



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

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

**March 2007**



***Taiwanese shadow puppets showing a fantastic array of characters  
(from an exhibit at the Global Puppet Festival in Kaohsiung,  
Taiwan).***

*There are currently only five traditional Taiwanese shadow companies left in Taiwan, all located in the south in Kaohsiung County. The traditional shadows are made with leather that is scraped and then dried under boards to flatten it. Patterns for the figures are transferred from paper to the leather. Then a number of punch like tools are used to cut the intricate designs in the untanned leather. After the figures are cut the leather is dyed on both sides with tints that will show up through the shadow screen, giving color to the figures when illuminated from behind by the shadow lights. The traditional Taiwanese figures are worked right against the shadow screen so that they can use multiple light sources. The controls are generally worked at right angles to the puppets (extending straight back) and the shadows of the control rods radiate out softly above the figures .)*

### Inside this issue...

- ◆ Sonoma Puppetry Festival Continues with shows and workshops
- ◆ Guild meeting March 25 - Paul Mesner performs (see page 5)
- ◆ U Tube, Making it work for U Too
- ◆ Guild members visit Global Puppetry Festival in Taiwan
- ◆ Calendar, Classifieds and More!

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## From your President:

Valerie and I have just returned from performances at the Global Puppetry Festival in Kaohsiung, Taiwan. It is the 4th puppetry festival we have performed at in a foreign country in the last year and once again I was struck by the value other cultures place on the puppetry art form, and the support they are given by their governments to sponsor a puppetry arts event. As we were being taken out to dinners at great restaurants and escorted to visits to cultural locations and treated with such respect and courtesy in Kaohsiung, I was continually struck with the idea that this is the way a puppetry festival should be run and that these foreign festivals with their government support would be an excellent model for puppetry events in the U.S.

In Taiwan, as in Puerto Rico in December, I also saw large youth groups performing puppet productions that would delight even a discriminating audience here in the U.S. These companies of upper elementary aged and middle school children are taught puppetry arts to the extent that their productions are skillfully executed and entertaining, and, no doubt, very fulfilling to the young performers. Of course a program like this needs support from somewhere. I was not able to learn the source of support of the puppetry programs in Kaohsiung (my impression was that they were school programs as the leader was referred to as a teacher), although in Puerto Rico the programs I observed were city programs, supported by several cities. Perhaps in Taiwan, with its rich cultural heritage in the puppetry arts (you can not go into any museum or exhibit without finding something on the puppetry of the island) it is understandable that there is a strong educational support for the art form. In Puerto Rico the support could basically be traced back to one family that



*At the Kaohsiung Global Puppetry Festival the Asian puppet exhibit hall had 5 puppet stages set up for visitors to try out. Puppets were attached to the stages in such a way that they could be manipulated but not removed. Shown here is the marionette stage (inset shows a young puppeteer trying his skills with a traditional Taiwanese string puppet. Other stages allowed sampling of hand puppets, rod puppets and shadow puppets.*



*A youth group of puppeteers in Kaohsiung take their bows just after performing a traditional Taiwanese hand puppet show complete with vigorous acrobatics and martial arts. Behind the puppeteers is their quite colorful puppet stage. The puppets would appear in front of the white curtain (above the green line at the top of the painted stairs.)*



*Exhibits at the Taiwanese puppetry festival were the best I have ever seen. Here SFBAPG member Valerie Nelson gives scale to one of many large puppetry exhibits. SFBAPG was well represented at the festival. In addition to Magical Moonshine, Guild member Larry Reed of Shadowlight Productions was there, starting an extended performance tour of Taiwan with Indonesian dalang I Nyoman Sumandhi and the Wayang Kulit Parwa Bali, who also performed at the festival.*

