



The official newsletter of
San Francisco Bay Area Puppeteers' Guild
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SFBAPG is a charter guild of the Puppeteers of America, Inc., a non-profit, tax exempt organization

December 2019



Kennedy Puppets' Santa Claus puppet got his cookies. Read on for more holiday puppet photos and anecdotes as we enter the Holiday Season.

It's time to renew! Our Guild Membership year expires at the end of December. Do your hardworking Membership officer/Newsletter editor a big favor and renew right now so I can relax knowing you will not miss out on anything Puppet Guild for the next year. EASY! Go to <http://www.sfbapg.org/membership/join/> and follow the instructions. Thank you so much!

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Our Traditional Guild Holiday Party - Sun., Jan 26, San Rafael area.

Hear-Ye all Puppet Enthusiasts!

Please mark your calendars for the SFBAPG traditional celebration of the Holidays and New Year. You may ask why January. It's because many puppeteers have a very busy December. WHEN is this shindig supposed to occur?! Sunday, Jan 26th from 3-7ish pm

INVITE YOUR FRIENDS - This is a festive social party and a perfect time to invite family (including your children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews and distant cousins) and friends. The party provides great entertainment and fun activities for all ages in a gracious setting. It's also the perfect time to reach out to that teacher, librarian or teen that has shown an interest in this art form. Let's share our puppet enthusiasm. There will be prizes for...

- the member who invites (and gets the most people to come) to the Party
- the person (member, or not) travelling the furthest distance to the Party
- people that become members at the Party & more!

WHERE can I meet up with these crazy-fun people?! At Christ Presbyterian Church, 620 Del Ganado Road in beautiful Terra Linda (San Rafael area) California!

Featured Performance

Magical Moonshine Theatre (MMT) has performed in 18 countries in 8 different languages. MMT is the recipient of 3 UNIMA-USA Certificates of Excellence and other awards including the Golden Apple Award for Best Children's Play at the World Puppet Carnival in Kazakhstan! Michael & Valerie Nelson of MMT will bring their new show "The Gunnywolf" to our annual Holiday Party!

"The Gunnywolf" Little Rabbit goes into the forest to pick flowers even after her mother tells her not to. There she meets the Gunnywolf who wants her to sing him to sleep. Every time she stops singing, the Gunnywolf wakes up and wants another song. Meanwhile, Little Rabbit's froggie friends are working on their act with hilarious results. This musical show is presented with Bohemian style marionettes on a table top stage. Recommended for ages 3-103 and up. Afterwards, a show and tell of their production.



ALSO: Evening Slam/Potpourri, Holiday Potluck Supper and More!

A Very Loose Schedule which may change a bit come the January newsletter

2:00 Setup, decorate a table, setup puppet display, etc.

3:00 Meet & greet plus puppet activities

3:30	Show "The Gunnywolf" by Magical Moonshine Theater
4:15	Short Guild meeting
5ish	Potluck supper
6ish	Slam/Potpourri/Raffle Winners/Gift Exchange
7ish	Cleanup

EVENING SLAM/POTPOURRI - Do you have a short, family-friendly puppet piece, up to 5 minutes that you'd like to share at the evening slam/potpourri? We challenge all Crankie workshop participants (Oct. workshop) to bring a vignette! Or perhaps you did a piece at the SLAM or workshop and would like to polish and perform again. If so, please contact Judy Roberto be_artsy@hotmail.com. If you'd like a call back, please include your phone #.

POTLUCK SUPPER - Please your favorite dish/beverage to share with others. Appetizers, salads, desserts and of course main courses are always appreciated. Microwave and refrigerator available. Dinnerware will be provided.

ADOPT A TABLE & TRIM THE ROOM - Individuals and companies are invited to host & adopt a dining table. Table cloth will be provided. Bring in any decorations to make it a wonderful table to dine at. And you don't necessarily need to be content with décor for just the winter holidays. You can host the 4th of July table, the Halloween table, etc. There will be prizes for participation, but the greatest prize of all is knowing that you're lending your artistry to make the holiday party festive! To adopt a table, text or call Ilene Kennedy at 707 731-3232. Also, holiday decorations for the room will be greatly appreciated. Doors open at 3:00, so bring in some decorations between 2-3 (no nails please) to trim the room. At the end you just take your decorations down and take them home.

GIFT EXCHANGE - We have customarily had a gift exchange. What is this? Participants 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 receive a gift from the stack. Last year we had very few people participate in the gift exchange. Should we do it this year? If you wish to participate in the exchange please contact Ilene Kennedy at 707 731-3232 by 12/27. If enough people reply, we'll announce the gift exchange in the Jan. newsletter.

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.

RAFFLE - Puppet items, useful and unique are raffled off, with proceeds going to the scholarship fund. If you have a raffle item you'd like to donate, please contact Valerie Nelson at magicalmoonshine@gmail.com. Please put Raffle in the subject line.

