



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



Every July 4th the Vallejo Giant Puppet Project takes to the streets for the annual July 4 parade. In June, Guild members and community members work on building new puppets and repairing/preparing older puppets, all culminating in the parade celebration on the morning of the 4th. The parade is about 1 ¼ miles long and takes about 75 minutes to walk, with moving street theatre for a very appreciative audience. We have riding floats and walking puppets, and everyone from children to seniors can find something suitable for their abilities. Vallejo is on the water and usually has good (cooler!) weather for the parade. Join us! Email Michael and Valerie at: newsletter@sfbapg.org

Inside this issue:

Next meeting June 8, vote for board, review of DLUX
Puppets Alice, Performing in the Rain

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June Guild Meeting – “LIVE” Green Screen for Schools & Puppet Shoots & Summer Party! Workshop Almost Full!



When: June 8, 2-7:30ish pm

2-5 pm Workshop & 5-7:30 pm Guild Meeting (Election of Officers) Potluck Party & Videos

Where: Images in Motion Studio, 720 Ladera Dr., Sonoma

Who will want to attend...

- Puppeteers
- Teachers
- Tech Enthusiasts
- Teens & Adults that want to have Fun!

This is a cutting edge workshop. It's the 1st time a Guild meeting (world-wide) is attempting to do a “live” green screen compositing workshop. In real time, as a performer or puppet appears on camera, they can be placed in any environment, in front of the Tal Mahal, a rainforest, to Mars and beyond! The afternoon features a Green Screen* Workshop. See how to use green screen in the TV studio and the classroom to add creative backgrounds for

puppets and actors. The evening features video clips to inspire and delight. *Green Screen (in film and video): a green background in front of which moving subjects are filmed and which allows a separately filmed background to be added.

This 2.5 hr Green Screen workshop is presented by Images In Motion and Magical Moonshine Theatre. IIM will cover the basics of good puppet manipulation and the added complexity of working in front of the video camera with a green screen setup. Practice “filling the frame”, working with monitors, greenscreen tips, etc. MMT will share tips and techniques on using green screen in the classroom as a hook to get students engaged with core curriculum while being creatively inspired. This will include using video and still images as backdrops as well as creating video effects by layering video content, all using a \$6.00 green screen app.

You can be an observer or an active participant. Bring puppets to use and share. There will also be Folkmanis and other puppets available. The 20 spots for active participants are almost full, therefore we have moved 5 spaces from Observer to Participant. There are a number of Observer spots available.

WaitList: If you want to be an Active Participant and no slots are available, to waitlist, please sign up as an Observer and add a note saying you'd like to be a Participant. If a slot opens, we'll let you know (we'll email, but if you'd rather we call you, please leave your #). If you have signed up as an Active Participant and can't make it, please delete your space at Sign Up Genius, so that someone else can use it.

Magical Moonshine Theatre is celebrating 40 years of puppetry this year. MMT founders Michael and Valerie Nelson, in addition to their international touring career, have spent the last 12 (or so) years as California Arts Council Artists in the Schools, teaching puppetry and drama to young people. As part of this work, they have explored the world of green screen on-the-cheap, setting up temporary green screen studios in the classroom. Images In Motion, Media Inc. (IIM Inc.) <http://www.imagesmedia.com>, specializes in puppetry for TV and film. The co-directors of IIM, Lee Armstrong & Kamela Portuges, come from performance backgrounds and each brings over twenty-five years of experience to this medium. They strive for quality and they have received numerous awards for their work, including 6 Regional Emmys. Credits include “Fraggle Rock” “Being John



Malkovich” “James and the Giant Peach” and more. They produce puppet videos, rent their studio and also do 3D printing for animation studios, museums, etc.

If you’re not a Guild member or haven’t renewed, and would like to be an active participant for the afternoon workshop, we ask that you join the Guild (Non-Guild Observers are free). (The cost of this single workshop in LA would be over \$50). Guild membership isn’t expensive. A single adult is \$25 and for people under age 18 is \$15. Then you’ll have all the Guild benefits, including other workshops, a newsletter of puppet events and much more! Join today, <http://www.sfbapg.org/membership/join/>. Then you can sign up for this workshop. Time schedule for Guild meeting is approx. as some things may take more or less time. You can come for all or part of the day.

2-2:15 Meet & Greet, nametags, etc.

2:15-4:45 Greenscreen Workshop. Please sign up as an active participant (must be a Guild member or join the Guild) or an Observer (Guild membership not required)

5 pm Guild meeting & elections, followed by potluck supper. You do not need to sign-up for activities from 5-7:30. All are welcome.

