



The official newsletter of
San Francisco Bay Area Puppeteers' Guild
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Check for it at SFBAPG.ORG*

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

November 2020



Monica Leo to give a Bohemian rod marionette workshop
November 22, free to guild members. See info in this newsletter.

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Bohemian Rod Marionette workshop to be given by Monica Leo

The workshop is on Sunday, November 22 at 4:00. There will be a membership meeting before the workshop at 3:30.

Have you ever wanted to make a marionette that is simple to operate, or a rod puppet that has more movement? The Bohemian rod puppet is both. The Bohemian rod marionette has a simple control that manipulates the legs and arms. We are lucky enough to be able to feature Monica Leo in another workshop this year. Monica Leo will introduce us to the art and show us how to construct one of these wonderful puppets. This technique is adaptable for animals, people and fantasy creatures. It is the perfect puppet technique to use with the pop up stage that Monica taught earlier. I have been trying to copy Monica's technique for years and now here is my chance to learn it from the master. The workshop is on Sunday, November 22 at 4:00. There will be a membership meeting before the workshop at 3:30. Below is the link to sign up for the class. It will also be posted on our Facebook page.

LINK TO SIGN UP FOR THIS WORKSHOP -

<http://sfbapg.regfox.com/november>



A Signature Puppet for the PreSchool Teacher

Sandra Starr

This is such a versatile and useful communication device. As a teacher you can have a special puppet friend who comes with you to the circle, to a child, to an event, creates a special moment and is a captivating vehicle for getting the attention of most any child, especially preschoolers. Using your Signature puppet you have an entertaining way to introduce, address, enact, reveal subjects, attitudes, reminders, rules, stories, and any number of basic classroom routines.

You get to find/make/purchase a character. (See the potentials of redesigning a stuffed toy to become a useful puppet.) It is best for it to be a hand puppet that only needs one hand for the operation. It needs to be one that you find easy to put on and is easy to operate. A mouth articulated puppet is just fine for a teacher to use as a Signature puppet as there is no threat of biting and pinching as there is with a preschooler using a mouth articulated puppet.



It should be a character who is at first sight – loveable and endearing. It needs to be one that no child could find scary or make any child fearful. That could be a color and design issue, or a character one. I had a dragon who I was sure all the children knew was really sweet. But one child had a real fear of it. I knew it was NOT the job of my Signature puppet to be the one to try to change the child's outlook. . That can be done in other ways but not with the Signature puppet. I found a unicorn who could manage all the nuances of the work of the "Signature puppet" easily and comfortably for all. Your "Signature puppet" needs to be a character that you yourself have a strong affinity for &/or love.



The issue of being a creature or an anthropomorphic character remains the same. It is the strongest and most effective choice for this specific audience. It is easier for a preschooler to identify with a bunny than some stylization of a humanoid representing a specific race and other selective human attributes.

Give your character a name and keep that name for the character.

It will need to have a gender if for no other reason than to be consistent with prepositions – "his" "Her" "she" "He" . Having an "it" doesn't work. The puppet gender does not need to be the same as yours.

Present this character in your hands, openly. It is generally best for a Signature puppet to be done this way and not be presented from a puppet theatre, unless you have some wearable apron that has a built in stage curtain. Cradle the puppet character, when you can, to give it a comfortable space to rest in. However it can walk and move in blank space.

Look at your puppet-friend as you would another being, giving eye contact. Your relationship with your puppet-friend is modeling your heart-felt relationship with your children in an especially caring way that you might not get to express in an on-going basis to all the individuals.

Model respect for the puppet instrument. Be careful putting it on, taking it off and putting it safely away or on display..

This is a puppet that only you should use. It is YOUR special friend. Another adult will not be able to communicate as you do with it and a child cannot project the adult caring relationship that you want to develop and represent in that character. (You are creating your own archetype.) This is why we call it a "Signature Puppet" as it gives your special touch.



You can give your character a fun voice. Don't use one that is abrasive or unpleasant to hear. Or, you can give your puppet-friend an inaudible whisper into your ear giving you its verbal communication which you translate to the audience.

Practice in the mirror to create as many expressive movements as possible. Check out how you look together. What techniques of holding the figure work best.

You can, and maybe should. add costume pieces to your figure. It is really helpful to have parts of the puppet or puppet's costume move, flutter, create as animate and motion filled a picture as is possible. If the character can have floppy ears, or wings, or some kind of cape, ribbon that has its own animation, this is a theatrical

asset. If a bow, or flowers or even a badge is loosely sewn on the figure then it will move about on its own. Good.

