



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

November, 2018



A search of the internet for turkey puppets yields a variety of simple, creative projects including (above) puppets based on a water bottle, an envelope, a paper bag and a little finger puppet with colored paper.

Inside this Issue

- Next meeting Nov 10
- Puppet film shot in Sonoma
- Lex Rudd Open Studios
- Hand to God review
- Big Bird "retires"
- Mary Nagler sends an update
- Book Review
- Mrs. Bandersnoot
- And more!

Guild Board and Officers

President

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

Vice President

Lynnette Pinto
lynnette.pinto@gmail.com

Treasurer

Michael Nelson
mail@magicalmoonshine.org
707-363-4573

Membership Officer

John Arnold
arnoldiw@gmail.com

Secretary

Barbara Grillo
bgrillo@contracosta.edu
Lee Armstrong
images@vom.com
707-996-9474
Judy Roberto
be_artsy@hotmail.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

OUR

Guild Meeting, Sat November 10 2018! Please mark your calendars now!

Location: [The Veterans Memorial Hall of Benicia](#), 1150 1st. Street, Benicia, CA 94510.

Time: 1-7pm

PROGRAM

(times are approximate)

1:00 pm General meeting, welcome, introductions, agenda, upcoming activities and meetings

Special book sale - see Elisheva

Guild Library*

2:00 pm:

Gabriel Anthony, who WOWed us with his black-light workshop, has offered to share his story creation knowledge, from his experience with Pixar and Disney.

Gabriel says: Let's explore the secrets behind the success of the world's leading animation studios! We'll discuss story development, character development, and creativity and see what I've gleaned from my vast collection of "the Making of" books for films like "Toy Story," "Frozen" and "Wall-E."

Gabriel has been enthusiastically involved in puppetry for over 15 years, not including his younger years when he staged puppet shows from his bunk bed. He is the director of "Create, Minister, Teach!" - a creative ministry team in Daly City. They enjoy blending powerful stories with diverse art forms to present musical programs throughout the Bay Area. He has taught at regional, national and international conferences. He has also traveled to Mexico, Panama, Nicaragua and Ecuador for mission trips to equip locals with puppetry and creative techniques for working with their communities.

3:00pm

Judy Roberto, Imagination Shapes - A Paper Puppet Workshop. Judy brings a plethora of paper pieces, ready for you to create whatever your imagination can make of them. She challenges you to go several levels beyond your initial thoughts about what each shape is, to what else it could be. It's all paper, all fun. Make more than one!

5:00 POTLUCK SUPPER

Please bring your favorite dish to share with others. Appetizers for the Social and Main courses are always appreciated. Microwave and refrigerator are available. Dinnerware, coffee and tea will be provided. Beverages are welcomed, however at this venue, please don't bring alcoholic ones. There is a *very reasonable* bar in the same building, and we are welcome to purchase them there.

6:00 -ENTERTAINMENT - WE'RE COUNTING ON YOU!

Share your talents. Share your work-in-progress. We are looking for 1-10 minute, family friendly "shorts". If you would like to perform a short piece at the November meeting, please contact Judy Roberto, be_artsy@hotmail.com or 408 981- 7898.

PUPPET PARADE- BE SURE TO BRING THAT GREAT PUPPET THAT HASN'T BEEN OUT OF THE SUITCASE FOR A WHILE!

6:45 - 7:00 - CLEAN UP

***GUILD LIBRARY**

The Guild library has hundreds of books covering a variety of topics. Books & DVD's will be available for you to checkout at the meeting, to people that have been members for at least 6 months. Are you looking for books or DVD on a particular topic? Contact the Guild Librarian, Lee Armstrong, images@vom.com 707 738-5906. She can email you a list and she can bring related books to next meeting.

SEE YOU THERE!

Books, Books, Books-SALE AT GUILD MEETING -

Elisheva Hart has great puppet resource books and will be selling some of her collection at the Guild meeting. Come with cash and checkbook and peruse her fine books, just in time for a Christmas gift for a puppet enthusiast, or a gift for yourself.



BUNNY LOVE Making of the movie

Judy Roberto

Many of us were lucky to be at a recent SFBAPG guild meeting when Pam Severns joined us, with her bunny puppet friend. They performed a short, hysterically funny piece, which left us all wanting more.

