

	<p>The official newsletter of</p> <h2 style="text-align: center;">San Francisco Bay Area Puppeteers' Guild</h2> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Looking for updates and missed information? Check for it at SFBAPG.ORG</i></p> <p><i>SFBAPG is a charter guild of the Puppeteers of America, Inc., a non-profit, tax exempt organization</i></p>
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WELCOME MICHELLE OBAMA!

Former first lady Michelle Obama joins the puppet community with a new show on Netflix and with help from SFBAPG members from Images in Motion. Article below!

March 20th Guild Meeting “The Ins & Outs of Live-Streaming Your Puppet Show”

When: March 20, Sat. 3-5 pm

Where: On Zoom – Sign up at RegFox

<https://sfbapg.regfox.com/march>

This exciting workshop starts with a live streamed show of the “Three Little Pigs” which has some very interesting special effects. Then see how it’s all done as Art Grueneberger of Puppet Art Theater gives us a backstage tour.

Guild Board and Officers

President

Camilla Henneman
camhenneman@gmail.com

Vice President

Ilene Cleveland
hope922000@yahoo.com

Secretary

Barbara Grillo
bgrillo@contracosta.edu

Treasurer

Valerie Nelson
mail@magicalmoonshine.org

Webmaster

Gabriel Galdamez
gabriel@cmtministries.org

Lee Armstrong
images@vom.com
707-996-9474

John Arnold
john@puppetsopt.com

Judy Roberto
be_artsy@hotmail.com

Nao Kobayashi
naopuppet@gmail.com

Librarian

Lee Armstrong
707-996-9474

Membership Assistant

Michael Nelson
707-363-4573
mail@magicalmoonshine.org

The Three Little Pigs

Three pigs strike out on their own looking to have fun and adventures. But first, they must build houses for themselves. Straw, sticks, bricks, and a huffing and puffing Big Bad Wolf add up to hilarity and mayhem in this adaptation of the classic story, "The Three Little Pigs." Sneak preview at <https://youtu.be/ftCL75J7RmE>.

After the show, Art will take us backstage tour to look at equipment and his virtual set-up. Art will share three ways he's adapted his shows to work as live-stream performances in the COVID Era. He will also discuss how he will use the live-stream technology post-pandemic.



Art Grueneberger

Director, Puppeteer, Puppet Builder

Art became fascinated by puppetry in the early 90's while pursuing a degree in teaching. A puppetry course his last year of college took him off the teaching path and onto a successful career as a puppeteer. Under the mentor-ship of master puppeteer Richard Bay he began performing shows at theme parks and schools. An

early opportunity to study with Jim Henson's Muppet Performers and hundreds of performances for Bay's company helped hone his skills as a performer. An invitation to be one of the first participants in the Emerging Artist Program at the National Puppetry Conference, Eugene O'Neill Theater Center helped develop Grueneberger's writing and production skills. These skills combined with a bit of luck lead to the formation of Grueneberger's Puppet Art Theater Co. in 1995. Today Puppet Art Theater Co. has eighteen productions that tour across California and beyond completing more than 600 live performances for family audiences every year. Grueneberger has become a master at developing marvelous puppet shows that delight audiences of all ages. Grueneberger took these skills and started Puppet Arts Creative which develops and tours fantastic educational programs for government agencies, corporations and other organizations that deliver important educational messages to targeted audiences. In April 2020, Puppet Art Theater pivoted from live performances to live-streaming shows. Since the pivot they've completed over 200 paid live-stream performances.

Loose schedule

3:00-3:30 Guild meeting
3:30-4:00 Show
4:00-5:00 Live Stream presentation & Q & A

May Guild Meeting: Presenting *Stinky Tales*® plus the Basics & Tips of Grantwriting
Sun. May 16 from 3-5 pm
More information will be in the April Newsletter

Stinky Tales®

Meet the dynamic duo, Doug and Annie Zesiger, producers of the video series *Stinky Tales*®. They will share how they produce their own videos, shooting in their home studio. Doug has a true gift for talking to children in an empowering way, a new Mr. Rogers and Annie encapsulates the show's life lessons in her memorable songs. Their presentation will be filled with samples of their videos and what they have learned over the years about children and puppets.

Stinky Tales® is an interactive puppet show helping kids navigate the challenges of social emotional learning. Dillard the dragon and his friends often need the help of the humans in the audience to help them find their way. As the kids help the puppets, they also help themselves, cementing some pretty important life skills along the way. Check it out at <https://www.stinkytales.com/>.