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? Check out the booklist at <http://www.sfbapg.org/resources/>. If you want the Guild Librarian, Lee Armstrong to bring a particular book or topic, email her at sfbapglibrary@gmail.com or call 707 738-5906.

VOLUNTEERS - There will be signup information for volunteers in the Jan. newsletter.

Directions to the church at 620 Del Ganado Rd

From 101 North, just past the Civic Center exit, San Rafael or 101 South, just past Lucas Drive exit

Take exit 455, Terra Linda/Freitas Parkway, West, toward Terra Linda

Merge onto Manuel T Freitas Pkwy, 1.2 mile

Turn right at Del Ganado Rd, 203 ft.

REVIEW OF THE CRANKIE WORKSHOP-OUR 3RD ANNUAL NICK BARONE MEMORIAL WORKSHOP- OCTOBER 5TH, 2019 - PRESENTED BY GUILD MEMBER CAMILLA HENNEMAN.

Reported by Elisheva.

This workshop, held at our meeting place in Benicia, was amazing in its 'clean cut' organization. All the supplies were prepped. Instructions were brief and clear and doable. Thank you Cam.

"A crankie is an old storytelling art form where a long illustrated scroll is inserted into a box with an open front and hand-cranked like an old-time film reel. Puppeteers can use crankies as movable shadow screens, backgrounds for puppet shows, or even interspersed with puppets to tell a story." (From SFBAPG Newsletter, October 2019, top of page 2.)

First, Cam introduced us to the sample crankie theater which guilders and other participants would be making out of an ordinary white file box. Then with the help of Judy Roberto, Cam showed us the rolling scenery she had built for her performance of the song, "Miss Otis Regrets". Opaque shadow puppets- casting solid black silhouettes on the scenery acted out the story which was narrated by this song ["Miss Otis Regrets"]-at a Guild meeting some months ago.

They also showed us several lusciously colored crankie rolls. These brilliant colors were created by cutting lengths and shapes from colored tissue paper. "Bleeding Art Tissue" gives vivid colors to a backdrop.



The Bleeding Art Tissues are made by Spectra Art Tissue, comes in packs of 20 sheets and is available at art stores. Besides scenery, it can be used for masks, rod puppets, and shadow puppets as well as crankies.

Regular colored "gift wrap tissue" will give a muted, softer, misty look--depending on which color you select and how many layers overlap each others. It is available in most places which sell gift wrapping paper, gift cards, etc. Experiment.

>Hints for using tissues: Adhering tissues to the backdrops. Elmer's glue is very strong, and flexible when rolled. Butcher paper is sturdy for backdrops, great with kids (strong, inexpensive) as well as using with adults. DON'T ROLL UP UNTIL DRY! Also after the scenery is glued and dry, put clear tape along the top and bottom of the backdrop to reinforce it.

Tracing paper can also be used for the scroll. And a product called t y v e c is the champion of backdrops, not cheap, and available only in huge rolls. (Check with Cam if she has extra which you can buy from her, or go in together with some buddies to purchase a roll to share.) Adhere tissue paper to t y v e c with "Tacky" glue--available at Michael's, etc.)

>Getting the most out of Bleeding Tissue Paper--in 5 steps!

1. Unroll the background paper on a table top, laying it flat. Cut it to the length needed, allowing extra at each end for attaching to the rollers. Cut it to the height needed.

-Now prep the tissue paper by:

2. Spraying the tissue paper with water.

3. Cut waves, mountains, trees, sky, skyscrapers, etc of various colors and lay them on the wet scroll.

4. Tamp down tissues with paper towels.

5. Let air dry. Now you can roll the backdrop up.

Believe it or not, NO GLUE IS INVOLVED IN THE ART TISSUE,. IT IS JUST WATERCOLOR INFUSED TISSUE.

>In Cam's teaching experience with children, they "always draw in the center of a paper---leaving it surrounded by blank space." [Ditto cutting something out of a sheet of paper--right in the middle--thus wasting the rest of the sheet!]

So when creating a crankie story of "Charlotte's Web" with a 3rd grade class, she gave each child an 18 inch square of butcher paper to illustrate their portion of the story on. Upon finishing the illustration--to help connect the pictures together in a continuous fashion-- they each outlined their square with colorful tissue borders. These vertical strips of color also signaled the crank turners when to stop turning so that the scene is centered properly on stage.



Cam also finds that her students get a deeper understanding of Literature by creatively illustrating it. She suggests an excellent idea to stimulate interest in a very familiar tale--recast animals in place of people. For instance substitute 3 coyotes into "The Magic Fish."

How To Convert the File Box into a crankie box is simple-but too lengthy to record in this article. Alas. So Cam, please write and print out a guide-or a book!- to creating this wonderful style of crankie that you have shown us! Thanks so much.

Besides tips on using the tissue paper, Cam gave us other useful tidbits.

> Hot glue gun sticks used in a small hot glue gun (about the diameter of the yellow school pencil) are best bought at Dollar Tree type of stores.

