



The official newsletter of  
**San Francisco Bay Area Puppeteers' Guild**  
*Looking for updates and missed information?  
Check for it at [SFBAPG.ORG](http://SFBAPG.ORG)*

*SFBAPG is a charter guild of the Puppeteers of America, Inc., a non-profit, tax exempt organization*

## December, 2018



Our guild president, Tree Bartlett, created the above Santa puppeteers image to share with you all. Your guild board wishes you all a very happy and safe holiday season and we look forward to seeing you all at our Holiday Party in January. Why do we have a Holiday Party in January? This is a guild tradition that started decades ago when it was decided that so many of the guild's puppeteers were so busy performing and doing other activities during December that it would be better to have the guild celebration in January to allow the most members to attend.

## Happy Holidays!

### Inside this Issue

- Call for performances for January meeting
- November guild meeting reviewed
- Secrets learned from Pixar (and others)
- New, cheap overhead projector reviewed
- Calendar Listings for December

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## SPECIAL NOTICE REGARDING OUR JANUARY HOLIDAY MEETING

Plans are in the works for the Guild Holiday meeting in January (probably the weekend of January 19 or 26<sup>th</sup>) and your Planning Committee is looking for possible entertainment. Do you have a fun show to offer for the event? If so, contact Judy Roberto (her email address is on page one in the guild board list to the right of the page) and let her know!

## REPORT OF NOVEMBER'S GUILD MEETING, November 10, 2018

By Elisheva

Due to being scheduled on a holiday weekend-Veteran's Day-plus quite smoky air which kept many people indoors, the attendance was light.... and very cozy! Lots of fun also. Unfortunately neither the holiday nor the smoke was evident to the planning committee when they booked the The Veterans Memorial Hall of Benicia several weeks ago.

Starting time was 1 pm. And, oh my! several Guilders forgot to eat lunch or bring lunch! So mid-meeting we set up a small buffet which morphed into early dinner!

Guild President, Tree Bartlett, came early and helped set up the room. Unfortunately, he then had to leave early. This gave vice President Lynnette Pinto a chance to make her chops, by running the meeting- which she did admirably. *(Photo: Lynnette, taking a break from running the meeting to make a puppet, Right)*



Ilene Kennedy (Kennedy Puppets) of Vallejo, announced her annual drive to obtain 300 puppets of all sizes, from finger puppets up, for Christmas presents for 300 high risk kids in the Vallejo environs. Alas, if elaborate, expensive gifts -electronics, bicycles, etc-are collected and distributed, they usually are sold by the parents for drug money.

Luckily "mere" puppets have "no value" so the kids can keep them. These gifts indeed could become the BFF of each child. Besides being a worthy cause, here is a golden opportunity to release some of your neglected on-the-shelf (or in-the -box) puppets.

Ilene needs the puppets ASAP/ by December 15th. Mail or deliver them to: Ilene Kennedy, 1113 Pine Street #23, Vallejo, Ca. 94590 Contact her at (707) 731-3232 or kennedy puppets @ [facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com/kennedy.puppets) Already she has received a box of 30 puppets because of this announcement.

Elisheva brought 3 wine boxes full of puppet books and took home less than 1 box! Originally her earnings were slated for Christmas. However, now she is planning to devote these funds to finishing her project of creating 2 "go-bags", one for her car, and one for inside her front door. The disasters of last year and this are indications of these necessities. Thanks to all of you who relocated these extra puppet books to your libraries!

Our 2 great workshops inspired us all. Plus a mysterious load of old puppets appeared, donated by Pat Lavin. WHO IS SHE? Accounts of all 3 of these are in their own separate articles.

A wonderful trio, Grandmother visiting from Germany, her adult daughter, and the Granddaughter, whose name is Linda, arrived at the invitation of the Nelsons. Linda is in her last year of grade school. (Next stop,

Middle School.) The 5th graders are required to pick a topic about which they know nothing, but are very interested in. They need to identify and utilize their skills and "tool boxes" which they have learned and developed in all the previous years at school, to now do research and learn about this topic.

