



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*



**President**

Lee Armstrong

**Co-V. Presidents**

Ilene Kennedy  
 & Glynn "Tree" Bartlett

**Membership**

CE Choy & John Arnold

**Programming**

Marisol Himmel

**Treasurer**

Valerie Nelson

**Secretary**

Valerie Nelson

**Webmaster**

John Arnold

**Social Media**

Marisol Himmel

**Hospitality**

Uel (Samuel McGinnis)

Judy Roberto

**Newsletter**

Michael Nelson

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

**Librarian**

Lee Armstrong

## From the President

Hi Puppet Friends

As my good friends Zee and Fiona would say "What's cooking at Fairyland on Aug 26?" We as a group have weathered the isolation of Covid, so it seems particularly special to get together in-person. I encourage everyone to come to our next event, Puppet Fair at Fairyland on Sat., August 26<sup>th</sup>. Bring your family, invite a child or friend that you think might enjoy a day of puppets in the park. There will be shows by notable Bay Area and LA puppeteers, a Puppet Exhibit, Puppet Craft table, walkaround puppets performing... all at the colorful and tree-shaded grounds at Fairyland, Oakland.

For over 70 years, Guild members have helped at Puppet Fair and used it as an opportunity to share our interest in puppetry and get together with like-minded Guild members. You can sign up as a volunteer, but you can also just bring a puppet, walk the grounds and make instant friends. Or ask if the craft or information tables need extra help or seek out a new Guild member and introduce them around, or.... At one Puppet Fair, a member spontaneously came with a variety of hand and Muppet puppets and gave passersby a chance to try them on and see how easy it would be to make and bring them to life.

We had a lively Board meeting in July. Nine Guild members are on the Board and all nine made it in-person or by Zoom. Thank you, Board!

There were lots of reports, including the Treasurer's report, showing that we have ample funds, due in part to generous donations. Thank you, Treasurer Valerie Nelson.

Membership (John Arnold & Beth Choy) reported that our membership is down, so please renew and spread the word about our puppet guild, especially if you know anyone interested in puppetry and theater and/or teachers, librarians, etc.. Membership is planning to print new brochures and perhaps business cards with Guild contact info, in time for Fairyland. Thank you, John, and Beth!

The newsletter report by Michael Nelson indicated that we should all send in news, on time (at least a couple of days before the end of the month). Thank you, Michael! If you have a Bay Area show open to the public, send info. Seen a puppet show, send a review. The board talked about spotlighting members, both new and old. This dovetailed with Social Media, chaired by Marisol Himmel who said that our YouTube and Instagram accounts are growing fast! She'd like to have more short videos to post. That led to a discussion about doing short video interviews with members, or short "How-Tos" that could be used for all our social media platforms. If you have a short video that might fit this bill, please contact Marisol at [moddypuppets@gmail.com](mailto:moddypuppets@gmail.com).

Marisol is also Head of Programming. She and the programming committee have lots of things in store for us. In Sept., there will be another in the popular Zoom series of "Show and Tell" giving equal opportunity to share what you're doing, whether it be a puppet build, performance, TV shoot, puppets in the classroom, etc. Also, there are rumors of a "Puppetathlon" (a huge hit at the Seattle Festival) coming our way. Thank you, Marisol!

The Programming Committee meets the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of each month at 6:30. This programming meeting is open to all. It's a fun group of members who share programming ideas and organize Guild meetings and events. If you have ideas for programs you'd like to see happen or would like to suggest a venue in your town, contact Marisol at [moddypuppets@gmail.com](mailto:moddypuppets@gmail.com). Better yet, if you'd like to attend the Aug 1 meeting at 6:30, email Marisol for the Zoom link.

Ever wonder how the Guild functions and why they do what they do? For this "Board year" the Board will be meeting every 2 months and the Board invites you to attend. If there's an in-person Guild meeting that month, we'll try to do a hybrid in-person/zoom meeting. If

Aug 1, 2023

Page 3 of 14

there's no in-person meeting, then the Board meeting will be held on Zoom, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month. The next Board meeting is scheduled for Tues., Sept. 12 at 6:30. Email me at [images@vom.com](mailto:images@vom.com) if you'd like the zoom link. I and the rest of the board hope to see you then!

Lastly, two scholarships to the National Festival in Maryland were awarded to Daniel Gill and Camilla Henneman for Festival registration. We look forward to hearing about their experiences.

