



San Francisco Bay Area Puppeteers' Guild
CELEBRATING 50 YEARS!

December 2012

Happy

Solsti-Hanu-Mas!



May you and
your puppets
be warm, dry,
and well-fed!

In this issue:

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- And other items of interest...

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THE SFBAPG HOLIDAY MEETING

Save the Date!

January 27, 2013

Details To Be Announced in the Next Newsletter

Reviews and News

“Big Shoulders: Small Dreams” a new Multimedia Performance Featuring Puppetry by Puppet Art Theater Co.

The wonderful Norman Rockwell exhibit “American Chronicles” is now showing at the Crocker Art Museum in Sacramento. I am honored to be collaborating with some very talented people on a multimedia piece that discusses Rockwell’s more political work after his time at the Saturday Evening Post. Original music, poetry, dance, projection and puppetry are combined to glance at this portion of Rockwell’s work. The work centers around seven year old Ruby Bridges, the first African American Elementary Student to be integrated into an all-white elementary school.

The Ruby character is portrayed by a life-sized puppet operated Bunraku style. The puppet was constructed by Kristen Phillips-Gray (<http://www.kphillipsgray.com/index.htm>) and is designed to look like the image of Ruby in Rockwell’s painting “The Problem We All Live With.” (The painting is currently on display in the White House.) Kristen used plaster molds and neoprene to construct the head and neck and soft sculpture for the rest of the body.

“Big Shoulders: Small Dreams”

Who: Written and composed by Deborah Pittman. Directed by Art Grueneberger

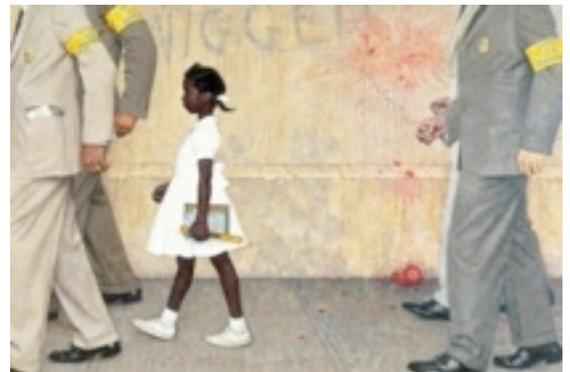
When: 2 pm Dec. 28; 12 p.m. and 1 p.m., Jan. 8, 2013

Where: Crocker Art Museum, 216 O St., Sacramento

Tickets: \$8 (Dec. 28, \$5)

Information: (916) 808-7000; www.crockerartmuseum.org

Here’s a link to the article about the show from the Sacramento Bee. <http://www.sacbee.com/2012/11/03/4955822/she-lived-an-experience-depicted.html#storylink=misearch>



*“The Problem We All Live With”
by Norman Rockwell*



*Ruby Bridges Puppet
Built by Kristen Phillips-Gray*

The Million Puppet March on Washington

The word "silly", for me, usually beams with a positive light. But when in the course of recent U.S. presidential debates, a particular candidate pledged, if elected, to do away with public funding for public broadcasting, well, that just seemed too silly. And ridiculous, and like a very, very bad idea. In response, a couple puppet fans, Michael Bellavia of L.A., and Chris Mecham of Idaho, came up with the idea of a Million Puppet March. The goal was to bring a clear, visible message to Washington in support of public broadcasting and the kinds of quality, noncommercial programming it delivers. While Sesame Street may be the poster child of such programming, Public Radio and Television bring immeasurable good to a broad range of communities and interests all over the country. The U.S. government spends about \$4 per capita per year on it! Canada spends \$30, the U.K. \$90, and Norway \$133 ("Funding Public Media: How the US Compares to the Rest of the World", www.niemanlab.org)

Anyway, in early November I found myself stuffing 4 of my fly-for-free friends into my carry-on and heading to the Capitol to help bend the arc of history. The March, while boasting something shy of a million puppets and their supporters, was none the less beautiful, inspiring and very very creative. All sorts of people and puppets, ages, colors, and fabrics were there. Chants included "No Puppets, No Peace!", "Elmo! We won't go!", and "Whose Street? Sesame Street!"