Yes, it is fine to have more than one puppet that you alone use for communicating with your children. You can have your primary “signature” puppet who is able to bring up the sensitivity issues...“Are you being shy?” “Does that make you unhappy?” “When someone tells you that you can’t come to their birthday party does that make you unhappy?” This is a good arena for one character.

There is also the clown character, say a frog, who wants to be the one to do this and that and gets it backwards or cattie wumpas. This is a possibility for the over eager child to be described in the playful silliness of this character. He can interrupt (which you can keep trying to remind him is not the way to do it) and tell his version of what the story is or what the situation is in some outlandish way.

Perhaps there is a puppet character who is there just to help you at story time. Maybe an old dog who knows all the good stories and has good questions about what is happening or going to happen? Maybe the old dog can come up with other endings to the story or add other parts to the story and get the children thinking about how to rewrite tales, create better endings, eliminate or change sad parts (for their improvement alone)?



Guild Member Lex Rudd leaving U.S., puppet materials available

Halloo to all my friends at SFBAPG.

Sad news, I've decided to take my little family and leave the Bay Area. And the State. And heck, even the country. We will be back in the UK for a time so my daughter Eleanore can grow up knowing her grandparents - and even her great grandparents!

I'll miss you all but I'm only a video chat away if you wanted to catch up, and who knows what the future holds!



In side news, I need to leave a lot of my stuff behind. If anyone is interested in fur scraps, glues and chemicals, part finished projects, who-knows -what and many, many plaster molds (all the ones I have used for all my creatures over the years) please email me at lex@alexisrudd.com with something relevant in the title like “Creature/Puppet Moving Give Away” (I get a lot of spam so this helps me see it) and we can talk. I'd prefer someone to take a boat load and parse it out if there's a lot of interest. It needs to be out so I can sell my redwood cabin, sadly.

Thanks all, and please stay in touch!

- Lex Rudd

www.alexisrudd.com / www.dreamsandvisionsart.com

Opportunity: Holiday Puppet Virtual Market in December

Join us for our Holiday Virtual Puppet Market event on December 5th, 2020

10am-8pm! This is our way of helping the puppet artists who were unable to be part of the Regional Puppet Festivals puppet stores. Imagine running a live stream with your customers able to comment live on Facebook!

Imagine being a customer who can order directly from the different artists to make sure they get all the money from the order! Half hour live streams will run from 10am-8pm with small breaks to get the next person ready to stream. What you do with your live stream is up to you. Will you show products? Will you just chat with your fans? Will you refer them to the product postings you are putting in the post feed? If you aren't sure what to do you can email me at puppetmaster@wyndwolfpuppets.com to get some suggestions and guidance for your individual market time. A schedule of when each vendors live stream will start will be published several weeks before the event. Through out the day of the event people can post links to chat rooms for face to face time, websites, products, and more.



Before the event you will have your company information and website published and promoted through the Marketplace page and emails that go out. Vendors are encouraged to share and use advertising information to send emails to their own customer base (if you have one). You can share the other vendors profiles as well! We will all work together to share our customer base and enjoy the time we will have together even if it is virtual.

We may run more markets through out the year if this one is successful. Start your holiday shopping or stock up for more months of lock down occupation! \$20 fee covers the market manager costs. \$5 of this money will be a donation for the Puppetry Guild of Portland.

Please note: Vendors get live streams, an album, a business post and targeted advertising prior to the event. Sign up now for this puppet filled shopping event! Or save the date to attend and support puppet artists affected by the lockdown.

Like the Market page to get updates and share it with your customers!

<https://www.facebook.com/The-Marketplace-by-Wyndwolf-Puppets-101245038320099>

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ELISHEVA'S MEMORY OF "A PARTICULARLY RESOURCEFUL HALLOWEEN PARTY"---IN THE NETHERLANDS!

In mid-Fall of 1971, I answered a call from Shirley Roman of New York, a fellow Shadow Puppeteer. She was signed up for a big Shadow Fest in Germany during the last part of October. Her husband was suddenly unable to travel with her and- -could I come with her as a traveling companion? (All expenses paid!)

"Oh yes", I immediately responded.

We went to the Shadow Fest and then, having previously been invited to visit Margaret-a local Shadow Puppeteer, we accompanied her to the North-Westerly point of the Netherlands [also of Europe] where her vacation cottage was located. Her sister-in-law, Heidi, joined us there.

Early one afternoon I noticed-after adjusting for the time zones-that it was October 31st. "It's Halloween today. Do you celebrate Halloween here?" I asked Margaret. "No" she said, "And I don't understand it at all. You are going to give us a Halloween Party tonight to explain that custom. Get your purse, I'm taking you to town to get provisions!"

