

	<p>The official newsletter of <b>San Francisco Bay Area Puppeteers' Guild</b> Looking for updates and missed information? <i>Check for it at <a href="http://SFBAPG.ORG">SFBAPG.ORG</a></i></p> <p><i>SFBAGP is a charter guild of the Puppeteers of America, Inc., a non-profit tax exempt organization</i></p>
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## August Guild Meeting at Children's Fairyland in Oakland

Sat., Aug 27 at Children's Fairyland, 699 Bellevue Avenue, Oakland, CA

Our 66th Annual Puppet Fair - 10:30-4:30 & Guild Meeting 5:00 - early evening

Puppet Fair is back again, and this time promises to be Jammed full of fun and performances! Join us for our annual Puppet Fair at Fairyland. This is an action packed day of puppet shows, a puppet exhibit and events, provided by Fairyland. The Guild volunteers with the puppet exhibit, puppet walkaround "meet & greet," the puppet craft table and more. Please sign up <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050e4baeab2aa7fc1-fairylands>

if you'd like to get involved! The schedule of puppet shows is below and features the popular Bob Baker Marionettes of Los Angeles. The evening is an opportunity for a social get-together and Guild meeting. Afterwards, there are lots of restaurants featuring different styles of food located on Grand Avenue, near Fairyland, for those who want to continue with the merriment.

Admission: Admission to Fairyland is free to Guild members. If your membership needs to be renewed, please do this before Aug 15th, so we can give a current list to Fairyland. At admissions, say that you're with the Puppet Guild and have come to help. However, if you are bringing friends that are not members of the Guild and are not helping, they must pay admission (unless they want to join that day). Guild members must be inside the gates by 4 pm.

Additional info on directions, parking, etc. is at <https://www.fairyland.org/visit-us/directions/>.

### **Schedule for Sat, August 27th:**

9:00: Setup of Puppet Display in Merry Meadow.

10:00am - 4:00pm: Exhibit is open to the public and the guild will be doing an arts and crafts project with the kids, while also walking around demonstrating their puppet skills.

10:30: The Bob Baker Marionettes Perform at the Aesop's Theater. Head puppeteer Alex Evans, will bring to life wonderfully, whimsical marionettes for your enjoyment. We are very proud to present the Bob Baker's Marionette Varieties

11:00: The Fairyland Storybook Puppet Theater will present: "Tam & Cam." A lovely Vietnamese "Cinderella" fairytale. Scenery by Warren Moten III with puppets created by Randal Metz, Will Lewis and Jesse Vail. First time ever production.

1:00: The Puppet Company, Randal Metz, will perform "The Three Dinosaurs Gruff" at the Emerald City Stage. A show 3 million years in the making.

2:00: The Bob Baker Marionettes Perform at the Aesop's Theater. Head puppeteer Alex Evans, will bring to life



wonderfully, whimsical marionettes for your enjoyment. We are very proud to present the Bob Baker's Marionette Varieties

2:30: William Lewis, of Dragonfly Puppets, will debut his new show "The Tinderbox." A new, classic retelling of an old legend. At the Emerald City Stage.

More information can be found online @ <https://www.fairyland.org/events-and-performances/schedule-of-events/>.

Volunteers: We'll need volunteers! Do you have a puppet and would like to greet kids as you walk around the park? Would you like to help at the puppet making table, monitor and chat about puppets at the puppet exhibit and other important volunteer positions? Sign up here to help: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050e4baeab2aa7fc1-fairylands>



## Puppets for the Puppet Exhibit at Fairyland

If you would like to display some of your puppet creations, contact Randal Metz at (510)569 - 3144. You MUST have your puppet at Fairyland no later than 10:00am on Sat.

5:00pm: Evening Guild Meeting: This will be held at the Aesop's Playhouse Theater. At 5:00pm we will travel as a group led by Randal from the Storybook Puppet Theater to the Aesop's Playhouse Theater. There will be a wedding being held on the park grounds that night, so we will have to be careful not to disturb the event. All guild members must be on Fairyland grounds by 4:00pm in order to attend the evening event.