They sell a pack of 16 sticks for \$1.00. Michael's sell a pack of 18 for \$3.00.

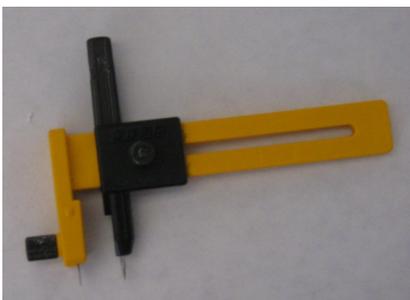
Please note the Dollar Tree used to sell 18 sticks for \$1.00-is this lesser count because of recent trade embargoes? Maybe we should stock up!

>Cam wants to know where to go for similar discounts on large hot glue sticks, for use in the large glue gun. Please share this info with Cam:

camhenneman@gmail.com and/or
newsletter@sfbapg.org

> Blue Painters Tape is available in various widths at hardware type stores and very handy-dandy. For instance, 2" tape is handy to hold flaps of the cardboard file box out of the way while you are working underneath the flaps of the box. AND the blue tape will neatly peel right off when you need to, unlike masking tape.

>The crankie stage needs precise holes drilled into the corrugated cardboard so that the turning mechanisms work smoothly and allow the scrolls to roll properly. A nifty hole cutter, "OLFA" brand (below) is available at art stores. It looks sort of like a compass.



>Bamboo BBQ skewers are sturdy enough, and dainty enough, to use as rods for shadow puppets with the crankie stage. They will not cast "large as log shadows" on the screen. Easily available in supermarkets, etc. they can be purchased in different lengths and diameters.

Q to Cam: Do we take the rods off each scroll when storing them? A. Cam prefers keeping the rods on the scrolls for preservation of the paper, and for ease of switching from one backdrop to another.

Nick Barone LOVED cheesecake and we have his favorite recipe! At each of his Memorial Workshops, attendees are invited to bring this yummy dessert-whether made from his recipe-or not so we all will have a treat! Cheese cakes were provided this year by Valerie, Olivia, and Lavera-who thoughtfully brought a vegan one! Thank you all for your delicious thoughtfulness.

We enjoyed the goodies while waiting until the participants who had gone "to the mall" for lunch returned to the group. Thank you so much Nick, for all you have brought into our lives. He passed about 6 and a half years ago, and we miss him.

Several participants voluntarily brought drinks and snacky things to share so we could keep our energy flowing throughout the workshop portion. Several also brown-bagged lunch, grasping every moment possible to creating their crankie.

Another type of "delicious treat" at the end of the workshop was viewing Magical Moonshine Theater's work-in-progress crankie show. It was very cool and also informative for when we build our own shows now that we had our small theaters. The Nelsons' show had a much larger crankie stage to perform within, "all the better for you to see us, my Dears!"

They performed 2 musical numbers. The first, "The Errant Apprentice", is from a song by Andy Stewart. It has a very stimulating storyline. Val manipulated the shadow puppets and sang a little. Mike played and sang lead on both songs.

The second song is done on a tall skinny vertical crankie screen shaped like a ladder, and is called, "So Far, So Good." The puppet involved is the window washer who had a "What me worry"? attitude. Scenery and puppet were both manipulated by Val. Their next song in process is another olde ballad, about "Tam Linn", who gets involved with the Queen of the Fairies, who live under the hill with her Fairie folk.

Crankie Tips from Mike:

1. When blocking the action of the puppets, think of the space where they will be standing, etc. For instance, beware when placing them in front of scenery, such as a fireplace. The puppet will "disappear".
2. How to run puppets across a long bridge, etc. They made miniatures of the puppets with wires coming out their feet into a wood block. They were juggled slightly up and down in place to indicate running, while the backdrop moved across the stage! This was a chase scene from "The Errant Apprentice" in an early form of our currently popular car chases.
3. When changing from one scene to another by rolling the backdrop across the stage, make a STOP mark (on the puppeteer's side of the scroll of course). This will show you where to HALT for the perfect framing of the next episode. Not needed of course if your scenery is one long continuously moving panorama.
4. They paint their backdrops with acrylic paints that have been watered down and then blotted off. This lightens them up and makes them more translucent.

A question from the audience was, "Do crankies always have songs?" Mike reiterated, "Anything you can do with shadow puppets, you can do with crankies!"

THANKS CAM, JUDY, VALERIE AND MIKE! YOU ROCK! WE WILL, WE WILL PERFORM-FOR-YOU!

Review of November 16th Guild Meeting @ Children's Fairyland, Oakland

We were entertained TWICE with puppet shows! Each featured puppets and scripts by Randal Metz! Both were terrific! Entertaining! and made us Feel Good!

(Read the "official" PR write up for these shows on page 3 of November, 2019 SFBAPG Newsletter).

First was "The Velveteen Rabbit, or How Toys Become Real", based on author Margery William's lovely picture book. It was a crowd pleaser, performed in the Storybook Puppet Theater at the 4:00 public showing. + us Guilders.



