



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*

**APRIL 2020**



In past years, April has been a time for your newsletter editor to take a little, humorous break from the otherwise serious business of running a puppetry news publication. This year, instead, the Guild would like to send out wishes for health and safety for you and your loved ones, your colleagues, friends, community. While covering the usual puppetry news, we also have some information about assistance that you performers and self-employed folks might find useful. Keep in mind that lots of assistance programs are still not quite formalized so take the information here with a grain of salt and do your own research (and then share it with the rest of us.) Puppetry has proven to be a very resilient art form in the past. The puppets will be safe, so let's take care of the puppeteers.

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

### Upcoming Guild Meetings & Events

Lots of exciting programs and events coming up!

*The optimistic lines above are how our last newsletter started. Below that announcement was a list of the great programming that your Programming Committee had organized for you. Alas, as you probably don't need to be told, all upcoming events are postponed until healthier times. Below is the updated info from our Programming Chair:*

#### Upcoming Guild Meetings & Events

Due to the Coronavirus crisis, meetings have been postponed until it's safe. Lots of exciting programs and events coming up!

#### MARCH GUILD MEETING

"One Puppet Magic!"

Sat. Mar. 21 2 – 5 pm **POSTPONED. New Date will be announced asap.**  
Sonoma Valley Regional Library, Sonoma, 755 W Napa St, Sonoma

**GUILD EVENT: FELTING WORKSHOP Sat., Apr., 18, 9am to 4pm** at the Early Learning Center Contra Costa College, 2600 Mission Bell Dr., San Pablo, CA **POSTPONED. New Date will be announced asap.**

**We are hoping that the following meetings will take place.**

**EVENT: PUPPETS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS at Contra Costa College, Sat., May 9 POSTPONED. New Date will be announced asap.**

Using a variety of puppet types, including hand puppets, shadow puppets and rod puppets, this workshop will focus on learning and teaching students how to make puppets become "alive". Puppet movement and staging will be explored, with hands-on activities, and staging options. Certificates of Professional Development hours are available to attendees.

**MAY GUILD MEETING Sat., May 30<sup>th</sup>, 3-5:30 pm. Benicia Public Library, the Dona Benicia Room, 150 E L St, Benicia TO BE DETERMINED. Stay tuned for announcements in April.**

**Puppet Show. "Stinky Tales" at 3 pm** is an interactive storytelling experience bringing children and puppets together to explore the everyday social problems of childhood. And the creatives, **Doug & Annie Zesiger**, will share their new web series, <https://www.stinkytales.com>, bringing big laughs while teaching empathy and confidence to 3-6 year olds. Bring your friends and family. Great for all ages, 3 to 103! Guild meeting after the performance

**Doug** is a master classroom teacher, storyteller and puppeteer. **Annie** is a puppeteer and music teacher who writes original children's music.

**Guild social and meeting will be from 4-5:30ish pm.**

**Pacific Northwest Region PUPPET FESTIVAL: Left Coast Puppet Love Fest – Aug 6-9, Portland, Oregon.** Fun-filled days of workshops and shows, with puppet exhibit, puppet store and more! Festival Directors: Mary Nagler & Dustin Curtis

**Annual Puppet Faire at Fairyland, Oakland, Sept. 5-6.** Two days of puppet shows, a puppet exhibit and lots of fun to celebrate Fairyland's 70th birthday (opened 09/02/1950) and the Guild's 65th!

**Please note** that Guild Meetings are free. Guild sponsored Events have a small fee to cover the cost of the leader/performer, venue and supplies, if needed.

#### **PROGRAMMING HELP WANTED!**

- 🕒 Would you like to suggest a program for a Guild meeting?
- 🕒 Do you have a show or skill that would be of interest to our membership?
- 🕒 Would you like to have a Guild meeting in your community and could provide your home, your local library, church, community center or...?
- 🕒 Would you like to be on the Programming Committee?