Another puppetry festival scenario is the one that is going right now in Sonoma, where over the course of 3 months a number of puppet shows and workshops are taking place at the Sonoma Community Center (see the calendar for info). I urge you to attend these shows and workshops and promote attendance from your friends and family. One of the guild's goals is to promote puppetry in the Bay Area, and already pre-signups for some of the workshops in Sonoma have been so low that workshops have been cancelled. We don't want Bay Area puppetry venues to be scared off from organizing puppetry events. To this end, any promotion the guild can do for this and other puppetry events will help ensure that this art form will continue to have venues locally (so local puppet companies don't have to go to other places to perform at a great festival and so we can have great venues to invite other performers to!)

persevered in the art of puppetry and changed the community view of puppetry and its importance in the society. That is a model that could work in California if someone was dedicated enough to pursue it. The other major and obvious difference between the Global Puppetry Festival in Taiwan and puppetry events here is the scale, scope and attendance. This puppetry festival had between 20,000 and 30,000 visitors a day! Of course there was more than just the puppet shows. There was a huge, temporary puppetry museum, a huge fashion doll exhibit, and a toy exhibit. Also there were games and rides (like a county fair) such as a carousel, etc., as well as a very large amount of food concessions and some kind of trade show booths (selling toys, educational software, schools, etc.) There was much there to attract young families and they came in great number, but at the center was the puppetry festival which featured some international performers (like ourselves)

as well as many Taiwan puppet companies, both professional and amateur. Perhaps one of the things about this festival that contributed so to its success was that the whole thing was integrated into the community, addressing many needs of young families, including the need to see great puppetry arts and traditional stories performed. This model could be most easily duplicated here by joining forces with an event that already is organized for young families. An example of this is Napa County's Spring Fair, which is a fair for families and school children rather than a general county fair (which is on a different date.) There must also be other kinds of preexisting events that a puppetry festival could be integrated into.



*Crowds of 20000 to 30000 a day attended the Taiwanese puppetry festival, going to shows, strolling through exhibits of Asian puppetry and fashion dolls, eating from the large number of food booths, riding on the carousel and other rides, playing fair-type games, and generally having a wonderful time.*

## YOUTUBE U

By Lee Armstrong

Lee is co-owner of Images in Motion ([imagesmedia.com](http://imagesmedia.com)) & P of A Video Production Consultant

Millions of people, including puppeteers, are using YouTube.

YouTube is an online video streaming service that allows anyone to view and share videos that have been uploaded by their members. YouTube provides two very valuable services for puppeteers. It allows puppeteers to view puppet works from around the world, creating an on line puppet festival. It generates ideas and connections. It also gives puppeteers a forum to share their work and advertise their skills and services.

If you haven't visited recently (or yet) go to [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com). You don't have to be a member to view the clips. Enter a search. Words like "puppetry" "puppet" & "puppeteer" will bring up hundreds of clips. You will have to scroll down through titles that have nothing to do with puppets, except the use of this common English word. However, there are gems to be found. Here you will find puppeteers using YouTube to share ideas and promote their work. Check out the new

UNIMA2008 clip with samples of intriguing puppetry, cut against the spectacular landscape of Australia. Check out the European hand shadow commercial "What Hands Can Do" for Volkswagen. See the latest Muppet improv at "Puppets Up". Andrew Doss, aka the blogger "puppetboy" has his own work presented, plus clips he likes, posted. Some puppeteers are using it to post demo reels, including the bizarre Paul Louis' "Puppets Audition for Wizard of Oz". Many companies use YouTube and other sites as part of their marketing plan. From MTV to NBC, companies posts clips to generate buzz and raise name recognition. A Los Angeles puppet company, Swazzle ([swazzle.com](http://swazzle.com)) posts regularly to YouTube. Among other ideas, they regularly produce a 3 to 4 minute instructional video, "How to Make Puppets" and cleverly direct viewers back to their site to download patterns, etc. They also put their website address in the show description (to the right of the screen). Since posting and blogging (blogging is another article) they have doubled the traffic to their site, from 300 visitors per month to over 600. We could all use free publicity, so tag your

clips, direct people to your website and give viewers enough information to find you.

Originally, I was going to write an article on how to produce a video for YouTube, However, I went to the YouTube Help and Info section, found at the bottom of each webpage, and realized they had done my work for me. There is an amazing wealth of information available.

