



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*

**January, 2019**



**Happy Holidays!**

- Renew your membership now. Our new membership year starts January 1 (so you got 4 free months last year!!!) Stop reading right now and go to <http://www.sfbapg.org/membership/join/> to renew, then come back and read the rest of the newsletter!

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## Message from your President: RENEW NOW! (<http://www.sfbapg.org/membership/join/>)

Hello Guild,

First off, Happy New Year! And with the start of the new year is the beginning of our new calendar year and time to renew your memberships. This past year the board decided to change our membership renewal to start with the calendar year. Our former membership began in September so this is a change from past practice. The good news is that our guild members received 3 months of membership for free. So now I am encouraging all of our members to renew now.

I did my membership renewal online through our guild website at: [sfbapg.org](http://sfbapg.org). I did it just before I wrote this piece so I could give you a first hand report on how easy it is to do. And easy it is! Thanks to John Arnold our membership and website officer, members can go onto our website and either through the membership pull down menu or just by pressing the “join now” button, you will be taken to an online form where you can choose to become a new member, renew, or just make a donation to help support guild activities or scholarships. We are currently offering four membership categories to suit the needs of our members as follows:

General membership: \$25.00

Family membership: \$30.00

Senior membership (over 65): \$20.00

Junior (under 18) Membership: \$15.00

Once you’ve chosen your membership category fill out the online form. You must fill out all the red starred boxes before your online form will be accepted and if you forget one you will be reminded. I forgot to fill out two different boxes so was reminded twice. So if that happens to you don’t fret, it’s just a necessary part of the process.

There are a variety of other choices and information you can provide to the guild during renewal that can help the guild serve you better. You will get to choose how personal information is made available to other guild members on the roster. Please note we do not share this information online or with any other entities other than fellow guild members. So any personal contact information you choose to allow will give only you and fellow guild members the opportunity to stay in touch and network together .

So once you’ve filled in the blanks and made all your personal choices you can also opt to give money to the Founders Scholarship which provides scholarship funding to guild members for attending puppetry workshops, festivals, and conferences. More information is available online regarding eligibility. This is one of the great benefits available to all members who have been part of the guild for a year or more, so feel free to check it out and apply.

There is also the Nick Barone Memorial Scholarship that supports an annual workshop teaching in-depth

puppet building and manipulation skills that you could support as well as contributing funds to the Guild Activities Fund that helps support guild events and meetings.

Once you've made your choices and ready to pay you can send a check to the address provided or you can make a payment through PayPal. There is a small fee you will be charged using PayPal but for me, choosing PayPal meant a quick and easy done membership renewal that saved me time and postage in the long run. I chose to give some support to all three funds as part of my membership renewal since I know that our guild is a volunteer run organization. All of our funding comes from membership renewals and gifted support by our membership including the scholarship and activities funds. So please RENEW NOW! And help support your guild.

On a different note, we have a whole year of activities ahead of us. Our next up coming event is our post holiday guild party which will be held on January 26 at the Bay Area Stage in Vallejo. Further details for this event are posted in this newsletter. We also have a couple of workshops planned, more guild meetings to attend, including a Nick Barone workshop in April. So stay tuned and participate in the 2019 guild events.

So here is a happy wish from me, to you, for good things to come in the New Year! Happy New Year SFBAPG!! And don't forget to renew your membership.

Sincerely your Guild President,  
Tree

!!!! SAVE THE DATE !!!!!

THE SFBAPG HOLIDAY PARTY WILL BE HELD ON **SATURDAY, JANUARY 26, 2019.**

**LOCATION:** Bay Area Stage, 515 Broadway St Studio H, Vallejo, CA 94590

Save the Date! Guild Holiday Party, Sat January 26 2018!

Mark your calendars for this Guild traditional celebration of the Holidays and New Year.

Location: [Bay Area Stage](http://www.bayareastage.org/), (BAS). 515 Broadway St Studio H, Vallejo, CA 94590  
<http://www.bayareastage.org/>

Holiday Potluck Supper

Entertainment: Chanticleer the Rooster, a family friendly Canterbury Tale

Gift Exchange and More!