At the end of this school year, each student will make a presentation of her/his topic to their peers and teachers. Linda is enthusiastic and a very lovely person. [Historical note-our Lettie Schubert managed to talk all her teachers, when she was in school, into letting her create and perform puppet shows on the assigned topics, instead of writing papers. She certainly have enjoyed Linda!] When asked, Linda (with Mom's supportive OK) enjoyed our suggestion that she also give her presentation to our Guild! Tia suggests that this become the dress rehearsal before the class assignment is due.

This was a very nice, leisurely gathering, to be sure. Reported by Elisheva

## Gabriel Galdamez's Presentation at our November meeting

"SECRETS I'VE LEARNED FROM DISNEY AND PIXAR" reviewed by Elisheva Hart.

*(Photo, Gabriel Galdamez getting expansive in his workshop, Right)*

"Create characters people connect with and tell stories that deeply entertain and move them, the audience will come and they will keep coming back." quote from John Lasseter (Toy Story)

Gabriel has watched Disney and Pixar films, read books authored by the creator/s of these films, and then watched the films again with knowledgeable eyes because "The proof of the pudding is in the eating." [A very old proverb dating back to the 14th century.] And he repeated this process over again and again, sussing out the salient points which connect and support these quotes with the examples he saw.

Then he summarized his findings, clustered them into categories, spiced them with 'wisdom sound bites' and printed them on a double sided sheet for folks to use in "Secrets I've Learned from Disney and Pixar" Workshops.



Category by category. Quotes by quotes. Gabriel asked us open-ended discussion/questions like, "Describe Woody's character" (the cowboy doll from Toy Story). Then we related our brief answers popcorn style-in

random volunteer order- to the discussion starter. Some answers about Woody's character were: awkward, boy next door, not perfect, relateable, threatened by Buzz Lightyear, and overwhelmed.

{OK? Got it? All aboard for the real deal.}

**Ed. Note:** *Gabriel is sharing his great handout for the workshop with us all, below:*

## Secrets I've Learned from Disney & Pixar

Gabriel Galdamez | [gabriel@CMTministries.org](mailto:gabriel@CMTministries.org) | [www.CMTministries.org](http://www.CMTministries.org)

"Create characters people connect with and tell stories that deeply entertain and move them, the audience will come and they will keep coming back" - John Lasseter

Character Development: create characters people connect with

- **APPEALING:** "Wall-e was a 'Robinson Crusoe' robot that you liked before you even knew what he was about. You knew he was the last robot on Earth, working by himself. He could stop doing it but he didn't know that. You immediately liked him." Pete Docter, Wall-E

- **RELATABLE:** "Woody wanted to be a sarcastic guy; someone who hides his very real anxiety about



being forgotten in a sort of malice and wisecracking... Woody is the person who needs to learn the lesson of the movie..." Josh Whedon, Toy Story

"When you think... story you pull from your life experiences." Fawn Veerasunthorn, Frozen

"There were some early versions where Ralph was a troll. Then he was monster, then an ogre, then shambling caveman.... We discovered that you can't make

Ralph so basic in his design... so they swung the other way and went for realistic, and Ralph quickly became more relateable." - Jim Reardon, Wreck-it-Ralph



- **BELIEVABLE:** "My number one goal is believability." - John Lasseter, Toy Story

"The quality of the acting in Toy Story makes you believe the toys are real." - Peter Schneider

Story Development: tell stories that deeply entertain and move people

- **A STRONG STORY:** "If the story isn't there, all the breakthrough computer graphics in the world piled onto it won't matter. You'll have made a piece of passing fashion." Joe Ranft, Toy Story

"No amount of the best animation in the world will ever save a bad story..." John Lasseter, Wall-E

"A strong story will carry weak animation, but the most polished animation can't save a weak story." the Art of Frozen

- **SHOW, DON'T TELL:** "The bond Woody feels with Andy had to be the first thing we got across in the movie. It had to be immediately tangible, or you wouldn't care when something comes along and upsets it." - Andrew Stanton, Toy Story