The show was written and performed so that all the spectators became emotionally involved. We had outrage with the toy rabbit being bullied by the other nursery toys because she was old fashioned-with only sawdust filling her, instead of gears and levers, etc. Later she was also bullied by the living rabbits because she had no hind feet and could not leap or dance in the open air, like a "proper" rabbit could.

We all had great enjoyment and laughter at the Jack in the Box, the Marching Soldiers, etc. which Randal cleverly designed to entertain us. And to "set the stage" for further trials of the Rabbit. Plus to add "eye candy" to the set and the brown rabbit as these toys were quite colorful. The antics of these other toys also stretched the action on stage, which contrasted with narration and solo bits with just the Velveteen Rabbit. Alone on stage.

But first the shabby and creaky old Rocking Horse consoled and introduced our Bunny into the Nursery Wisdom of 'Becoming Best Beloved Toy', like he was.

Scarlet fever strikes the nursery! The Boy, owner of Velveteen Rabbit, insists that she be brought to his isolated sick bed so that he can cuddle his beloved toy. Now, its her turn. She consoles him. Once he is healthy, she narrowly escapes the fate of being burned with his bedding as a preventative measure.

Our Rabbit plaintively does a poignant rendition of "Have yourself a Merry Little Christmas" as she looks at a decorated small tree. All by her self. This was done intentionally, said Randal later, to stir up emotions in both the children and the adults, and Rabbit also. Tears were in everyone's eyes, including the rabbit's! The Blue Nursery Fairy soothes V. R. who winds up dancing with the real rabbits and, of course, reuniting with The Boy.

One mind blowing thing was the changing of the backgrounds. The first one morphed into a large popup picture book which opens and shuts sideways and opens again sideways into a new setting!. This was to keep the adults' attention and to help the children relate to the book which is behind the play in many ways besides dialogue.

After vigorously applauding the play, we Guilders herded into the Story Theater's "green room" and ate a pot luck of finger foods. A short Guild meeting followed.

The second puppet show was "Rumplestiltskin....or What's in a Name?" It was performed at the Emerald City Stage on Randal's own portable theater- The Puppet Company,-which he uses occasionally inside Fairyland but mostly at libraries, parties, and other lucky venues.

The story is a clever retelling of the Grimms Fairy Tale, only flavored with a Mexican twist. It was done extremely well. Guilders were very attentive and enjoyed the visuals as well as the puppets, and as well as enjoying the new story line which was very colorful, active, and used very appropriate Mexican music, etc.

The show starts with a young Mexican boy questioning his Abuela (Grandmother) as to why does he need to give food and write notes to his ancestors?---They are all dead! She relates this story to him as both leave the stage to make room for other puppets to act out the fairy tale. The Grandson was so excited by this story that at the end, he excitedly rushed to do the proper things to honor his ancestors.



We rushed through the chilling air, back to Randal's warm workshop. He then gave us a great discussion about design, construction, and putting together a show for special holidays and libraries.

Basically he gave us his valuable insights of the many details which he uses in his shows to integrate the needs of viewers-both children and parents. In "The Velveteen Rabbit" the pop-up scenery, and the "new fashion toys" (those with gears, levers, etc.) -the likes of which these adults may have played with when they visited Grandparents as children-include these parents in experiencing the show, instead of grinning and bearing it.

In the "Rumpelstiltskin" show, sugar skull motifs, a wonderfully tall dancing skeleton complete with a beautiful sombrero, gold being spun into cactus shapes, and the peppy Mexican music, etc were so appreciated by the audience members raised within this culture! Randal says that a show, which he developed a couple of years ago, based on stories from India [see page 2 of September, 2018 Guild newsletter for the review of the stories from the "Panchatanta Tales"] also brought many, many thanks from the audience members who have ties to India. In both cases they urge him to do more. [I think many of us who were not from these cultures also want more!] A KEY to Randal's success is to use RESPECT in his approaches.



Unfortunately, according to Randal, most librarians only want shows with "broader appeal", like the circus.

Warren Moten III is another success story of young people who hung around the puppets at Fairyland. He grew up still involved with them. [I remember him from those days, and the fun of Jesse Vail bringing Warren to one of our holiday parties several years ago in San Rafael. Besides enjoying the party, Warren was blown away by the vast amounts of stars which can be seen away from the city!]

Warren has developed his drawing skills into being a wonderful artist who created and painted 2 wonderful backdrops for "Rumple..." One is an interior of a humble home and the other an outdoor setting with a fabulous widening path of marigold petals. This path is a guide for the returning souls at Dia De Los Muertos. [Day of the Dead-Nov. 1 and 2.] The perspective in both backdrops is amazing.



Randal and Warren collaborated in selecting motifs, etc for the details of the designs....First Randal informs Warren of his needs. They discuss them. Warren returns with his ideas. Then Randal selects what he feels would best work from Warren's ideas. What a successful team! We eagerly look forward to more of your collaborations in the future.

