



The official newsletter of
San Francisco Bay Area Puppeteers' Guild
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SFBAGP is a charter guild of the Puppeteers of America, Inc., a non-profit tax exempt organization



Kamela Portuges-Robbins Celebration of Life

March 18 2023, 2-5 pm

Sonoma Woman's Club, 574 1st St E, Sonoma

Family and friends of Kamela hope you can join us in a celebration of her life on Saturday, March 18. Doors open at 2 and the program, starting at 2:30 will include her life video, songs, stories, short bag stage puppet show by Michael Nelson of Magical Moonshine Theater, and an exhibit of her work. Light refreshments and beverages.

You can RSVP at <http://evite.me/dRDArkqeXn> or just call, text (707 738-5906 cell) or email Lee Armstrong back at images@vom.com. However, a RSVP isn't necessary to attend (it's

Guild Board and Officers

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John Arnold,
president@sfbapg.org

Vice President

Camilla Henneman
vp@sfbapg.org

Secretary

CE Choy
secretary@sfbapg.org

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Valerie Nelson
treasurer@sfbapg.org

Membership

Nao Kobayashi
membership@sfbapg.org

Programming

Marisol Himmel
programming@sfbapg.org

Glynn "Tree" Bartlett
gbartlett@sfbapg.org

Judy Roberto
jroberto@sfbapg.org

Ilene Kennedy
ikennedy@sfbapg.org

Newsletter

Michael Nelson
newsletter@sfbapg.org

Librarian

Lee Armstrong
library@sfbapg.org

just to give us an indication of how many chairs, etc. we might need). If you'd like to share a story about Kamela, or bring an easy to serve desert (cookies, squares, cake) just let Lee know.

Please note that there's only street parking for the Woman's Club building.

From Our Members

Paul Lewis, puppeteer, blog interview



This month at underthepuppet.com

Paul Lewis is a puppeteer who was building puppets and molding creatures at an early age. A trained opera singer and accomplished actor, Paul's puppetry credit include Bobby the Gopher Boy on the hit Netflix series Sweet Tooth and the menacing M3gan, the killer robot from the hit 2022 science fiction horror film. I talk to Paul Lewis about his puppetry career on this first episode of season 7 of Under The Puppet.

Santa Cruz Tiny House Theater is forming an adult puppetry group

Hello fellow puppeteers! Tiny House Theater is forming an adult puppetry group and our first project will be a magical Summer Solstice "Story Forest Walk." Theater guests will enter with a guide and walk along a "path" featuring puppetry vignettes created by our group members, all on the theme of Summer!

Our first meeting for planning and discussion is March 5, 2023 at 10am. Future meeting schedule for crafting, practicing and the event TBD on March 5.

Join us or pass this along to others who want to be part of this fun event. Details on Tiny House Theater Events page

<https://www.tinyhousetheater.com/events>

Tiny House Theater is located at 980 17th Avenue, Building 3. Across street from Simpkins Swim Center. Enter driveway by fire station. Drive all the way back past white canopy. Turn left. Building 3 and Tiny House Theater is straight ahead!



Questions? Contact Madrone D'Ardenne at 831-535-8838, tinyhousetheater@gmail.com

Tiny House Theater-- Nature Inspired Puppetry and Storytelling Arts

tinyhousetheater.com

831-535-8838-- text first :)

Guild Member Mark Segal offers a tip!

Don't know if this is german, BUT I have found that writing (in a journal) has been extremely helpful to me creatively and emotionally :) during these past 3 years of change of circumstances.

I developed a kind of an idea mining method...write/draw -review - index and since I became tired of adapting the books I was using I made one that met my needs and published it on Amazon.

So here is the link for that journal in case it is something that can be put into the newsletter. <https://a.co/d/eG0NAsV>

Fun New Puppet Video-check it out!

I made a music video with puppets recently!

<https://youtu.be/-uPsYA35qfQ>

Paul Oliphant

Mr. Elephant

Exceptional Shows happening right now

From the Chronicle Date Book: **Bay Area theater supergroup unites playwright, composer and shadow puppeteer**

<https://datebook.sfchronicle.com/theater/sojourner-zy-bay-area-theater-supergroup-17770426>

The play is co-produced by Shadowlight Productions, New Performance Traditions/Paul Dresher Ensemble, and the Presidio Theatre...



<https://www.presidiotheatre.org/show/shadowlight-productions-paul-dresher-ensemble/>

Editor's Note: Your editor (Michael) and Valerie Nelson will be attending the last show of the run this Sunday, if any guild members want to join us. See you there!

Canadian puppet legend Ronnie Burkett performing at Stanford-Rare opportunity to see him.



https://events.stanford.edu/event/little_willy_ronnie_burkett

Event Details:

The works of Canadian puppeteer Ronnie Burkett are well-known for their elaborate design and outrageous hilarity. Burkett began touring his puppet shows around Alberta at the age of 14 and has been on the road, honing his craft, ever since. Burkett's Daisy Theatre Players return to the Bing Studio with his latest production, an interpretation of Shakespeare's tragedy *Romeo and Juliet*.