ENTERTAINMENT: **Chanticleer the Rooster**



Magical Moonshine's newest addition to the Canterbury Collection is Chaucer's Canterbury tale about a rooster who is caught by the flattering fox...but foxes can be fooled as well. Assisting the beloved Chanticleer is a wise ant, as well as the pig, sheep, goat, dog, hen and farmer. Medieval costumes and live, ancient music (including a version of "Old MacDonald Had A Farm" from 1710!) make for a delightful and interactive family program. This production is inspired by the Kelmscott Chaucer from the McCune Art and Rare Book Collection, who are sponsors of the project.

#### POTLUCK SUPPER

Please bring your favorite dish to share with others. Appetizers for the Social and Main courses are always appreciated. Microwave available. Dinnerware will be provided.

#### ADOPT A TABLE & TRIM THE ROOM

The tables at Bay Area Stage may be little cabaret style tables...we are not sure yet. More info on this will follow. Individuals and companies are invited to adopt and decorate a table. Any and all holidays are recognized!!! Questions about decorations? Contact Valerie Nelson at [mail@magicalmoonshine.org](mailto:mail@magicalmoonshine.org). Also, holiday decorations for the room will be greatly appreciated. Doors open at 3:30, so bring in some decorations (no nails please) to trim the room. At the end you just take your decorations down and take them home.

#### GIFT EXCHANGE

If you wish to participate in the exchange, bring a puppet related, wrapped gift to add to the pile (in the past, \$10.00 approximate value has been suggested.) All who bring a gift will get to receive one.

#### PUPPET DISPLAY

Do you have a puppet that you've made, that you'd like to display? A table will be provided for an informal puppet exhibit, so bring your puppet (on a stand, if needed) and share your puppet(s) with others.

#### GUILD LIBRARY

The Guild library has hundreds of books covering a variety of topics. Books & DVDs will be available for 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](mailto:images@vom.com) 707 738-5906. She can email you a list and she can bring related books to next meeting.

#### TENTATIVE SCHEDULE (not strictly kept to, after all it's a party!)

3 – 4	Festively trim the room (Volunteers welcome, contact Valerie Nelson)
4-5	Guild Welcome, Social & Gift Exchange
5-6	Potluck Supper
6-8	Short Guild meeting & announcements
	Performances & Party
8:00	Clean up!!!



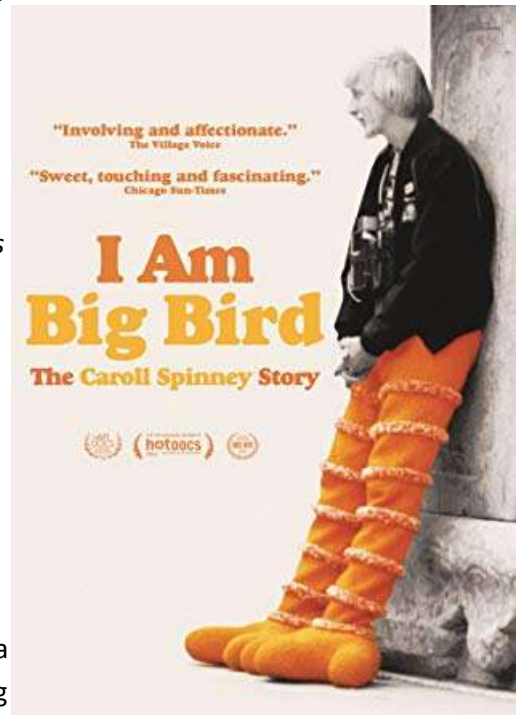
## **Guild Library A GREAT REASON TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP RIGHT NOW! - Books, DVDs and More! (<http://www.sfbapg.org/membership/join/>)**

The Guild Library, a treasure trove of puppet books and DVDs, is free with Guild membership. The Guild library has hundreds of books covering a variety of topics. Are you looking for books or DVD on a particular topic? Check out the Library List at <http://www.sfbapg.org/resources/library/>.

