



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)

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

## Dec. Guild Meeting & Pam Severns' Writing Puppetry Acts for Puppet Slams

*Editor's note: while this workshop states that it is for puppetry slams, it is my opinion that the skills Pam will be sharing are adaptable to many kinds of puppetry writing and will be of use for a variety of puppet performance creations. This is an opportunity not to be missed!*

Dec 5<sup>th</sup> 7-8:30ish pm on Zoom

Join the fun in this one-hour workshop by LA-based Pam Severns. This workshop will be brimming over with ideas to help you devise, structure, and create characters for puppetry acts for puppet slams. We will discuss the types of acts we often see in puppetry and why they work. Students will generate a few of their own ideas to choose from and will create an outline for a new puppet act. All styles of puppetry and puppeteering skills are welcome.



### Guild Board and Officers

#### President

John Arnold,  
[president@sfbapg.org](mailto:president@sfbapg.org)

#### Vice President

Camilla Henneman  
[camhenneman@gmail.com](mailto:camhenneman@gmail.com)

#### Secretary

Barbara Grillo  
[bgrillo@contracosta.edu](mailto:bgrillo@contracosta.edu)

#### Treasurer

Valerie Nelson  
[mail@magicalmoonshine.org](mailto:mail@magicalmoonshine.org)

#### Membership

Gabrielle Greenfield  
[membership@sfbapg.org](mailto:membership@sfbapg.org)

#### Webmaster

Marisol Himmel  
[webmaster@sfbapg.org](mailto:webmaster@sfbapg.org)

#### Programming

Nao Kobayashi,  
[programming@sfbapg.org](mailto:programming@sfbapg.org)

Judy Roberto  
[be\\_artsy@hotmail.com](mailto:be_artsy@hotmail.com)

Ilene Kennedy  
[hope922000@yahoo.com](mailto:hope922000@yahoo.com)

#### Newsletter

Michael Nelson  
[newsletter@sfbapg.org](mailto:newsletter@sfbapg.org)

#### Librarian

Lee Armstrong  
[library@sfbapg.org](mailto:library@sfbapg.org)

**Note:** A Puppet Slam is an evening of curated

short-form puppetry acts intended for adult audiences. The Puppet Slam Network fosters growth and diversity in puppetry through grant opportunities and community building.

Nice things people have said:

*"She has the physical expressiveness and luminosity of the great Carol Burnett."*

- The Puppetry Journal

"...renowned for her unorthodox take on classic puppetry"

- The LA Times

**Pam Severns** is a comedian and performer who has appeared on the stages of the Jim Henson Company stage in Hollywood, Coachella, and LA's most exclusive variety show, Brookledge Follies. She has also worked on TV projects

with IFC, Amazon, MTV, NBC, and PBS. Pam is a recipient of a 2019 Jim Henson Foundation grant for her solo comedy show, Moving Pictures. Her film Bunny Love, which won Best Film at the 2019 National Puppetry Festival, is available on Amazon Prime and was made possible by a 2018 filmmaking commission from Heather Henson's Handmade Puppet Dreams. During the pandemic Pam managed the NYC-based Puppet Slam Network for Heather Henson, which funds puppetry artists all over North America.



There will be a brief Guild meeting to share information and puppet announcements.

## New Books & How-to-Do Videos by Puppet & Special Effects Artists Free at Guild Library

Want to be the first to check out our new 50 Hand Puppet Techniques: Hidden Secrets and

Tricks Revealed by Chad Williams or Foam Patterning and Construction Techniques: Turning 2D Designs into 3D Shapes by Mary





McClung? The Guild Library is a treasure trove of puppetry information. You can request these new books or books on any puppet topic by emailing Guild Library, Lee Armstrong at library@sfbapg.org and she'll bring them to the Annual Holiday Party, happening soon in 2023.