For more information about the March, go to millionpuppetmarch.org. Apparently they're working on a film about it. There's even t-shirts for sale there to help cover the costs of the event. While it looks like the immediate threat to PBS has been averted, inspiring speakers at the rally called on the citizenry to take the offensive and press for more, not less, investment in this national treasure. "Know Puppets! Know Peace!"

Peter Olson, Up A Tree Puppetry
Oakland
Member of the guild since November, 2012!

Peter Olson lives in Oakland, CA, and has been playing with inanimate objects and giving them voices since he became animate. Fairly new to puppetry as an official vocation, he has founded Up A Tree Puppetry. One show built and being performed so far. Others in the oven. No web site yet. Looking to network, help out, learn from and play with others. peterrobertolson@gmail.com



Peter Olson is in the orange hat, behind Cool Boy and Louise the chicken.



Pataphysics and Puppets

by Michael Nelson

Puppetry takes us all kinds of directions and opens up all kinds of opportunities for learning. Such was the case when Valerie and I attended a recent performance by former guild member Janaki Ranpura at City Lights Bookstore in San Francisco. The event was secret and private and even with our names on the list we had trouble getting admitted to the little upstairs room at City Lights (usually reserved for poetry.) There we participated in an obscure and fun event celebrating pataphysics, which consisted of free absinthe, a concert of wild improvised music on theramin, percussion, sax and guitar, and a puppet show. Not familiar with pataphysics? Neither were we (nor was Janaki before being asked to perform her take-off on Ubu Roi (King Ubu) for the event). Here's what Wikipedia says about it: "Pataphysics (French: 'pataphysique) is a philosophy or pseudophilosophy dedicated to studying what lies beyond the realm of metaphysics. The concept was popularised by French writer Alfred Jarry (1873–1907), who defined pataphysics as "the science of imaginary solutions, which symbolically attributes the properties of objects, described by their virtuality, to their lineaments." Now that we have cleared that up (check the rest of the Wikipedia entry for more) let's go on to Alfred Jarry and Ubu Roi.

Again from Wikipedia: "Ubu Roi (Ubu the King) is a play by Alfred Jarry, premiered in 1896. It is the first of three stylized burlesques in which Jarry satirizes power, greed, and their evil practices—in particular the propensity of the complacent bourgeois to abuse the authority engendered by success." Jarry had intended the play to be done by actors playing the roles of puppets (rather the opposite of many of our puppet shows) but before the end of the first and last performance of the play (at least with actors,) riots broke out, ending the run. Ubu Roi was then outlawed from the stage and Jarry moved it into the apparently more forgiving realm of the puppet theatre, where it has remained as an obscure staple of puppet repertoire.

Now that you have had a little of the background on this play, I can tell you that Janaki confided in us before the show that her play was not going to tell any of the original Ubu Roi. Instead she used the Ubu character (as interpreted by her) in a short play about finances, greed, and probably some other themes that slipped by me in the absinthe wonderment of the evening. The show was new for Janaki, and not the shadow puppetry that I expected from seeing previous shows of hers. Instead we were treated to an overhead rod marionette show with wonderfully weird puppets (that I liked a lot) in a simple but largish proscenium stage with rear projection of real life images, many of politicians connected to world economy. In this story, Ubu (I think he was king of some Arabic country) was working a scheme to get all other countries to exchange their monies for the local currency so he would have control of the world's economy. After much scheming by the puppets onstage, the puppet portion of the show ended and everyone in the audience was then offered the opportunity to exchange U.S. dollars for random amounts of Ubu's country's currency. After the money exchange, there was a period of bartering in the audience where we all tried to get more money. The one with the most money at the end of the exchange was given a bottle of champagne. The value of the champagne in US dollars was divided by the amount of Ubu money he had, thus setting the exchange rate for all of the money that we all now had. And then, after one last glass of absinthe, it was all over and we were free to leave, wondering what the heck we had just experienced, which is probably exactly how pataphysics is meant to work. The whole evening was a rip-roaring hoot and Janaki's imaginative interpretation was the highlight.



Véritable Portrait de Monsieur Ubu.

