



August 2013



Summer
Reading
Issue

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August Meeting

Date: August 24th, 2013, 10:00 am to 4:00 pm

Guild meeting and programming begins at 5:00pm after the park closes.

Children's Fairyland, 699 Bellevue Avenue, Oakland, CA 94610

Join us for Puppetry Day at Children's Fairyland and THEN join us after hours for our guild meeting!

Show and Tell!

Please bring something to share with your fellow members. Do you have a puppet you are working on? A sketch of one? A new puppetry purchase you'd like to show off? Perhaps you have a new idea or script you'd like to share? Bring it! We wanna see it!

Programming!

All Day: The Puppet Petting Zoo! Presented by Ron & Barbara Johnson of the Motion Makers Puppeteers. Come and play with your favorite puppet, tell stories with your family.

Puppet Exhibit: Please bring a puppet to put on exhibit for everyone to enjoy. contact Randal Metz (510) 569-3144 with details.

11:00, 2:00 & 4:00: "The Magic Blossom" William Shakespeare's timeless tale of A Midsummer Nights Dream. Puppets and show by Lewis Mahlmann.

12:00 - 2:00 pm - Make a puppet with members of the San Francisco Bay Area Puppet Guild.

12:00: "Puppets & Poppets" presented by The Motion Maker Puppeteers, Ron & Barbara Johnson. Kids make their own puppet show! Sing songs, make puppets and perform on stage with the Motion Makers.

1:30: "Jack and the Beanstalk" presented by Randal Metz and the Puppet Company. Script by David C. Jones, puppets by Randal Metz and scenery by Annie Wong.

3:30: "Perez and Mondinga" presented by Rhonda Kaye, The Puppet Lady. A Mexican fable filled with animals and fun. An intimate show for the family.

Rhonda Kaye Godwin, The Puppet Lady, will present a talk and performance on how to start up in the birthday party business. Rhonda has been a birthday performer for the last 17 years. She specializes in performing at birthday parties for children 1 - 4. She will perform her party show entitled "Mrs. Wintergreen's Birthday Surprise." The show was written by Lewis Mahlmann and Lettie Schubert. With puppets by Lewis Mahlmann. Bring your questions and learn how you to might begin performing at birthday parties.

Puppet Theatre Derby! Bring your traveling puppet theatre to show to others. This will be a rare opportunity to see many of the wonderful theatres that are used in the area and ask their creators for pros and cons, and tips on making your own.

Puppetry Craft

Jesse Vail will lead a craft on how to make a very Muppety looking sock puppet. If you can, please bring a fluffy "spa sock" (available at any 99¢ store). If you cannot find one... fear NOT. Jesse has a few to spare.

Pot Luck!

Please your favorite dish to share with others. Appetizers for the social and main courses are always appreciated. Dinnerware will be provided.

For help getting into Fairyland, call Randal at (415) 609-8704.

See you there!

Reviews and News

Memories of SFBAPG by Pam Wade

Many years ago I was an active member of the SFBAPG. They welcomed me in as a brand new puppeteer with absolutely no experience and proceeded to nurture me with patience, thoughtfulness, skills, and invaluable help. Last week I took some DVD's that a friend made of some old videos of several shows we'd done to show the "ladies" at the resident home where I work. It was funny to watch those shows from 20 years ago. I came to the very last show we ever did, a shadow show of "Everyone Knows What a Dragon Looks Like". I thought it was from a library we'd done on route to the P of A Festival in Minneapolis/St. Paul. Well, it turns out the show was recorded at a library before a SFBAPG meeting. The show and a post discussion/review by guild members was recorded for our use. It was an early performance of that show and it had a lot of rough edges. But the treasure is to see who was in the audience sharing their expertise! Lettie Schubert, Mike **Oznowicz**, Coleen Uherra, Betty Stewart, Linda Zittle, Jack Fredricks, Randell Metz, Lee Armstrong, Gail Warshaski, Lisa?, Elisheva Hart, and several others who's names aren't coming to me. And the good and the expertise and the unselfish sharing continues!