All the best, Lee

## Annual Puppet Fair at Fairyland

Sat., Aug 26 at Fairyland, 699 Bellevue Avenue, Oakland  
Oakland, CA

Puppet Fair 10:00-4:30

Your Guild has been participating in Puppet Fair at Fairyland since 1956! Join us for this action-packed day of puppet shows, a puppet exhibit and events, provided by Fairyland.



Admission: Admission to Fairyland is free to Guild members who are volunteering. If your membership needs to be renewed, please do this before Aug 15<sup>th</sup>, 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 the Guild that day. If so, they should go directly upon entering to the Guild Info booth).

Bart & AC Transit bus can take you to Fairyland. Additional info on directions, parking, etc. is at <https://www.fairyland.org/visit-us/directions/>.

The Puppet Fair Saturday schedule.

### [It Could Always Be Worse](#)

Showtimes: 11 a.m., 2 p.m., 4 p.m. at the  
Storybook Puppet Theater

A funny Yiddish tale of a Jewish family that is unhappy with their living conditions. A mother, father, baby and two children all living in a very small house are fed up with their overcrowded, noisy home. They seek out the local Rabbi who advises solutions and tries to tell them that it could always be worse. Will this family ever learn to be happy with what



they have? Come to Fairyland and find out! This show features lively klezmer music for a fully spirited performance!

Puppets designed by Elizabeth Luce. Rod puppets created by Randal Metz. Scenery by Lewis Mahlmann. Script by Shana Barchas, Inspired by a Traditional Folktale.

[“Three Dinosaurs Gruff” presented by The Puppet Company](#)

Showtime: 12:00 p.m. at the Emerald City Stage

Granny Brachiosaurus is telling her friend Grumpy Greta, a Pterodactyl, the tale of three dinosaur brothers. A Stegosaurus, a Triceratop, and a Ceratosaurus who all love to cross a tree bridge each day to nap, eat, and play on the other side. But what will happen when Ugh, a trollish caveman, moves in under the bridge? Our show teaches



children the importance of working together, problem solving, and getting along. The pre-hysterical comedy pokes fun at the famous “3 Billy Goats Gruff” tale through the use of imagery, music, and songs. A family treat millions of years in the making!

The Puppet Company was created by Randal Metz and has been producing imaginative family entertainment for close to 50 years.

12:35-1:15 Guild Meet & Greet & Lunch break. From 12:35-12:50 gather at the benches at the Storybook Puppet Theater for a quick “hi” to meet other Bay Area puppeteers and keep you up to date on puppet happenings in the Bay area on beyond.

Then, for folks that would like to do lunch at this time, the group can have lunch break at the benches, at the tables near the snack bar or some shady area of your choosing. We’d strongly recommend bringing a bag lunch and beverage, as the lineup at the snack area can be long.



[“The Frog Prince” presented by Fratello Marionettes](#)

Showtime: 1:30 p.m. at the Emerald Stage

This production of the classic fairy tale follows the spoiled princess Ofelia on her birthday. Her life is changed by a chance meeting with a frog – who we know to be a handsome prince, transformed by a witch. When she loses her new golden ball down a well, the princess promises to grant the frog three wishes in exchange for the ball's recovery. Will Ofelia follow through with her promises, and will the frog turn back into the handsome Prince?

The Fratello Marionettes has produced timeless marionette shows since 1989. Puppeteer Kevin Menegus brings classic stories and vignettes to life through hand-crafted marionettes.

[Bob Baker Marionettes of L.A. presents a Musical Variety Show](#)

Showtimes: 2:30 p.m. at the Aesop's Playhouse

Since 1963, the Bob Baker Marionette Theater has been part of imagination and fantasy that thrives in Los Angeles, with over 200 performances a year, utilizing over 2000 handcrafted puppets. Join Alex Evans as he presents his one-man variety show with marionettes from Bob Baker.

The Bob Baker Marionette Theater of Los Angeles was founded by Bob Baker and Alton Wood. It's reportedly the oldest children's theater company in America.

Note: Puppet Fair continues Sunday, Aug 27. The schedule is similar to Saturday's schedule with a few changes. Find online at

<https://fairyland.org/events-and-performances/schedule-of-events/>.



Volunteers: We need volunteers!