"You hear that mantra constantly: 'Can we do it without dialogue?'" Williams, Frozen

- **AN EMOTIONAL JOURNEY:** "For every laugh, there should be a tear." John Lasseter

"At the end of the days it's not the technique that the audience cares about; it's a great story, a visual feast and great characters. They want to be taken on an emotional journey they've never been on before." Peter Scheider, Toy Story

"It isn't enough to create a world that looked real and populate it with believable-looking characters which moved realistically and told a cohesive story. The one element of story-telling that would be absolutely essential to making Toy Story work was emotional believability. Through the use of music, careful voice casting, attention to ambient sound, and subtle work with characters, acting, and lighting, the filmmakers worked to bring a richness and realism to the film..."

- **WHAT'S THE POINT?:** "When the new Disney musicals became big office hits, other studios tried to copy the model. The result was a spate of uninspired films where the plot halted, a character sang, and the filmmakers tried to pick up the story." the Art of Frozen

"Other studios assumed, you write a song, you put it in the movie, and it's a musical. The only way a musical works is if the songs heighten the emotional beats in a way that grows organically out of the story... They won't write a song until they understand where the story is going. It has to be a continuation of the plot and convey something in a way dialogue can't." the Art of Frozen

the Creative Process



- **STUDY the ART FORM:** Watch great ones and bad ones - see what works and what doesn't

- **DO NOT WORK IN A VACUUM:** "The more input you get, the more you tear it down and build it back up, the stronger it gets." Ranjo, Frozen

- **SURROUND YOURSELF WITH TRUSTED PEOPLE:** the "Brain Trust" is a group of filmmakers at Pixar who review pitches and films in progress. "Although they're brutal in the notes sessions, there's a sense that's it all to make the film better... We speak up when we think something can be stronger." Peter Del Vecho, Frozen

- **BE WRONG AS FAST AS YOU CAN:** So you can talk about it, tear it down and build it back

- **LOOK AT THE BIG PICTURE:** "You will not be able to see the forest when you're in the trees, you'll be focusing on the pine needles." John Lasseter

"We create the entire movie in rough form before a single frame of animation is done. We work from the very beginning with the story crew putting together rough storyboards and temp sound effects, temp music, scratch dialogue, just to see how it plays." Jeff Draheim, Frozen

- **BELIEVE IN YOUR IDEAS:** The song "Part of Your World" was almost cut from the Little Mermaid by one of the producers because he thought children would find it "boring." They screened a pencil test of the song for children and one of them dropped his popcorn on the ground. The producer insisted on cutting the scene but the writers defended it... and won!

- **TALENT CAN COME FROM UNLIKELY PLACES**

- **BE THIRSTY FOR KNOWLEDGE**

Sources:

Toy Story: the Art and Making of the Animated Film. John Lasseter and Steve Daly.

The Art of Wall-E. Tim Hauser.

The Art of Wreck-it-Ralph. Jennifer Lee and Maggie Malone.

The Art of Frozen. Charles Solomon.;-=-

## **When Santa Can't Deliver The Goods--- Who You Gonna Call? E L F- H E L P That's WHO!**

By Elisheva

"HELP ME SANTA, I am calling you, even though I am an adult. My passion is puppetry and I have been going to swell workshops at our SFBAPG meetings. I'm really turned on to the fun and excitement of using overhead projectors but can't afford one-plus they are heavy and take up lots of space. Please, can you help me find a small model? Or better yet, display this note on the ELF-HELP Line. I know you are busy. Thanks so much." Signed, Me.

REPLY! "Elves, here. We are thrilled to help you, especially as you need small. We don't usually deal with grown ups but Puppeteers certainly are childlike at times, and give us good press, so you qualify! Here is our small advice....

TOPIC: Overhead Projector, Lite! LITE is a good Elf descriptor indeed. Brand Name: Discovery....Wall and Ceiling Art Projector. More info at >DiscoveryKIDS.com<

DESCRIPTION: ....projects up to 20 times the original size of art. The circular lens is 4 1/2" across. Set includes 10 reusable coloring disks- same size as lens-and 6 washable color markers which can be layered to achieve a variety of designs. Uses 4 AA batteries (not included) and has a built-in DC jack for usage without batteries, (also not included).