The Stan Winston videos are available now! Check out their Pathways, <https://www.stanwinstonschool.com/pathways>,



There are 10 courses (33 hours) in their Puppet

Making Basics



pathway which is perfect for novice puppet builders or experience puppeteers looking for new ideas. Explore these recommended courses to pick up an assortment of fundamental building skills with the world's leading puppet makers. Using budget-friendly foam, fabric, and even plastic bags, you'll learn how to build hand & rod puppets, inflatable puppets, stop-motion puppets, basic puppet mechanisms, and more.

Other groups of courses include Basic Design, Basic Painting, Molding and Casting, Mechanical and Animatronics, Filmmaking, Fabrication Basics, etc. These courses open new doors and possibilities!



If you'd like to see this subscription continue next year, now is the time to show it by checking this out. Contact Lee at library@sfbapg.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. Each Guild member can request use of this subscription for up to 2 weeks, but if no one is on the waitlist, you can access it until there's a request. (This access time may change, depending on usage.) Have you checked it out once but would like too again. If

there's no waitlist, you can use it a second time.

## New episode of Under The Puppet

New episode of Under The Puppet arrives today and it'll be of particular note to any puppeteer who's wanted to produce their own show. My guest is Danny Joe Labrecque the creator, puppeteer and host of Danny Joe's Treehouse. A show that invites families to come out and play with big thoughts, ideas, and feelings. I talk to Danny about the development of Danny Joe's Treehouse and how he has been able to produce three seasons of the show completely on his own. Download the new episode today, wherever you get your podcasts or listen at [underthepuppet.com](http://underthepuppet.com) <<http://underthepuppet.com/>>





# REVIEW OF NEW PUPPET BOOK , "ZHANG HENG AND THE INCREDIBLE EARTHQUAKE DETECTOR"

authored by Randel McGee. Article by Elisheva Hart

While wandering recently through the children's wing of the Petaluma Library I once again almost walked right into the display of new books. Why? There was an author's name on a beautiful new book written by a puppeteer friend, Randel McGee.

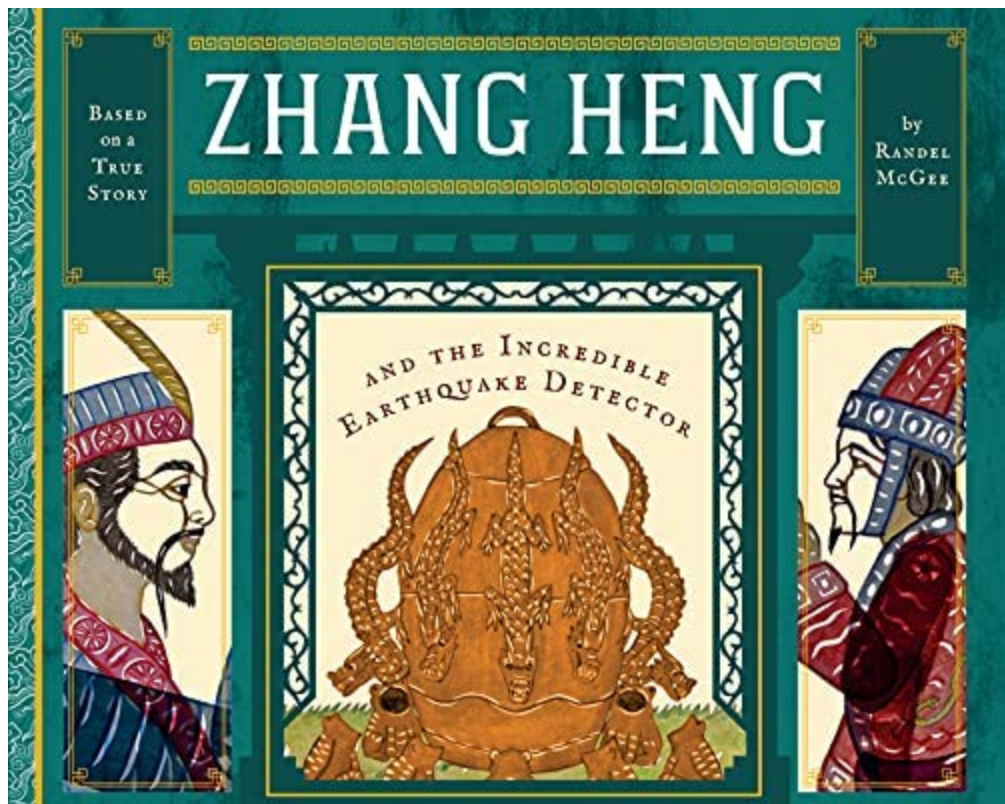
Each page is a view of the story presented as a beautiful d Chinese Shadow Theatre (plus narration of course.) The story is real history in China of a brilliant man who lived between 78 BC and

