



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

December 2014



*Bob Baker, thanks for all the joy over the many years.
You will be missed.*

Inside this issue...

- ◆ Bob Baker dies at 90
- ◆ Next Guild Meeting January 25
- ◆ Message from your President
- ◆ Guild survey results

Looking for the guild calendar? Check out the guild website:
<http://www.sfbapg.org/events/calendar/>

2014-2015 Board of Directors and Officers

President

Olivia Huff
ohuff@den.org
916-484-0606

Vice President

Elisheva Hart
ishvahart@yahoo.com
707-933-1395

Treasurer

Mary Nagler
mary.nagler@gmail.com
707-303-0093

Membership Officer

Camilla Henneman
camhenneman@gmail.com
831-359-9761

Secretary

Judy Roberto
judy.roberto@sanjosegov.ca
Lex Rudd
lex@alexisrudd.com
626-224-8578

Lee Armstrong
images@vom.com
707-996-9474

Gregory Hayes
gregoryhayes@gmail.com
707-874-8378

Newsletter

Michael Nelson
mail@magicalmoonshine.org

Non Board Positions

Librarian

Lee Armstrong
images@vom.com
707-996-9474

From your President:

Hello Guild!

I'm hoping you all had a wonderful Thanksgiving holiday and that you are gearing up for your Holiday performances and events in December. It sure is a busy time! That's why we have our Holiday Party in January...see the details elsewhere in the newsletter.

I want to welcome Lee Armstrong to the Board. She is replacing Tom Crystle who could not continue with Board duties due to his schedule. I'm happy to say, however, that Tom and his wife, Beth Marie, will be able to continue on the Hospitality Committee and you will see their welcoming faces greeting you at the membership meetings. Lee will continue to be our faithful librarian in addition to being a Board member.

NEXT MEETING, SAVE THIS DATE. Sunday, January 25th, 2015 is the day of our Guild Annual Holiday Party and Potluck! It will be held at our usual site, Christ Presbyterian Church, 620 Del Ganado, San Rafael, from 4-9pm. Magical Moonshine Theater will perform their new show, "The Three Little Pigs", a creative retelling of the traditional story by Valerie and Michael Nelson. It is presented with the traditional Bohemian style of marionettes on a table top stage, complete with lots of Live Music! Festivities include schmoozing and networking, potluck dinner, decorating the dinner tables with themes of any holiday you want, holiday theme puppets you want to display (or "just puppets") --bring your own stands, the Scholarship raffle, the library, and yes-the Gift Exchange! Complete details will be in the January, 2015 issue of our Newsletter.



Bob Baker, the founder of one of America's oldest puppet theaters, died Friday at his home in Los Angeles. He was 90.

The cause of death was kidney failure according to Greg Williams, his biographer. The below article was written by Australian puppeteer Marianne Mettes.



Bob and the author, at his theatre.

Bob Baker, a life of puppetry

Bob Baker's story - how he told it to me in a one-on-one conversation on the 3rd of July, 2010. For more info on his life and theatre and performance credits - visit his [website](#).

When Bob was 6 years old, already trained in piano and dramatics - he went to see a puppet show and was so entranced, he went back twice after, so he could understand how it worked.

Having an understanding mother, he received his first puppet and lessons in puppetry every Sunday for a year. After much training and passion, he did his first puppet show for the payment of \$15 in the affluent Bel Air and continued on doing shows until WW2.

Bob went with his puppets to every movie star's home in Los Angeles, taught puppetry when he was in high school, manufactured puppets and became an accomplished Vaudeville performer before even turning 17.

When he turned 17, he was in the Army Air Force camouflage division, teaching camouflage to older men. After the war - he worked on movies, receiving credits as a puppeteer, alongside some of the world's greatest entertainers, such as Elvis Presley, Shirley Temple and Judy Garland, just to name a few. He was responsible for moving animated objects in box-office classics such as *Bed Knobs and Broomsticks*, *Adams Family 2*, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, and many more ([see his website](#)).

He also became well-known as the 'Butterfly Man', when he would make little 'butterflies' with bits of mono-filaments or cellophane at the end of long rods and strings, and dangle them over dogs in order to get them to do tricks for the camera.