Later, a call went out asking for volunteers to assist with the shooting of a puppet movie. I answered the call, to do whatever they needed, though I was a complete novice in puppet movie making. Fred Riley III also answered the call, bringing Seattle puppeteer Annett Mateo in from the airport.

The location was an incredible hilltop in Sonoma, literally in Lee Armstrong's backyard, and included panoramic views of the valley all around.

The excellent crew consisted of Pam Severns (Director), Sam Koji Hale (Producer), Alex U. Griffin (Dir. of Photography), Annett Mateo (Puppeteer), Danny Hernandez (Production Assistant).



Photos--Outdoor shoot, in view: Danny Hernandez, Annett Mateo, Pam Severns, Sam Hale, Alex U. Griffin

The kitchen Picture: Alex U. Griffin, Danny Hernandez, Annett Mateo, Sam Hale, Pam Severns, Lee Armstrong

was the newbie Craft Services (food) and errand runner. When possible, I took the opportunity to photograph the process of the shoot.

Everything went very smoothly, a testament to Pam Severns' and Sam Hale's work and the planning and rehearsing done by the crew ahead of time. There were many small things to learn, that you can't get any other way than being there: About camera angles, props, and monitors, puppeteers in the dirt and sun, and reflected light; Makeup and clothes for "black and white" shot in color.

Bunny Love is sweet, funny and classy, and it will be for IBEX Puppetry/Heather Henson's Handmade Puppet Dreams film series.

I know you'll all want to see it. Stay Tuned!



Photo: Garden, in view- Same Hale, Alex U. Griffin, Annett Mateo, Pam Severns, Fred Riley III

OUR LEX DOES IT AGAIN!

by Elisheva

A magnificent 4 day open studio display at Lex Rudd's new "Dreams and Visions" studio featured her puppets and human sized creature costumes, along with masks, pendants, and make-your-own-puppet kits, all for sale of course. She was able to participate in the Sonoma County Fall ART Trails this October.

This is on the heels of her smaller 2 day exhibit last May in someone else's studio in Sebastopol. (See SFBAPG Newsletter, June, 2018 issue, page 5-6 for coverage.)



Now she has her very own fascinating studio at 6544 Front Street, Forestville, in Western Marin.

On opening day, Saturday, October 13th, Lex had over 80 awestruck people visiting and enjoying her artistry. My art teacher friend, Suzie, and I set out the next day, on Sunday, questing for amazement and puppets. There was no way I could verbally prepare her for the scope and variety of Lex Rudd's talents so it was a joy to see Suzie being blown away as we reached our objective. We looked at everything possible and asked a lot of questions: materials, use (commercial and film creds), how long the creation took, interesting stories, etc.

It was also fun for us to enjoy several other visitors and their pleasure. The "funnest" were 3 local Forestville residents, a Mom and 2 boys. The eldest boy (AKA Big Guy in this article) seemed about 11 (he had begun to sprout up) and the younger was maybe 9 years old.

Big Guy was VERY interested in all the puppets. Mom also turned out to be interested. Some of Lex's medium-sized puppets have movable mouths, no legs, with each arm hollow down to the hands. This allows the puppeteer to insert her/his arm in each of the puppet's arms. Oops, that equals 3 puppeteer arms! Big Guy caught this right off, and wisely asked if only one person was manipulating the puppet, what happens with the "empty" arm? Lex replied with suggestions like the empty arm can be tucked into the puppet's waistband, etc.



The boys decided on a puppet they desired to manipulate together and soon this was turning into a selfie-session, narration and all. At one point Big Guy proved his natural talent to become a puppeteer by making a wish which many, many of us have also done, "Why don't I have 3 hands?"

I began chatting up the Mom, mentioning our Guild and, oh yes, it's a shame you didn't know about our Annual Puppet Fair in August at Oakland's Children's Fairyland! They all began to smile. Oakland was their home town before moving to Forestville. Big Guy (when he was quite small) had his birthday party there! No wonder that ol' puppet bug had bitten him---and Mom-so thoroughly. They purchased the puppet which starred in their selfie.

