



The official newsletter of  
**San Francisco Bay Area Puppeteers' Guild**  
Looking for updates and missed information?  
Check for it at *SFBAPG.ORG*

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



## Hello Guild Members and Newsletter Readers,

I have an ask of you. We want to keep our guild healthy, growing, and providing benefits to all our members. For this we need your help. While we do ask for dues annually, we are a volunteer organization, and our success is driven by our membership participation. We can't do this without you.

I want to take the time to thank all of you who write articles for our newsletter; edit our newsletter; maintain and support our library; provide scholarships to our members; plan and execute our programming; find, provide and share puppet events in the area; and participate and lead our board and committees. It makes me happy to see people sign up to help at Fairyland to ensure we can share information about the guild, share activities with fairyland visitors, and provide support at Fairyland so we can continue to have events there.

We need more help though. Are you familiar with bookkeeping and interested in learning about assisting our treasurer? Can you help contact members and help with our elections on the nominating committee? Do you enjoy meeting and greeting new people and help with hospitality and membership? Do you have a programming idea, or workshop you'd like to help facilitate or lead by attending a programming meeting? Are you interested in communication and publicity? We need your help. If you'd like to find out more and participate, please contact any of our board members or myself.

We need your help to keep our guild healthy and fun. You can contact us at [info@sfbapg.org](mailto:info@sfbapg.org)

Thank you,  
John Arnold  
President

# Photo Highlights of the Left Coast Puppet Love Festival

These photos are only a few of the wonderful events featured at the Left Coast Puppet Festival. The SFBAPG was well represented.



For performances...

**Art Grueneberger of Puppet Art Theater Co.** performed "THE 3 LITTLE PIGS" where hilarity and mayhem abound as the Pigs try to out-smart the Big Bad Wolf. Puppet Art Theater Co. used digital sets and simple animations in combination with hand and rod puppets to create a unique adaptation of the classic tale "The Three Little Pigs".



**Michael and Valerie Nelson** shared "Canterbury Tales: A Miller's Tale." The play proceeds on several levels, with the actors/musicians taking the roles played by both Chaucer and the Innkeeper who encourage the tales, the hand puppets playing the roles of the story tellers, and the beautiful paper scenes and figures telling the

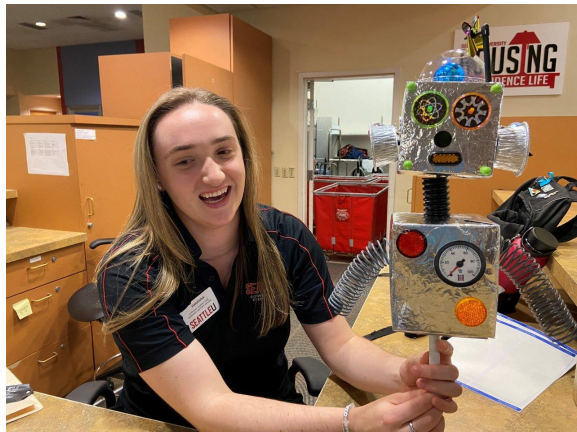
tales themselves.

**Michael and Valerie Nelson** were also featured in "Meet the Artist" moderated by Carole D'Agostino (Center for Puppetry Arts) where they shared stories and insights from their successful forty+ years as the creative force behind their successful Magical Moonshine and Little Blue Moon Theaters.





For workshops, *Shadow Mechanisms Workshop with Wendy Morton*, *Puppet Magic 1 & 2 by Lee Armstrong*, *Images in Motion Inc.*, and *Ready, Set, GO! Running a Prosperous Entertainment Business with Art Grueneberger* shared info with puppetry enthusiasts.



Board member **Beth Choy** made the robot puppet in the photo – after taking the workshop “Recycled Robots: Making Puppets in Libraries and Classrooms” then gifted it to a delighted Seattle U receptionist. She also participated in the Tabletop Puppet-Athon and her trio won the prestigious Gold Medal for their feats of puppetry prowess.

