



# SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA PUPPETEERS GUILD News *March* 2014

## Celebrate National Day of Puppetry With Us at Happy Hollow, April 13



Coyote and his friend, Iktome, travel and meet a rock named Iya in the Lakota Sioux tale, **Coyote's Giveaway**, one of the shows Happy Hollow will feature on April 13. (photo from hhpz.org)

*See Spring Guild Meeting inside for more details ...*

### Inside This Issue

- Spring Guild Meeting
- Notes from the Holiday Party
- Talking Puppets at Convolution
- Gnawty P, ADMC Spokesdog
- Bringing D&D Monsters to Stage
- Playing Chicken with Transcendence
- Lewis Mahlmann Honored
- Creature Shop Premieres at Pub
- Note from the Editor

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## Spring Guild Meeting and National Day of Puppetry

April 13 - Happy Hollow Park and Zoo



Behind the scenes of Coyote's Giveaway (photo from hhpz.org)

The next SFBAPG meeting will be held at Happy Hollow Park and Zoo in San Jose.

Guild members are asked to participate once again during the day. Please bring puppets to share in the exhibit; puppets to walk about with, delighting and educating the public; puppet making and playing for Happy Hollow guests; escorting giant (backpack) puppets.

We will be showing two different shows at the Puppet Castle Theater (times TBA). It's the grand opening weekend for new show **Magic Kettle Stories**, and of course we'll see old favorite **Coyote's Giveaway**. We are planning to have another puppet show at 4 p.m. in the Meadow Amphitheater (TBD).

On Sunday April 13, the Park opens at 10 a.m. and closes at 5 p.m. Our public exhibit and puppet play area will be open 11 a.m. to 3:45 p.m., with several 30 min. closures during show times.

Guild meeting will follow at 5:30 p.m., and will cover important Guild business - watch this newsletter and your email for more news.

Like last year, there will be animal meet and greet with our Zoo Education staff. A catered meal from the Picnic Basket restaurant will be available for a reasonable price.

For each guild member we offer a free entrance (\$12.95 value) and parking ticket (\$10.00 value). Additional family members will pay the group entrance rate of \$8.00 each.

Members will check in at the guest services will call window at the entrance. Parking pass distribution tbd. Further details will be posted on the guild website. If you have questions please email me at [judy.roberto@sanjoseca.gov](mailto:judy.roberto@sanjoseca.gov)

Happy Hollow is at 1300 Senter Rd., San Jose, CA 95112, or on the web at [hhpz.org](http://hhpz.org).

- Judy Roberto

## Holiday Party Roundup



Guild alumna Elizabeth Luce shows the audience a scenery panel before performing *The Splashy Sea Saga of Sailor Sam* (photos by Gregory Hayes)

Thanks to everyone who helped plan and pull off another spectacular Holiday Party! We had quite a strong showing of both Guild members and from the community who were invited to enjoy the show.

Former Guild member Elizabeth Luce delighted the audience with *The Splashy Sea Saga of Sailor Sam* and a thorough Q&A afterward.

Mary Nagler reports that the raffle netted \$212 for our Scholarship Fund, plus a \$50 donation from Elizabeth Luce. This brings the available total to over \$1500, just waiting for your application. Thanks a bunch to everybody who purchased tickets, and to star donor Elizabeth!

The Board conducted a brief vote for the Guild's proposed bylaw amendments, which all passed unanimously. For information on the amendments, see January's newsletter.



## Convolution 2013

### Panel: Use of Puppets in Popular Media



Panelists (l-to-r) Toby Froud, Camilla Henneman, Stephen Nelson, and Jason Harding swapping puppet stories.

Convolution is a wonderful little Bay Area fantasy convention, held in 2013 at the Hyatt Regency SFO in Burlingame. The con itself is a forum for professional artists, writers, game designers, costumers, and fans of fantasy and science fiction to network; share their creations, ideas and skills; and dress up and have fun. Honored guests included the Froud family (Brian, Toby, and Wendy). The weekend's activities opened on Friday night with The Goblin's Ball and went on to include workshops and panels on costuming, storytelling, mask making, writing, puppetry, and other areas.