Books & DVDs are available for checkout at the meeting, to people who have been members for at least 6 months. Contact the Guild Librarian, Lee Armstrong, [sfbapglibrary@gmail.com](mailto:sfbapglibrary@gmail.com), 707 738-5906, if you have a particular book or DVD request and she will bring related books to the next meeting. Or come to a meeting, pursue the collection and check out books and/or DVDs of interest.

### **Featured DVD: "I A Big Bird"**

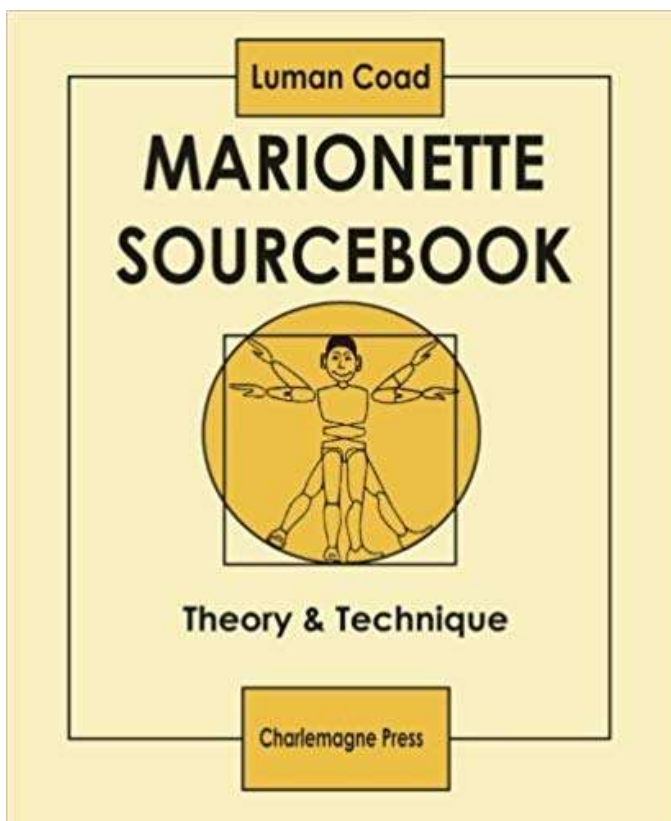
For almost 50 years, Caroll Spinney has been beloved by generations of children as the man behind Sesame Street's Big Bird and Oscar the Grouch. Caroll just retired this year. The DVD is... "A loving portrait of the man in the yellow suit, *I AM BIG BIRD* features extraordinary footage of Spinney's earliest collaborations with Jim Henson as it traces his journey from bullied child to childhood icon. And as the yellow feathers give way to grey hair, it is the man, not the puppet, who will steal your heart." (Amazon review)



Watch it yourself or invite friends over for a screening at your place. This is an in depth look at Caroll's work and life.

Featured Book: Marionette Sourcebook – Theory & Technique by Luman Coad

*"The Marionette Sourcebook is filled with the best of the design and construction ideas developed by the world's most inventive puppeteers. The string puppet's anatomy is carefully detailed in 171 line illustrations. Also included are useful tips for stringing, staging, and manipulating the most regal of puppets - the marionette."* (Amazon)



## "THE NORTH POLE REVIEW!" wows families at selected Sonoma County Libraries!

This is "The Review of the Review" by Elisheva Hart

Arriving on December 8th, this happy event by "FRATELLO MARIONETTES" was performed by Kevin Menegus (founder, performer, builder) and assisted by Samantha Lake (performer, builder) at the Petaluma Library. They have worked together for 1 1/2 years.

The audience-waiting music was both bouncy and classic. The kids' eyes and mouths were opened wide in expectation! Kevin entered between 2 deep red curtains which were side by side at the back of the raised performance area. He stood on a platform which spanned the width of the back curtains. The sides of this platform were draped with matching fabric.