**Mary Nagler**, guild member (and also President of the Puppetry Guild of Portland) was the Festival Artistic Director and worked to provide an exceptional experience for all. In her photo, she is presenting the PofA Jim Henson Award for Puppetry Innovation to Cherie Panek for her PDX Puppet Collective - a group of Puppeteers that meet to play and practice with their skills in puppetry.



Other performances in this photo highlights include...



**"PUSS in BOOTS"** by [Oregon Shadow Theatre](#) which transforms a familiar tale into a Cajun extravaganza using of shadow puppetry with live voices. The Zydeco and Caribbean music give spicy flavor to this production, which reaches a rousing conclusion in a Mardi Gras festival replete with colorful and fantastic



costumes. Deb Chase manipulated the delightful shadow puppets to the sounds of Mick Doherty's "one man band" of accordion, percussion, kazoo, whistles and sound effects.



**"She Thinks She's Queen Elizabeth But She's Dirty Gerts To Me"** by Sarah Frechette's [Puppetkabob](#). A groovy paper doll & pop-up blend of historical fiction, 60s pop culture, and colorful confetti at this one-of-a-kind

show for families.

**"Jawbone Puppet Theater's Sad, Funny, Beautiful Wondershow!"** - Adam Ende, founder and janitor of Jawbone Puppet Theater. [Jawbone Puppet Theatre](#) did variety of sketches including a folk tale about cooperation, as seen in the animal mask photo.



The [PDX Puppet Collective](#) and the Puppetry Guild of Portland "The World's Greatest Table Top Puppet-Athlon" (*Editor's note: The Puppetathlon was fantastic and our guild should definitely do it! Definitely!*)

**Puppet Festivals** are a great way to celebrate the art of puppetry and share with others. Don't miss the University of Maryland

for the 2023 National Puppetry Festival and academic symposium. Puppeteers, enthusiasts, educators, and friends will all be gathering to celebrate the puppetry arts and experience our first festival together in four years. The festival will focus on the theme of generations, honoring those that went before, celebrating those who are with us now, and encouraging those to come. All are welcome to attend.

<https://www.puppeteers.org/national-puppetry-festival>

## UNIMA-USA Launches Zoom Series

*Editor's note: UNIMA-USA is the U.S. branch of UNIMA, the international organization of puppetry. It's a great way to connect with puppeteers around the world.*



UNIMA-USA is experimenting with some Zoom events once a quarter. In addition to the World Puppetry Day event (March 21 or thereabouts), there was a recent event on design (Brad Clark of Bowling Green State University's design staff who presented on his 2022 production of Baron Munchausen (<https://vimeo.com/679328998/7d43cf0984>) which reflected 19 century wing and drop scenery in a "toy theatre" inspired set with wooden (Czech style) marionettes. The production went under the sea and to other planets and is well worth taking a look at. Steven Widerman, now Chicago based, shared information on stereoscopic puppetry and how to get involved whetting appetites to try the technique and discussing the similarities and differences from VR and Elaine Williams of Bucknell University talked about her designs for Center for Puppetry Arts, including among others the Bobby Box "Diary of Anne Frank" dollhouse inspired show. Future zooms are planned! Make sure you learn about them (one a quarter for starters)—which will certainly happen if you are an UNIMA-USA member (check quick to see what special deals on membership UNIMA-USA has going). UNIMA-USA is in the process of launching a new online journal in addition to its print publication (*Puppetry International*) and remember that it is a portal to UNIMA-International which has important festivals and events through its commissions that you may want to know about. Put the next World Puppetry Festival (Korea, 2025) on your calendar now to see the whole world of puppetry in one place in a beautiful site (Chuecheon, Korea with satellite events in Seoul and Pusan).