After the short guild meeting, the Bob Baker Marionettes, Alex Evans and Winona Bechtle, will perform again for those that may have missed the earlier afternoon performances. After that, there will be a presentation on the career of Bob Baker, a talk on his work with Walt Disney and how the theater is revitalizing itself through work with outside civic organizations and performances. You might also get to work a marionette and learn some of Bob's choreography. There will also be copies of the new Bob Baker Book: Enchanted Strings! available through Alex and Winona. This is a good chance to buy a copy and have it signed by Alex and author/historian Randal Metz.

The Bob Baker Marionettes will also be performing and doing a lecture at the Walt Disney Family Museum on the evening of Sunday, August 28th For more information please contact the Walt Disney Family Museum.

Sunday afternoon at 2:30pm, Kevin Menegus of the Fratello Marionettes will be debuting his new show "Jack and the Beanstalk" at the Puppet Fair on the Emerald City Stage.

Hope to see you all at Puppet Fair!



Names of People from guild in the first Fairyland Puppet Fair photo - 1956: First row: Jenny Oznowicz, Frances Oznowicz, Mary McMahon, Pat Lavin, Dorothy Hayward, Jim Embree, Bev Philis, Helena Hayward. Second row: Lettie Connell, Marion Derby, Flemming Heegard, Jerry Juhl, Jim Chandler, Elva Aiken, (standing) Jack Aiken. Third row: Roberta Mack, Betty Mount, Ray Mount, Kay Ballan, Jan Ballan, Lee Donaghey, Bob Darling, Mike Oznowicz (standing). Fourth row: Paul Miller, John LaPatra, (rear) Hugh Seyfried, Lewis Mahlmann, Mark Benjiman.

Not pictured, yet there: Ralph Chesse', Tony Urbano, Nancy Cole, Frank Oz(nowicz). Photo: Fairyland Archives

## Mike Oznowicz and Frank Oz Family History and Puppets in San Francisco

By Joel Schechter

Puppets created by Mike Oznowicz, father of puppeteer and Muppeteer Frank Oz, are now on display in a small exhibit at San Francisco's Contemporary Jewish Museum (736 Mission

Street, San Francisco). The exhibit is about more than puppets, as two video recordings narrate Oznowicz family history. (I met Mike at a 1992 puppet festival in San Francisco, and he was once quite active in SF Bay Area puppet activities.) In a 30-minute film he recounts how his family escaped Nazi-occupied Europe.

It was a perilous journey, at a time when German U-boats were sinking Allied transports; but Oznowicz survived and resettled in Oakland.

Mike's son, Frank, later became a friend of Jim Henson and collaborated on the creation and performance of characters such as Miss Piggy, Cookie Monster, and Yoda. (A larger exhibit on Jim Henson featuring some of these



famous puppets has been on display in the same museum for a few months, and they can be photographed.) A second video recording in the Oz family display has Frank Oz talking about how he filmed his father's account of the escape from fascism, and how his (Frank's) puppets might never have been created had his parents not found a safe haven in America.

The puppets of Mike Oz are displayed in glass cases. They include a group of cabaret performers and a Hitler effigy. With heads carved from wood, dressed in simple clothing, these figures are small in size and a far cry from the brightly colored, larger Muppets displayed elsewhere in the building. A long caption and special attention are devoted to the Hitler puppet, which Mike Oz buried in a backyard before he fled his Antwerp home, for fear he would be arrested and punished if caught in transit with it. Years later he returned to the yard, dug up the puppet, and its aged face and torn uniform now can be seen in the museum tribute to a young man (Mike Oz) who escaped prosecution for puppet-making, among other accomplishments. The display offers no indication Oz ever performed with the Hitler puppet, but he planned to mock the dictator through its use, according to the accompanying caption. Ironically, a sign outside the display room warns visitors that the Hitler puppet may upset them. It



seems that the image of the tyrant still poses a small threat, or might provoke distress, despite the fact that his army was defeated long ago.

I am sorry the exhibit did not say or show more about Mike Oznowicz's association with American puppeteers in the San Francisco Bay Area. But the story of his flight from Hitler (the man and the buried puppet), and the resulting freedom his son enjoyed as a puppeteer, is a tale well-told.

## Member News and Updates

### From Magic Circus's Benny Buettner:

I am featured in the movie "How to Successfully Fail in Hollywood", portraying an acting agent. While auditioning talent for my roster I do puppetry and comedy magic.

Bebe had also a small part, playing an edgy comedian.

The indie feature length comedy was produced locally in the Bay Area.