One of the boys asked Mom for his future allowance so he could buy one of Lex's eyeball pendants, pleading "Please, I'll pay you back!" (Typical kid tactic). She agreed. (Ditto Mom). Turns out this is a Waldorf School family [there is a huge campus in nearby Sebastopol] and they are going keep revisiting "Dreams and Visions", hopefully purchase more puppets, and check about Guild news, etc. Very successful contact indeed! Both for Lex and for Big Guy and for the future of puppetry.

Dragging ourselves away from Lex and her studio, Suzie and I had a nice lunch and had enough energy left to visit 2 more local studios on the Art Trail. The artist who painted silk scarves said that she had read of the opening of Lex's studio a few months ago and is looking forward to meeting her. Getting ready for the Art Trails had consumed ALL her time in the last few months. She was sure our Lex is a very desirable addition to the Forestville scene! We totally agreed, of course.

Later, after the ending of this Fall's Art Trails, Lex shared that she also worked very hard to get ready for Art Trails. It was a lot of fun meeting and greeting and offering snacks to nice folks -which will lead to networking- and especially enjoyed sharing her art forms with them.

“Hand To God” is a “Wild, Wacky Roller-Coaster Ride”

Review by Lee Armstrong

October 27-Nov 11 @ 8:00 pm

Cost: \$25 - \$40 at www.leftedgetheatre.com or at 707-546-3600

Luther Burbank Center for the Arts, 50 Mark West Springs Rd, Santa Rosa

If you've been in the puppet business for over 25 years, it's fascinating to work with the next generation of clients. We knew Chris Ginesi as a kid. Now, with a Masters degree from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland he called Images In Motion to see if we could



make the puppets for “Hand To God” which he is directing. As the puppets are supposed to look like they were made by teens, it didn't require the meticulous work of a TV puppet. Kamela Portuges had fun creating the 6 puppets needed and then we all went to see the show at the Luther Burbank Center this last weekend. Ginesi's version is excellent, with a tight performance and an engaging cast.

We had seen the play previously as a Guild event at Berkeley Rep. If you missed the shows in Berkeley and Sacramento, we highly recommend Ginesi's “Hand To God”. (Please note: Adult material, not suitable for children.) Reviews below from Aisle Seat Review, <https://aisleseatreview.com/>.

“Director Chris Ginesi has staged an expertly executed and grossly entertaining experience for theatergoers craving something unconventional. Rife with clever dialogue and R-rated humor, the script explores some darker themes without compromising the explosive laughs, turning even the

most shocking moments into serious fun. From puppet sex to pedophilia, playwright Robert Askins dares go where others won't, and the result is thought-provoking comic gold.”

“It's a wild, wacky roller-coaster ride, filled with riotous laugh-out-loud action and the absurdly clever ravings of a deranged puppet. You don't want to miss this one... Special applause for Images in Motion, credited with the creation of the puppets for the show.”

BIG BIRD RETIRES! dateline, Thursday October 18, 2018

By Elisheva

"Today Carroll Spinney, aka Big Bird, leaves the Sesame Street Nest". This announcement was made yesterday [Wed. 10-17-2018] through Sesame Street's official twitter. Carroll is one of the few participants who has been with Sesame Street from the beginning.

Carroll is now 84 years old. He has performed Big Bird continuously since the first program was aired, in 1969. He stopped puppeteering in 2015 due to the physical requirements of "inhabiting" an 8 foot, 2 inch tall yellow bird.

The large wearable puppet was originally conceived by Jim Henson to be a "big goofy guy". Spinney convinced Jim that Big Bird's trademark of curiosity and innocence would better serve Sesame Street's very young target audience if he were portrayed as a child learning to count, the ABC's, how to make friends, etc. just as the viewers were doing.

This sweet child-like persona made Big Bird famous-a star on Hollywood Walk of Fame, his likeness on a US postage stamp, and named a "Living Legend" in 2000 by the Library of Congress. Big Bird is MUCH more famous than Carroll Spinney, except possibly to us puppeteers.



Photo: Carroll Spinney and Jim Henson

Two younger men have been groomed for years to take over Big Bird and Carroll's other puppet, Oscar the Grouch. Carroll has done only the voice of Big Bird for many years. Today's final performance was recorded but is not planned to air on HBO until sometime next year, during Sesame Street's 50th Season.