More Description:....\$12.99 at CVS. Could be sold out. Or check online. Made of plastic. Assembled height is 11". base is 7" deep and 5" wide. Weight is less than 2# including the 4 AA batteries (when installed.) It can be stored in a standard 12 bottle wine box with room for folders of shadow puppets, scenery and special effects, etc. Trust us, we emptied several wine boxes to scientifically check this out.

BRAINSTORMING: Why would puppeteers desire such a small, cute projector?-besides being small and/or cute, just like us.



\*To see if this tool really suits you and your art before spending Big Bucks.

\*To use as a special effect aid with other types of puppets ie a magic mirror on the wall in a hand or string puppet production of "Snow White".

\*To create mood accents. Place your colored disk on TOP of the lens circle (instead of on the base) to produce a soft hazy tie-dye effect. The one in the photo is made with the SFBAPG disk.

\*To use in "1 ON 1" visits in a convalescent home or while touring a Children's Hospital. (Projector is portable to the max.)

\*You like working small."

\*Combine with crankies. (We Elves know about crankies! Especially when Old Chubby returns from that sleigh ride!)

\*Even if you do have a huge overhead projector, use the lovely small one as sort of a sketchbook....try out bits and pieces on it first, when needing to stimulate your inspiration' or questioning your ideas.

\*To give one to your new born child or Grand baby. Goal: to activate the child's interest in your art form so that it eventually becomes part of your troupe, and joins your Guild.

#### TIPS WE HAVE DISCOVERED IN THE TRADITIONAL 'OOPS' METHOD.

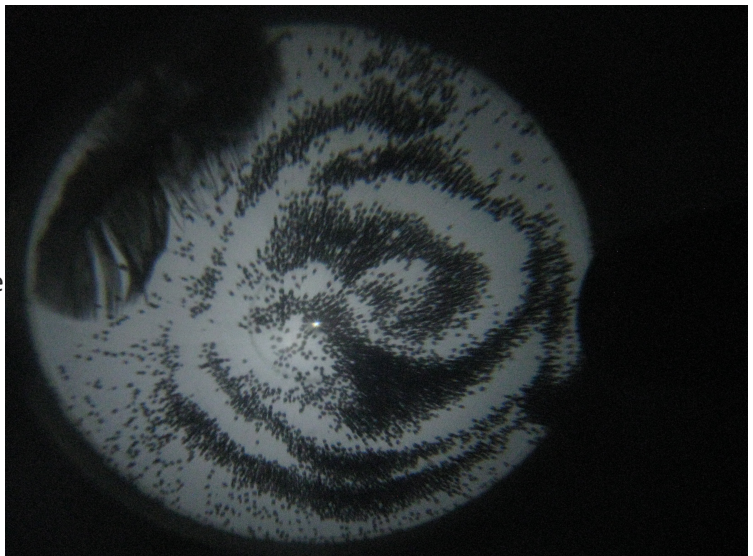
\*The 10 included disks are hard to pull off the lens in a hurry. So we folded a narrow strip of 2" long index card in half across the middle.. Then placed the two ends on either side of the disk's edge (in an inconspicuous place) and stapled the tips onto the disk's edge with a small stapler. ( Be sure to leave the folded edge of the card sticking out from the disk for a handle.) Fold this handle part upwards so it can be grasped with your finger tips to remove the disk or to rotate it slightly to and fro. Watch out for hand shadows!

\*Glue sticks can anchor paper to the disks and can be removed with gentle washing. If the paper has cutouts in it, try not to get glue inside the cutout bits.. They become opaque if you do. Poking the glue glob with a toothpick to reopen the cutout bits.

\*The 6 color pens provided with the projector are washable off the disks. When permanent color is wanted on the disk, a 'thin pointed' Sharpee pen works if you slant the pen so the side of the point rests on the plastic disk. For intense color, use the pen on both sides of the disk. The yellow behind the SFBAPG in the photo is done this way. (Other colors are from the set.)