The Grand Gidouille on Ubu's belly is a symbol of pataphysics

Calendar

Nick Barone Puppets

November 20, 7:00 pm

Puss In Boots

Milpitas Library

40 North Milpitas Blvd. Milpitas, CA 95035

December 2, 3:30 pm

Holiday Treats

Cheeky Monkey Toys

640 Santa Cruz Ave., Menlo Park, CA

December 8, 9:30 am, 11:00 am & 12:30 pm

Holiday Treats

Elizabeth Gamble Garden

Gamble Garden Carriage House, 1431

Waverley, Palo Alto, CA

December 10, 7:00 pm

Holiday Treats

El Sobrante Branch Library

4191 Appian Way, El Sobrante, CA

December 12, 3:00 pm

The Princess Mermaid

Richmond Public Library

325 Civic Center Plaza, Richmond, CA

December 15, 10:15 am

Holiday Treats

Morgan Hill Public Library

660 W. Main Ave., Morgan Hill, CA

December 15, 2:00 pm

Holiday Treats

Belmont Library

1110 Alameda de las Pulgas, Belmont, CA

December 16, 5:30 pm

Holiday Treats

Fairy Winterland

Children's Fairyland, 699 Bellevue Ave.,

Oakland, CA

Puppet Art Theater

December 8, 10:30 am

The Boy Who Cried Wolf (Holiday Version)

San Leandro Lib Manor Branch

December 8, 2:00 pm

Little Red Riding Hood (Holiday Version)

Santa Margarita Lib Rancho Santa Margarita

CA 92688

December 15 11:00 am

Boy Who Cried Wolf, San Carlos Lib 610 Elm

Street, San Carlos

December 15, 3:00 pm

The Boy Who Cried Wolf (Holiday Version)

Carmel Library

December 16, 4:00 pm

The Boy Who Cried Wolf (Holiday Version)

Hercules Library

December 16, 7:00 pm The Boy Who Cried

Wolf (Holiday Version)

Concord Library

December 28, 2:00 pm

Big Dreams: Small Shoulders

The Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento.

December 29, 12:00 pm

Little Red Riding Hood (Holiday Version)

Modesto Library

3:00 pm at Salida Library

Fratello Marionettes

December 1, 3:30 pm

The North Pole Review

Rio Linda Library 902 Oak Lane

Rio Linda, CA

December 1, 9:15 am

The North Pole Review

Mont Bleu Resort 55 Highway 50

Lake Tahoe, NV

December 3, 6:30 pm

The North Pole Review

Cesar Chavez Library 605 North El Dorado St.

Stockton, CA

December 4, 11:00 am

The North Pole Review
Vineland Branch Library 1450 Blossom Hill Rd.
San Jose, CA

December 4, 3:30 pm
The North Pole Review
Ripon Library 333 W. Main St
Ripon, CA

December 4, 5:30 pm
The North Pole Review
Maya Angelou Branch Library 2324 pmock Ln
Stockton, CA

December 5, 4:00 pm
Aladdin
Walnut Creek Library 1644 North Broadway
Walnut Creek, CA

December 6, 6:30 pm
The North Pole Review
Oakley Library 1050 Neroly Road
Oakley, CA

December 7, 4:00 pm
The North Pole Review
Santa Teresa Branch Library 290 International
Circle
San Jose, CA

December 9, 1:00 pm
Aladdin
Sonoma Community Center 276 East Napa
Street
Sonoma, CA. Tickets on sale at the front door.

December 11, 4:00 pm
Aladdin
Danville Library 400 Front Street
Danville, CA

December 11, 6:30 pm
Aladdin
Kensington Library 61 Arlington Ave.
Berkeley, CA

December 12, 2:00 pm
The North Pole Review
Courtland Library 170 Primasing Ave.