It had its premiere last month in a theater in Santa Rosa and is showing again on August 20th in Occidental. See the trailer and ticket info:

<https://howtosuccessfullyfailinhollywood.wedid.it/campaigns/10033-how-to-successfully-fail-in-hollywood-film>

### Lee Armstrong of Images in Motion sent this report on her Puppetry Workshop in Sonoma

The puppet workshop at the Sonoma Community Center in July got off to an exciting start



with puppet building. Lee Armstrong and Nao Kobayashi taught an enthusiastic group of teachers, artists, media professionals and puppeteers.

Day 2 & 3 was stage performance. Our friends at Folkmanis donated a wonderful assortment of puppets which everyone used, along with puppets made in the 1st session. This ended with a fun impromptu show for middle and high school students attending summer camp at the center.

The 2 day TV workshop ended with taping original shorts with a broadcast quality camera and professional lighting.



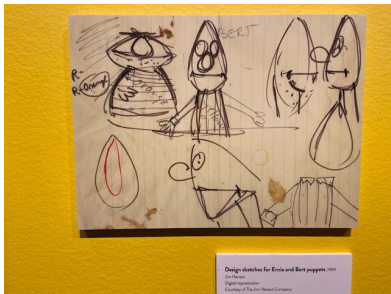
All 3 puppet workshops were filled with creative adults, many taking the entire week to take all 3. The Sonoma Community Center is enthusiastic about more puppet events.

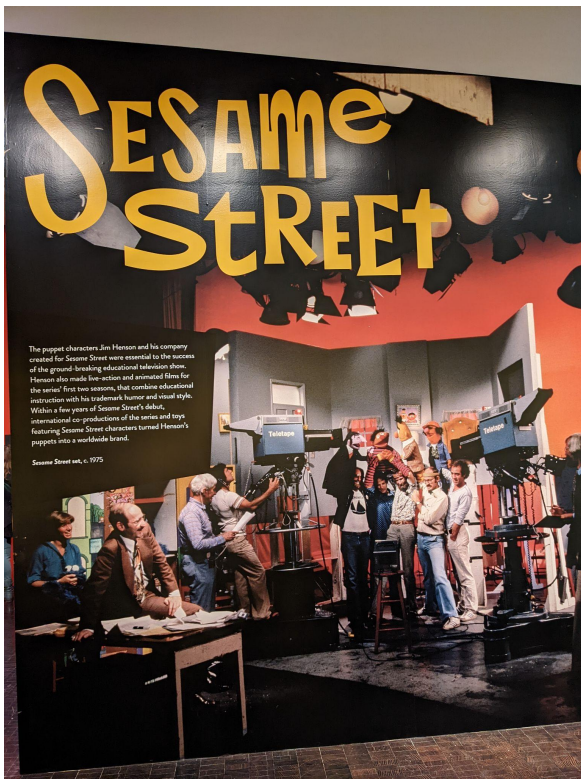


## Guild Event: July 24 at the Henson exhibit in SF

As promised in the last newsletter, the guild visited the Contemporary Jewish Museum's Jim Henson/Muppet exhibit on July 24. Guild members from all over joined a big, happy community of Muppet fans at what turned out to be an excellent exhibit, with everything from famous puppets in person (so to speak) to sketches, scripts, behind the scene videos and so much more. Visitors were invited to add facial features to an un-faced muppet, selecting from hair, eyes, noses, etc., to try out manipulating puppets on camera using a monitor to see what you are doing and, of course, to pose with the puppets. The exhibit followed the creative timeline of Henson's work, even including some non-puppet creative projects. One promised highlight was to be the viewing of the Henson film, *Labyrinth*, with Q&A by long time Muppet performer Karen Prell. Unfortunately, due to technical difficulties, the film could not be shown. Fortunately, Karen generously shared great behind the scenes stories and answered questions, probably for longer than the film would have run. I left thinking I could watch the movie at another time but wouldn't have had another chance to hear all those stories. Please enjoy a few photos of the event, below (from Lee Armstrong and the Nelsons). How many guild members can you find?







## Guild Members Join the Vallejo Giant Puppets for July 4 Parade

Guild members joined with community volunteers to parade giant puppets through the streets of Vallejo on July 4. This was the first parade in 3 years due to the pandemic and the mood was joyous as music and laughter and cheers filled the air.

Photos from the Giant Puppets on July 4. Again, how many guild members can you find?



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