\*Trader Joe's sells a 32 ounce container of Goat Milk Yogurt. The lid for it is totally clear and it fits perfectly everywhere the 10 disks do. There is also a 1/4 " rim around the lid, which when turned over can hold small 3D objects for projection. Try tiny beads, and sand to draw in with a narrow wire to create an instant, on screen zen garden. >Late breaking note< Twinkle Toes, the Observant Elf, says T.J.'s lids are now bearing tiny molded (and still clear) recycle logos, etc which mar the pristine lids near the outside edge. So cover this area, with a flat tiny paper bell or whatever, as needed.



COULD BE BETTER

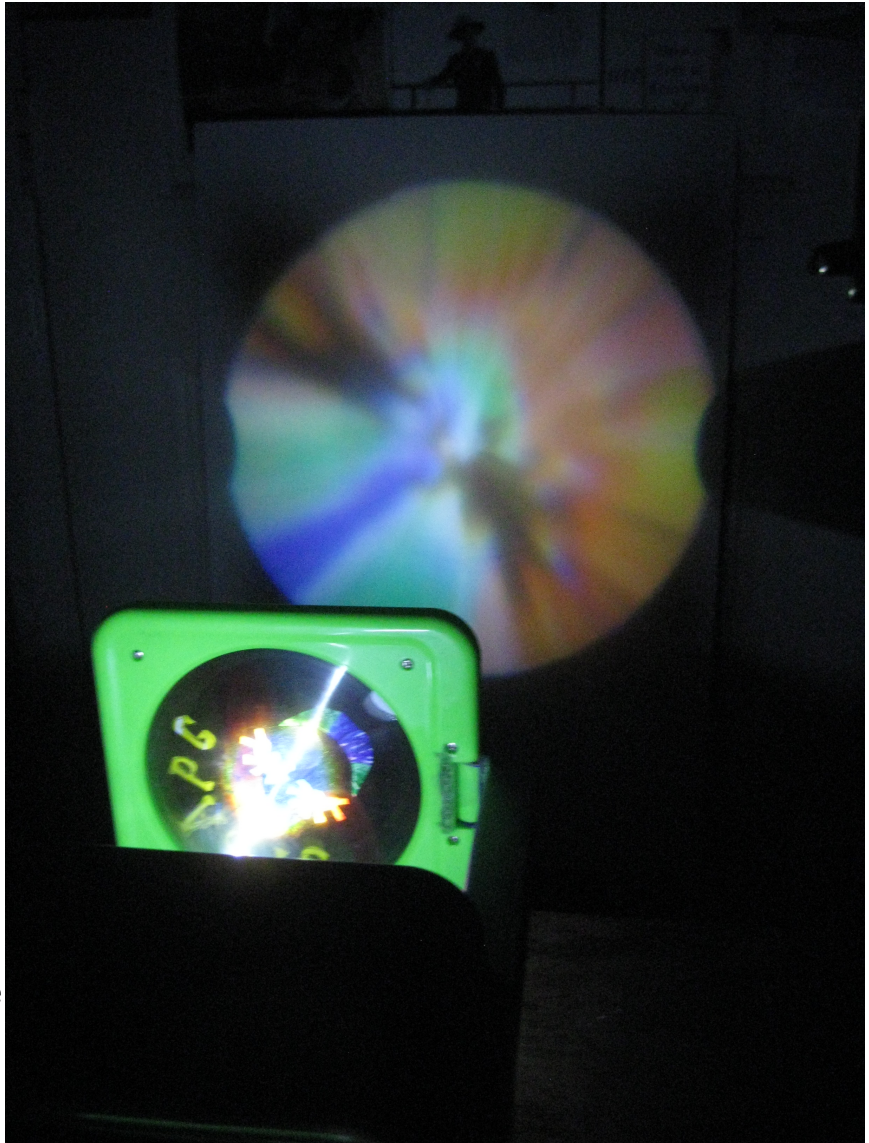
This projector is built to show images in two directions: on the wall, and on the ceiling. -To Project on the wall the projector is laid on it's "backbone" which sturdily supports the machine. Alas, the yogurt disk will now be vertical and 3-D beads, etc. scatter everywhere. We Elves tested this, just in case gravity is different in SF Bay Area because very direction is South from here! Took us all night to find all the beads and the night is really long at our North Pole.