6 - 7:30ish Video showcase. Featuring classic and contemporary puppet videos. Viewing in part will be determined by the interest of the group, but can include shorts by Guild members. Outside videos may include Heather Henson’s Presents (greenscreened) Moonfishing “Jim Henson Presents The World of Puppetry, Youtube selections and an excerpt from the Carroll Spinney documentary I Am Big Bird. If you have a short piece you’d like to show, either your own or something you have on DVD or can load onto a thumb drive, please email Lee at images@vom.com, with a description and length.

7:30ish-8 Cleanup

Potluck: Please bring a dish and beverages to share. We will have a tub filled with ice. The Guild will provide paper plates & utensils. Food can be put in the office. Please bring a cooler for perishable items. There is a microwave available. Think picnic food!

Volunteers: We need your help! Please go to Sign Up Genius:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20F0A44ACAE2AA7F49-june> and lend a hand.

Guild Library: The Guild library has hundreds of books covering a variety of topics. Books & DVD’s will be available for checkout at the meeting, to people that have been members for at least 6 months. The Guild Library is stored at IIM so this is a unique opportunity to see more of the collection. Are you looking for books or DVD on a particular topic? Contact the Guild Librarian, Lee Armstrong, images@vom.com. She can email you a list and can pull related books for you.

If you borrowed items from the library at the last meeting, they are due at this meeting. Please bring them back at this meeting, so that others may use them.

Carpool, Pool, Parking, Studio, Neighbors

Carpool: Please carpool if you can. If you need a ride or can give a ride, please email Lee at images@vom.com. In the email, please state where you live and if you are looking for a ride or can give a ride. Are you planning to come at 2 pm for just the workshop, or after 5, or for the whole day, from 2-7:30ish? If you are driving, how many seats you can offer? Then, what is the best ways to contact you? If you don’t do email, call IIM at 707 996-9474 and leave a message. We can’t guarantee a ride but will try to connect people if possible.

Parking: There are 4 parking spots in front of the house if cars are parked close together. These should be reserved for people with mobility issues and for drop-offs. Please do not park on the other side of the narrow street, as it makes backing out of the driveway problematic. There is street parking along Calle de Arroyo and Central.

Studio: The IIM studio is in a residential area, in the northern end of Sonoma (Boyce Hot Springs). The office/studio is behind the blue house. Park, then take the path around the left of the house to studio/office,

through the office to the studio. There will be signs. After 5, the meeting, party and videos will be in the studio, house and outdoor decks.

Pool: Like to swim? Bring suits and towels. There's a small pool outside the studio. But be forewarned. It's not heated so may be cold.

Neighbors: We like our neighbors! Please come and go quietly!

Election for Guild Board of Directors

The SFBAPG has 9 Board of Directors who work with our Guild members to help promote the art of puppetry through workshops, meetings, events and other activities. Each Board member serves for three years and can run for reelection for one more consecutive three-year term. Each year, 3 board members rotate off as 3 as members are elected. This year, the Nominating Committee is presenting three candidates (bios below) for the three Board of Director positions. Our new candidate is Ilene Kennedy. Valerie Nelson has been on the Board in the past and is volunteering to return. The third candidate, Barbara Grillo has served one 3 year term and is running for a second term.

There are 3 ways to vote: by attending the June 8th Guild meeting or by email or postal mail. If you aren't attending the June Guild meeting, please mail your ballot by June 1st or email by June 6th to Lee Armstrong, images@vom.com or at 720 Ladera Dr., Sonoma, CA 95476.

Voting information: Guild members can also nominate candidates from the floor during the June Guild meeting. There is also a place on the ballot to add a write-in candidate, if you are voting by email or mail. However, a nominated individual must give their consent to being a candidate, and have been a Guild member for at least one year prior to the election. Each Guild member can choose up to 3 candidates for the 3 positions.

CANDIDATES FOR BOARD (REPEAT FROM MAY NEWSLETTER)

Barbara Grillo has been a member of the Guild since the 1990's. She served on the SFBAPG Board from 2005-2011 and again from 2016-2019. Barbara is a professor emeritus in the field of early childhood education at Contra Costa College and currently works as a consultant and mentor. While working at Contra Costa College she initiated a collaboration between the Guild and the Department of Early Childhood Education to sponsor a one-day Conference on Puppetry which was held at the College. She is interested in promoting more collaborations between the Guild and local Departments of Early Childhood Education.



Puppetry has been a hobby of Barbara's since she gave her first performance for her daughter's 3-year old birthday party in 1982. She has given many performances to preschool children in schools where she has worked as well as a few for fundraising events. Barbara has served on the SFBAPG Board as secretary for the last 3 years and is interested in continuing to serve the Guild as a member of the Board for a second term.



Hi, my name is **Ilene Kennedy**.