A Midsummer Night's Tribute

Lewis Mahlmann, Fairyland's master puppeteer for 43 years, formally retired from his position in 2006, and we dedicated our Storybook Puppet Theater to him at that time. Now 85, Lewis doesn't often leave his home. But three years ago he created exquisite new puppets for "The Magic Blossom," based on Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream." Our revival of the play, which begins Friday, features the debut of Lewis's beautiful creations. It's going to be a very special production for several other reasons. For one thing, Lewis has made it clear that these were to be his final puppet creations. For another, this year's production has been reimagined with gorgeous new scenery and sound effects.

And, most gratifying of all, Lewis has told us he'll make a rare return visit to the park to see the production. He hasn't said exactly when, but we're all looking forward to welcoming him.

You may wonder whether it's appropriate to stage a Shakespeare play – even one with puppet actors – for very young children. Lewis has strong opinions on the subject: he believes that children should be exposed from an early age to the best cultural offerings. That's why Fairyland has presented shows based on such classics as "The Magic Flute," "Peter and the Wolf," "The Nutcracker," "Coppelia" and "Peer Gynt." Lewis's successor at our theater, Randal Metz, who has worked with Lewis for 44 years and remains in almost daily contact with him, aims to carry on the tradition. "Neither of us believes that you should underestimate your young audience," Randal says. "They'll take away what they want, and get a little bit of culture along the way."

"The Magic Blossom" focuses on the story of Fairy Queen Titania, her king, Oberon, the mischievous Puck, and the enchanted mortal, Bottom. Lewis wrote the play and has performed three versions of it since its premiere in the 1960s. He sold his puppets from the original production to an American Conservatory Theater professor in the 1980s.

When Randal asked if Lewis would consider bringing back the show to Fairyland, Lewis said yes, adding that he had a special idea about what these puppets should look like. During Lewis's world



*Lewis Mahlmann and
some of his puppets*

travels over the years, he met Jiri Trnka, a Czechoslovakian artist and puppetmaster who was known as “the Walt Disney of Eastern Europe” and whose films featured stop-motion animation and puppets with beautiful and expressive faces. His 1959 film of “Midsummer”—“a ballet of mime and fairies” is how Trnka described it—created much controversy when it was first shown at the Cannes Film Festival. “It is a film full of invention, humor, [and] refinement, and we are fascinated by its rare beauty,” wrote the critic of *Le Parisien Libere*. On the other hand, “Trnka sent even garden gnomes into Shakespeare’s realm,” sniped the *Suttgarter Zeitung* critic. Back home, the Czech audience loved it.



*Oberon and Puck from
"The Magic Blossom"*

*photos credit:
Maria Rodriguez*

Trnka, who is recognized as having broken away from the “dominant Disney tradition,” established the puppet film as serious adult entertainment. His “Midsummer” was eventually dubbed into English with narration by Richard Burton.

Lewis’s puppets, while paying homage to Trnka’s film, are simplified and clothed in charming, childlike costumes, layered in flowers. The music accompanying the production is by Felix Mendelssohn, the 19th-century Romantic composer best known for his famous “Wedding March,” which was originally created as incidental music for a theatrical production of “A Midsummer Night’s Dream.”

Randal says it’s “an honor and a challenge” to adapt Lewis’s show into its current version. He’s cut a couple of minutes from the dialogue, added “enchancing” sound effects and redesigned the scenery based on Lewis’s original designs. Artist Annie Wong has upped the ante by creating a breathtaking backdrop that makes you feel that you’ve entered a fairy grove at midnight.

Randal’s biggest challenge, he says, is to “not inflict my outrageous humor, and keep it as a romantic piece for children.” He acknowledges that we’re living in an era of computers, fast-paced games and cartoons, but he’s seen how successful *Fairyland* has been in getting kids to step back, listen, and immerse themselves into something a little slower – “something magical.”

Randal, who has worked with Lewis since he was 10, could not be happier that his mentor’s work will live on in our theater through the 150 shows he’s donated to us.

We can’t wait to welcome Lewis home, and we won’t be alone. “He always draws crowds and thanks,” says Randal. “He’s had a positive effect on generations of kids, myself included.”

“The Magic Blossom” opens Friday, July 12, and plays through Aug. 29. Join us to celebrate Lewis Mahlmann’s parting gift to the puppet theater—and the kids—he loves.

Thank you note from Mary Nagler:

Recently, I was happy to be informed that I had been awarded a partial scholarship to attend the Puppeteers of America (r)evolution Festival in Philadelphia. I am very much looking forward to the opportunity to learn more about our chosen art form and sharing what I learn on my return. Thank you SFBAPG for the scholarship. It is a big help!

