



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

September, 2018



Our last guild event was the annual day of puppets at Children's Fairyland in Oakland. The engaging puppeteers of the Dublin 4H joined in the festivities, performing and walking around sharing their puppets with Fairyland visitors. One of the young puppeteers, Kruthi Kumar, shared a video she made of the event. Check it out at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zA8lej6PdLs>

Inside this Issue

- Review of meeting at Fairyland
- Art Grueneberger visits Puppet Showplace
- New Adult Puppet Film from Brian Henson
- Bob Baker Marionettes
- Imagination Puppet Workshop
- Getting Puppet Help
- And more!

Guild Board and Officers

Co-Presidents

Glynn (Tree) Bartlett
glynntree@hotmail.com
831-239-9281

Peter Olson

upatreepuppetry@gmail.com

Vice President

Michael Nelson

mail@magicalmoonshine.org

707-363-4573

Membership Officer

John Arnold

arnoldjw@gmail.com

Secretary

Barbara Grillo

bgrillo@contracosta.edu

Lee Armstrong

images@vom.com

707-996-9474

Judy Roberto

be_artsy@hotmail.com

Lynnette Pinto

lynnette.pinto@gmail.com

Gabriel Galdamez

gabrielgaldamez@gmail.com

Additional Positions

Librarian

Lee Armstrong

707-996-9474

Newsletter

Michael Nelson

newsletter@sfbapg.org

Calendar

John Arnold

events@sfbapg.org

Treasurer

Valerie Nelson

magicalmoonshine@gmail.com

707-363-4573

REVIEWS OF CHILDREN'S FAIRYLAND PUPPET FAIR PERFORMANCES,

By Elisheva

"THE FROG PRINCE", performed by Dragon Fly Theater, presented by tuxedo-clad Will Lewis, and assisted by Sarah Tracey-Cook.

This show is delightful and witty, and premiered last year at the Puppet Fair for the public and also a special performance, just for our SFBAPG Meeting.

There is an extensive review in our Guild Newsletter of Sept. 2017, pages 3-4.

"THE KING'S PROBLEM" presented by Randal Metz and his Puppet Company. This was the very first audience preview! Next year it will be expanded for more performers and performed on Fairyland's permanent "Story Book Stage" as part of the regular schedule.

This play is based on tales from the "Panchatantra Tales" of India and utilized traditional plus Bollywood music to help link the tales, as well as to define each of the individual tales. Each tale was introduced by a large animated, talking book. A three year old gurgled, "I like this music!" every time he heard the book's disappearing tune.



Each tale ended, Aesop Fable-wise, with a moral, like "Honesty is Rewarded." Exciting characters inhabited these stories: serpents; a flying wood Spirit with movable wings; talking crow; a dancing and squirting elephant [when the kids heard its Bollywood music, most of them popped up and began dancing in the "Mosh Pit" ie aisles!]; a snake charmer and a king and a farmer! The show's concluding moral-aimed at the King-is "An incorrect solution to a problem can lead to MANY problems!"

After the show Randal was very pleased when a man from India praised him for having the snake "turn tail" on the snake charmer, making the man dance!

Currently there is a big movement in India to ban snake charming because it is harmful to the snakes.

"A MODERN LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD" presented by the Alameda County 4-H Puppeteers, directed by Sharon Clay, one of our Guild members. We not only had a chance to see what "Red" is doing these days, but also had skits about nutrition and exercise, and about being careful while crossing the street. ("Did you look both ways?" said the man. "No, it was dark and I couldn't see," replied the possum, an apt reply from this clueless animal.

The skits were linked together with the aid of "Sammy", a real 4-H person. She MC'd outside their nifty roundish stage, which had room inside for several other 4-H puppeteers and puppets. Sammy asked questions of the audience before each skit which helped set the stage. She needed to ad lib when the sound system misbehaved and she did it well.



Many puppeteers need the stage between them and the audience due to shyness. Many don't. We all have our gifts and it is wonderful when they are used. We the audience could see that the puppeteers had rehearsed and are gaining in their manipulation skills. One fun visual was a large tree which traveled slowly above the backdrop, indicating "Red's" movement through the woods.

The puppeteers introduced themselves and we learned most have been in the 4-H puppet club for 2 or 3 years. Members of our Guild who came to this year's April 29th meeting (at Derek and Lauren Lux's home in Concord) met some of these 4-H puppeteers there. The workshop was on manipulating Muppet style puppets and we can see their benefits in this performance.

After the cast took their bows, an audience member asked, "What's your favorite part of puppetry?" Immediately came the response, "Making the puppets come to life!" A terrific motto for us all.

"PEREZ AND MONDINGA", presented by The Puppet Lady, aka Ronda Kay.