The YouTube Help Center covers basic recording, editing and exporting questions.

For example:

### How do I make a video?

You'll need to have a device that can capture digital movies—this could be a camcorder, digital camera, or even your cell phone! You copy the movies to your computer, and then you can either upload them as-is or edit them with software such as iMovie or Windows Movie Maker to add titles and special effects. For more detailed information, read the [Making and Optimizing Your Videos](#) guide.

The YouTube Video Toolbox gives excellent advice on taking videos to the next level. Articles on preproduction, shooting, lighting, audio, editing, a buyer's guide to equipment, etc. are

provided through a collaboration with VideoMaker Magazine. Articles are current and very applicable. I would also highly recommend this information to puppeteers producing videos for nonweb applications. You can click on the link, [www.videomaker.com](http://www.videomaker.com) to take you to the online magazine for even more articles.

The same skills that create good video, i.e. good composition, sound, lighting, editing, are important, whether for TV or web. However video for the Internet is compressed and often watched in a small webscreen format. Complicated images and frequent movement produce artifacts, dropped frames and are sometimes hard to view. Detail

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EXHIBIT: World Literature through the Wonder of Puppets, An exhibition of selected works from the Alan G. Cook Collection from the Conservatory of Puppetry Arts (COPA)  
Jan 8-April 15, Sonoma Community Center, 276 East Napa Street, Sonoma, CA  
This free exhibit features masterworks of puppetry, including antiques and contemporary examples of the craft. You will see a magical collection of puppets inspired by the works of Shakespeare, Lewis Carroll, Frank L. Baum, Beatrix Potter, Hans Christian Andersen, and many others. The exhibition includes puppets from the 1937 production of Peer Gynt by the Tatterman Marionettes, one of the most prominent American troupes of the 1930s, as well as puppets built by George Latshaw, Tony Sarg, and Bay Area puppeteer, Wolo. There is also a display recognizing the contributions of Lettie Schubert, Jerry Juhl and Roger Mara. The exhibit will be up until April 15. We hope that Guild members will attend a performance or workshop at the Winter Puppet Festival, and then take time to enjoy this special exhibit.  
P.S. It is possible for other organizations in the Bay Area to host this wonderful exhibit after the run in Sonoma. If you are interested, or you know of a venue that might want a puppet display, please contact Mary Decker at 650-361-1310 or [marydeck@earthlink.net](mailto:marydeck@earthlink.net).  
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can be lost. To conserve bandwidth and optimize file size, keep it simple.

- Keep backgrounds simple. Use color contrast to separate puppets from background.
- Try tighter framing. TV is a close-up medium and the web even more so. Close-ups work better on the small screen. Move the camera in on your puppets.
- Keep camera movement to a minimum. Carefully consider each pan and zoom.
- Keep lighting simple, but professional. Try soft lighting from behind the subject and more light on the subject to separate from background.
- Don't forget good audio. Always try to mic the puppeteer. Camera mics are a last resort. Because of compressed audio, many companies reformat their TV clips to remove or minimize soundtracks to make dialogue easier to understand.
- Keep editing simple. Carefully consider transitions. A cut instead of a dissolve saves space. If using graphics, make them large enough to read.
- You don't need expensive equipment to post a clip on YouTube. The better the equipment and production values, the better the video

will look. However, the web is more forgiving than TV. Video quality is diminished across the board. To check out a film quality look on YouTube, search "Stargate, puppets". On the web, there isn't a huge difference between film, an HD camera with 1080 lines of resolution and a mini DV cam at 480 lines. However, there is a huge jump between a DV camera and a cell phone. At a CompUSA store, the clerk, Evan, directed my search for a simple way to get started shooting. He recommended a Logitech QuickCam WebCam. It plugs into your computer, captures up to 640 x 480 pixels (number of pixels is not the same lines of resolution. A camera with 640 lines of resolution is far superior.) and comes with simple editing software, all for under \$150. Will this produce great video? No. Neither will your cell phone. But if you have something compelling, or unique to show, people will watch it. If yours is the only footage of aliens abducting Kermit the Frog, you can be assured people will check out your posting.