Puppet Guild Holiday Party a great success

The guild had a live and in person gathering to celebrate puppets and creative camaraderie in Martinez last month. While there were many elements of the event, including a puppet parade, food, raffle and silent auction as well as social time, this write up will focus on Art

Greuneberger's performance for the guild. During and after the pandemic Art has forged ahead into new areas exploring the intersection of live performance and video that seem to this writer to represent a future direction for puppetry in the digital age. With material and ideas that he developed over Zoom during the pandemic, Art has set out to boldly adapt or hybridize his video work on Zoom with performance before a live audience. The show he presented to us was a delightful and very successful blend of projection and black light puppetry. In my opinion black light shows can be hard to watch over a full show time slot as the dark combined with the brilliant fluorescent puppet effects can have a tiring effect on the eyes. This is not the case in Art's productions (and this is the second one of his like this that I have seen) as he has created a projection screen proscenium around the play area where he projects scenery and show elements that blend seamlessly with his puppet performance. I found that the blend of animated video projection and live puppets created very memorable scenes that were powerfully effective in telling his story.

There are, not surprisingly, challenges to this new direction. For these new shows, Art must find venues that can be darkened enough for his projections to work. In a theatre space this is usually not a problem, but commercial puppeteers are constantly faced with less than perfect spaces, such as libraries and schools, in order to find enough performances to make a living. Not all venues can accommodate this show's technical needs. And, when asked, Art noted that he had spent his career developing shows that could be set up and struck in 15 minutes; with his new direction (he said with chagrin) he is now looking at an hour for set up to get all of his tech just right.



After the show Art very generously showed off his techniques to the guild audience. In the photo he demonstrates a ghost puppet within his proscenium which, in the photo, shows the silver projection screen but with house lights on the projection is not visible.

Using Puppet Books to Slow Down

Guild member Daniel Gill shares some of his work with puppets and young children

I made my first puppet book while collaborating with Ms. Anna, the lead teacher in an inclusive toddler classroom that served 12 children ages 2-4. We were collaborating to introduce a puppet "classroom pet" that would live in the classroom, in a house, and support the children's social-emotional development. The book, featuring photos of the puppets, retold the same story as the puppet show. It was something Ms. Anna could read to the children in advance to prepare them for the show (like a **#socialstory**). It would then live in the classroom library, for the children to access and revisit independently or with a teacher as another way for children to access the material (**#universaldesignforlearning**).

Recently, I have been working as a Teaching Artist for a visual arts education organization in San



Francisco. In one TK public school classroom with 22 children, my teaching partner and I noticed that the children were behaving with a sense of intense urgency and that the classroom felt chaotic. When we passed out the art materials, the children had a hard time waiting their turn. They seemed to be rushing through the art experience as if it was a race to say, "I'm done!" As this intensity grew, the classroom grew louder. I felt stressed.

After brainstorming with my teaching partner, I decided to create a puppet book. This time, the puppet would supplement the book, instead of the other way around. The book was about a puppet named Toby, who learns to "notice," instead of rushing to "be done" with his art. A teacher gently encourages Toby to slow down and start noticing all of the little things during art, such as the way paint moves across the paper, the way colors change when they mix together, and the way turning a light on or off can change the way colors look.

I showed the children Toby the puppet's little house and explained that he was inside. "Toby might come out at the end of art class to say goodbye," I told the children. "But when the classroom is very noisy, Toby feels a little nervous. If we can use inside voices, we can help Toby feel safe enough to come out and say hello." The children were thrilled at the chance of seeing Toby "in person."

The book worked. During the class, the children seemed much more present. They began telling us all of the different things they were

noticing. "I notice the different lines I can make," said one child. "I am noticing that I can use my crayon sideways," said another. After her headband accidentally fell on her eyes, one student noticed that she could still draw without seeing and was now noticing the sound of her crayon making marks on the paper.

I focused on noticing because, instead of shaming children for doing something wrong, it provides them with a tool they can use to enjoy every moment. Children inherently know how to be present, but in school and family settings they are often in settings that feel rushed and that focus only on the end product. Children have the right to unhurried exploration. It is in these settings that curiosity, experimentation, and problem solving can bloom.

During the class, one child kept reminding the other students to use inside voices, so that they could see Toby. As we concluded the class with group sharing time, she was relieved to know that he would be coming out of his house. After he emerged, we explained that Toby was eager to see the children's artwork. This encouraged each child to come up (voluntarily) and share their artwork with Toby and the rest of the class. One student, who didn't know the sharing routine, didn't get to share her art because she had put it away in her backpack. She wouldn't let me leave until Toby got a chance to see it. And Toby wouldn't have it any other way.

Give credit where credit is due: the featured puppet is made by Folkmanis ([#folkmanispuppets](#), I learned about "noticing" in art from Brian Silviera at Pacific Primary ([#pacificprimary](#)), and I learned about pet puppets at the Jim Henson Foundation's Making Connections Through Puppetry workshop ([#jimhensonfoundation](#)).

[#earlychildhoodeducation](#) [#inclusion](#) [#puppets](#) [#education](#)

A few images from Lee Armstrong from the Guild Holiday Party



Send newsletter articles to
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