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A poster for the Northern California Puppet Festival. The central graphic is a blue shield with a red top section containing the text "NORTHERN CALIFORNIA" in white. Below the shield is a large blue circle with two white eyes, and the words "PUPPET FESTIVAL" in a stylized, colorful font. To the left of the shield is a red square with a white icon of a person holding a puppet. Below this is a yellow box with the text "Puppet Shows" and a list of events: "Personal Spaces Fri 10am", "Carnival of the Animals Fri 4pm", "Los Animalitos Fri 7pm", "Tommy's Space Adventure Sat 10am", and "Green Bird Sat 4pm". To the right of the shield is a red square with a white icon of two puppets. Below this is a yellow box with the text "Puppet Slam! Sat 7pm". At the bottom left is a blue box with the text "SONOMA COMMUNITY CENTER", "276 E Napa Street Sonoma, CA", and "AUGUST 2 & 3 2024". To the right of this box is a QR code. At the bottom of the poster is the text "SONOMACOMMUNITYCENTER.ORG/EVENTS" and "PARADE SATURDAY 9:30AM IN THE SQUARE!".

It's Festival Time! Starts Tomorrow,

August 2-

Use your member discount code (sent to current members in an email) and attend our great 70th celebration.

On the fence? Know that your fellow guild members have spent many many hours, weeks, months! planning this and working to make it happen. You don't want to miss this. It's not too late to help either. Show up, and share the joy!

Festival Store, Last Call

Last Call to Vendors! Got some nice puppets you would like to rehome? Need to clear out your bookshelves to make space for more books?

The 70th Anniversary Bay Area Puppet festival is going to host a pop-upstore. Last call for vendors. The Sonoma Community Center has graciously allowed us to use a small space for a pop-up store in their music room. This is a great opportunity to de-stash (clear out your puppet shelves to make room for more puppets that you can buy at the store.) We can accept new or good quality used: puppets, books,masks, toy theaters and other puppet related items.



Folkmanis Puppets is donating a selection of puppets to the store. 20% of sales would be donated back to the guild. Vendors are responsible for delivering items before the store opens (Cam will coordinate that with individual vendors) and are responsible for picking up their items at the end of the festival. The store will be open between workshops and shows. If you are interested in offering items for the store, or volunteering some time to help staff the store, please contact Camilla Henneman (camhenneman@gmail.com) or 831-359-9761. (It's easiest to contact me by email or text)

From the President

Dear Fellow Puppeteers,

Well, the votes are in and I have been chosen as your new president. I feel humbled and overwhelmed, but ready to take up the task. That said, there's a lot going on in our guild this month!

Coming at the beginning of this month is the Northern California Puppetry Festival at the Sonoma Community Center. Thank you to all the hard work the volunteers have put in to make this event possible. Although I won't be able to attend due to a previous engagement, I will be with you in spirit.

Then at the end of the month we have the puppetry day at Childrens Fairyland in Oakland. Both of these events are a great way to meet with fellow puppeteers, gain inspiration, and make new friends.

I look forward to seeing you at an SFBAPG event sometime soon!

Talib Huff, SFBAPG president



Puppet Fair at Children's Fairyland on August 24 and 25

(More info coming in a separate email)

Join us for the delightful Puppet Fair at Children's Fairyland on August 24 and 25, 2024! This enchanting event promises a weekend filled with creativity and fun for families, featuring captivating puppet shows, interactive workshops, and engaging activities.

The Puppet Fair includes performances each day at the open-air Storybook Puppet Theater and at other venues around the park. Children and adults alike will be mesmerized by the magical storytelling and charming puppetry. Our guild will be present with walk around puppets and craft tables on one day, we believe Saturday, August 24. Look for more information coming via email.

In addition to the shows, attendees can participate in hands-on puppet-making workshops, where kids can unleash their creativity and craft their own puppets. These workshops are designed to inspire young imaginations and provide a unique bonding experience for families.

Throughout the fair, there will also be a variety of puppet-themed activities, including arts and crafts stations and opportunities to meet and interact with puppet characters. The event is perfect for all ages, making it an ideal outing for families looking to create lasting memories together.