Let's look at clip, to compare the quality and equipment used. At

YouTube, search "swazzle". Open any of the Swazzle Workshop episodes. Equipment: Canon XL1 mini DV camera, over 500 lines of resolution  
Cost: Approx \$3000  
Editing: edit on Mac with Final Cut Pro editing software  
For their workshop clips that are approx. 3-4 minutes in length, workshop clips are approx. 14 MGs, (YouTube allows up to 100 MG files.)  
Export: Export as an iPod option, the tag is m4v (This is a Quicktime movie) this keeps the file size down and works well for YouTube.

If you are interested in producing video and have never attempted it, take a class in video production from a community college or public access station. There you can learn video skills and work with equipment before getting into expensive purchases. If you want your puppets to appear in streaming video, but want to stay on the talent side of the picture, team up with a video company, or video enthusiast.

If you've posted clips at YouTube and would like to share information on your equipment, editing, tips, viewer's feedback, etc., email me at [lee@imagesmedia.com](mailto:lee@imagesmedia.com), and I'll do a follow-up article. Good luck with your streaming video. I look forward to seeing it on YouTube!

## **March Guild Meeting -- Three special treats in one day! Sunday, March 25, 3:00 pm in Sonoma!**

**Coming from Kansas City, Missouri!  
Paul Mesner Puppets perform *True Story of the 3 Little Pigs* by A. Wolf** (used with permission by Jon Scieszka)  
Think you know the real story behind the huffing and puffing? Think again! There's only one individual who knows the true story about one wolf, three houses and three little pigs: Alexander T. Wolf. In this revealing no-squealing adaptation of Jon Scieszka's popular

### **SFBAPG Members are Invited to Attend a Lilliputian Players Production of "Through My Eyes: A Tale of Don Quixote, A Puppet Show of Deep Proportions" and Celebrate David Jones' Birthday!**

To be held at the Storybook Puppet Theater in Children's Fairyland in Oakland, Sunday, April 22nd 2007.

Join us for a beverage and snacks at 5:30 PM, Puppet show is at 6:30 PM  
Lilliputian Players: Lewis Mahlmann, David Jones, Randal Metz  
Come back stage to see our new workshop and newly renovated puppet theater!

HOPE YOU CAN COME! PLEASE RSVP: Call David at 510-832-7619 or Lewis at 510-839-3078. Thank you!

book, A. Wolf has a chance to tell his side of the story. He only wanted a cup of sugar and he did have a cold. For years we have only known this story from the pigs pigs' point of view. Mr. A. Wolf tells all about what really happened to those three little houses made of straw, sticks and bricks and the three pigs who lived in them. and....

***World Literature through the Wonder of Puppets***

**An Exhibition of Selected Works from the Alan G. Cook Collection at the Conservatory of Puppetry Arts**  
Enchanting puppets made by the Tatterman Marionettes, Turnabout Theater, Tony Sarg, Coad Canada, Bernard Paul, Ralph Chesse, Dolores Hadley and many more incredible puppeteers.

and....

**A talk by Paul Mesner about how he runs his very successful puppet company!**

**Sunday, March 25 from 3:00 to 6:00 PM**

**Performance begins right at 3:00 PM**

**Tickets to the show: \$12.00 for general public; \$10.00 for Community Center members and SFBAPG members.**

**Exhibit is free.**

**Sonoma Community Center**

**276 East Napa Street in Sonoma**

Directions from Golden Gate Bridge, going north on 101:

Take US-101 past the Golden Gate Bridge and go 20.9 miles. Merge onto CA-37 East toward Napa/Vallejo and go 7.6 miles. Take CA-121 North / Arnold Dr / Carneros Hwy toward Sonoma / Napa and go one block. Stay straight to go onto CA-121 North / Arnold Dr / Carneros Hwy. Continue to follow Arnold Drive for 8.7 miles. Turn RIGHT onto West Watmaugh Road and go 1.2 miles. Turn LEFT onto Broadway / CA-12 and go 1.8 miles. When you come to the plaza (basically a T in the road), turn RIGHT onto East Napa Street. (Do not turn onto Napa

Street which comes several blocks earlier.) The Community Center is down a couple blocks on the left side of the street.