**Kathy Foley**

## Under The Puppet

New episode of Under The Puppet is here and my guest is Kurt Hunter. Hear how





seeing a Tony Urbano show at an early age inspired a love for puppetry and marionettes in Kurt that has carried through to today. Kurt creates and performs wildly inventive marionette shows including Penguin In My Pocket and Sock Puppet Serenade. You can hear the episode wherever you get podcasts or over at [underthepuppet.com](http://underthepuppet.com)

Grant Baciocco, Puppeteer. Creator, [grant@throwingtoasters.com](mailto:grant@throwingtoasters.com), MrGrant.com

## JIM HENSON'S PUPPETS ON DISPLAY LONG AGO

### Elisheva Hart

The amazing exhibit of Jim Henson's Puppets, currently on display at the SF Contemporary Jewish Museum, is not the first time his work has been displayed in SF.

Many years ago, in the late 1980's or early 1990's a much smaller display was held in Golden Gate Park.

David, my puppetry musician, and I happily jumped off the N. Judo public transportation and eagerly rushed into the building where Jim's display was going full force. Circling the walls of the display room were several nooks complete with loud videos of "Sesame Street" and enchanted young children plus their parents! They totally ignored the actual puppets. (Perhaps the parents did not want to spoil the illusion of aliveness for the children? OMG, how will we have future puppeteers if the children can't understand puppets?)

BUT WHERE WERE PUPPETEERS? THIS IS A TERRIFIC OPPORTUNITY FOR US!

A-HAH. We were ignoring totally the videos and families. We Looked like we were playing "twister", craning our necks and bodies to catch a glimpse of the interior of the puppets..to no avail. And I am proud of us puppeteers because we did respect the "Do Not Touch" signs which really were very tempting to ignore.

It was a very fun outing regardless and quite inspirational.



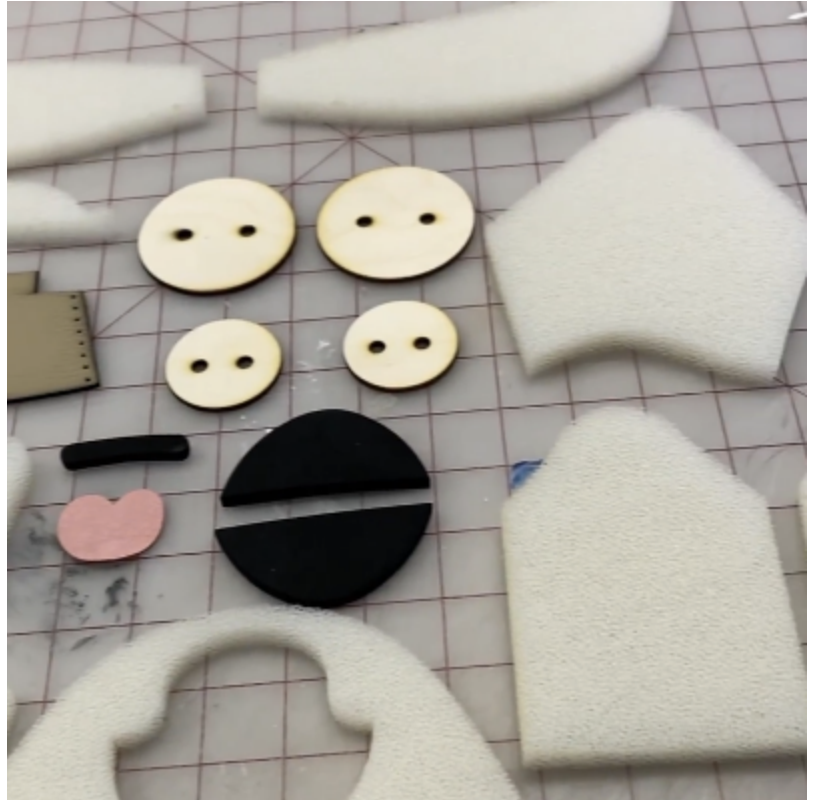
## Laser Cut Puppet Parts?

You may have seen on Sean and Patrick Johnson's social media (@SwazzlePuppetStudio) that they are now using a laser cutter as part of their puppet building process. This new powerful tool allows them to create puppet patterns and puppet pieces with speed and precision. They have been able to cut a variety of materials including wood, foam, leather, felt and more.