I have been a member for several years and I have a real love for puppetry. I have been doing puppets since I was 13 yrs old. I am also a retired 4H leader for over 13yrs. I have taught puppet classes and put on puppet shows with my puppet groups for many years, even taught Ventriloquism to my students. I have made a whole lot of puppets and have sent them to children in hospitals and overseas to war torn countries and also orphanages. I love puppetry of all types I have a real love for the art and I would love to try and be a part of our Guild Board, if you vote for me. Thank you for considering me.

Valerie Nelson is one half of Magical Moonshine Theatre. She and Michael Nelson have been performing puppetry for 40 years. She believes the guild is a wonderful way to connect with creative people who love puppetry.

We thank these candidates for their willingness to support the art of puppetry in the Bay Area!

Submitted by the Nominating Committee

Judy Roberto

Elisheva Hart

Lee Armstrong



DLUX PUPPETS' MUSICAL "ALICE IN WONDERLAND"

REVIEW, PART 1 by Elisheva Hart

Guild members Derek and Lauren Lux presented their creative musical adaptation of "Alice in Wonderland" (henceforth designated "A-in-W") at Leshner Center for the Arts in Walnut Creek, May 4th, 2019-a return engagement- for families of all ages.

It featured amazing digitally *rear-projected* "Live Virtual Sets". Lauren captivated us as the dancing, singing and sometimes confused real girl, Alice. The audience's top favorite projected set featured Alice in front of the projection screen back drop, miming falling down the super cool continuous projection of the interior of the rabbit hole. It was enhanced by the sounds of the Beach Boys' 1963 hit "Little Deuce Coupe" (with altered lyrics).

This left Derek to perform "Everyone Else"....translation-Alice's real Father, plus all the life-size light-weight foam puppets-and not always one at a time. Soon the appearance of Tweedle Dum and Tweedle Dee with Derek's head precisely centered between the heads of the twin puppets [thanks to a snare drum harness] entered the stage doing a perfectly syncopated low-kick Cancan dance and -ZOWIE- his secret revealed

itself.... Derek morphs Into One with each of the Puppets he performs. And, as Alice's real Father, his presence bookends the beginning and the ending of the show.

Cleverly, only certain scenes from the 'Alice books' were selected for this approximately 50 minute show (with no intermission.) The program wisely proclaims ' "A-in- W"---originally written by Louis Carroll.'

"While the production is designed to teach children how to use the power of their words, thoughts and feelings in a positive way, above all else, DLUX Puppets' Alice in Wonderland is a feast for the eyes and ears for everyone in the family!" (Quoted from their promotional material.)

Accompanying the excited children were their adults! Wise puppeteers acknowledge these adults, sometimes verbally with innuendos and references to "back in the day". Since this performance was a musical, of course music was prevalent -all written between 1966 and 1976, thus oldies but goodies to most of the adults.

The lyrics were altered throughout to assist bewildered Alice in gaining self esteem by giving clues to help her find her direction in life. Also to advance the action. AND the length of each piece of music was customized to the needs of the performance-like Baby Bear's porridge.... "Just Right."

Once Alice encounters the Red Queen ("Dancing Queen" from "Mama Mia" Abba, 1976), she shares with the Royal ruler tips on having a positive attitude. Therefore the Queen lets Alice keep her head and they depart friends. Alice encounters the caterpillar and asks what she should do now. Caterpillar reminds Alice of what she has learned in this past hour, "You. Have. Power!"



(Photos, above: DLUX poses after the show with fans; bottom photo include guild members Elisheva Hart and Tia Smirnoff)

The projected background begins to ripple, Alice's Father enters, They are reunited!

And the last music selection was, of course, "White Rabbit" (Grace Slick and Jefferson Airplane, 1966). I was stoked and very interested that none in the audience seemed to object to a song that is, in the original, definitely a drug song, with lots of references like "And one pill makes you happy, Go ask Alice, when she's 10 feet tall!" The DLUX reprisal of this throbbing song now earns a G rating....The adults in the audience may/or not flash on the original lyrics while enjoying sharing this version with the whole family!

The Joyous Audience applauds their approval, dance out to the terrace, and

form a cluster to meet and greet Alice, Derek, and the Mad Hatter. Such a perfect photo op for their adoring audience. A lifetime memory is preserved. I questioned Derek Lux as to the length of time it took them to create their show. Here is his answer:

"For Alice in Wonderland, I worked for approximately 2 1/2 years before the show debuted. Granted not full time but from the time we outlined it and started writing the script to its debut it took about that long. I would say that all of the puppets were built intensely over the period of about six months."

John Arnold's review of "Alice in Wonderland by DLUX Puppets" is in SFBAPG's Newsletter, June, 2017, pages 4 and 5.