I was introduced to this convention by Nick Barone, who was scheduled with me on a panel about puppets in the media. (Unfortunately Nick had to cancel this year.) On the panel, moderated by convention vice-chair Stephen Nelson, were Toby Froud, the man who as a child played "Toby" (the boy in the striped pajamas in the movie *Labyrinth*) and is now an amazing puppet designer, film producer, and performer; Jason Harding, a Bay Area actor who writes, performs, and produces *Opinion-Ville*, a puppet social satire on YouTube; and I, due to my work creating puppets and creature costumes for *Ghostbusters II*, *Harry and the Hendersons*, *Captain EO*, *Childsplay*, and other film projects.



The casual presentation, held in a fairly intimate meeting room, had the feeling of chatting with old friends. I was seated next to Toby Froud who brought his puppet character Ignatz from Froud's project *Lessons Learned*. Jason Harding brought his puppet

from *Opinion-Ville*. As the puppets I worked on for film (*Slimer*, *Chucky*, *Harry*) are the property of various production companies, I had to make do with photos. I admit I was a bit star struck, sitting next to someone whose work I so admire. We each answered questions about the puppets we had worked with. Since many of the puppets I had worked with were mechanical and remote- or cable-controlled, I went into explanations of what that entails. Toby introduced Ignatz (who bantered with the other panelists) then filled the audience in about his film project. We shared experiences and funny stories with the audience and each other.

It was a lovely time. If you are a fan of fantasy, science fiction, puppetry, and costumes, attend this year's Convolution, September 26-28 at the Hyatt Regency in Burlingame. For more information, visit [www.con-volution.com](http://www.con-volution.com).

- Camilla Henneman

## Gnawty P, Spokesdog



The spokesdog puppet at rest while the crew is setting up for the next shot. (photos submitted by Lee Armstrong)

The latest spokesperson for ADMC (American Distribution & Manufacturing) is a bulldog puppet designed and built at Images In Motion's Sonoma workshop. ADMC distributes pet products, among other things, and runs its own charitable organization, the Compassion For Pets Foundation, to support animal welfare charities.

Kamela Portuges designed the puppet, which Mary Nagler fabricated beautifully. The dog has a foam understructure, covered in fur, and an eyebrow mechanism which allows the puppet to furrow his brows.

"The shoot was fantastic! A lot of funny material," said the client. "And Gnawty P definitely steals the show."

- Lee Armstrong

## She Makes Monsters

Mary Nagler helps design fantasy roleplay creatures for student play.



Sonoma State University students help build the five-headed dragon. (photos submitted by Mary Nagler)

Mary Nagler has been working on a contract at Sonoma State University--where she received her BA in Sculpture--making creatures for the Theater Department's upcoming play.

The creatures, a very large five-headed dragon and a Gelatinous Cube from the game Dungeons and Dragons, can be seen in Qui Nguyen's play *She Kills Monsters*, directed by Paul Draper, which opens March 5 for four days, then runs four more March 26—29.

From the play's website: High school teacher Agnes comes to terms with the death of a teenage sister she never really knew when she discovers Tilly's secret gamer world of Dungeons & Dragons. Dubbed "Agnes the Asshatted," she follows the dynamic trio of Tilius, Lilith & Kalliope in search of the lost soul of Athens, confronts Orcus of the Underworld, battles a 5-headed dragon Tiamat, and finds her true self.

For tickets, visit <http://www.sonoma.edu/theatreand-dance/productions/monsters.html>.



## Bit Layers



(photo courtesy Ryan Daffum – [www.daffum.com](http://www.daffum.com))

Congratulations to Transcendence Theatre Company, who recently won four awards from BroadwayWorld San Francisco including "Theater of the Year" and "Best Youth Production – Fantastical Family Night".

Images In Motion is delighted that their chickens, Zee and Fiona, were a part of Family Night. Fiona clucked, "It was great to flap our wings on stage with TTC. Great singers and dancers, full of pluck." Zee gushed, "Made me want to crow with pride! Alas, I'm a chicken."

Lee Armstrong and Kamela Portuges puppeteered the chickens, designed by Kamela and built at the IIM studios. They performed in the song "I'm Flyin" with the Broadway singers and dancers. TTC had asked if the chickens could fly, so at the conclusion of the song, the TTC performers brought up a circular shaped shadow screen, and the chickens, as shadows, soared across a yellow moon.