Doug & Annie Zesiger, Producers of *Stinky Tales*®

Doug & Annie are both teachers who work live, on the web and zoom. "*Stinky Tales*" is a project in the making for many years, Doug and Anne Zesiger voice the lead characters, their son sings the theme song and their daughter creates all of the graphics. Anne also writes and performs original music for each of our full episodes.

Plus Grantwriting for Puppeteers

Jill Valavanis is an artist, educator and grantwriter. She has years of experience in writing grants for the arts. She will share some basic information to get you started, some valuable tips and answer your questions.

Jill Valavanis completed her graduate work at California State University, Long Beach where she earned her Master of Fine Arts in Integrated Three-Dimensional Media, utilizing skills developed in working with fiber, metal, and wood. In addition to making and teaching art, she is a grant writer for a local nonprofit visual arts center. She recently joined the staff at the Sonoma Community Center as their Fine Arts Manager.



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 be on the Programming Committee?

If so, please contact Lee Armstrong, images@vom.com, cell 707 738-5906, Judy Roberto be_artsy@hotmail.com, or anyone on the Programming Committee or Guild Board.

Call for Nominations for Guild Board of Directors

Do you share our common goal of promoting the art of puppetry in the Bay Area? If so, you might be interested in serving on the SFBAPG Board. If so, please contact the Chair of the Nominating Committee, Judy Roberto be_artsy@hotmail.com, 408 981-7898 before April 15th for more information.

Eligibility: Candidates must have been members of the SFBAPG for at least one year prior to the elections.

Term limits: Each Board member shall serve for three years. Each Board member shall be allowed to serve no more than two consecutive three-year terms. Each Board member must want to be an active volunteer, taking on such positions as President, V.P., Programming, Membership, Publicity & Social Media, Hospitality, etc.

Candidates need to provide a short bio and photo to the Nominating Committee, prior to April 25th, to be published in the May newsletter.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Your Nominating Committee

Waffles + Mochi Features 2 Cooking Puppets

Michelle Obama's new Netflix's show *Waffles + Mochi* encourages healthier eating habits. The series is based on the adventures of two puppets who have a dream to cook fresh food from around the world with the help of Obama, a magical shopping cart and celebrity guests. The 10-episode series makes its debut March 16 and is the latest project from Mrs. Obama and Barack Obama's production company, Higher Ground Productions.



The puppets working alongside Michelle were built by our friends at Swazzle (Swazzle.com) with a little support from our team at Images in Motion. Kamela Portuges created the 3D files for "Mochi" & the waffle elements of "Waffles," then 3D printed them. Kieron Robbins molded the 3D prints for

duplication, then cast a number of mochi balls and a stack of waffles in tinted pillow foam. These were flocked and shipped off to Swazzle. It was a quick project, but we're excited to be a part of this production.

Just to show that things don't always happen perfectly the first time around, here are some heroes and discards of Mochi.



A video Little Journey travels to festivals

A short puppetry video Little Journey was produced by a TV puppetry company Images in Motion Inc. (IIM)

<https://vimeo.com/481959575>

The project is a continuation of the stage work Shilo Kloko, which Nao Kobayashi a puppet maker started in San Diego in 2017 as an interdisciplinary puppet performance with two animators. This production was experimental, yet comical in style, and warmly supported by festivals and venues through the LA Guild and its community. Later, it evolved into a full-length theater show with local musicians, co-produced with Highways Performance Space in Santa Monica. The show received a scholarship and awards at the Hollywood Fringe Festival in 2018. Additional photos and a sample video of this work is at

<https://www.naopuppet.com/shilokloko.html>

Nao wrote and storyboarded the video, then built the puppets and sets, and puppeteered. For the IIM team, Kamela Portuges-Robbins was director and editor, Kieron Robbins-fabrication and camera, Bill Ferguson-lighting design, and Lee Armstrong-production coordinator and puppeteer.

An article in the Fall 2020 Puppetry Journal shares further stories about this project including material choices and budget, and artistic view behind.

<https://www.puppeteers.org/latest-issue>

Little Journey was presented at Forbidden Puppet Cabaret by Magical Moonshine Theatre in SF Bay Area, Adult Puppet Cabaret by Animal Cracker Conspiracy in San Diego, and January 2021 Guild Meeting. The video was also officially selected in Venice Shorts Film Awards, and received a certificate of Award of Excellence in Production



Design by Southern Shorts Awards, and will be screening at Festival of Animated Objects in Calgary Canada in March.