Sincerely, Mary Nagler

To the Membership of the Puppeteers of America,

The Board of Trustees is proud to welcome Dr. Cheryl A. Maloney as our new Executive Director.

This is a major step in our process of becoming a more sustainable organization that can thrive and grow in today's non-profit environment. This step will allow us to enhance management of P of A services; improve our communication with you; and eventually lower costs, expand festivals, and add new programs.

Cheryl brings over thirty years of experience in the fields of art administration, economic development, nonprofit leadership, and consulting. Her expertise includes: nonprofit management, fundraising, community building, business development, marketing, and large-scale special event production. Cheryl is born and raised in MN, spent ten years in the San Francisco Bay Area quickly becoming a strong community leader in Fremont, CA, while earning her Doctorate. Cheryl is passionate about the arts and currently manages and is the host and warm-up act in Macy's Annual Holiday Puppet Show, Moose Crossing USA, Minneapolis, MN. She is committed to engaging the community with respect and enthusiasm for collaborating with multicultural and diverse communities along with youth leaders to develop meaningful programs.

Her professional experience in the Twin Cities includes leadership positions at the Hallie Q. Brown Community Center, Twin Cities Pride, Riverview Economic Development Association, MN Recovery Connection and independent consulting. While living in the San Francisco Bay Area Cheryl served as President of the Mission San Jose Chamber of Commerce. She held leadership positions with Cañada College, Sisters of the Holy Family and the Fremont Chamber of Commerce, where she directed the largest Art & Wine Festival in CA, with over 400,000 people. In addition, Cheryl cofounded the HERS Foundation to respond to the needs of women and their families surviving breast cancer.

Cheryl has long been involved in local, national and international social justice organizations and sees the arts as a valuable pathway to building a stronger more engaged community. While in California she earned her doctorate from the University of Creation Spirituality where she explored the role of spirituality in relationship to values and ethics in the marketplace. She earned her Master Degree in Theology/Spirituality from the College of St. Catherine, St. Paul, MN. The Board of Trustees of Puppeteers of America is excited to welcome such a dedicated and accomplished community leader to build and establish our new office in the heart of Minneapolis, MN.

Cheryl will be joining us at Puppet Festival (r)Evolution, the 2013 National Puppetry Festival in Swarthmore, PA, August 5-10. There will be opportunities to connect with her throughout the week.

For more information or questions, the Board of Trustees can be reached through President Nick Hubbard, ndhubbard@gmail.com.

Dr. Cheryl A. Maloney
Executive Director
612.926.3319
cmaloney@puppeteers.org

Please visit our newly redesigned website, www.puppeteers.org, to learn more about Puppeteers of America.

From Alan Cook:

An important historical documentary film deals with the mass murder for "political reasons, ie: anti communism" in 1965 of over a million people in Indonesia. This event passed unnoticed in the American Press at that time, but was mentioned in Atlas Magazine, a low-circulation publication reprinting articles from the world press which I subscribed to. While no puppets or puppeteers are mentioned in the film, it is still possible that puppeteers were effected. One Indonesian friend had seen "underground" performances of Chinese-style puppets.

So puppeteers and others interested in cultural upheavals as well as any film student should try to see this remarkable film, lauded by the New York Times a couple weeks ago, and then by the Los Angeles Times. August 9-15 the film is at The Landmark San Francisco.

30th Fraggle Rock Reunion In Toronto by Lee Armstrong

The 31th year of the taping of Fraggle Rock was celebrated in Toronto on June 8th with a gala Anniversary party. Everyone called it the 30th Anniversary, but Larry Mirkin, Fraggle Rock's producer for the show kept track and said it was 31 years "31 being a great, Fragglish number" and I agree with him.

This event was masterminded by Karen Prell (Red Fraggle and much missed Guild member now living in Seattle) and the overly qualified Larry Mirkin (Toronto). Many volunteers jumped in to provide entertainment, decorations and production services to make the evening special.

Rhys and I attended with approximately 100 guests, from Fraggle rock cast, writers & crew to Muppet notables. Three at our table were Bonnie Erickson (The Jim Henson Legacy), John Tartaglia (Muppeteer, Broadway cast of Ave Q) and Jan Nelson (wife of the much beloved late Jerry Nelson). Also attending, from the Bay Area, Dave Goelz (Muppeteer, Boober on Fraggle) flew in and spent a few days afterwards reconnecting with friends, as did Susan Juhl (wife of head Muppet writer Jerry Juhl and contributor to the show) who took the train from Vancouver to Toronto!