Sombreros off to both of you. Thanks very much for sharing.

Randal told of some of the guidelines he follows when creating scripts for family audiences. Don't scare the kids! So Rumple's voice is not booming nor harsh, but sort of silly-and recorded by a 'silly voice actor!' Rumple does not split in two or tumble into a deep pit when the Queen correctly names him. There is a happier ending.

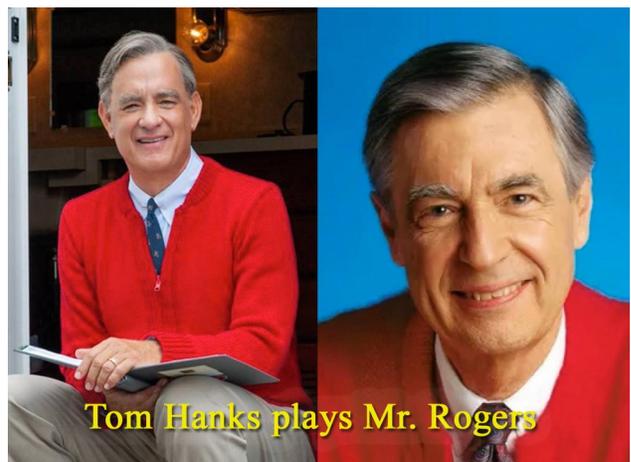
Randal avoids slurs like "stupid" (a no-no of course from the Fairyland directors). When Randal pulls a puppet show out of storage, before he can perform it he vets the script for actions as well as words. For instance, Princesses and other females are more assertive nowadays than 20 or more years ago! And thusly are the scripts updated.

We were treated to a demo of Randal's usual backdrops called "Roll Drop" It is a "lost art" and is left over from vaudeville. It works like a yoyo and is very efficient. More info can be found about this technique by using your computer.

[I have often mentioned the smoothness of his backdrop changes in reviews and am glad to learn about this technique.]

New Film based on Mr. Rogers, by Elisheva

Robert, my co-worker and a movie buff, announced that he was going on opening night to see "A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood". He follows the reviews and the idea of Tom Hanks totally reversing his boisterous outgoing



persona into that of Mr. Rogers-("The Nicest Man in the world! Filled with Relentless Kindness And a Supreme Listener!")- really captured my friend's attention.

"OK Robert, next week you must tell me if there is any puppetry in the movie. None of the interviews and reviews so far have even mentioned puppets. I need to know because I want to review it for our Puppetry Guild's Newsletter.... Or not!"

The answer was, "Not much, but some."

OK, enough for me ! Hah hah, to you, Robert. Each of Fred Roger's puppets are claimed to represent an aspect of his personality, so as long as he was portrayed on the movie screen, his whole cast of puppets were also there.

The opening and closing shots of the film were of a night skyline of Philadelphia, created in scale and style matching the buildings in the TV panoramic view of Mr. Roger's Neighborhood. One of the interviews said this opening/closing motif was to inform us that the movie was an adult version of the TV show. Even adults need to know how to manage and let go of their "Mad". (A theme of his children's program.)

Yes there are some cameos of Fred's real puppets. Yes we see how Fred scrunched underneath the TV show's "Neighborhood" model so he could perform his puppets and speak for them too. Yes we see him guide a cranky, upset Esquire magazine writer, basically by listening, to learn how to release all his anger. We all should be so lucky. Yes it is perfectly cast-including an adorable baby boy, son of the writer. (We both knew Tom Hanks could not duplicate Fred, and he did give us a good glimpse of him.) Yes, if you are "in like" with Mr. Fred Rogers, I advise you see this movie. And don't forget your handkerchief!

SFBAPG Newsletter of March 2018, pages 4-5, has an article about Mr. Roger's Neighborhood's 50th Anniversary, mostly based on an interview of Fred Rogers that National Public Radio Fresh Air's Terry Gross conducted in 1984.

Special Bonus Section: Holiday Show Puppets! What do you do for the December Holidays?

Your editor asked our members to share their holiday puppets and their approach to shows for the holidays. Below are some responses. Thanks to all for sharing!

John Arnold sent a photo: with explanation: "Olaf the Snowman, I built for Poison Apple Productions' Frozen Jr. this December and January."



From Art Grueneberger/PuppetArt: Here's our publicity blurb for our holiday shows:

We have Holiday Versions of "The Boy Who Cried Wolf" (photo of holiday version to right), "Little Red Riding Hood" or "Jack and the Beanstalk." Both have funny Holiday twists. In The Holiday version of "The Boy Who Cried Wolf" the after Wolf tries to trick the Boy the Boy captures the Wolf by tangling him in twinkling Christmas Lights and convinces him that Santa won't bring him presents if he continues to be naughty. In Holiday "Jack" the Giant tries to trick Jack by disguising himself as Santa. Our shows start with a puppet intro character that warms up the audience and gets the kids into a Holiday mood. This is followed by a brief musical number featuring our famous dancing caterpillar wiggling to "Jingle Bells." In all of our stories the audience helps the hero of the story foil the villain. For example in "The Boy Who Cried Wolf," the audience helps the Boy trick the Wolf and capture him. At the end of the story we bring out the puppets and show the kids how we've built them and how they were moved.