- Do you have a puppet and would like to greet kids as you walk around the park? Bring your puppet and surprise kids as they enter the park, roam the ground and engage families in the fun or team up with another puppeteer for lively banter.
- Or would you like to help at the puppet making table? All materials and instruction are provided.
- Or answer puppet and Guild questions at the Puppet Guild Info Booth/Library + monitor puppet exhibit (your table will face the puppet exhibit)?

Please sign up at Sign Up Genius, <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050E4BAEAB2AA7FC1-fairylands1>. Thank you!

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 10:00 on Sat. 26<sup>th</sup>.

Guild Library will be at Fairyland

The Guild library has hundreds of books covering a variety of topics. Books & DVD's will be available for checkout at the Guild Info Table for people that have been members for at least 6 months. If you have a book checked out, please return it at Fairyland. If you can't make Fairyland, please mail it to...

Guild Librarian, Lee Armstrong, 720 Ladera Dr., Sonoma, CA 95476.

## July Guild Event - Magical Moonshine Theatre in Sonoma

By Lee Armstrong

What a delight to see family audiences enjoying "Coyote Sings" by Michael and Valerie Nelson of Magical Moonshine Theatre, Vallejo at the Sonoma Valley Museum of Art. The Nelson's performed on a tabletop stage, creating a Southwest tableau with a few simple props and set pieces. Music was an integral part of the show, and performed live with guitar, drum and voice. In fact, the drum in the story beat out a rhythm as it rolled along the desert landscape. The show was engaging for children and adults alike. Afterwards, there was a short Q & A and people were invited to build their own puppets and stages. Bravo!

The original plan was to have lunch and meet and greet in the town park. However due to a heat wave, the park was an oven, so we wisely retired to the airconditioned Images in Motion studio in Sonoma for lunch. Afterwards, we had a puppet show and tell. Puppets were shared and discussion ranged from everything about puppet elbow joints to puppet materials. And some members stayed for the July Board meeting and now know a lot about future planning and events. To right, Lana Tleimat with puppet built by herself





Below, Left, Cassandra  
Vargas with Rose puppet  
built by John Arnold



(From previous article) To right,  
Uel McGinnis with Snake puppet built by John Arnold

## National Festival Teaser

By Camilla Henneman

We just got back from the festival. What a whirlwind! First, I would like to thank you all for the scholarship that helped make this trip happen for me. National festivals cost a lot of money to put on. I would not have been able to attend without your help. As usual, the workshop offerings and performances were vast. I didn't see all of the shows, but several of them are on the Whova app the event used and I plan to watch some of the ones I missed.

This is just a teaser to let you know that there will be a more detailed article coming from the festival in the next newsletter.



Well, it was a bit of a challenging start. I forgot to leave a burnt offering to the goddess of journeys, Abeona. Because the travel gods were not on my side. My 5 hour journey to Baltimore ended up taking 20 hours and into 4 airports as flight after flight got delayed or canceled. I missed the first day of the festival. I finally got to Baltimore and my luggage went to Houston. I ended up staying in Baltimore so that I could get my luggage which was filled with items for the store. I did finally arrived in the 90 degree weather and 50%humidity. Transportation was not available for the first few days, but another festival goer recognized a weary fellow traveler. The University of Maryland is built on hills. "Follow me!", she said as she sprinted up the hill ahead of me with the perkiness of a 15 year old track star. I shlepped my bags up the hill praying not to pass out, as my guide jogged ahead of me. When I made it to my room I collapsed on my bed for an hour. A shower never felt so good. I was a bit bleary eyed but determined to make up for lost time.

For me, the best part of the festival is meeting up with old friends and making new ones. There were some SFBAPG alumni doing presentations. Our Kathy Foley presented a workshop on Balinese rod puppets.

Art Gruenberger performed his show, 3 Little Pigs.



Alumnus Matthew McGee presented a workshop on inflatable puppets. I have known Matthew since he was a teen and have been following his amazing career as a puppeteer.

When I arrived on Wednesday, I was there in time to catch my first show, Terrance Pipkin's (Jegetto) show SPINOKIO a futuristic dystopian Hip Hop opera loosely based on Pinocchio.

Tarish performed with his two sons who are following their father into the

puppetry business.

One of the hardest things about the national festival is that so many amazing workshops are offered but you cannot take them all. I felt very lucky to get into some of Aretta Baumgartner's performance workshops. If you ever get the opportunity to take a workshop from her, grab it! She makes everyone believe that they can really do anything!