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Through more than 15 years he has become a fixture in the Kansas City theater and arts scene and in the national community of puppeteers. He produces a full season in Kansas City, and logs 30,000 miles in travel presenting shows in schools, community centers, festivals and theaters to more than 100,000 children and adults annually. He collaborates frequently with the Kansas City Symphony, the Kansas City Ballet and many other arts organizations. The Company has received many grants and awards, among them the Citation of Excellence from the American Center of l'Union Internationale de la Marionnette.

Paul Mesner's audiences are life-long fans of his hilarious enterprise. An avid reader, Mesner has made a name for himself reinterpreting classic and contemporary juvenile fiction or, as he says, "presenting fiction like a juvenile." He prefers the classic repertoire of tales and myths because they offer life lessons intertwined with engrossing stories. He incorporates slapstick humor and a break-neck performance pace to make stories simultaneously entertaining to children and amusing to adults. "Averting imminent disaster is what theatrical production is all about," says Mesner. "Kids know this, and I like to keep them thinking things are about to fall completely apart at any moment. This way, I slyly trick them into paying more attention."

## CALENDAR

**Please note that CALENDAR is not in chronological order**

**SONOMA COMMUNITY CENTER**

**Good news! The Guild has grown larger while you weren't looking! Please add the following new or renewing members to your Roster!**

Ruth Macchiarini, PO Box 76, Petrolia, CA 95558, 707-629-3478

Alice Cornwell, 2508 Tom Polk Ave, Chico, CA

Larry S. Schmidt, 3854

Greenwood Ave., Oakland, CA 94602,

Lisa Bady, Box 2343, Novato, CA 94948

Alan Cook, 1155 Mariposa, Altadena, CA 91001

Matt Brady, 119 S. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, Rio Vista, CA 94571, 646-878-5750

**WINTER PUPPET FESTIVAL CONTINUES: (good news: member prices now extend to SFBAPG members! For directions to the Sonoma Community Center, see March Guild meeting instructions, this page.)**

March 10 2:00-4:30 p.m.

Puppets in Action, a workshop for ages 5-11\* Michael & Valerie Nelson, Instructors

\$45 member, \$50 non-member (includes materials)

Sunday, March 11 2:00 p.m.

Coyote Sings, performed by Magical Moonshine Theater (Michael & Valerie Nelson)

\$10 member, \$12 non-member

Sunday, March 25 3:00 p.m.

True Story of the 3 Little Pigs by A. Wolf, performed by Paul Mesner Puppets (Story used with permission from Jon Scieszka)

\$10 member, \$12 non-member

January 8 - April 15, 2007  
World Literature through the Wonder  
of Puppets - An Exhibition of Selected  
Works from the Alan G. Cook  
Collection at the Conservatory of  
Puppetry Arts - No admission fee

\*Workshops require advance  
registration. Forms are available at  
<http://www.sonomacommunitycenter.org>  
For more information, call the Sonoma  
Community Center at  
707-938-4626. or Mary Decker at 650-  
361-1310.

**Two puppet productions are  
coming to Villa Montalvo in  
Saratoga! For  
more info, go to  
<http://www.villamontalvo.org>**

CATSKILL PUPPET THEATER  
performs HIAWATHA  
Using full sets, exquisitely crafted  
puppets, and accompanied by  
Native American flute and drum, this  
enchanting play is based on the  
life of the Iroquois hero, Hiawatha. A  
curious boy, Hiawatha  
discovers a magical world full of

#### CLASSIFIEDS

*(Ed. Note: this is from Rick, a  
therapist who is looking for  
puppets to use with his clients.  
Please help him find what he  
needs!)*

I'm mainly interested in finding a  
handful of puppets representing  
ordinary people of various ages -  
children and adults - and maybe  
a few animals too, depending on  
cost. Contact Rick at-  
[xrx@earthlink.net](mailto:xrx@earthlink.net)

friends who help him discover the  
path to becoming a great man.  
Sat March 3: 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.  
\$8/16

Family/household members and  
above are invited to a post-event  
reception with the cast following the  
1pm performance. For more  
information, call Steven Hanks at  
408.961.5807.