**If so, please contact Lee Armstrong, [images@vom.com](mailto:images@vom.com), cell 707 738-5906 or anyone on the Programming Committee or Guild Board.**

## **Corona Virus, Shelter in Place and the Working Puppeteer**

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by Michael Nelson

If you are a performing puppeteer, it is probable that all of your live performances have been canceled or postponed. If you are a teacher who uses puppetry, your classes are probably switching to online classes and I am guessing that changing over to that new way of life is taking a lot of your time and focus. Libraries may be closed or have very limited offerings with puppets being low on the list. And I am sure there are many other ways that sheltering in place is impacting your puppetry. Some puppeteers are offering online performances and exploring how that might work, both from a technical and audience point of view and also from a financial one. Others puppeteers are using the studio time to work on new shows with the hope of someday in the future getting to perform them. Many are seeing a major source of income stop abruptly.

I have heard from a number of you and will share some of what you have told me. A number of you have shared info on resources, and, as I mentioned under the front page photo, take all of this with a grain of salt and do your research as things are still changing daily.

First of all, we feel your pain! This is an extraordinary time and there are so many challenges to staying safe and sane while the world around us is filled with uncertainty. Please take care of yourselves. Just as they tell us before take off in a plane...put that oxygen mask on yourself first before taking care of others. If you don't protect yourself as much as possible and try not to get sick, then you run the risk of being unable to help others and requiring aid yourself. Don't panic but take this seriously. Even young people are getting sick and dying. (Now I'm done with the editorializing...let's see what we can find out!)

What are you doing to keep your puppetry going? Guild member RickiRoo is offering Zoom birthday party shows. Zoom is a video conferencing application that allows you to see and be seen by lots of other people, each on their own computer or device. Other puppeteers we have heard from are also trying this virtual puppet show technique. How live shows might translate to this medium and how it might work as a business model is still up in the air.

A number of puppeteers are offering online "how-to" workshops on making puppets, mostly for kids while they are stuck in their homes. Most are free and some have a way to donate to the puppeteers, but I've had no report as to how that might be working. Others have been offering live, online shows. Again, I'm not sure how that might be working for folks but if you know anything, please share. These have been on Facebook or other social media or video sharing applications. I know there have been a number of music concerts where

people play from their living rooms and viewers can donate. Also, Great Small Works is organizing a semi-virtual toy theatre festival (which we will be performing at) this month in NY. Some of the performers I think will be there and live and many (like us) have sent in video performances that will be played. There will be live audience members and online audience members. (links on page 8)

### Government Financial Help

There has been talk and info about some Federal programs to help small businesses and the self employed. A lot of this is happening the week this newsletter is going out, but maybe some of this info will help you know what to watch for.

At the end of this article will be some specific government info, but let's start with what some local puppeteers have learned or shared.

Normally, as a self employed person, one does not get unemployment benefits until one has paid into an unemployment insurance. However, there is talk that self employed people might be eligible to receive some relief under new programs from Congress. To this end, at least one local puppeteer has already applied online. He reports that the form he filled out did not appear to reflect new information about programs for self employed but he hopes that will change as programs and forms catch up to new policies. He shared this link to some info: <https://www.kron4.com/washington/washington-dc/california-lawmakers-lead-effort-to-provide-unemployment-benefits-for-gig-workers/>

Another guild member shared this link: <https://www.sba.gov/> and said that he is looking into applying for a low interest small business loan (which might be forgiven someday as part of the government relief program) to try and keep his puppeteers working.

From the Great Arizona Puppet Theater in Phoenix, here's a link to some more info on small businesses and how to survive this (a big link...you'll have to copy and paste)

[https://www.sbc.senate.gov/public/\\_cache/files/9/7/97ac840c-28b7-4e49-b872-d30a995d8dae/F2CF1DD78E6D6C8C8C3BF58C6D1DDB2B.small-business-owner-s-guide-to-the-cares-act-final-.pdf](https://www.sbc.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/9/7/97ac840c-28b7-4e49-b872-d30a995d8dae/F2CF1DD78E6D6C8C8C3BF58C6D1DDB2B.small-business-owner-s-guide-to-the-cares-act-final-.pdf)

The Office of Speaker Nancy Pelosi has prepared a resource guide to all COVID-19-related benefits enacted into law, which **you can find here**. <https://www.speaker.gov/sites/speaker.house.gov/files/COVID%20TOOLKIT%203.30.20.pdf>

This document provides much info including: "three sweeping pieces of legislation: • The Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act • The Families First Coronavirus Response Act • The Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act"

**Our local Congressman, Mike Thompson**, on his Coronavirus page

(<https://mikethompson.house.gov/coronavirus>) offers this info, below. The bold text in the paragraphs below are links to the appropriate sources on the webpage, so rather than type the links in here, I suggest you go to the Thompson's page (above) and use the live links from there.