The first show I ever built for myself was called Frankenswine, a Halloween show starring a cast of wacky pigs. I swore to never build another holiday show since they can only be performed during a specific month of the year. Then I built another Halloween show, Winnie the Witch. Then I double swore never to build another Holiday show. Instead we dress up a few of our year around shows with garland, twinkly lights and give them little Holiday themed twists. The three listed above are our typical Holiday shows but we can dress up quite a few of our shows and give them a little Holiday love.

Magical Moonshine Christmas Shows, the Early Years

Magical Moonshine Theatre is celebrating 40 years this year. Our very first production was a Christmas show in December, 1979. We accidentally picked an exceptionally forgiving theme for our first show; a group of marionettes are trying to put on a puppet show based on the "Night Before Christmas" and all kinds of things go wrong. Later we came to realize the brilliance of the theme in that if anything really did go wrong, it fit right in with the show's script. The photo here is actually a mixture of puppets



from early shows but it's the only one I could find that shows Santa and to stage left, the Abominable Snow

Man, from the first production. I still have the Santa puppet in storage (and tangled, no doubt!) but the Snow Man's papier mache head was destroyed by rats years ago.

In December of 1980 we produced a segment of one of my favorite childhood tales, "The Wind in the Willows." After writing to the copyright holders (Charles Scribner and Sons) and getting permission, we created a play we called "Mole's Homecoming," based on the part of the book where Ratty and Mole find Mole's old home in the snow, and go in,



and the field mice come to sing Christmas carols at the door. Mole is distraught that he has nothing good to offer Ratty to eat but the good friend, Ratty, sets out to cheer up his friend by searching around and finding provisions to make a holiday meal for the two of them.

For December of 1981 we were asked by a church to create a play based on Oscar Wilde's "Selfish Giant." It's a story filled with Christian symbolism about a giant who learns not to be selfish. I created some very beautiful, large rod puppets for the show and learned a valuable beginners lesson: if you make big and heavy puppets, don't forget that you have to hold them up for the duration of their part of the show (in this case, an hour long production.) I actually found that I had to make little crutches to go under my elbows so I could hold the giant up in the show. We had two other important lessons we learned from that show. One lesson came about when a piece of our scenery got hung up and we stopped the recorded voice and music soundtrack to free up the scene. Not a big deal until instead of pushing the play button on the cassette player, I either hit fast forward or reverse. I stopped it as soon as I realized my mistake but then didn't know which way to go to correct, creating several nightmarish minutes of forward and backward, trying to find the place in the tape where the story needed to be. After that we went basically to doing live shows and have been very happy with that. The other lesson involved appropriateness of a show to



audience. When we performed this show for a sit-down theatre audience (such as in the church that had requested the show) people were moved to tears (as were we while performing parts of it...it's a beautiful story.) However, we made the mistake of accepting a job performing it for a country club holiday party where they were not expecting a moving piece of puppet drama. Right at the very emotional climax of the play, the event organizer came into the back of the stage and asked rather irately if we could wrap it up real fast because Santa was ready to come out. We were shocked but, apart from stopping the soundtrack tape and show right there, had no good option but to continue to the end, now with full knowledge that the show was not right for this audience and they were unhappy with us. Anyway, lessons learned!

For a number of years we produced a specific December holiday show each year until after one year, when we realized we had done 60 performances in the first 3 weeks of December and were not really getting to enjoy the holidays ourselves, we backed off and now do what some other professional performers do, which is find ways to "holiday-ize" a show we already have. A few years ago I made a Santa Bear puppet that fits in the style of several of our more popular current shows to make them seasonal. He has shown up in the Three Little Pigs, Puppylocks and the Three Bears, and, this year, in the Gunnywolf (another advantage of a live voiced show is that we can throw in such changes on the fly.) And I have decades of holiday material for my one man show, The Puppetman, which I market under the generic title "The Christmas Capers."

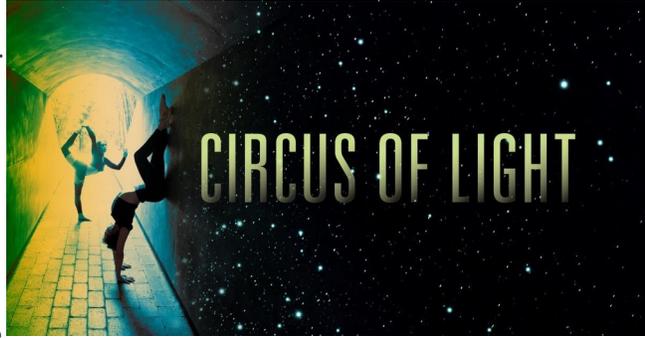


Fratello Marionettes: All our public schedule is on our website- FratelloM.com (penguins and more, by Fratello Marionettes)



Circus Center's 2019 Winter Show (Guild member Gabriel Galdamez has created some shadow puppetry for this event.)