A youngster pipes up and shouts to Kevin, "Why are you standing on a table?" Kevin explains that it is a stage for the puppets to perform on.

He asks the group, "What is a marionette?" A young boy -not a day over 4 years old-says, "It's a puppet you move with strings." I had to restrain myself not to capture him and draft him for our Guild!

Kevin then lets the audience know it takes 2-3 months to make a puppet.

Is this the answer to a frequently asked question? or a hint to the enthralled parents to remember to keep an eye on their offsprings? Probably both.

Then - ON WITH THE SHOW! "The North Pole Review" features 10 musical numbers. They are performed with marionettes unless otherwise indicated:

- 1: A graceful woman skating on ice
- 2: A pair of rats doing a hula while singing "Christmas Island."
3. Two puppeteer bare hands appear over the top of the rear curtain, with featureless "snowball" heads. These heads wear knitted neck scarves and hats with pompoms on the top. The puppeteers' bare fingers = puppet arms. The two hand puppets toss a pompom ball, controlled by a wire, to and fro and wind up rolling snowballs to create a snowman.
4. A young human-type marionette dressed in jammies and clutching a Teddy Bear sings "I Wanna Hippopotamus for Christmas."
5. Two Russian dancers controlled with rods from below synchronize their leaping dance to music from "The Nutcracker" ballet.



6. "Let it Snow" is sung by a bright green upright cactus, and at the finale, lights up with twinkly LED snowflakes all over.

7. A juggler appears and tosses the balls successfully, ending with the balls balanced on his nose, which thrilled the audience.

8. A smoky-blue-female-torch-singing-cat slinks around the stage on tall shiny stiletto heels, singing "Santa Baby!"

9. First 1, then 2 chubby blue-grey penguins waddle in, climbing and balancing on a seesaw. When one reaches the top, a young voice from the audience yells, "Whoa, that's a high one--JUMP!" A very large and chubby penguin-twice the size and weight-joins the fun!

[Kevin has sent explanations of the penguin controls, reprinted elsewhere in this issue.]

10: A large snowman, made of 3 stacked and clothed snowballs, rolls on stage. Suddenly the balls float apart--- Gasps and Applause from kids and parents alike!



To end the show an old elf carrying a huge box staggers onto the stage. Suddenly the box unfolds, displaying an interior banner which wishes everyone Happy Holidays.

Thunderous applause! Cheers! Especially when it was announced that Kevin and Samantha would bring out puppets for display and questions.

Audience notes. "You know I have one of those puppets!"

"Were those penguins acrobats? Or maybe I should call them penguibats?" (from a middle schooler).

"Why were they talking?"

A mature woman sitting in front of me cracked up at each new act.

One adult asked where were there schools to learn puppets. Kevin answered there are 1 or 2 but the best way is to go to shows, find a mentor or teacher, look for books in the library, join puppetry groups, etc. (Alas he who asked this question was on the other side of the crowded room and I couldn't see who spoke, or I would have definitely approached him about our Guild.)

This was a fine seasonal treat for us Petalumans-old and young-as well as patrons of other Sonoma County libraries. \*\*\*\*\*

From Kevin Menegus in answer to Elisheva's query: The penguin design was something that Fred (Riley III) and I developed. We wanted to do a marionette acrobat with a specific swinging action, but was hard to do certain movements. We then experimented with large plastic Easter eggs with a lead weight in their lower tummy and the pivot higher than the middle of the puppet. This is a sort of Czech/Sicilian design that works very well. They do have one string on the bottom of the puppet only to hold them vertically when the fat one stands on his head or the finale stack of penguins. All other movements is simply by rocking the bar back and forth. I

attached a photo showing how a long bolt goes through a piece of flat plywood that runs through the center of the puppet. The rest is styrofoam and papermache with a large lead weight in the the tummy area. They get very effective movement and are always an audience favorite. This particular act we developed with a symphony orchestra collaboration many years ago, but lives in our holiday show the rest of the year.