The cake, designed by Michael Firth (Head Muppet Designer) was a work of art, with all the main characters represented. The Trash Heap had a place of prominence on top, and every character tasted delicious! Entertainment included familiar Fraggle characters, music, video tributes and even a Shakespearean tour de force by Mike Peterson (Fraggle performer) using stuffed animals.



Karen Prell (Red Fraggle) & Jocelyn Stevenson (Co-headwriter Fraggle) Lee and Rhys with the Fraggle Rock 30th Anniversary Cake

It was a great time to see old friends, meet new ones and talk about the show, which Jim Henson had envisaged as showing children how various races could live together in peace and harmony.

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Ventriloquists Ron Coulter and Sid Star are launching a new show this year:

BACKSTAGE

with Jesus, Sid and Greyson! Performance Art by Coulter and Star
A behind the scene frolic with the first two institutions to emerge in community; theatre and religion.

<http://www.CoulterandStar.com/>

You can read program details, a brief professional bio and find contact information on the NEWS page of their website.

Broadway Under the Stars Michael Nelson

On July 19, Valerie and I were fortunate enough to attend a performance of Fantastical Family Night presented by Transcendence Theatre Company. The performance was held in Jack London State Park in Sonoma County, and the stage was set outdoors in the ruin of an old winery. Attendees showed up early to picnic and taste wines on a warm summer evening, then it was showtime!

The organizers of the event had been running a camp all summer and for this performance celebration they had not only their "campers" there to perform their original musical numbers, they had also brought in a wonderful slate of performers from across the U.S. to present a variety of family friendly Broadway hits. And included in the line up for the first time were puppet performers Lee Armstrong and Kamala Portuges from Images in Motion, a video and live performance company based in Sonoma.

Overall the event had a joyous feel, with lots of feel-good songs interspersed with the antics of Mark Gindick, a wonderful, non-speaking clown whose silence was a fun contrast to the singing and whose comedy added much to the evening. Indeed, just when one might be thinking they might have heard enough Disney Princess tunes, Mark would appear with just the right comic relief. His "Singing In The Rain" brilliantly done with an umbrella and plastic water bottles wielded by conscripted audience members was a comic highlight, (that, along with the unexpected Disney Alladin tune sung on camel back by a camel who decided at that dramatic moment to empty its bladder to the general amusement of the crowd.) The singers seemed masters of their craft and there were some notable numbers, including a great "Courage" from Wizard of Oz and a show stopping "My Party Dress" brilliantly sung in persona of a little girl singing about life and her dress.

Images in Motion was part of an ensemble piece near the end of the concert called "I'm Flying" Their chicken puppets were beautiful with plucky personalities (couldn't resist) that ably did some live voice dialogue and then switched to mouthing the lyrics sung in full view of the audience by the professional singers in a kind of puppet/live person song and dance number. The crowd loved the puppets in spite of the fact that some sound problems distracted from this performance as they had throughout the evening. One could not help but feel sympathy and respect for the performers that soldiered through mics crackling and cutting in and out (apparently the sound problems were solved by the next performance.) Adding puppets to the evening, combined with the clown MC, gave a great feeling of variety to what would have, without them, been a simple song and dance show. And while the puppets we saw were wonderfully entertaining, it seemed to me that, like the clown MC, the puppets could have benefitted from being interspersed throughout the show, rather than just a nod in the opening number and their one song at the close. Since the presenters were doing a lot of Disney songs, it occurred to me that a Lion King number, with some Lion King puppetry on would have been a good possibility with lots of drama, and I am sure that this creative team could come up with more ideas, which we will hopefully see in the future. All in all, Fantastical Family Night was a delight with great performances all 'round in a magical setting that should attract future audiences in droves, especially with clean sound. And more puppet bits throughout the evening would only add to the charm.