**Am I eligible for paid leave, unemployment insurance benefits, or other assistance to help offset a loss of income?**

The CARES Act provides **direct cash payments** to every working family in America and increases and expands **unemployment insurance benefits**. You can review your eligibility for COVID-19-related paid leave and unemployment benefits on the **California Employment Development Department website**.

**What assistance is available to small businesses?**



At Governor Newsom's request, the Small Business Administration has issued a disaster declaration for California. This declaration makes emergency Economic Injury Disaster Loans available to small business owners and non-profits. **You can apply here.** In addition, the CARES Act includes a rescue plan for our small businesses. Click to learn more about the bill's **tax relief measures** and **small business loan support**.

Employers who have questions about complying with the paid sick leave or the expanded family and medical leave provisions of the FFCRA: please visit the **U.S. Department of Labor website** for a helpful Q&A.

### What are other puppeteers doing?

Lee Armstrong shared the following from the artists who are scheduled for an upcoming guild meeting.

#### I Like Clean Hands!

Appropriate to our time, tune in to "Stinky Tales" as Dillard the Dragon & Stinky the Cat sing "I Like Clean Hands" <https://youtu.be/aCbBausgwRk>.

Dillard is puppeteered by Doug Zesiger and Stinky by Annie Zesiger. A talented family, Annie composes and records original music that storyteller Doug incorporates into his tales of empathy, exploring the shared challenges of being kids. They will be our featured artists for the May Guild meeting (if the "shelter in place" has ended). Many more songs and puppet stories on their Youtube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC39LkmV4C7-awJ-vc4OrRag>. The messages are great not only for kids, but helpful to parents, teachers and caregivers, as Doug poses thoughtful questions for children to answer. Share with your friends!



Valerie and I have been teaching drama and puppets from home at the arts magnet elementary where we work, using Zoom and online classrooms. We are scrambling to create curriculum that can be used by different grade levels, creating classes with video and live interaction, puppets, story and hopefully figuring out how to engage the students and keep them creative and active while they are home-schooling. I imagine other teachers are working similarly.

### Guild Members: Images In Motion 3D Prints Plastic Surgical Masks

Images In Motion usually prints 3D puppet parts, sculptural pieces and props for TV, film and exhibits. However, they received an urgent request last week to help in the fight against Covid-19.

A friend contacted IIM's Kamela Portuges with an immediate concern. His wife is a nurse, working at a local hospital, which has a shortage of protective masks. He had seen a CNN article about a Billings, Montana doctor and dentist who designed a reusable plastic mask that could be

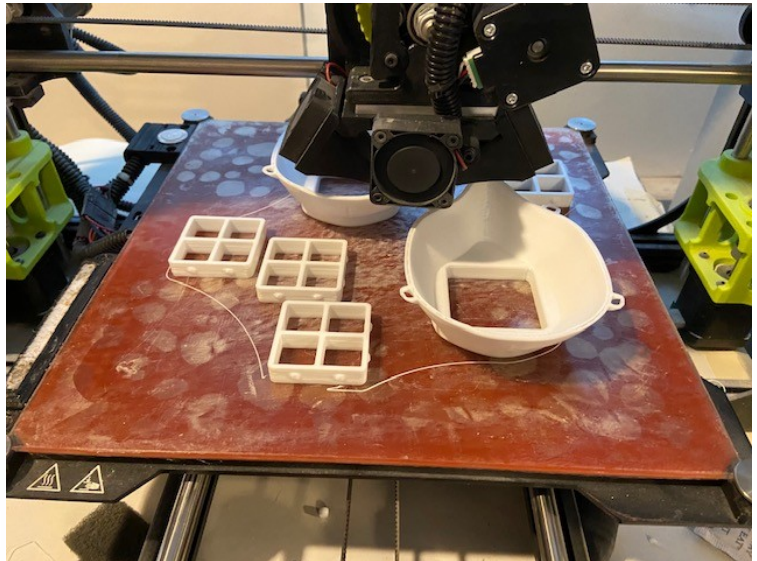


3D printed, <https://www.cnn.com/2020/03/23/us/coronavirus-3d-printed-medical-supplies-trnd/index.html>.