Courtland, CA

December 13, 10:30 am
The North Pole Review
Morgan Hill Library 660 West Main Avenue
Morgan Hill, CA

December 13, 4:00 pm
The North Pole Review
Los Gatos Library 100 Villa Avenue
Los Gatos, CA

December 15, 4:00 pm
The North Pole Review
Martin Luther King Jr. Library 150 East San
Fernando Street
San Jose, CA

December 15, 11:00 am, 1:00 pm
Aladdin
Burlingame Library 480 pmrimrose Rd.
Burlingame, CA

December 17, 6:30 pm
The North Pole Review
Edenvale Branch Library
101 Branham Lane East
San Jose, CA

December 18, 3:30 pm
Aladdin
Sausalito Library 420 Litho Street
Sausalito, CA

December 20, 4:00 pm
The North Pole Review
Evergreen Branch Library 2635 Aborn Rd.
San Jose, CA

December 22, 11:00 am
Aladdin
Visalia Library 200 West Oak Ave.
Visalia, CA

December 22, 3:00 pm
The North Pole Review
Visalia Library 200 West Oak Ave.
Visalia, CA

December 29, 2:30 pm
Aladdin
Almaden Branch Library 6445 Camden Ave.
San Jose, CA

Magical Moonshine Puppet Theater

December 2, 12:30pm - 3pm
Puppylocks and the Three Bears
75 Arbor Road at Cambridge Avenue • Menlo
Park, CA 94025

December 17, 4pm - 5pm
Puppylocks and the Three Bears
Atherton Library 2 Dinkelspiel Stations Lane
Atherton, Ca 94027

Storybook Puppet Theatre

Saturdays and Sundays, through Jan. 5
11:00 am, 2:00 pm, 4:00 pm
The Nutcracker Prince

We end the year with the wonderful holiday tale about Clara and her magic Nutcracker Prince. Through the music of Tchaikovsky, flowers and snowflakes dance, candies come to life, and Clara tries to outwit the evil Mouse King and turn her nutcracker into a handsome prince. Can Candy Land be saved from the mice? Will Queen Blanche and King Winter safely carry Clara into her dreams? A different telling of the classic ballet The Nutcracker. Designed by Pamela McIntyre. Puppets and script by Lewis Mahlmann.

Due to space considerations the tear out calendar will return next month.

There Is An App For That

By Talib Huff

Smart phones and tablet devices have quite a number of applications that can be useful in the art of puppetry. I would like to share a two of those that I have found.

Plaintext:

For simply converting information into a digital form, I have found Plaintext on the iPad to be indispensable. It has a simple, clean interface that makes it easy to get my thoughts down quickly. Although it has limited formatting ability (note the name), formatting is easily added later in a more powerful word processor on my desktop. Transferring the files from my iPad to my desktop is a breeze using Dropbox (see below). You can find out more about Plaintext by going to: www.hogbaysoftware.com/products/plaintext



Dj Soundbox Pro:

My final entry here is one that I have played with a lot but have not yet used in a show. DJ Soundbox Pro allows you to set up buttons on your iPad that trigger sound files. It comes some preinstalled sets but you can add your own sounds through iTunes. This would allow you to record your show in scenes, and then assign different buttons to the scenes. DJ Soundbox Pro is located here: chriskhoury.com/?p=311



So, what are your favorite apps? If you've found something useful to your work, drop me a line and I'll include it in the next newsletter.

San Francisco Bay Area Puppeteers Guild
5137 Robertson Ave.
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Holiday Gift Selection
Ask Santa-elf or treat Santa-self!
by Elisheva

(from Real Simple magazine, Dec, 2012, page 76-photo) Shadow-puppet set, silhouette style (no color) . To quote the magazine, "If Lemony Snicket came for a holiday visit, he would bring this. To buy: Shadow-puppet theatre (screen and four puppets), \$40, store.imaginechildhood.com.)" The screen features an elegant interior of a European style stage, flanked on each side by tiers of box seats. The screen looks like a window shade, with loops at the top corners.

Their website also features "Ombres dur soir, a 9 shadow-puppet set from Moulin Roty. Each [silhouette] puppet is made of black laser-cut cardboard with a wooden holding stick. Made in France. \$17.95"

Note: the two sets look compatible, although the scale might be different. It's hard to tell from pictures!

By the Way: I've got a NEW ADDRESS

Elisheva Hart

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Petaluma, Ca. 94954

Same email and phone: ishvahart(at)yahoo.com, (707) 978-8309. I'm ready to stay put for awhile! My bedroom is in process of becoming a studio, huzzah!