139 AD. "When thousands of people die in China's earthquake, Emperor Shun Di does not know what to do as it takes days for a city to communicate the news to Him, the Emperor. He

assigns his wisest advisor: ZHANZ HENG to create a device that will tell the Emperor and his court where [and when] an earthquake takes place."

The Emperor needed to send aid to these disasters ASAP. Zhang tries many things to figure this out. Of

course the other men of the court, being much less gifted, became exceedingly jealous of Zhang and tried to wreck his inventions, etc.



Who will succeed? Will anyone???? "Check it out," Dude. [HA HA]

Our library has 2 copies of this book which are constantly checked out to children who seem to want something more "advanced" than fairy tales. Possibly a mechanical view of the world?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR. Randel McGee has been playing with paper and scissors for as long as he can remember. As soon as he could get a library card, he found how-to books there. He tried nearly all the paper craft ideas he found in these books...then used them to launch his own ideas.

After graduating from college with a degree in Children's Theater/specializing in puppetry, he taught himself ventriloquism and started performing at libraries and schools with a friendly dragon puppet named "Groak" Unlike most vent figures of that time "Groak" did not behave rudely to Randel.

Randel has written and illustrated many paper craft seasonal books for children, and ALWAYS INCLUDES AT LEAST ONE PUPPET PROJECT IN EACH BOOK!

Randel also studied the technique of Hans Christian Andersen who made cut-paper pictures of stories as he told them. Randel has taken many tours of the world featuring his amazing techniques. He has been a regional director for Puppeteers of America among other "official" things, and lives in California.

And is a really nice guy.



Kennedy Puppets  
send holiday  
greetings!

# Turning your non-holiday show into a holiday show

Michael Nelson

Professional puppeteers often find they get more performance gigs during holidays and many times clients are interested in having a holiday themed show. You may decide that the interest is great enough that you want to create a special holiday show, and that's great. But many puppeteers have chosen to take an existing show and convert it to a holiday show with a few holiday additions.

Here are a couple of examples from shows that we have done that might spark some ideas for you.

**The Three Little Pigs-** For our Bohemian marionette 3 pigs show we made a polar bear Santa that we add to the show during the holidays, to perform **Santa Bear and the Three Pigs**. The performance is almost exactly the same as normal except that each time a house is blown down, Santa Bear walks through the ruined aftermath carrying his toy sack, and comments, "I thought there was a pig living somewhere around here." That's it. Holiday show!

The Santa Bear is a simpler puppet because all it has to do for its cameos is walk across the stage, so a quick build.

**Puppylocks and the Three Bears-** For this Goldilocks adaptation, all we do is put flat paper holiday decorations in the three bears

house. There are three stockings that hang by the fire (with double stick tape) and a wreath and garland. In some holiday performances a task that puppeteers can have is to introduce the visiting Santa after the show, so we have the Santa Bear come out and say something





like, “I am the Santa for the animals but I think YOUR (human) Santa is somewhere around here...” That’s it. Another holiday show.

Of course there are some shows where this kind of simple adaptation doesn’t make sense, but if you can pull it off, you have an on again/off again holiday show that wasn’t too much work or commitment to create.

*The Christmas Nativity story has been presented as a puppet play for generations. Some toy theatre examples below.*