Don't miss out on this magical weekend! The Puppet Fair is included with park admission, making it an affordable adventure for everyone. Come and explore the whimsical world of puppetry at Children's Fairyland, where stories come alive and imaginations soar. Mark your calendars for August 24 and 25, 2024, and prepare for a weekend of laughter, creativity, and unforgettable moments!



It's time for a new episode of Under The Puppet and this month my guest is Luman Coad! Besides traveling around the world performing his shows with Coad Canada Puppets, Luman was also the Director of The Storybook Theater at Children's Fairyland for several years. The new episode is available right now wherever you get your podcasts or listen directly at underthepuppet.com

Editor's Note: For those following the history of the guild as we celebrate our 70th, Luman was one of our very early guild members and is a valued part of guild history!



DEBUT: “The Ground,” a sonic poem

After spending my adult life in puppet theater, creating award winning works with theaters all over the country and touring the world, I, Fred C. Riley III, working under the name Odd Savvy, have been striving to create my own puppet theater. “The Ground” will be a sonic poem exploring our human nature and how we can learn to live in accord with the natural world. There is no real narrative here. I am trying to evoke emotion with a simple palette of movement, sound and image. I am exploring techniques in tabletop puppetry, mask and shadow theater.

I and my team (with help from the DEAR program and the Jim Henson Foundation Workshop Grant) have spent the last 2 years building mock-ups, trying out new concepts and finding new poetry in movement theater. Please come out and see The Ground. We load into the performance space on August 6th. If any Guild members want to come check out the process, or even help in the building of the final shadow sequences, I invite you to come down to the studio. I won't have much time, but I can talk as I work. The address of the theater is below and I can be reached at OddSavvy@gmail.com to set up a time to come by.

This is my first self-produced work and I am learning so much and meeting so many incredible talented people along the way. We have received a couple grants, but we still need more and you can go to my website on the donations page to give. You can also buy tickets through the site. Donations go to pay these artists and help with supplies and technical assistance. Theater is a team effort and I have assembled a great team. Please become part of that team! Odd Savvy The Ground opens on August 16th at The Dresher Ensemble Studio!

Shows are: August 16th at 7:00PM, August 17th at 7:00PM, August 18th at 2:00PM and August 23rd at 7:00PM, August 24th at 7:00PM, August 25th at 2:00PM— Dresher Ensemble Studio 2201 Poplar Street Oakland CA 94607

TICKETS <https://The-Ground.eventbrite.com>

Napa Valley Puppet Festival a Fantastic Event

On the last weekend in July, the Napa Valley Puppet Festival was born. David Garden and his enthusiastic band of volunteers brought shows, puppet making craft tables, and a glorious puppet parade, all in the sylvan surroundings of his family's beautiful White Barn in St Helena.

Many guild members participated, including past president Tim Giugni, Michael and Valerie Nelson, Kevin Menegus and Jesse Vail, Risa Lenore, Daniel Gill, Moddy Himmel, Heather Gobbee, and Lee Armstrong.

Performers included Fratello Marionettes, Il Teatro Calimari, Invisible Cities, a Toy Theatre Atlas from Chicago, Magical Moonshine Theatre, and Giant Puppets Save the World. And to cap it off, Forbidden Puppet Cabaret hosted a slam, which I'm told was a hoot.

And a giant puppet parade as well!



Guild Members Win Queen's Award

Guild members Lisa Zagone, and Michael and Valerie Nelson won the Queen's trophy at the 2024 Obtanium Cup last Sunday, with their self-created puppet submarine (complete with pelican puppet captain and moving eyeball periscope) and their papier mache diving suits. This was the first time this team had collaborated together, both in the puppet building and in the street theatre performing.



Editor's Note: Randal has done a phenomenal job of sharing 70 years of our guild's history with us in the series of articles that have appeared in our 2024 newsletters. This is his last article, bringing us up to date just in time for our big 70th celebration at the Northern California Puppet Festival this weekend. A huge thanks to Randal for this excellent history (which is also going on to the guild website.)