Bob was also one of the first people to start using Technicolor, and realized that TV could be a pre-recorded medium and not just live. This opened up a whole new world for the art of puppetry and his work appeared in many TV shows, television variety



shows and commercials.

Bob also had a very fruitful manufacturing line and supplied puppets for large companies, such as Walt Disney.

More recently, Bob supplied a series of puppets for the animated motion picture *The Polar Express*. But after the company asked if they could have the copyright to his creations and Bob rejected them, they ended up ditching his puppets, while changing them only slightly to get out of crediting Bob.

Bob told me about his frustration with such practices and more generally with a world of computer-generated imaginary (CGI) and 3D animation. When I asked him what he thought of the future of puppetry and if it had a future, he gave me a cheeky smile as if he had been to the future and seen puppets being ingrained in entertainment again and said; "We just need to wait it out".

To hear this coming from a man in his mid-80s confirmed my own view that puppetry is much more precious than we may think it is and we all need to help keep this world alive.



Bob Marshall in 2014 leading the Million Puppet Parade in Santa Monica as Grand Marshall.



A fond farewell, Bob.

Bring Back I-Fest (from Gabriel Anthony)

Creative Ministry Solutions (once known as One Way Street) is a ministry that has been equipping children, youth and leaders with puppetry and creative ministry resources and training since the 1970's. The International Festival of Creative Arts Ministries is a conference averaging 1000 attendees from around the world for a week of lectures, workshops, competitions, performances and camaraderie. The festival hasn't happened since 2010 but they hope to bring it back for 2015 with the help of people like us: believers in the power of puppetry, the arts and collaboration. Will you support Bringing Back I-Fest?

Photos from I-Fest, shared by Guild Member Gabriel Anthony

<http://www.faithlauncher.com/projects/1153-international-festival-of-creative-arts-ministry-i-fest?r=%5BIF1501%5D>



Guild Survey Results

Michael Nelson

The guild survey results are in, so let's take a collective peek at what you are saying! First of all, congratulations to the 50 GUILD MEMBERS(!) who took the time to share your thoughtful responses to the survey. Your contributions are already guiding the Guild Board and the Program Planning Committee. Of the respondees, 8 of you are new members (less than 2 years), 13 members for 2-5 years, 6 have been members for 5 to 10 years, and 22 for more than 10 years. Forty one percent of those responding use puppetry in education. Sixteen percent earn most or all of their income from performing, and 35 percent see themselves as puppet builders. Forty one percent earn some of their money from performing. Ten percent work in another form of theatre but sometimes uses puppetry. Most of you felt that the guild was important as a meeting place. A significant majority also saw the guild as being an important place to learn puppetry skills. Ninety percent of you felt the guild newsletter was an important part of the guild (thanks from your newsletter editor!) A strong amount also valued the idea of a puppetry calendar. Scholarship was important to 14% of respondents. The guild library results were pretty evenly spread, with a pretty equal response in all degrees of importance. Workshops at meetings had a very strong showing (77% indicating importance) while performances at meetings showed even stronger with 80%. How many meetings did you attend? Out of our 4 annual (at the time of the survey, now up to 6 meetings a year) 12% of you attended all 4, 12% attended 3, 18% attended 2, 24% attended 1 and 33% didn't attend any. Why didn't members attend more? The majority sited either schedule conflicts or meeting location as the reason they did not attend. What do you want at future meetings? Not surprisingly, you want more workshops and performances, but a significant number also hoped for more roundtable discussions and speakers. Do you want to hang out with other guild members outside of meetings? A significant 51% said yes they did! Would you pay to attend a workshop? More than 50% said they would pay between \$20 and \$50 for

The question about what is the purpose of the Guild gave a lot of good insight as to why you joined the guild and what you hope to get from your membership. Below are a sampling of some of the responses to this important question. Three ***s separate one person's response from the next:

The SFBAPG is to promote the art of puppetry and support those who make a living from the art, expose the art of puppetry to new audiences, and provide quality information and resources to those interested in puppetry.***I see the purpose of the guild to be to connect puppeteers together to facilitate collaborative artwork***To promote and support puppetry in the Greater Bay Area. I'd like to see a strengthening of communication, networking and skill improving workshops for members.***The Guild is a place for puppeteers to network, learn and procure knowledge. As a member I would like to see more workshops and demos. I would also like a clear mentoring program and community involvement.*** For a long time I've wished that we had more interplay with the theatre scene in the Bay Area, and with adult-oriented work, but don't know how to make that happen. The puppet slams have made a great contribution, I think, and hope there's a way to keep that happening, but it's probably best if the Guild isn't directly involved in that.***It would make sense, I guess, to offer special ongoing classes (e.g., workshop series of 4 sessions in a row over let's say 2 months with homework that needs to be done) to explore certain subject-matters in-depth and to establish a stronger and more active relationship between members.***The Guild allows members to exchange information in an open environment that fosters a greater expression of the art. The Guild should educate the public about the value and relevance of the art form, and should reach out to aspiring puppeteers to give them an avenue into the craft as performers and builders.***The guild is the heart of the puppeteers in the Bay Area. Let's host a festival!***You guys are doing great. I think it's high time to host a regional festival. I don't think just the Board should be responsible for this. The membership should provide a bunch of help. Many hands make light work, if they're the right hands.*** How about ride Share?

a good workshop. So, what do guild members want to learn at these workshops? A lot of you wanted to learn about the use of various materials for patterning and making puppets. There was less interest in learning about drapings and coverings for puppets, but I do wonder if the results would have been different with different vocabulary. Painting and airbrushing had some strong advocates (60+%) along with 18% who had no interest (possibly indicating interest in different styles of puppets.) About 50% of you were interested in workshops on show development. Fifty-seven percent wanted to learn about writing and directing for puppetry. Forty-one percent were very interested in learning about green screen technology (used in video work.) And now, for the moment you have been waiting for! **Which are the most popular forms of puppetry?** Here are the answers, with 1 being not interested and 5 being most interested: **Shadow puppets** - 1=18%, 2 = 4%, 3 =24%, 4=16%, 5 =22%. **Marionettes** - 1=12%, 2=8%, 3=27%, 4=12%, 5=27%. **Hand puppets** - 1=10%, 2=4%, 3=24%, 4=22%, 5=24%. **Hand/Mouth puppets** - 1=10%, 2=10%, 3=8%, 4=10% and 5=37%. **Using Rod puppets** - 1=8%, 2=12%, 3= 8%, 4=24%, 5=35%. **Large scale, walk around puppets** - 1=31%, 2=2%, 3=10%, 4=18%, 5= 24%. Someone with better statistical skills can now figure out which is the most popular kind of puppet!

You are also interested in voice over and vocal acting skills (more than 50% strongly interested.) Fifty percent liked the idea of puppet improv, 35% wanted to learn more about puppet slamming, and 16% were interested in street performing (busking.)

NOTE: A surprising 19% of you seemed to say you do not use the guild Yahoo Group. Currently this is the most important way the guild communicates with its members, most of whom get meeting notifications and newsletters through this service. I am sure your board would be interested in any comments or suggestions you might have on this important subject.



The SFBAPG **scholarship committee** is gearing up to give away money! We are finalizing the guidelines, but here is a heads up. Members in good standing for at least two years are eligible. The scholarship will help pay for registration at a puppet festival or workshop. Deadline is two months before the event. Look for more information in future newsletters or email Valerie Nelson at magicalmoonshine@gmail.com for more details.

Magical Moonshine Theatre performs at the January “Holiday” Guild Meeting. In this classic, three pigs set out to seek their fortunes with a bit of house building. Things don't go as planned in this creative retelling of the traditional story; houses collapse, pigs and wolves play together and audience members help the story along with lots of live music, singing, construction and laughter. Presented with traditional Bohemian style marionettes on a tabletop stage.

~ Participant Registration begins January 2015 ~



puppetfest@uconn.edu

nationalpuppetryfestival2015.com

join us on facebook for updates, volunteer opportunities and more:
Puppeteers of America 2015 National Festival at UConn



San Francisco Bay Area Puppeteers Guild
PO Box 1258
Vallejo, CA 94590