He asked Kamela if she could print a mask for his wife.

As N95 filter masks are in short supply, this plastic mask has a unique design. It has snap-in section which uses a small square of a surgical mask as a filter. The plastic portion can be cleaned with soap and water, bleach or other disinfecting products. Instead of a surgical mask being replaced every day, it's estimated that healthcare workers can get six to 10 uses out of a single surgical mask.

Kamela had 5 masks printed overnight and we just happened to have some N95 surgical masks in the workshop that we could donate to use in the filter section. Check out the printer fabricating these masks at [www.facebook.com/ImagesinMotionMedia](https://www.facebook.com/ImagesinMotionMedia).



**Many schools and libraries have 3D printers. It might be an idea to open facilities with printers to help make medical masks more accessible.**

**For more information and files:**

<https://www.billingsclinic.com/foundation/>

### On the simpler side...

Guild member Nao Kobayashi writes that she has been using her time at home to explore sewing techniques: We use various building techniques for puppet building, and I decided to study some new sewing techniques that I wanted to study and practice during this unusual time. Three dimensional patterning by making a couch cover, sewing dance pants using stretchy fabric, realistic eye painting with acrylics .. yet the best one so far was darning; a technique to mend sock holes!

(Ed. Note: ready for those darned sock puppets!)



### "Buenos Dias, Pajarito! Good Morning Little Bird"

The Remembrance of an Amazing Success Story! By Elisheva

Crank the clock back to 1974. Then I was known as Betty Polus-my married name. ( Nowadays I'm Elisheva or Elizabeth Hart.) The setting is in a first grade class in a Santa Cruz elementary school. The children sit at their desks, eagerly facing me. I sit in an adult sized chair facing them. A piano bench is at my knees covered with a baby blanket.

My goal is to teach the children a few words in Spanish and of course, have fun. I had been taking a Spanish class and wanted to experiment incorporating this new experience into my puppet workshops. Plus I also felt the need to continue to incorporate my Civil Rights activism goal to change attitudes in a positive way.

Looking over the children I realize they are all white except for one little guy in the front row who is Hispanic. I introduce myself to the class and ask if they would like to see my puppet. Enthusiastically "YES" they shout. The baby blanket comes off, revealing Pajarito, (translated: Little Bird) He is a crocheted purple and orange hand-in-mouth bird puppet (similar to a sock puppet) who lives in an upside down sombrero for his nest! My arm goes upwards through a hole cut in the crown of the inverted hat and into the puppet's head. A pacifier dangles from from the chin strap.

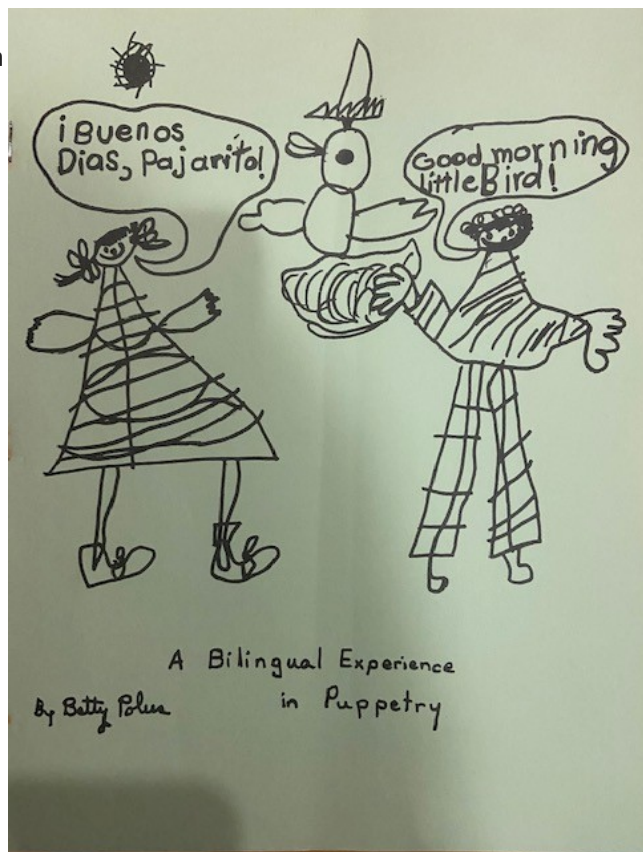
"Pajarito is a very young bird. He doesn't talk yet. I need you all to help me teach him, OK?" Another resounding "YES!" from the peanut gallery. "Thanks. We will only teach 3 words since he is so little."