Lee comments that the chickens are fun characters to perform. "We'd love to use them more. They are perfect spokespoultry for commercials and events. They even come with their own coops. In 2014, we'll be getting Zee and Fiona out of the coops and into the real world to really let them spread their wings!"

- Lee Armstrong

## Lewis Mahlmann Awarded

The Oakland Heritage Alliance recently awarded Lewis Mahlmann the Lifetime Achievement Award for his life in puppetry and the 40 years he spent designing puppet shows for the Storybook Puppet Theater at Children's Fairyland. The award was accepted by Randal Metz and Fairyland's Executive Director, C.J. Hirschfield, on behalf of Mahlmann, who recently turned 86.

## Creature Shop Premieres

*Tune in on the telly or pop by the pub to root for contestant Lex Rudd!*



The cast of the Creature Shop Challenge. (photo from Syfy.com)

Jim Henson's Creature Shop Challenge premieres later this month on the Syfy Channel. Root for our own local champion Lex Rudd in the new reality show as she goes head-to-head with other creature effects folks to vie for prize money and a shot at a dream job working at Jim Henson's Creature Shop itself.

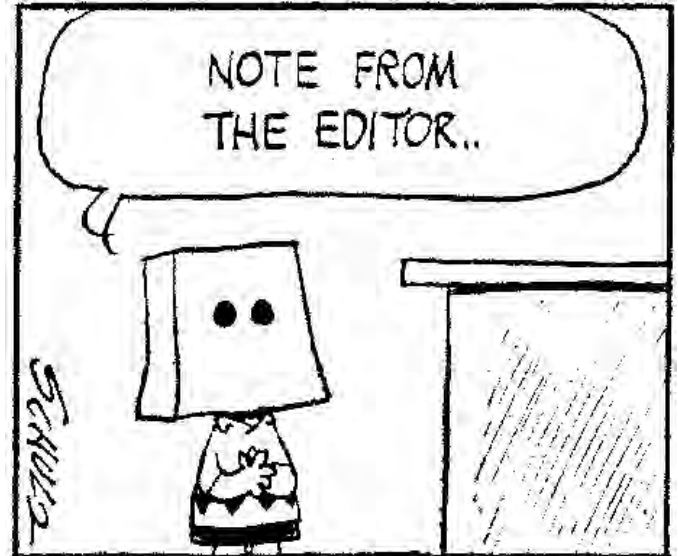
The first show airs at 10:00 p.m. Tuesday March 25 on the Syfy channel. So set the timer on your BetaMax, or better yet join Lex at her favorite local pub to celebrate the premiere episode. Gather at the Rio Nido Roadhouse on the scenic Russian River and make some noise. Arrive early for grub and tiddlies.

The Roadhouse is at 14540 Canyon Two Road, Rio Nido (just east of Guerneville). See Lex's event page at [facebook.com/events/1424800114428702](https://www.facebook.com/events/1424800114428702) or email her at [lex@alexisrudd.com](mailto:lex@alexisrudd.com) for more details. Spread the word!



## San Francisco libraries kick off month of free performances

Catch multi-media music, storytelling, circus performers, puppet shows and more at the San Francisco Public Library's Children's Performing Arts Festival, all March long. Featured puppetry includes performances by Magical Moonshine Theatre, The Fratello Marionettes, Sean's Shadows, and ventriloquist Tony Borders. More information and calendar at <http://sfpl.org/releases/?p=1241>



Gang, I owe you all an apology for the sporadic nature of the newsletter since I took over. I won't belabor the point, but you deserve better.

Without going into the gruesome details, I have found myself unable to make the necessary time to deliver the news in a timely way. My schedule is only going to get worse in the near future, so it's time to admit defeat and turn in my typewriter. Michael Nelson has graciously offered to step in as interim editor for now.

Besides the humble apologies, I owe a great thanks to everybody who has contributed material. Without your generous time and talent, there wouldn't be a newsletter at all. Please forgive me for dropping the ball on some timely content. I urge you to continue to submit articles, photos, and calendar items to the new editor.

The Guild needs a dependable volunteer to take over the position of Newsletter Editor. Ideally this would start with the April or May issue. The role does take a little time, but is a fun and rewarding way to get to know your Guild better. You would love it. I have.

Contact interim editor Michael Nelson if you're interested in filling this vital role.

Happy trails, everybody. - GH