The review of "THE BASICS OF 'HOW TO PUPPETEER, INTRODUCTION TO HAND & ROD (MUPPET STYLE) PUPPETRY" [a workshop presented for our Guild by Derek Lux] is in SFBAPG's Newsletter, June, 2018, pages 3 and 4.

PART 2 OF THIS ARTICLE WILL BE IN NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE OF SFBAPG'S NEWSLETTER. Hint: "Sensory Friendly Performance"

Editor's Note: DLUX Puppets is leaving the Bay Area for Las Vegas (our loss!) Below is an excerpt from the next Scene West column in the Puppeteers of America "Puppetry Journal" (Valerie and Michael Nelson, contributors and writers of the below article)

DLUX Puppets is a national touring production company currently based in Northern California but soon relocating to Las Vegas. Husband/wife team Derek and Lauren Lux debuted their first production, an original adaptation of Alice in Wonderland using actors, high-quality puppetry, digitally projected scenery, in May of 2017. Alice is portrayed by actress Lauren, while a Derek serves as actor and puppeteer portraying all the other characters in the play. With the exception of Alice's father, all other characters are portrayed as puppets, many of them life sized or larger than life. The simple staging for play is augmented by a digital, projected background that provides the changing sets for the entire production, including such effects as Alice growing larger or smaller (the projected background expands or contracts creating the illusion that Alice (actress Lauren) is shrinking or growing. The video background for "Alice" was made by Steve Axtell of Axtell Expressions, thanks to some generous sponsorships, which also allowed for a costume designer to costume Derek's puppets.

In addition to Alice in Wonderland, the company has also mounted a production of another children's literature classic, Peter Pan.

As a team, the couple complement each other's skills sets. Derek is a professional puppet builder who learned his craft in the Los Angeles market, while Lauren is a California credentialed teacher with over 10 years experience in the classroom. Both of them were full-time working actors in theater for years, having both performed in the legendary Beach Blanket Babylon in San Francisco. Their family productions are deeply rooted in Social-Emotional-Learning content which they say is proving to be a huge hit with educators, and the company has now expanded to doing sensory friendly performances for audiences on the autism spectrum or with other sensory sensitivities.

DLUX puppets is also working on the creation of a new show called *Two Puppeteers* for adult audiences, in collaboration with Christian Anderson of America's Got Talent and Broadway. The show will be an upscale cabaret type of production. It will premiere at the Leshner Center for the arts in Walnut Creek, California, on November 1, 2019, and have national engagements shortly thereafter. With the company's relocation to Las Vegas, it is their hope that in time the show will play on the Las Vegas strip. The company also hopes to have their family productions seen in Las Vegas as well. Since the productions use well-known music coupled with the use of state of the art digital projections, it seems a natural fit for the glitz and glamour of Las Vegas.

The couple has also just recently created a side endeavor of weekly video vlogs on YouTube called DLUX Fam. With the ever increasing popularity of social media they decided to document their family outings with a new family member named "Donnie" who is, of course, a Puppet!

Ilene Kennedy (Kennedy Puppets) update: Rainy Day? The Show Must Go On!

We did our show Saturday, May 18, at the Loma Vista Farm in Vallejo. The weather report predicted the possibility of rain later on. We got set up and then it started to rain a little. We were performing under a barn awning and things were going great and then all of a sudden I go to perform with 2 of my puppets only to find out that they were wet. I grabbed them to continue performing, when all of a sudden Mrs. Farmer is talking to the children telling them that she's got a leak in her kitchen and then the kids from the audience start to say that they were getting wet too. They were under a tree canopy and with a good amount of protection but soon it was not so dry under the tree either, as we continued on to try and wrap up the show. All of a sudden we started getting poured on from the top of our roof right down into the building. Mrs. Farmers kitchen got thoroughly soaked and so did her performer. So I made it part of the show and told the kids that we were going to have to have Mr. Farmer fix the leak to our kitchen. Mrs. Farmer had to go holler over to Mr. Farmer out her kitchen window, saying, "We have a leak in the kitchen, Mr. Farmer. We need to get this fixed!" Mr. Farmer said a few things about the leak so we could close the play. Then we had to fold it up quickly in the rain. However, wherever we set our staging during packing, it started to leak there, too. By the time we were finished packing up, we had been leaked on a total of 16 times! We came home totally soaked. Our theater was wet and my backdrop was totally wet and we had to go to another gig within 2 hours so I quickly dried everything and continued on, because, as you know, the show must go on. And that's exactly what we did. Til next time.

Send newsletter articles to newsletter@sfbapg.org and calendar listings to events@sfbapg.org