The show is chock full of toe-tapping Mexican fiesta music and a cockroach who marries her mouse suitor- one of many-because he loves her! See our SFBAPG Newsletter for September, 2017, bottom of page 5 and top of page 6, for a brief review of her charming show.

This year her audience warm-up act was dancing in front of her stage while gracefully dancing with a ballet dancer, and then a cat marionette. They interacted with children sitting in front of the Emerald Stage. Interestingly the sound system gremlins were messing with her performance too. Must have been a plague sweeping through the park. (Humm, could this be a performance next year at the Puppet Fair?)



"THE SORCERER'S APPRENTICE," was presented in the Open Storybook Puppet Theater (3 times) by the Children's Fairyland puppet crew and directed by Randal Metz, Fairyland's Puppet Master. In the show, Harold applies to become the Sorcerer's Apprentice because he wants to learn Magic so he "can clean up!" The cat-in-charge-of-hiring replies, "That's where you'll begin, cleaning up!" A very true statement.

The script and visual effects were effectively acted out. The production included brooms of course, an imp, and a fun set cluttered-on purpose-with lots of magic essentials such as a large kettle decorated with mystical symbols.

In typical Randal fashion, there was lots of water squirted at the audience. The woman who introduced the show gave fair warning to the front rows, especially to the Mom sitting near the stage, holding her adorable 1 year old Birthday Girl! They moved to new seats, no one else did.

BITS AND PIECES, PHOTOS AND TEXT BY ELISHEVA

HISTORY IN THE MAKING AT THE PUPPET FAIR! Sharon Clay (in red tee and blue jacket), a long time member of SFBAPG and director of the Alameda County 4-H Puppeteers meets just-joined-our-Guild-at-the-Puppet-Fair Robin Stice (in blue tee), a 4-H Leader from Pacifica! They meet n' greet n' agree that Sharon will help Robin set up a 4-H Puppet group in her area.



GUILD MEMBER JOEL SCHECHTER WITH THE TRUMP PUPPET

he made to carry in a protest parade recently. It was so well received-many cheers/jeers-that he is planning on participating in more "outings" when possible. YAY TEAM! Keep us posted.



Nao Kobayashi of Richmond shared her unique white glazed sculpted puppet which is manipulated with an old paintbrush embedded in the back of it's head plus hands-on manipulation. She usually does not name puppets, so the audience or clients can name them. It was the main part of her latest production called Shilo Kioko in the LA area. She has worked with the San Diego Guild and the LA Guild. She arrived to the Puppet meeting as a non-member of our Guild and is interested in becoming a new member.

<https://www.naopuppet.com/shilokloko.html>



MARCO YAMAGATA OF "DEEP SEA PUPPETRY" WAS A GUILDER IN THE 1990'S. And is one again. He is an East Bay Artist and loves to turn junk into puppets! He is working on hand puppets whose heads turn upside down to create different faces. He helps facilitate very affordable art workshops in his neighborhood.

"BOB BAKER MARIONETTES"

Alex Evans gave a special performance of his one-man variety show with marionettes from Bob Baker's Theater to our Guild after dinner. He had done one for the regular visitors earlier in the day. WE got to look at the puppets up close and even try them out! Alex is a very personable fellow, is an exquisite performer, and a fabulous representative of this type of puppetry-musical vaudeville. Ten years ago he went to Bob and asked if

he could volunteer there, he was so excited about the puppets. And he's still there.

If I recorded them all, there were 12 acts: Shambles the dog, yellow hen singing opera while holding a fan, a topsy-turvy doll, a singing baby seal wearing a bling collar, an ice skating polar bear, a red checked girl rag doll paired with a blue checked boy rag doll, a "real" boy dressed in a red flannel long night shirt with a matching long hat singing "I dreamed I was a tiger", an Italian looking Pierrot dressed in his traditional white silk outfit who had a yellow balloon, a huge singing and dancing frog, a couple dancing the tango, a yellow cat vamping "My Heart Belongs to Daddy", and a Mexican Hat Dance! Several of the marionettes were very tall. All beautifully rehearsed and presented.



A TIP OF THE ICE BURG ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF BOB BAKER

-from an after show talk by Alex Evans.

Bob Baker, at 8 years old, first saw a puppet show and spent the rest of his life trying to do this! (Bob passed away at 90, 4 years ago.)

There are 2000 puppets in his Los Angeles Theater. " Most are older than me," smiled Alex. The focus of Bob Baker performances is on Musical Vaudeville Acts or Vaudeville Acts with a Theme such as "A Day at the Circus", (from 1948!) Their musical library, including albums, is gigantic. The group just became non-profit this year and is secure in its continuity.