At the darkest time of the year, we explore the light. Our fear of the dark, our desire to be illuminated, our flaring passions, and our longing for revelation.



Circus Center's 2019 Winter Show is a family-friendly circus journey through darkness and light with aerialists, acrobats, musicians, jugglers, poets, and clowns as guides. This holiday season, brave the darkness and discover the light!

Directed by Felicity Hesed - Featuring performances by...Circus Center's instructors and high-level students Our flying trapeze troupe. Our youth troupes, the Super Novas and the SF Youth Circus--PLUS Serchmaa Byamba's Mongolian Contortion Center& Jarrel Phillips' Wild Child Movement Collective

TICKETS - Adult (Age 18 & Up): \$20, Children Under 18 & Circus Center Students: \$10 --ALL AGES WELCOME!
<https://m.ovationtix.com/pr/1019650>

Ilene Cleveland of Kennedy Puppets wrote: "Our Santa play we did at a library,Santa and jingles had a Holiday blast."

Ilene also wrote about an earlier show: Kennedy Puppets did a few Puppet shows on October 19,2019. We did 5 shows a little different each time and our crowds were so huge they even were standing to the sides of our theatre on both sides. They were all laughing and screaming at the poor donkey, but all he wanted was some pie.





News from the North- By Mary Nagler

Greetings Friends in the South! Recently, I had the opportunity to attend a production of *Black Beauty* at the Seattle Children's Theatre. The horses were designed by Annett Mateo, our NW Regional Director. As picture taking was not allowed, I could only get this on in the Talk back afterwards, but I thought you might find it interesting for scale and material use. This is the front half of *Black Beauty*. Most of the conversation between the horses occurs in the stable, so half a

horse is all you need and all you see! Then they were brought out of the stables a child actor worked the front legs, sitting cross legged on the rolling platform and two others worked the back haunches. The effect was not as smooth as *War Horse* but convincing and I was impressed at the coordination the 4 people needed to employ to keep the proper gait going! I was also very impressed with the young man pictured here: Richard Nguyen Sloniker, who played *Black Beauty*. He employed all emotions, delivered his many lines clearly and kept the horse fully alive throughout. A truly great puppetry performance!

Here is a link to the trailer https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yRU_xir6iOs

Here is a link to a news story show about the show https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uZZA5M_mdy0

Each of the horses was made of a different material that spoke to their color and age. Watch the trailer and news story to get a taste! The scenery moved about and was expressed on different scales. Truly an entertaining experience!

In other news, my show *Terran's Aquarium* is set to debut in February 2020, during the Portland Art and Theater Alliance Fertile Ground Theater Festival. This features new works from the Portland area and has 11 days to show off over 50 new presentations! We will open at the PDX Metro Arts Center, which is a theater and dance school for young people. I have done a few workshops for them and expect a long association with the center because they are doing a great work here in Portland. We are deep in rehearsal, and I am



scrambling to finish all the elements. We have launched a GoFundMe campaign to pay the theater and permit expenses as well as sound and lights we need to acquire. Many thanks to those of you who have contributed! If you feel so inclined, here is the link: (Many Thanks!)

<https://www.gofundme.com/terran039s-aquarium-world-premiere-ecology-show>

Working with my cast has been a delight! Because they have many talents the show has become a real collaborative effort, and a bit of a musical! Left to right are Daniel Considine, who plays Handy Andy the Plumber, Matthew Stowers, playing Terran, and Kori Bormann who also plays Terran in some of his manifestations as he takes a