Many clips and special articles re Big Bird are available on line. And here are 2 stories from a different source, a paperback book about the beginnings of Children's Television Workshop and Sesame Street. It was (probably) published to mark their 10th year. I bought it in a Santa Cruz Albertson's (grocery) market then passed it on after having read it.

As a parent and a preschool teacher, the stories have stuck in my mind.

#1. Soon after Sesame Street began, many children (and parents and teachers) wrote thank you and fan letters to Big WHITE Bird!!! This puzzled the crew at the workshop. Finally they realized that many of their target audience-low income and head start qualified families-in 1969 had only black and white TVs! For a few years thereafter, Big Bird frequently was greeted by his friends on the TV as Big YELLOW Bird.

#2. Early on the show must have been broadcast live or this next story would never have happened. Once early on, Caroll, appearing on the TV set and being filmed in full Big Bird costume (of course), really had to use the restroom. Gritting his beak, he tried to hold it-but got desperate and said to the other characters, " 'Scuse me, I've got to go to the bathroom!" and to every one's surprise, walked off camera.

A few weeks later he received a letter from a grateful Mom who wrote that she is so thankful for him saying this. Her very young-but potty trained-son was so enthralled by Sesame Street-especially his favorite character Big Bird-that she could NOT get him to leave the TV to use the bathroom. Now her son would say, " 'Scuse me, I gotta go bathroom!" to Big Bird every time he got the urge, and then would leave! Coming back asap of course.

Mom was So Happy not to have to clean the carpet daily, dubbing Big Bird her Hero Forever.

News from the North

By Mary Nagler

Greetings! This has been an eventful month! The new guild I have been trying to encourage had a second meeting and found out our charter is not 48 years old but more like 37! So no jubilee year just yet, but still coming! I am the new president and everyone at the meeting was eager to step up and help so I look forward to a great year ahead.

I am moving to Portland NOV 1 and will take up residency in an Art Collective run by Michael O'Neill, a former Ringling Clown and movement artist. The place has a rehearsal hall that can be used (For free) by members of the house, which includes a musician and another movement artist. Collaboration is in the air!

My new group of performing friends participated in a Slam using some puppets I made from baskets and wooden bits collected from Goodwill stores. The story line of "Oblivious " included a girl in a park with her mom and infant brother (In a pram) mom gets on her cell phone and the girl is left to amuse herself as she meets and plays with a stray dog, battles a compost monster and saves, herself, the dog, mom and her little brother from going off the cliff! Fast music and intricate manipulation made this performance a challenge and a joy. It was well received by the audience.



Sort of a Book Review

by Elisheva Hart

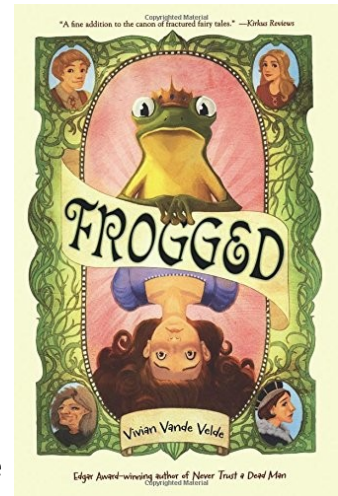
"FROGGED", by Vivian Vande Velde, is a chapter book rewrite of "Frog Prince". Part of this fairy tale plot has a Middle Ages traveling theatrical group-at a historical time when only men were actors, even playing princesses. as well as servant girls. Luella, the lone woman with the group, did cooking, sewing, and other grunt work.

There is a fun sentence about this circumstance, which our female Guilders can appreciate. It appears on the next to last page of this amusing book. (Ned is the director of the troupe.)

"....Ned was telling Luella all about how he was thinking of switching from plays to puppet shows, since puppets were less trouble than actors, and that oh by the way did she know that society had no constraints against female puppeteers?" Exit Ned and Luella, arm in arm.

The level of this chapter book is middle school. Vivian Vande Velde has rewritten many books for this age group. "The Rumpelstiltskin Problem" has 6 rewrites of the Straw into Gold story in one book, which shows us how inventive we can get with one basic story.

Since the settings are basically the same in all versions of this story, perhaps it might be an interesting way to divide up a classroom, giving each group one of the rewrites to perform (or challenging them to create their own). Then have a Straw into Gold marathon. Highly recommended, even if you are not interested in producing this particular fairy tale.