Bob had a long and varied history with many Hollywood connections including Disney, George Pal's "Time Machine", Elvis' movie "G. I. Blues", "Star Trek", and "Close Encounters of the Third Kind." These are but a few examples.



[Many Guild members have fond memories of seeing Bob in person, thrilling and inspiring generations of children, at local County Fairs from such far flung places as San Diego Co., Marin Co., and Santa Cruz County. Back in the day, last century-pre Loma Prieta earthquake-our Guild used to meet occasionally in Santa Cruz at the family beach house owned by Guilder Kitty Adams. (Now passed on.) Once this coincided with the Santa Cruz County Fair, and Bob was invited to our meeting. He came and was totally gracious with answering our questions, etc.]

Bob Baker can take the credit of convincing film actor Ronald Reagan (who then was the president of the Screen Actors Guild-SAG) to admit professional puppeteers to this union!



Over the decades many puppet builders and performers were associated with Bob Baker, including our own Randal Metz, current Puppet Master at Children's Fairyland! So even though Bob Baker is the only name on the theater, many, many more names are silently connected to the achievements of this fun filled, professional theater.

GOT PUPPETRY PROBLEMS? NEEDS?

Bring them to a SFBAPG meeting. Ask individuals. And make an announcement to the group. For instance Sharon Clay needed advice on a sound system for her Alameda County 4-H Puppeteers group. During the recent Puppet Fair at Fairyland, she made inquiries both to individuals throughout the day, and at our after-dinner meeting. A flood of "sound" information and solutions were forthcoming! She now has a lot of options to consider.

If you can't wait for a puppeteers' gathering and don't know who to call SEND A *SHOUT OUT* to our SFBAPG Yahoo Group! This includes all the Guilders who have e-mail. It's easy-peasy! Just compose a letter expressing your problem or needs, etc. Address this to sfbapg@yahooogroups.com and send it out. It will be vetted to be sure it is legit and then forwarded to our members. We are a community who is very supportive and willing to share. So don't be shy at contacting your fellow Guilders.

Performances at The Puppet Showplace Theater

Art Grueneberger

Have you ever been to Boston? If so you must have visited the Puppet Showplace Theater. If you haven't, go back to Boston.

I arrived at the theater late on Thursday night with puppet stage, sound system and puppets in tow. My friend and former fellow P of A Board Member Roxanna Myrhum (current Artistic Director of The Puppet Showplace) met me so I could drop off my gear. Speaking of my gear I must say I'm pleased with my current flying set up. Two sets of puppets fit nicely into the new large suitcase purchased for the trip. The requirement for the bag was that it must fit one troll bridge, one flying saucer, three Billy Goats of various sizes, a grumpy troll, a tortoise, a hare, and evil scientist, an alien and a mouse. Plus enough underwear to get me through 13 days.



My stage is loaded into a hard case meant for golf clubs. These two bags are checked and I carry on my sound system and a small backpack with my intro character Rusty the Dog.

Freed of the ton of puppet gear Roxie and I grabbed the "T" (Boston's subway system) and headed to her charming home in Newton. I got to share a room with Pepino the cat. He (and of course Roxie and her charming husband Francois) were glorious hosts. I learned I was only the second puppeteer they've hosted since moving into their new home, Mike Horner from Mesner

Puppets being the first.

Friday afternoon I returned to the Showplace to set up my gear.



The little theater is charming, nearly as charming as Paul Vincent Davis (artistic director from 1977-2009). Chatting puppets with the 84 year old master was an incredible moment for me. He held court with me in the apartment he's been living in for nearly forty years above the theater. It's interesting that we solo puppeteers tend to discover the same problems and solutions for our shows. Paul and I were of one mind when it came to



several aspects of good solo puppetry for kids. We also discovered we used a lot of the same cheats to make our shows work. What a charming visit. I wish I'd spend more time with him.

I was the final act in the Summer line up, honored to be included with so many incredibly talented puppeteers. The first of my four performances of Tommy's Space Adventure was a little shaky. It's always a little intimidating for me to perform in front of other puppeteers, even

with a show I've been performing for over 20 years. Are my entrances and exits perfect? Are my puppets maintaining a consistent height? Are my "he's right behind you" bits timed well? I relaxed after the first show and really enjoyed myself and had some great performances. My morning shows had large audiences (50+ people) and the afternoons were smaller (20-ish) but full of energy and a willingness to participate in my silliness.

I love it when I get a chance to play off of the audience in an unplanned way. For example, in one performance Tommy the Mouse is going to fix his new found friend Zeenon the Space Alien a delicious Earth snack. He decides on a big plate of Twinkies and says while exiting, "Everybody loves Twinkies!" In the silence



that follows his exit a young audience member says, "I don't like Twinkies." Tommy Mouse from off stage replies, "Nearly everyone likes Twinkies..." to which the grownups giggled. I love that kind of thing and the audiences at the Showplace provided ample opportunities.