Shari Lewis By Ilene Kennedy (vice president)

Shari Lewis was an accomplished ventriloquist who was so good at what she did. She is remembered more as a puppeteer. The children she performed for often had no idea that she was the one speaking for the puppet Lamb Chop. Lewis was born Phyllis Hurwitz and grew up practicing skills as an all around entertainer. She danced, played piano and violin, performed magic tricks, juggled, and studied ventriloquism. Lewis hit the big time when she won first prize on the TV show



Arthur Godfrey's Talent Scouts in 1952. Lewis hosted several local TV programs. She and her puppet Lamb Chop appeared on The Captain Kangaroo Show in 1956, and she got her own network series in 1960, The Shari Lewis Show. Other puppets on the series included Hush Puppy, Charlie Horse, and Wing Ding, although none were more popular than Lamb Chop. The show ran until 1963, after which Lewis kept a full schedule appearing in both British and American TV shows and performing live, as an actress, puppeteer, and musician. Lewis died in 1998, and her daughter Mallory now performs with Lamb chop.

I have seen her perform in videos and she was great. You could really tell that she enjoyed talking for the animals that she was performing with.

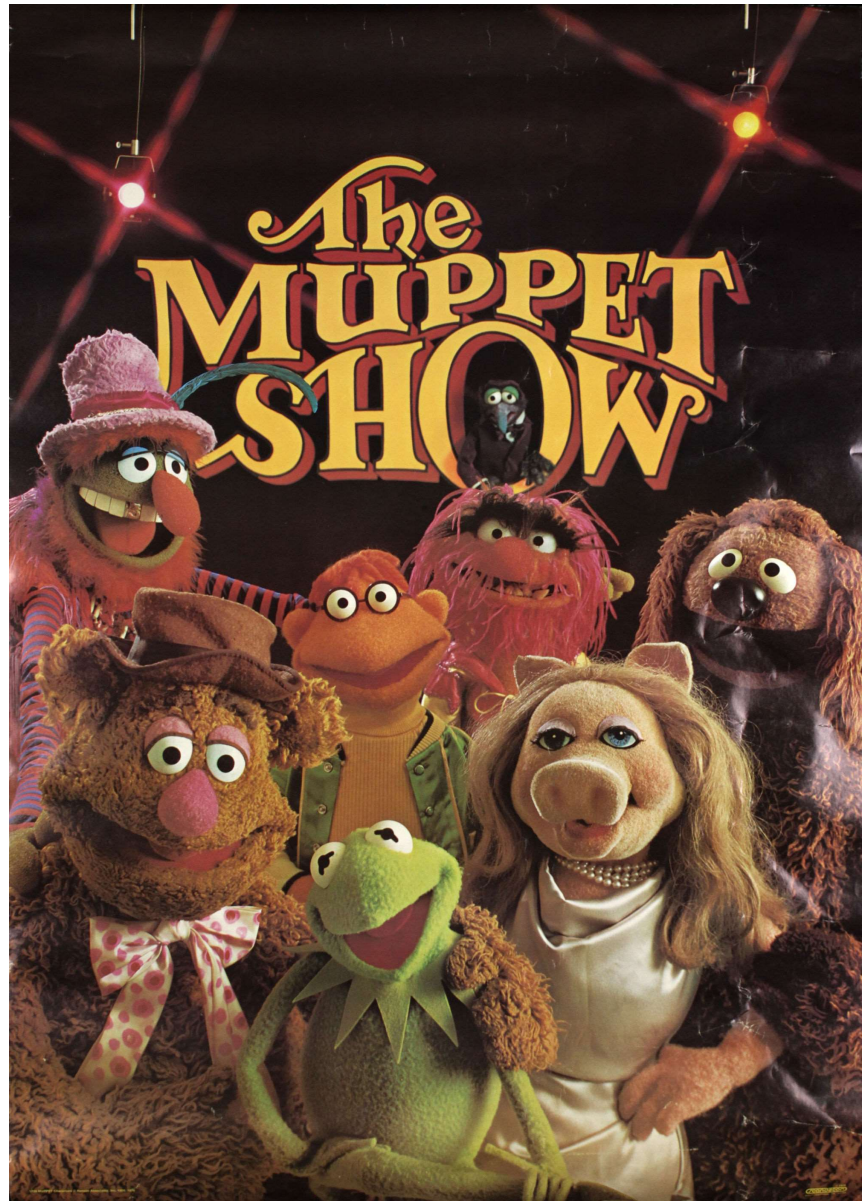
She really interacted really well with them. I still enjoy watching her Shows on DVD. She is really a great artist.