Sean and Patrick are now offering their laser cutter services to all Guild members!

If you have a project, large or small, that requires precision cutting, please visit

<https://www.swazzle.com/laser-cutter> fill out the form, and they'll get back to you with a quote.



What will you create?

## Children's Fairyland Day of Puppetry

By Moddy Himmel

Bright and early on Saturday, August 26th, I loaded up my car with 50 foam caterpillars, 75 printed coloring pages, crayons, markers, pencils and chalk pastels for the craft table at Fairyland's 65th annual Puppet Fair weekend.

With the craft kit ready, all that was left to grab was my lunch bag, my puppet, Alexa, and a quick pic for Instagram







The drive was pleasant and easy and soon I was wheeling my craft cart with my child-sized puppet-passenger under the heel of the old woman's shoe.

Upon entering I looked around wondering which way to go when I spotted this beauty:

Prominently displayed was a large witch puppet built by Guild president John Arnold, so I knew I was in the right place. Fellow Guild member,



Gregory Hayes along with John Arnold and his

son had arrived before me and had set up our tables and several puppets, four of which were brought and built by Sean and Patrick Johnson of Swazzle Puppet Studios.



Together we set about covering the tables with plastic table cloths and draping colorful felt flag bunting.

No sooner had we set down the tray of chalk pastels than we had our first little crafters approach the table.





Carefully deciding between a green or a white body caterpillar, our little crafters quickly set off designing and creating with uninhibited enthusiasm.

While elsewhere in the park the Bob Baker marionette theater performed, we had the storybook theater within eyesight. I was able to catch only snippets of the puppet shows being performed there, as our table became a hive of activity! A tangle of little arms reaching for colors and half a dozen foam caterpillars crawling around. We were abuzz with proud little voices proclaiming “Mine’s gonna be purple” or “blue” or “pink with yellow polka dots!” We offered helpful tips on how best to get the color on the caterpillar, or pointing out pictures of real caterpillars from our two reference books with parents jumping in to help the youngest among us and join the fun.



Guild secretary, Beth Choy joined us soon after and interacted with guests using three adorable puppets she built herself!

The caterpillars were such a hit that there were no more left by lunch time!

Thankfully we still had coloring pages, so the afternoon was spent pleasantly chatting as children colored our Guild mascot, Willy the Jester, holding up a Fairyland Magic Key.

At 4pm we packed up the crayons and markers and chalk, took down the bunting, folded the table, breathed a happy sigh and made our way to Aesop’s Playhouse where the Guild got to enjoy a private show by Bob Baker Marionette Theater.



Puppet Fair at  
Children’s Fairyland



Executive Director and head puppeteer, Alex Evans, along with Winona Bechtle, Director of Development & Partnership, had brought along several puppets from the theater's collection including some of the licensed marionettes created for Disneyland by Bob Baker.

We were given background information on each puppet's history with additional anecdotes from Randal Metz who was in the audience as well. We even got to test the puppets out ourselves! Finally, we had the opportunity to purchase the book "Enchanted Strings" written by Randal Metz and have it signed by Randal himself.



While these foam caterpillars will never become butterflies, our hope is

that they will form a chrysalis in the child's imagination. It was a beautiful day of puppetry tying past generations of puppeteers to future ones. Only time will tell just what those little caterpillars will become.



## September Guild Library News



The Guild library is a treasure trove of puppetry information. You can request books on any puppet topic by emailing [library@sfbapq.org](mailto:library@sfbapq.org), and they will be brought to the next meeting.

The Stan Winston School is now available through the Guild Library. Our Guild purchased a one-year subscription to the Stan Winston School of Character Arts. If you aren't familiar with this site, it's the world's premier online destination for learning the art and technology of character creation from Hollywood's leading artists and technical wizards. It has a puppet section with notable builders and performers. To get familiar with the puppet tutorials

available, go to <https://www.stanwinstonschool.com/>. Then click on the search feature (magnifying glass on the upper right) and type in "puppets." However, you can also visit videos on creature fabrication, stop motion armatures, wiggling, making eyeballs and all sorts of interesting crafts!