My last shows each day were at 1pm which gave me plenty of time to go and explore Boston. The last time I was here was January, 2005 shooting a commercial for Bose with shadow master Wendy Morton. If I can't go

out in jeans and a hoodie it's too cold for this Californian. Fortunately the weather was much better this trip allowing me to walk the Freedom Trail and enjoy Boston Harbor.

As I write this I'm on a flight to New York City where I'll visit with friends for a few days and then head up to Long Island to perform for Liz Joyce's Goat on a Boat Puppet Theater after which my husband will join me in the city and we'll do a Broadway binge seeing three Tony winning shows in two days.

This brief east coast tour has been a great way to wrap up a busy Summer.

Muppets Gone Bad

Elisheva

'MUPPETS GONE BAD' screamed headlines in last weekend's Press Democrat movie section. A ROUGH PUPPET MOVIE NOT MEANT FOR THE KIDDIES continues a 3 column trash of this new film. Katie Walsh, reporter from Tribune News Service, is obviously horrified with what she saw. Henson Alternative, an offshoot of the Jim Henson Company....bills the content as "not intended for our youngest viewers."

"The Happytime Murders", R rated for strong crude and sexual content and language throughout and some drug material, was directed by Brian Henson, Jim's son, and is the first feature film by Henson Alternative.

When the puppet cast of an '80s children's TV show begins to get murdered one by one, (shades of Agatha Christie), Phil Philips, a puppet private investigator reluctantly joins up with human Melissa McCarthy to investigate "Who's Doing It?"



[Myself, being born much earlier than the Muppets-needed another, older emotional reference equivalent to the horror and shock which Katie Walsh feels. So I tuned in to how my older girl cousins would have felt if they learned that the dimpled, dancing, curly headed Shirley Temple grew up and starred in porn films! Urgent Alert: this paragraph is not even #Fake News, folks, just a What If! My Mom met Shirley Temple Black, who trained Mom to

be a grey lady at the Palo Alto Hospital and Mom verified she was just as nice as when she was a child movie star!]

The Happytime Murders are, as of the weekend of our Puppet Fair, playing in 3 theaters in Santa Rosa/Rohnert Park area and probably playing in one near you. (If you are known in your neighborhood as a puppeteer, you could always wear a paper bag to the theater. Don't forget eye holes!)

Children's Fairyland Puppet Fair 2018 - Puppet Making - Imagination Puppets

Judy Roberto



I was delighted to share this workshop at the Children's Fairyland Puppet Fair on Saturday, Aug 25. Huge thanks to Tia Smirnof, Barbara Grillo and Lynnette Pinto for assistance.

It was a perfect day, with delightful children. They were all well mannered, creative and thankful. Outstanding parenting was the order of the day - very impressive.

The puppet creation project is titled simply: IMAGINATION PUPPETS

Materials offered were: small/med paper bags, *80 Imagination Puppet Shapes, each in many color choices, Tissue paper strips, Fabric & ribbon shreds, 3/4" stick-on eye dots, liquid glue and glue sticks, *Imagination Puppet Shapes* © 2002, Judith Roberto are carefully designed to be both ambiguous and suggestive.

Children were asked to first look at the table of

Imagination Puppet Shapes, imagining what they would like to make. They were invited to choose a face and mouth (many to choose from), and 6 shapes to begin with before proceeding to the assembly area. They were encouraged to return shapes to the trays if they changed their minds, and to take more pieces if they desired. Puppets were completed using tissue paper strips and fabric shreds.

Approximately 100 wonderful puppets were made in the course of the day. One child spent an hour, with parents waiting patiently nearby, as she made a beautifully intricate puppet. Others were created using the originally selected 6 pieces and tissue, with great success.

CALENDAR: For calendar listings, check the guild calendar at <http://www.sfbapg.org/events/calendar/> To submit Calendar Items, email to events@sfbapg.org

To submit newsletter articles, email to newsletter@sfbapg.org



Puppet Show!

Come join the fun at the office with an inaugural morning of puppetry.
Tinker's Coin Productions
(Talib and Olivia Huff)
will present

"The Garden Show or A Tale of Two Plots."



When: Saturday, September 22, 2018
Time: 9:30 am and 11:30 am
Where: 2717 Cottage Way, #14,
Sacramento CA 95825
Cost: Adults: \$5; Children \$3
Tickets: 916-484-0606

Reservations are required due to the size of the venue. Don't be disappointed; get your tickets today!