THE ORIGINAL MUPPET SHOWS ARE BEING REBROADCAST!

reported by Elisheva Hart, with big help from Dani S.

I was listening to KQED/National Public Radio last week and perked up when the anchor woman said that she was so very happy to see these shows again. For her it is a trip back to Before Times, when things were calmer and happy.

I did not catch how to find viewer information so I contacted a young friend who has much more knowledge about these things than I. She responded that her research yields they are only rebroadcast on Disney+ [Disney plus] and unfortunately this streaming service costs \$6.99 per month or \$69.99 per year.



Editor's Note: Disney Plus is running the original Muppet shows with the following disclaimer: "This program includes negative depictions and/or mistreatment of people or cultures. These stereotypes were wrong then and are wrong now. Rather than remove this content, we want to acknowledge its harmful impact, learn from it and spark conversation to create a more inclusive future together."

HMTC This Week: The master of puppets

Feb 12, 2021 reprinted from the Hanford Sentinel

Puppet making is an art. Puppets can be made in many ways and take many forms. In a recent virtual event that I attended, sponsored by the San Francisco Bay Area Puppetry Guild (SFBAPG), the array of puppets exhibited was phenomenal. I had to embark on making a puppet.

My first attempt was ambitious. I wanted a blinking dragon. Learning how to make the mechanism of blinking eyes in a puppet head was laborious. I got to the point that I just wanted to buy already made mechanical eyes. The best eyes I could find were robotic from Spain. That would be expensive, so I attempted to make my own. If a teenager on YouTube can do it, so can I.

With countless visits to the hardware store, and ordering parts online, I finally made eyes that blink. However, it blinked for several minutes and got stuck. I made a call to a puppeteer and he explained that making any puppet was basically trial and error. I continued working on the eyes hoping for it to work well. There was some success.

The next thing I had to do was make a foam head. I went to a local upholstery shop for scrap foam. I proceeded to form the head by cutting and gluing. Rubber cement has a tremendous smell and family in the house complained. I resorted to a glue gun. Not a good choice for me. I burned the skin on my fingers very badly. Bandages later, I was able to insert the blinking eyes in the foam head. I discovered that I made too large of a head, and it was tremendously heavy. So, I bought a Dremel and hollowed out the foam inside the head. It helped to make it lighter. I wrapped the head with faux fur to sew together. Well, it looked more like a dog and my arm hurt holding it up to maneuver the eyes. I sent a picture of it to my puppetry friend and he suggested I dismantle it



and try again. I decided to leave as is and call it an oversized dog puppet with lazy blinking eyes.

After brooding over not finishing my dragon puppet, I decided to start a new one. I am a papier-mâché and paper clay wiz. I decided that my next puppet dragon attempt will be made by papier-mâché. I know how to waterproof and make papier-mâché durable, so I had no fear with this project. To my delight I have finished the head, the claws, and the tail. The next step will be to paint, and then affix long fabric to it so it can wrap around my body. It will be a puppet that rests on my shoulders.

I am looking forward to finishing this project. I am also thrilled with the eyes. Gluing realistic glass eyes was a good choice.

Silvia Gonzalez Scherer is the Executive Artistic Director and co-founder of the Hanford Multicultural Theater Company. She is also a playwright and an actress.

Wanted – TV Puppeteers

HELP WANTED: San Francisco based entertainment company, <http://uzzelement.com> seeking puppeteers or actors for the filming of the first episode of a comedy web series. Comedy web series will be filmed in various restaurant settings.

The web series will star four puppets and one mascot. Seeking people with experience in puppeteering, stand up comedy, improvisation, voice impressions, etc. Acting background is not required. This is a volunteer situation until the show gets off the ground, but has potential to be a paying gig.

To inquire, please submit the following:

1. Name
 2. Occupation
 3. Why you responded to the post
 4. Special Skills
 5. Link to your Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, etc.
- customerservice@uzzelement.com

A big thank you to all of our contributors this month!

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