Pam Corcoran, Wisconsin
- Phillip Huber & The Huber Marionettes, Tennessee
- Lynne Jennings of the Puppetry Center of San Diego, California
- Jim Napolitano of Nappy's Puppets, Connecticut
- Paul Mesner of Mesner Puppets, Missouri

Contact Information:

PuppetFest MidWest
Festival Directors,
Peter Allen & Debbie Lutzky Allen
P.O. Box 14
Jamesport MO 64648
Phone: (660) 684-6825
email: dlpallen@grm.net
puppetfestival.org



Aloha until next newsletter, or guild meeting, or hula-day party!

Punch and Judy Puppetuzzle Answers

1. Rumor has it that Judy represented Mother England, so that the show was not about spousal abuse but rather striking a blow against the government.
2. A Professor.
3. A swazzle.
4. The story goes that Rob D'Arc from Riverside, California actually had the police called on his show by an irate parent. Apparently when the police arrived they were a bit chagrined at having been called in to "stop a violent puppet show." No doubt they felt they had better things to do than to spoil the fun of a group of happy children.



San Francisco Bay Area Puppeteers Guild
PO Box 2296
Yountville, CA 94599

Upcoming Puppetry Events:

National Day of Puppetry, last Saturday in April

Next Guild Meeting April 23rd.

Much Ado About Puppets Regional Puppetry Festival, August 4-7