#### FLASHES FROM THE PAST by Elisheva

Once upon a-many times there were puppet festivals (both National P of A and Regional) held at Asilomar, near Monterey. In fact 7 in all! During these festivals many workshops were presented. And many local puppeteers attended.

One special workshop was held during a Regional Puppet Fest probably at the end of the 1960's. Jay Marshall, a prominent magician from Chicago, showed us many cool things we could do as puppeteers/storytellers.

The one I frequently used was how to create a tree (or cornstalk) right in front of the audience with just a rolled up newspaper. This simple trick turned out to be quite a crowd pleaser.

Many of our very own Guilders attended this workshop: Lee Armstrong, Valerie and Mike Nelson, myself, and .....Jan VanSchuyver, a young librarian from the Bay Area. She was a member of our Guild for many years.

Imagine my surprise recently when I was looking through a paperback book, "Santa Rosa", published by the 'Images of America' series, and there on page 85 is a vintage B&W photo of Santa Rosa Librarian Jan. She is showing young bookworms how to create a corn stalk (or tree) out of newspaper! What a flash back to the good ol' days. Made me wonder where Jan is today.

What a coincidence! I had recently checked out a book from our Guild library "Storytelling Made Easy with Puppets" by....ta ta... Jan VanSchuyver herself, published in 1993. Included on the acknowledgement page is "Pam Wade, for great brainstorming sessions". The very same Pam who snail mails out hard copies of our Newsletter to Guilders who prefer this instead of email copies.

I called Pam immediately. Sure she knows where Jan is nowadays. She lives in Fayetteville, Arkansas to be nearby her elderly Mother. Jan had a big effect on SFBAPG and the world of puppetry in general.

Mike and Valerie Nelson, of Magical Moonshine Theater, first met Jan while attending a puppetry class which Jan taught at Santa Rosa College. Jan later commissioned Mike to build her one of his amazing custom walk-around stages. Mary Nagler taught Jan some papier- mache' techniques back in the early 1980's. Then turnabout when Mary---err Mrs Bandersnoot, in her November, 2018 Guild Newsletter Advice Column, quotes





a long passage from Jan's book as an answer to a desperate Guilder's letter about getting the children in a puppet show audience to cooperate with him.

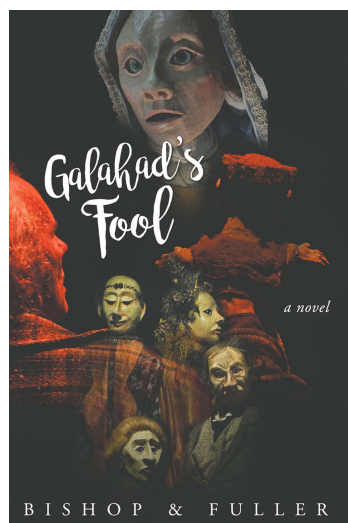
What fun to unexpectedly find a photo of a good friend to us all in a small book about Santa Rosa. AND wow! on page 126 of "Santa Rosa", there is another B & W puppet photo of a giant parade puppet used by Santa Rosa activists protesting U.S. policy in Central America in 1985. What an insightful editor to select 2 puppet photos for this book. Thanks editor Simone Wilson, (who also photographed the protest puppet,) for including both of these special photos as a vital part of Santa Rosa's history!

WARNING: Our editor warns us that nowadays young people scarcely understand what a newspaper is, so ya better start saving them up to create treestalks, especially before working with a group.

PS: HELP, MY CORN/TREE/STALK NEWSPAPER SCULPTURES which I have not made for several years, are now coming out weird...sort of like Martian Mutant Palm Trees! Have I lost the touch from lack of practice, or....is it the current newspaper situation? (Gosh this sounds like a plea to Mrs. Bandersnoot!) If you can still create them in an old fashioned tried and true style, please re-instruct me at our next Guild event.

Thanks so much, Elisheva.

GALLERY OF THE GUILD'S PAST YEAR! HOW MANY GREAT THINGS HAVE WE DONE? LOTS!





MORE IMAGES FROM 2018