Tracing The Tangled Roots of Our “Puppet-Tree” and the San Francisco Bay Area Puppetry Guild (1954 - 2024)

Randal Metz - Guild Historian

Note: Dates listed by names of puppeteers represent their careers in puppetry.

Part 7 - 2000 - 2024

And now we've caught up to the 21st Century. And with it came up-to-date new technologies. And the puppeteers embraced it and found new artistic ways to use it. These technologies included Facebook, Youtube, the iPhone, 3-D model animation, C.G.I. and of course the Henson Digital Performance System (HDPS) where digital puppets were performed in “real time.” And the beauty of the puppet still prospered where live puppet performances, and puppet play thrived in art and theater. Puppeteers and guilds were keeping in touch on the computer with chat sites such as “PUPCRIT” and “Puppet Hub.” And others like Guild member Grant Bacioccio (2000 - present) interviewed puppeteers on his monthly podcast “Under the Puppet,” talking about their careers and experiences, and preserving puppetry through their personal stories. We also mustn't forget all of the computer tutorials on puppetry that were now available to all artists. And the guild had members, such as Mary Decker (1990s- present), who worked with the puppet world helping to connect the guilds with broader programs and activities of The Puppeteers of America. Mary was our Regional Director in 2000, and spent several years in that office and on the P. Of A. board.

She served on the board of the International Puppetry Museum, and has donated many puppets to the museum. Her service to the art of puppetry has been exceptional.



Puppetry also thrived at our local theaters and parks where many could enjoy professional puppet entertainers. At Fairyland in Oakland, Lewis Mahlmann retired in 2006, and Randal Metz continued as the ongoing theater director. The Storybook Puppet Theater received two prestigious awards: The Puppeteers of America Award for “its outstanding contribution to the field of puppetry” (1999) and in 2003 the theater was officially dedicated to Lewis Mahlmann. We also had our share of guild members training in our workshop. As a young child, William Lewis (2010 - present) started hanging out in the theater. Will has since become a young performer specializing in his own brand of puppetry, while still following his love of music and theater singing in local musicals and playing the Wurlitzer Organ at the Grand Lake Movie Theater on weekends.



Over in San Jose at the Happy Hollow Puppet Theater, from 2006 - 2017, Judy Roberto (1968 - present) became the theater director pulling the strings. Judy taught Art & Puppetry in the Los Angeles schools program before settling in the Bay Area. She is a Recreation Specialist and has taught puppetry and dramatic play, shadow puppetry and developed volunteer workshops in the art form.



Besides the theaters at Fairyland and Happy Hollow, you could also find regular puppet performances at The Climate Theater, the recurring Puppet Love Festivals, and the ongoing "Puppet Slam" evenings of "The Forbidden Puppet Cabaret" run by Michael and Valerie Nelson. Puppet Slams began in our area around 2012, and evolved out of the popular "Guild Challenges" and the evening "Potpourri" always held at puppet festivals, where anything goes! And for teens and younger, who wanted to get their big break, member Sharon Clay (1982 - present) has for many years trained and directed the Alameda County 4-H puppeteers program which has been honored many times!

The guild also had many performers promoting the puppet arts through their talents on so many levels. Joe and Ronna Leon (1976 -present) led the charge with their Caterpillar Puppets. Joe, the initial performer, has presented bilingual puppet shows at many schools. The Caterpillar Puppets were also the featured puppeteers at Marine World/Africa U.S.A. and the California State Fair.



Robin Stevens (1985 - present) moved from England to Oakland and brought his shows for the “little ones” to enjoy. Robin was producer, writer and performer for Ragdoll Productions. He created the role of the puppet “Pob”, of the show of the same name on B.B.C. television, and also worked on “Teletubbies.” Robin also built marionettes for Larry Schmidt’s “DrivewayFollies.”