-Projecting straight up to the ceiling. Why? Great for bed bound puppeteers, and preschool audiences sprawling on pillows. (Chubby confessed that back in the day-one summer he and the Mrs visited Sausalito. They joined an audience in a warehouse where everyone laid on mattresses staring up at the ceiling, viewing Vincent Price's 3D film, "House of Wax"! It was very difficult to ingest popcorn.)

To install the 4AA batteries it takes a smallish Philips head screwdriver to open and close the only screw in the projector. Alas, there is no way to change the bulb. We Elves like our little test projector so much we bought more for backup, in case bulb-burnout occurs.

Assembly is very easy. There are only 3 pieces. Thread the backbone down the back of the base. Attach the lens to the top of the back bone. It faces the same direction as the base does. Be sure to get the designated bottom of the lens facing downwards. The label is molded into the plastic and blends into the rest of the rim!

We Elves had to lay the assembled backbone and base flat on the table to jam the lens unit in place. Despite the directions saying Not to Disassemble the projector, the lens unit did graceful swan dives several times from the top of the backbone, the lens surviving each time unbroken.



So Duct Tape time! (Or clear packing tape for a neater look. Chubby never noticed it when he checked our work over.) We bent and stuck a strip horizontally over the top of the lens unit and down the backbone. Ditto duplicated it on the bottom, only going upward. Yay! Small brains overpower gravity!

FAREWELL OUR NEW HUMAN FRIEND. Now that we have test driven your dream machine, we are spending our lunch breaks designing and building puppet shows. Please slot us into your First Small Overhead Projector Lite Festival! Thanks, nice knowing you. Good Luck!!!!

-E L F H E L P, OVER AND OUT."

## CALENDAR LISTINGS

From Guild Member Joel Schechter: On December 2nd I will be performing a puppet play titled "Brecht and Weigel" at the Howard Zinn Book Fair, at the Mission Street campus of San Francisco City College. 11AM in the campus courtyard cafe. Free admission. The address of the Mission District campus of City College is 1125 Valencia Street, San Francisco. The photograph depicts playwright Bertolt Brecht and his wife, actress Helene Weigel, who lived in exile in California in the 1940s. Performance of "Brecht and Weigel" by Joel Schechter and Jeni Johnson



### Saturday, December 1

Puppet Shows @ Fairyland Oakland

### Sunday, December 2

Puppet Shows @ Fairyland Oakland

### Friday, December 7

Puppet Shows @ Fairyland Oakland

### Saturday, December 8

Puppet Shows @ Fairyland Oakland

### Sunday, December 9

Puppet Shows @ Fairyland Oakland

### Friday, December 14

Puppet Shows @ Fairyland Oakland

### Saturday, December 15

Puppet Shows @ Fairyland Oakland

### Sunday, December 16

Puppet Shows @ Fairyland Oakland

### Tuesday, December 18

3:30pm Magical Moonshine: Pacifica--Chanticleer the Rooster

### Friday, December 21

Puppet Shows @ Fairyland Oakland

### Saturday, December 22

Puppet Shows @ Fairyland Oakland

### Sunday, December 23

Puppet Shows @ Fairyland Oakland

### Friday, December 28

Calendar Listings from our website for December. Remember, you are the guild's eyes and ears as far as letting your fellow members know about calendar listings. If you are performing or know of a performance, send your info to [events@sfbapg.org](mailto:events@sfbapg.org). For more details, our website calendar page is: <http://www.sfbapg.org/events/calendar/>

Send your newsletter items to [newsletter@sfbapg.org](mailto:newsletter@sfbapg.org)

## 2019 NATIONAL PUPPETRY FESTIVAL



JULY 16-21 UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA  
MINNEAPOLIS