Each Guild member can request use of this subscription for up to 2 weeks. This access time may change, depending on usage. Contact the Guild librarian, Lee Armstrong at [library@sfbapq.org](mailto:library@sfbapq.org), and she will provide you with the password, on a first come, first served basis. If the subscription is checked out, you'll go on the waitlist for the next available check out. However, right now, this subscription is available. Don't delay, contact Lee today!

If you'd like to get started immediately with these amazing tutorials and the Guild subscription is already checked out, you can sign up at <https://www.stanwinstonschool.com/> for a free 7-day trial. 100's of courses available. Try out...

"Styrofoam Sculpting" Learn to create props with expanded polystyrene aka "styrofoam" with master FX artist Tim Martin (Godzilla: King of the Monsters, Captain Marvel, The Predator). If you're looking for the perfect material to make low-cost and lightweight props for your films, haunts, or cosplay creations, it's hard to beat styrofoam.

Check out Pathways, <https://www.stanwinstonschool.com/pathways>, with groups of courses: Basic Design, Basic Painting, Molding and Casting, Mechanical and Animatronics, Filmmaking, Fabrication Basics, etc. These courses open new doors and possibilities!

## Images in Motion End of Summer Update

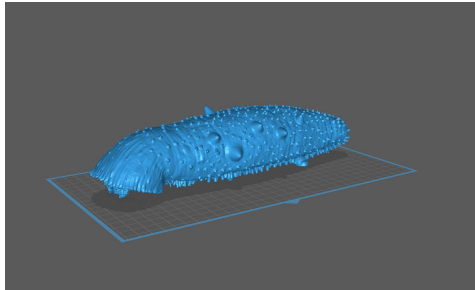
This summer has been busy at the video studio and workshop! We had a very fun studio shoot





with Joe and Ronna Caterpillar Puppets, Benicia. They provided the puppets and content, and we provided the studio, crew, and editing. More on this in the next newsletter.

Nao Kobayashi is finishing up a new puppet for “Stinky’s Tales” by Doug and Annie Zesiger, <https://www.stinkytales.com>.



Many puppet building skills are applicable to fabricating models. The Monterey Bay Aquarium’s Education Dept. project of building sea creature models for their school program is into its final stage of prototyping. The photos show a 3D file of the warty sea cucumber, which the Aquarium provides. Kieron Robbins prints the 3D file in our Peopoly 3D printer, <https://peopoly.net/products/phenom>, which uses UV light to cure the resin into a hard sculpt with excellent detail. The sea cucumber is then fabricated

into a plastic sea creature where it’s body parts can be attached and detached by students, as they learn how sea creatures have adapted to protect themselves. Kieron determines the attachment parts, then it’s molded in parts, then cast in a rubberlike plastic and realistically painted to capture its natural beauty.

Our 3D division is expanding. We added a 3D scanner, the Einscan SP, <https://www.einscan.com/desktop-3d-scanners/einscan-sp/> and picked up two new animation companies that want 3D scans, as well as our mold, cast & 3D print services.

Lee Armstrong had a great time teaching puppetry, first a series at the Sonoma Community Center in July and then the Seattle Puppetry Festival in August. Both workshops used puppets provided by our friends at Folkmanis Puppets. Lee returns to



UC Santa Cruz in the Fall to teach “Jim Henson and the Art of the Muppets” to 250 students. She’s excited to add the new “Fraggle Rock: Back to the Rock” (on Apple +) to her course. If you haven’t checked it out yet, it’s a vibrant and exciting continuation of the original “Fraggle Rock.” As the LA Times states, “Themes include sustainability, advertising, industrial pollution and letting nature do what nature does... Hilarious and profound, the new ‘Fraggle Rock’ is a thing of beauty.”

These are important messages for our times.



Remember to send future newsletter articles to [newsletter@sfbapg.org](mailto:newsletter@sfbapg.org)