MERMAID THEATRE OF NOVA  
SCOTA performs Leo Lionni's  
"Swimmy, Frederick and Inch by  
Inch"  
Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia's  
latest production is drawn from Leo  
Lionni's exquisite Caldecott Honor  
books, Swimmy, Frederick, and Inch  
by Inch. These stories of an  
innovative fish, poetic mouse, and  
resourceful inchworm are brought to  
the stage through gentle  
story-telling, innovative poetry, and  
evocative music.

Saturday, April 28: 11 am, 1 & 3pm.  
\$8/16

Saturday, April 7, 2007 - 11:30 am  
Nick Barone Puppets present, "Tales  
from the Enchanted Forest"  
Elizabeth Gamble Garden, Gamble  
Garden Carriage House, 1431  
Waverley, Palo Alto, CA

Saturday, April 14, 2007 - 11:00 am  
Nick Barone Puppets present, "Tales  
from the Enchanted Forest"  
Saturday, April 14, 2007 - 1:00 pm  
"T-Rex Thunderlizard's Wild West  
Review"  
Bay Area Discovery Museum, East  
Fort Baker, 557 McReynolds Road,  
Sausalito, CA

Monday, April 16, 2007 - 7:00 pm  
Nick Barone Puppets present, "T-  
Rex Thunderlizard's Wild West  
Review"  
Concord Library, 2900 Salvio Street,  
Concord, CA

### **Lettie Schubert Hears of Own Death, remembered by Elisheva**

**Hart:** A long time ago, sometime in  
the last millennium, Lettie Connell  
Schubert attended a Puppeteers of  
America National Festival. She arrived a  
few minutes early for a performance,  
gratefully sat down and closed her eyes  
for a mini-nap. Suddenly she was  
awakened by some people in the seats  
ahead of her. "Did you hear the terrible  
news?" one asked the others. "Lettie  
Schubert recently died." "How terrible,"  
exclaimed another. And they were  
immediately exchanging stories about  
our friend.

As she told me this story, she chuckled  
and said, "I'm a little afraid of opening  
the Puppetry Journals ever since because  
I might find myself in the obituaries!"  
She seemed not only amused, but  
somewhat in awe of what had transpired.  
Not everyone hears their own eulogies in  
person.

This story seems like something from a  
fairy tale or Dicken's "A Christmas  
Carol". We know that Lettie was a most  
special person and deserved to hear this,  
even if by error.

Call For Entries: Puppets, Puppets,  
Puppets

In May and June of 2007, the Arroyo  
Arts Collective will be hosting  
Puppets, Puppets, Puppets, a Puppetry  
Festival in Northeast Los  
Angeles. We are looking for puppeteers,  
artists who make puppets,  
teachers for puppetry workshops for  
children and adults and a teacher  
to give a talk on the history of puppetry.  
Thanks to generous grants  
from the City of Los Angeles,  
Department of Cultural Affairs, and the  
Los Angeles County Board of  
Supervisors through the Los Angeles  
County Arts Commission we are able to  
give modest honoraria  
The Arroyo Arts  
Collective, P.O. Box 50835, Highland  
Park, California 90050-0835  
EMAIL:  
[puppets@arroyoartscollective.org](mailto:puppets@arroyoartscollective.org)



San Francisco Bay Area Puppeteers Guild  
PO Box 2296  
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**ROCK WITH THE PUPPET RAMPAGE! IF YOU DARE!**

**July 17-22, 2007**

**St. Paul, Minnesota**

**<http://www.puppetrampage2007.org/>**

**Register today and guarantee your spot!**