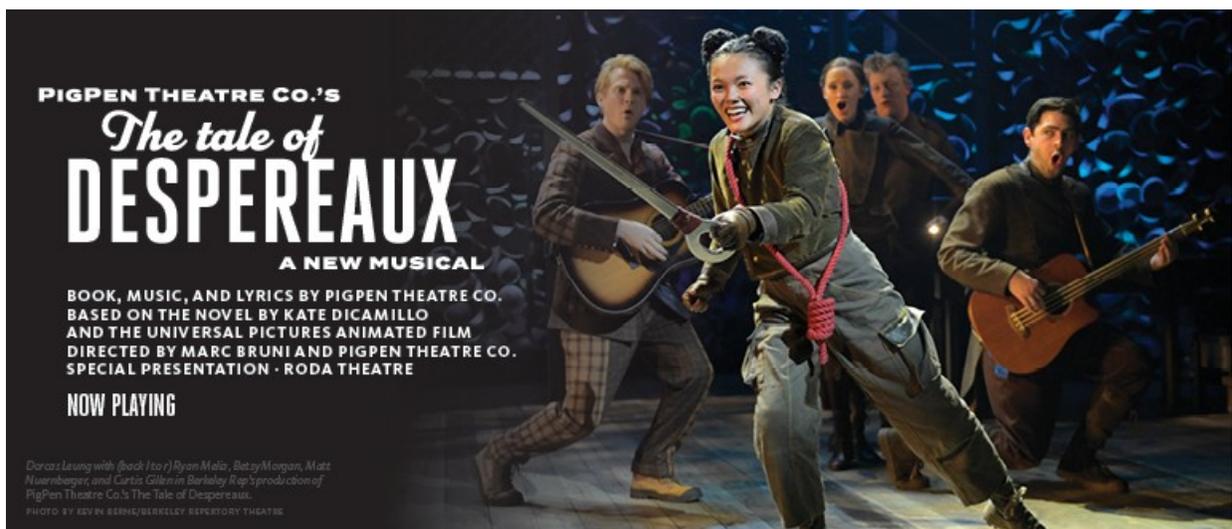
magical trip, via the plumber, to learn how water works in the world and in the infrastructure! I am honored to work with these talented people and look forward to bringing the show South, so you can see **Terran's Aquarium** and meet them!

The Puppeteers of America NW Regional Festival will happen in Portland next Year Aug 7 -10. Mark your calendars! It is shaping up to be a grand time! We will be putting out the call for performances and Workshops soon, after the venue is secured. One thing I can tell you is Jim Kroupa, Master of mechanics will be there! He is great and usually only available to learn from if you get to attend the O'Neill National Puppetry Conference. We are Calling it the:

Left Coast Puppet Love Fest to include so many left coasters, who can't make it out to the East coast to attend the festivals and conferences there. Stand by for more information coming soon!

Berkeley Rep offering 2 shows this December with puppets!

Tickets and Info on either show: <https://www.berkeleyrep.org/season/>



Editors note: *Although I have not seen this show, it includes shadow puppetry.*

A musical adventure awaits you this holiday season when the acclaimed PigPen Theatre Co. brings its inventive and imaginative retelling of the beloved, Newbery Medal-winning modern fable to Berkeley Rep. The courageous Despereaux, shunned by his community for his love of stories and humans, shows a forlorn kingdom that even the smallest voice can change the world—and that it only takes a little light to reveal the truth.

An indie folk band that creates dazzling works of theatre, PigPen infuses this tale of bravery, forgiveness, and redemption with their masterful music, stunning stage effects, and witty performances. PigPen's The Tale of Despereaux is a spellbinding musical treat that resonates with adults and children alike.



Becky Nurse of Salem

Puppet consultants on this show are guild members Michael and Valerie Nelson. Here's Michael's take on the ongoing process. --The play is set in the Salem Witch Museum (in Salem, Mass.) near where I grew up (my brother was the head chef at the Hawthorne Historic Hotel practically across the street from the museum for decades.) In the museum and in the play, life size mannequins portray aspects of the famous Salem witch trials. In the play (and, specifically, the portion of the play we have been working on) the mannequins come to life. We were called in to consult rather late in the process, and the mannequin puppets had already been constructed. We asked for a few changes in the puppet design but mostly have been helping them to work with what they already had built. The show is currently in rehearsal for a December 12 opening. Valerie and I will revisit the production a couple more times to help out in different stages of development. Below is the official write-up about the play.

A dark comedy about the legacy of the Salem witch trials

"Once upon a time people thought the devil explained everything. Then a hundred years later they thought sex explained everything. And now? They think statistics explain everything. But numbers don't explain anything. Numbers didn't explain the election, did they? Sorry, I didn't mean to bring that up."

A world premiere by MacArthur "Genius" Grant winner Sarah Ruhl (In the Next Room (or The Vibrator Play); Eurydice), Becky Nurse of Salem is an offbeat dark comedy that follows a woman coming to terms with her family's legacy and finding her voice in our "lock her up" era.

Becky Nurse is an outspoken, sharp-witted tour guide at the Salem Museum of Witchcraft who's just trying to get by in post-Obama America. She's also the descendant of Rebecca Nurse, who was infamously executed for witchcraft in 1692—but things have changed for women since then...haven't they? After losing her job for calling out *The Crucible* in front of schoolkids, Becky visits a local witch for help. One spell leads to another, and then everything really goes off the rails.

Becky Nurse of Salem was commissioned by Berkeley Rep and developed in **The Ground Floor**: Berkeley Rep's Center for the Creation and Development of New Work.

Send articles to newsletter@sfbapg.org and find lots of holiday show calendar listings at <http://www.sfbapg.org/events/calendar/> Also, don't forget that ongoing shows like *Children's Fairyland*, *Happy Hollow* and others may not be listed on our calendar.

DO YOU WANT TO HELP OUT YOUR PUPPET GUILD? We are currently looking for a calendar person. The volunteer job would be to help put events on our guild's Google calendar. If you can help, please email me at newsletter@sfbapg.org.