The theme of this year's festival was the legacy of Jim Henson. We were fortunate to have Heather and Cheryl Henson join us as well as Craig Shemin, the man Jim





Henson partnered with to create his first TV show, "Sam and Friends." One of the highlights of the festival for me was getting to go on a bus tour guided by Heather and Craig, through the neighborhood where Jim grew up and the studios where he and his wife, Jane worked on their first productions. We got to hear lots of stories about growing up in the Henson home and the early days of Jim's television puppetry. That's all for now, but I will continue the journey next month.

## Bits and Pieces

### New episode of Under The Puppet arrives on August 1, 2023. From Grant Baciocco

This month my guest is The Grandfather of Puppetry, Sid Krofft! Sid picked up his puppet at a young age and was soon a sensation booking shows across the United States and then around the world. He would go on to create shows such as H.R. Pufnstuff, Land of the Lost and Sigmund & The Sea Monsters to name a few, but his love of puppetry was always at the heart of all he did. I chatted with Sid Krofft about his career in this special episode of Under The Puppet produced for the National Puppetry Festival in conjunction with the Puppeteers of America.

This is a alternate edit of the interview shown at the National Festival and will be available wherever you get your podcasts and at [underthepuppet.com](http://underthepuppet.com)  
<<http://underthepuppet.com/>>

### Tiny House Theatre Presents

Our Monthly Puppets and Picnic event is coming up on August 20th at Tiny House Theater. This month the story, "Varya's Mamochka," is an adaptation of a Russian folktale. I remember the book, My Mother is the Most Beautiful Woman in the World, by Becky Reyher, from my childhood. The Puppet event begins at 11am. Bring a picnic and join us afterward in the Schwan Lake Open Space across 17th Avenue from the studios.

Our events are as special and unique as the children you love!



Tiny House Theater is located in the Live Oak district of Santa Cruz at 980 17th Avenue, in the 17th Avenue Artist Studios, Building 3. Buy tickets and see all my upcoming events at

my website, <https://www.tinyhousetheater.com/events> -Madrone D'Ardenne, Tiny House Theater-- Nature Inspired Puppetry and Storytelling Arts

## Tips for a Successful Business

Hi there my name is Kasandra. I am a professional ventriloquist. For me, these past two years have been a lesson on how to run a puppet business, I have been performing shows back to back this whole summer and some shows during the fall and winter. Rather than talk about what I do, and my performances. I feel as though I should give some advice for those looking to start their own puppet business.



These are lessons I have learned from owning my own business:

1. Money is in the follow ups! Always!
2. Life is a marathon not a sprint. (This goes for cold calls: make 10 calls everyday for 4 days and you have 40 new people you talk to to sell your art to.)
3. Make an invoice and contract for the services you provide. You will be glad you did.
4. For your invoices, make sure you always follow up with the client a day before you arrive, make sure you are on the same page with the client. Sometimes clients change times, and audiences (and if you are like me you might switch up the times oops!!)



5. Always ask to charge for gas if it is over a 30 minute drive. And if you can remember, See if you can also charge for tolls. They add up. It might be scary to ask for more money to cover these charges but..If you don't ask, the answer will always be no.
6. Your art and puppet show will never be perfect to the point where you feel you can perform. The best time to start is now.
7. If you feel scared and want to cancel...do the performance anyway....DARE to take a chance when you see kids light up and laugh it will make you glad you didn't cancel.
8. Lastly, always remember: As artists, we create joy for others. That's what artists do, even if we do not intend to, we raise the vibration of the world cumulatively and we bring joy!! Which is the best medicine ever! So never stop creating the world needs YOU and the joy YOU bring!!! There is no one like you and that is pretty awesome!

Keep raising joy around everyone you meet! Hope this helps you. From, your fellow guild member/artist/puppet enthusiast, Kasandra Vargas (Founder of Peanuts Playhouse)