I pull 3 sheets of typing sheet sized card stock from under the blanket and place them blank side up onto the piano bench.

Holding up the first sketch, I show it to the puppet, then the class. "OK, what is in this picture?" "CHAIR!", everyone shouts. "YES! Does anyone know how to say 'chair' in Spanish?"

Horrified, the little brown skinned boy in front of me tries to become one with his desk. To disappear. He is way too embarrassed to look at me, especially when I supplied the word "la silla", and had the children say it 3 times. Then the puppet repeats each word for chair to the delight and applause of the class.

The second sketch is of a book. When I ask if anyone knows 'book' in Spanish [un libro,] the little guy in front of me picks his head up and stares at the puppet from under his lashes. I display the 3rd sketch-before I can say anything, he jumps up out of his chair, pumps his arms into the air as though he'd made a home run, and SHOUTS "LA MESA!" [table].



His classmates all are wide eyed and look at him as though seeing him for the first time in an interesting way, Maybe he IS worth knowing!

Pajarito bends his head, grabs his pacifier with his beak, and sinks back into his nest. I tuck him in with his baby blanket-such a Happy Ending for all the classmates. Today we surely would call it a win-win situation!

FOR MORE INFO AND A FEW MORE PLAYLETS featuring the Little Bird in the Hat, check out "Buenos Dias, Pajarito-Good Morning Little Bird! A Bilingual Experience in Puppetry" from our Guild Library at our next



gathering. OR if you want it sooner, Lee Armstrong-our Guild Librarian-can easily mail it to you. since it is a pamphlet. Just give her a phone call. She is listed on the 1st page of this Newsletter, in the right hand column of Guild Officers.

**Note: The semi-virtual toy theatre festival I mentioned in the Coronavirus Shelter in Place article can be watched here:**

Each night will be publicly broadcast via Facebook Live: [www.facebook.com/greatsmallworks](http://www.facebook.com/greatsmallworks)

Here are the Facebook Events for the two afternoons, 4:30 pm Pacific time. Magical Moonshine performs on April 2. There is a whole different slate on April 3! Invite your friends!

April 2: <https://www.facebook.com/events/506283823401472/>

April 3: <https://www.facebook.com/events/673612800051391/>

**Lemonade anyone?**

By Judy Roberto

Hello! I'm hopeful that you're all staying healthy, and distant, from everyone except your family, pets, plants and puppets.

Until a few hours ago, I was praying that projections would show a viral slow-down. Instead, we (Santa Clara County) got a big basket of lemons, projecting another month, at least, with more strict enforcement of SIP. OUCH!!

So there's time to make lots of sweet lemonade now. I don't even remember having this kind of time to make my own puppets. As has been recently suggested (thank you MMT) recording rehearsals, and sharing for critique input from other puppeteers would be wonderful.

This is where I'll begin – a 30 year old puppet, my first, who was never *quite* finished, not *quite* secure in his character voice. Quill is an English Hedgehog, who lives alone in the garden. He's just had a make-over, and he thinks he's ready...

Be Well and puppet on!



**To Right: Marionette Motto  
for the Day: HANG IN THERE!**

Send newsletter articles to  
[newsletter@sfbapg.org](mailto:newsletter@sfbapg.org). Send Calendar  
listings to [events@sfbapg.org](mailto:events@sfbapg.org)