At the end of the flying song, the birds transform into shadows against a shadow screen moon and fly away." Credit to Mimi Carroll



Fratello Marionettes

August 10, 2:00 pm
"Aladdin"
Belmont Library @ 1110 Alameda de las Pulgas
Belmont, CA

August 14, 3:00 pm
"Carnival of the Animals"
Foster City Library @ 1000 E. Hillsdale Blvd.
Foster City, CA

August 21, 3:00 pm
"Carnival of the Animals"
Antioch Library @ 501 W 18th S
Antioch, CA

August 24, 12:30 pm
"The Vaudeville Follies"
IAHF Italian Family Festa
Guadalupe River Park
San Jose, CA

August 25, 3:30 pm
"Aladdin"
Puppet Fair!
Children's Fairyland @ 699 Bellevue Ave
Oakland, CA

August 25, 12:30 pm
"The Vaudeville Follies"
IAHF Italian Family Festa
Guadalupe River Park
San Jose, CA

Magical Moonshine Theater

August 10, 2:00 pm
The Carnival Mask
C Chavez Branch, Oakland library,

August 14, 11:00 am
Puppylocks and the Three Bears
Corte Madera Library

3:30 pm
Puppylocks and the Three Bears
Marin City Library

7:00 pm
Puppylocks and the Three Bears (bilingual)

August 15, 11:30 am and 12:45 pm
Puppylocks and the Three Bears
Fremont Library

Puppet Art Theater

August 16 2:00 pm
Little Red Riding Hood
McKinley Park Library, Sacramento,
august 24, 25 San Jose Fun Fest

Storybook Puppet Theatre

Saturdays and Sundays
11:00 am, 2:00 pm, 4:00 pm
The Magic Blossom, through Aug. 29
William Shakespeare's timeless tale of "A
Midsummer Night's Dream" comes to life for
children. Puppets, script & scenery by Lewis
Mahlmann.

Tashi, A Boy From Tibet Aug. 30–Oct.27
This is a tale about helping each other and
caring for animals. In order to learn the lessons
of life, Tashi's father sends him out into the
world. On the way he meets a magical monk,
and saves a village from a wicked demon.
Puppets and script by Lewis Mahlmann.

**An apology for the lateness of the
newsletter and a request:**

Dear Friends,

I am sorry for the tardiness of this newsletter.
For various reasons, I was not able to complete
it before I left on a much needed retreat at the
end of July, and, upon returning, life rushed in. I
especially wish to express my regrets to those
performers whose performances have passed.

On another note, I would like to remind you to
please submit the text of articles unformatted
(save as plain text) and send along a note if
there are any special instructions.

August 2013

Special tear-out calendar! See Calendar listings for details on events. Due to space limitations, not all times or show titles are listed here.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28 Magic Blossom	29	30	31	1	2 Magic Blossom	3 Magic Blossom
4 Magic Blossom	5	6	7	8	9 Magic Blossom Aladdin Carnival Mask	10 Magic Blossom Aladdin Carnival Mask
11 Magic Blossom	12	13 Carnival of Animals Puppylocks	14 Puppylocks	15 Little Red Riding Hood	16 Magic Blossom	17 Magic Blossom
18 Magic Blossom	19	20 Carnival of Animals	21	22	23 Magic Blossom Vaudeville Follies	24 Magic Blossom Vaudeville Follies
25 Vaudeville Follies Magic Blossom Aladdin	26	27	28	29	30 Tashi	31 Tashi

San Francisco Bay Area Puppeteers Guild
5137 Robertson Ave.
Carmichael, CA 95608



Save the Date(s)

The Programs committee has agreed on the following dates and locations for 2013:

- Summer Meeting/Puppet Faire on Saturday, August 24 at Fairyland
- A Mini-Meeting with Lee Armstrong for TV Puppetry and Movie Night is penciled in for September -North Bay
- Mini-Meeting to attend open dress rehearsal for “Driveway Follies” on Wednesday, October 30 - Oakland
- Fall Meeting on Saturday, November 9 -San Francisco
- Holiday Party 2014 on Sunday, January 26 -North Bay

If anyone has a suggested meeting place for the November meeting in San Francisco, please contact Jesse Vail.



Puppeteers of america

Puppeteers of america, a national non-profit organization founded in 1937, provides information, encourages performances, and builds a community of people who love puppet theatre. Share the enchantment of puppetry with professional puppeteers, puppet builders, teachers, librarians, therapists, youth leaders, hobbyists and audience members who are enthusiastic about puppetry. To learn how to join, visit: www.puppeteers.org