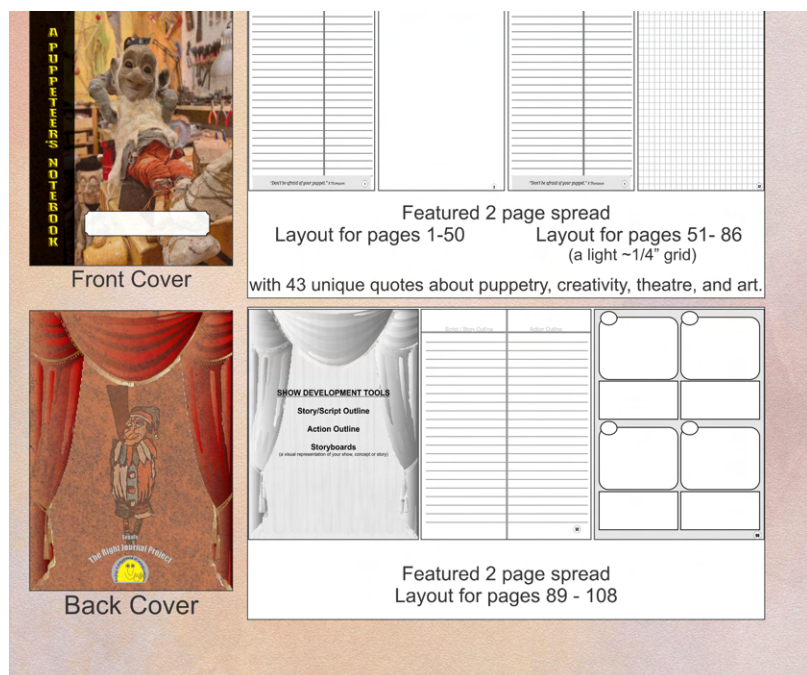
## Mark Segal Shares the Puppeteer's Notebook, now available online.

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 to get your own copy and start mining your own creativity!

<https://a.co/d/eG0NAsV>



## Join the Fever! SFBAPG Puppet-Athelon



By Michael & Valerie Nelson

Last summer at the Left Coast Puppet Love Fest, we were delighted to attend our first ever puppet-athelon. In this delightful and entertaining competition, puppeteers from the audience manipulated puppet athletes through a number of hilarious physical challenges in an obstacle course built just for puppets. Not only did the puppeteers have a blast, the audience was wildly enthusiastic about it as a spectator event. Valerie and I left the festival thinking that if there was one idea we needed to steal for our guild, this was it. So we are stealing it! Right now!

We are currently looking to build our own guild set of puppets and challenges with the thought that this would become an annual guild event. Are you with us? ARE YOU WITH US? Let's do this!

Now that you are fully enthused and ready to join TEAM PUPPET, shoot us an email at [newsletter@sfbapg.org](mailto:newsletter@sfbapg.org). Let's figure this out together.

## A Puppet's Lasting Impact in a TK Classroom

By Daniel Gill

I was amazed when Ms. Hu, a San Francisco TK teacher, sent me a photo featuring a colorful arrangement of drawings, words, and sentences. These were cards and letters were made by her students, ages 4-5 for a small dog puppet named Toby. [I used Toby to support student focus and self-regulation while working as a Teaching Artist](#) in an 8 week residency program in San Francisco Unified School District classrooms. In her e-mail, Ms. Hu wrote: *[The children] saw Toby as someone who understood their excitement about art and also the challenges that could come with it. Toby really helped encourage them to persist through these challenges and use art as a way to express themselves and feel seen and heard.*

Toby the dog puppet, by Folkmanis (to right)

I used Toby, along with a [puppet house](#) and [DIY puppet books](#), as a teaching tool during circle time to support the children's curiosity, experimentation, and enjoyment of the art-making process. The students quickly grew attached to the puppet.



As soon as I walked into the classroom, they asked, "Is Toby here?" On the days I brought the puppet, they were eager to say hello to him when I took him out of his little house during circle time. After class, some of the children wouldn't let me leave until they got a chance to share their art with him.

Cards for Toby the puppet.

On the last day of our residency, I shared my email with Ms. Hu, the classroom teacher. "If any of the students want to continue sharing their art with Toby," I told her, "feel free to take pictures and send them to me. I will reply on his behalf." Three months passed and I forgot about my invitation to to stay in touch with Ms. Hu and the children. I was to receive her email and moved by her words:



*My students constantly talked about Toby and how much they looked forward to seeing him each week. They saw Toby as someone who understood their excitement about art and also the challenges that could come with it. Toby really helped encourage them to persist through these challenges and use art as a way to express themselves*



*and feel seen and heard. I'm grateful for Toby and the inspiration he's provided my students.*

*Thank you!*

After I leave a classroom, I don't know what kind of impact I may have on my students. Sometimes I question the value I bring. Ms. Hu's email reminds me that all I have to do is to continue showing up in classrooms with a puppet, and the intention of helping children feel seen, heard, and appreciated. While the outcomes are out of my control, they are probably more effective than I realize.

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