Dear Mrs. Bandersnoot,

I am a monster puppet that is brought out this time of year to be a part of the Halloween show, and both look forward to getting out of the trunk and dread it. Though a monster, I identify as "friendly," like Cookie monster and Grover; some of my role models and friends, but my horns and big teeth (An artistic choice of my builder – with a hats off to their inspiration Nick Barone) make me look a little more ferocious than friendly. Kids seem to be afraid of me or feel a need to go into combat!! With shouts of "Kill the Monster!" I think it is wrong to judge monsters by how they look, but it happens. Very often the same crowd of kids have aspects of both, with the underrepresented few who just want to pet and hug me! What do I do?

Yours Sinsurrlly, Igor the Terribly confused

Dear Terribly confused,

As a puppet, you are an actor and with your horns and teeth and furry visage you can play a great range of possibilities from tender to terrible. Embrace that, and have a heart to heart with your puppeteer, who I assume is also your builder. You were likely designed for a particular role, and will have to play it, but from what you

describe it sounds like the interactions comes post show, when many puppeteers bring out the main character to meet the audience. You are exposed! I have many suggestions (Naturally) which I will address in a later article, but this one, coming from an article recently provided for my research, by my dear friend Elisheva Hart, bears sharing. The article comes from *Storytelling Made Easy with Puppets* By, Jan VanSchuyver (1993). My roommate Mary, taught Jan some Paper Mache techniques back in the early “80s. Small World! Here is what she suggests:

“Offer the children a safe way to interact with the puppet. One thing that works, even with a monster puppet, is to have the puppet taste fingers. Demonstrate by offering the puppet your finger, which he gently nibbles. Then he whispers in your ear what you taste like, and tell the children. Have your puppet promise to be very gentle as he tastes fingers. Then say that all people who want to have their fingers tasted should stay sitting down and hold their finger out in front of them. Your puppet can go around the circle of children and gently nibble each outstretched finger, whispering to you what each child tastes like. Tell the child what the puppet whispers to you. Most children find this great fun!

Never insist that a reluctant child have his or her finger tasted. If a reluctant child is sitting on a parent’s lap, have the puppet offer to taste the parent’s finger. The puppet is always extra gentle when tasting the parent’s finger. Often this example gives the child the courage to offer his or her finger to the puppet. If the child is not with a parent or older sibling, then I will ask if the child wants to shake the puppet’s hand or pat its head instead. I may show the children how much the puppet likes to be stroked. Sometimes they will want to do this. Always move slowly and give children total authority in how far they want to go in interacting with a puppet.” Thank you Jan! Good advice! Now, Terribly confused, you will need to devise a list of people “flavors” to have ready. Here, I will start you off... asparagus! cake! left over Halloween candy!...Best wishes! Yours truly, Mrs. Bandersnoot

To submit a question to Mrs. Bandersnoot, email Mary Nagler mary.nagler@gmail.com. (Mrs. Bandersnoot lives with her and Mary will relay the message!) Or, give Mary a call (707) 303 0093 **No question too silly**. Silly is good!

Nufonia Must Fall Live - Kid Koala

from Judy Roberto

If you read the article in the October Guild Newsletter by Lynnette Pinto, and you're excited to go to this event, here's some information for you. There are actually 2 venues that you may consider. We tried to arrange an event with group rates, but that requires payment in full. We aren't going to do that. The best seating for this show is the middle to front of house on the main floor.

The first Show is in San Francisco at (SFJazz)Miner's Theater: I was warned by their staff that the \$25 seats here are actually stools, not recommended for anyone with physical issues.

Nufonia Must Fall Live - Feb 7 thru 10 - [Kid Koala: Nufonia Must Fall -sfjazz.org](http://www.kidkoala.com/nufonia-must-fall)

The second is in San Jose at the Hammer Theater - only 2 nights Feb. 13 & 14

[Kid Koala—Nufonia Must Fall – Hammer Theatre Center](http://www.kidkoala.com/nufonia-must-fall) - This theater is less expensive than San Francisco, and there is ample parking for around \$5.

So if you're going, find your local peeps, and get the tickets. DON'T WAIT LONG - Both theaters said they are expecting a sell out very quickly.

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