"Good grief!" I thought, "I cannot throw together a puppet show to explain it, these puppeteers are perfectionists. That would never fly. OK, what does symbolize Halloween to me?" I made a list.

1. Jack O' Lantern. 2. a lit candle inside the pumpkin. 3. Halloween theme candy. 4. a Spooky Story..... Yay, I have a perfect one of those in my head!. Costumes and Masks of course, but they can apply to many events....so I erased them from the list. Besides, my being at least 20+ years younger than the others, I probably -in error- thought they would not be interested in dressing up.

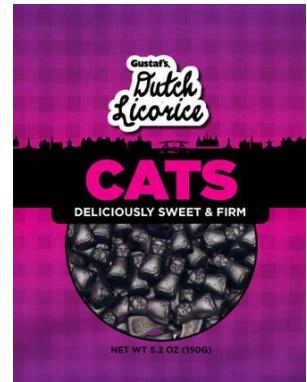
I was dropped off, all by myself, in a 3 story gigantic Modern Super Market. First stop, candy department. Much to my total amazement, among all the other unsuitable candies, there was a tray of flat black licorice punched out into the form of hissing, arched cats! "Please give me a bag full." I said.

I trolled the vegetable and fruit departments 3 times without finding a pumpkin. Not surprising, since they originated in the Americas. Unlike coffee, tea, and chocolate, pumpkins seemed to have missed the boat for the Netherlands. What to substitute? Well, oranges are the right pumpkin color, and Margaret did have small birthday cake size candles, but this fruit seemed too moist to sustain a flame.

Going through the veggie department again, I-to my great surprise- saw that bell peppers (something Mom used a lot) not only came in GREEN, but also ripened into yellow, then ORANGE, and finally red.

I fondled every orange bell pepper, finally selecting the best for the job...tall enough to contain a tiny birthday candle, round enough to give space for carving a grinning face, and flat enough on the bottom that it wouldn't tip over!. And not as drippy as an orange, it was moist enough to be flame proof for a short while.

After supper we gathered for The Halloween Party! While everyone admired Ol' Jack, and munched black cats, I described Trick-or-Treat as it was when I was a child. Suddenly remembering something



my Mom (born in 1910) told me-and her younger sister verified-I fortunately described that when they were girls they dressed up on Halloween in raggedy old clothes (costumes were for parties, etc.) and go tramping up and down the sidewalks of suburban Detroit with the other similarly clad kids. They all would shout out, "Help the poor!" (Of course this was pre-UNICEF coin collection boxes.)



This scenario somehow explained ALL of Halloween to Margaret. Apparently when she was a child, the churches sponsored a similar begging parade, somewhere in the calendar, but not October 31.

The last item on my list was Spooky Story. I told "The Ghost in the Bottle", a British story I think. A staple in my storytelling, I retold it just a month ago at work. It has evolved with the passage of years and awareness. For instance, when the Wise Woman advises catching the ghost by daring it to get small enough to fit inside a bottle (then cork it tight) she now interjects, "Use a glass bottle, plastic ones are bad



for the environment you know." Another important part of the story is the bottled-up ghost has to be given to her before the church clock finishes bonging out midnight! Or else!!

Well, when I finished both bonging and the story, Margaret smugly told me that I had only bonged 11 times, not 12. I disagreed, privately, thus allowing her the Last Word. She really was a very nice person and stay once in San Francisco with David and me. She was just brusque at times.

Our Amazing Puppet World

By Ilene Kennedy (Vice President)

As a child I'm sure we all watched Mr. Rogers Neighborhood. I really enjoyed all the characters. I even built my own castle and made stick puppets of my own to try and have my own little neighborhood. Ilene's little neighborhood! (LOL)

Before Fred Roger's became the host of Mr. Roger's Neighborhood, he was an ordained minister and songwriter. His hobby was "puppetry." His first TV show had no budget, so he wrote the scripts and built all the puppets as well as operated them. He also did all the voices for them as well.

Thank you Fred Rogers for inspiring me to become a puppeteer to continue making children and adults smile and laugh.....



Forbidden Puppet Cabaret presents PuppetLove in the Time of Covid, November 21

Short puppet acts, mostly for grownups, are the forte of Forbidden Puppet Cabaret. On the eve of Saturday, November 21, Michael & Valerie Nelson will host the first ever “virtual” FPCabaret with streaming acts you can view from the safety of your own home, starting at 7PM. Details are still evolving. Keep updated at the Forbidden Puppet Cabaret event on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/events/2776495235966491>

Images from the Guild Halloween Puppet Experiment

Here's what you missed!



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