Another member who traveled here from afar was Herbert Lange (2005 - present) who left us spellbound with his Fairytale Theater. Herbert, a German puppeteer, loved to present the Brothers Grimm stories in all their comedic glory. Herbert uses puppets in his job as a speech-language pathologist. He also credits the guild with giving him a head start into the world of puppetry.



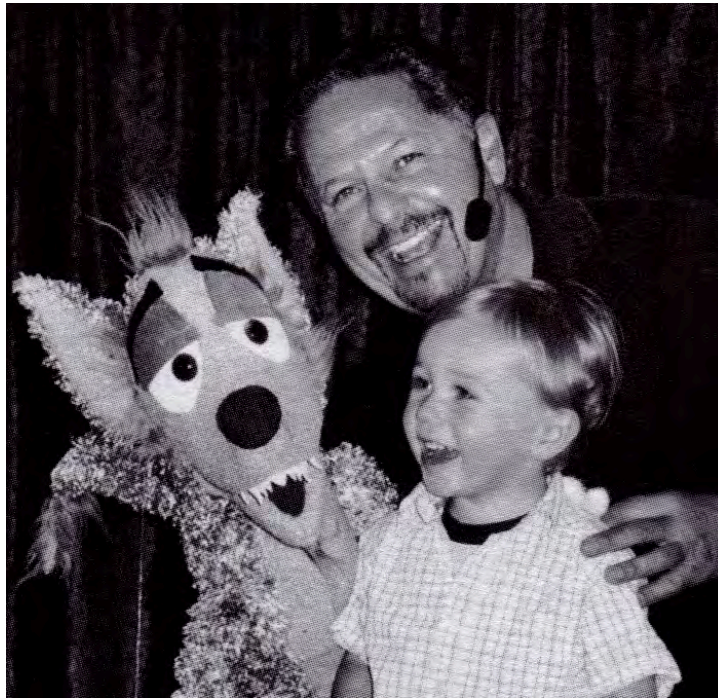
Guild member Sam Hale (1999 to present), specialized in film and stop-motion animation. A graduate of the Academy of Art University, Sam founded Mighty Pug Studio in Los Angeles. He works with Heather Henson's Hand Made Puppet Dreams, and has taught Theater Arts at Cal State. Sam also edited our newsletter and interviewed members.



Art Grueneberger (1991 - present) caught the "puppet bug" when he took a college class from mentor Richard Bay. Founder of Puppet Art Theater, and a college puppetry teacher himself, Art has excelled at bringing the puppet arts to California. His shows can be found at Fairytale Town in Sacramento, and many of our local libraries. Art has also served as Vice President of The Puppeteers of America. He has his own puppetry podcast called "Meet Our Mentors."



Another Bay Area favorite was member Peter Brizzi (1979 - 2010) of P & T Puppets. Peter loved to entertain with black light puppetry, and often lampooned fairy tales with Gilbert and Sullivan tunes. A popular birthday party and library puppeteer, he is sorely missed.



Elizabeth Fuller and Conrad Bishop (1969 - present), The Independent Eye puppeteers, arrived in CA around 2010. Seeking out the guild, they brought their theatrical, live, powerful form of puppetry to the Bay Area. Both university college teachers, the two have filled their productions with music, theater, masks and puppets. The couple have performed in 38 states, and have produced over 78 works, as well as authoring several books on theater and their careers.



But what did the guild accomplish during this 2 decade period?

Well...in a nut shell: In 2000, we finally got our guild website, email and newsletter! The guild turned 40 in 2001, and in 2004 we decided that our Newsletter Editor and Webmaster needed a stipend for their work. Matt Baume, a puppet fan, created our Web Page:SFBAPG.ORG., and we began archiving newsletters in 2005. Also in 2004- 2005 the guild tackled the problem of low-attendance meetings. They voted to have 6 bimonthly meetings, 1 Holiday Party meeting, and 4 optional “flex” meetings. These were meetings that could be called for and arranged by lone guild members. This was tried for several years. Michael Nelson and Co-Pres.Randal Metz & Tim Giugni were working together to build a strong membership and a strong constitution.

Also In 2005 Homeland Security almost froze the guild funds. Thanks to hard working members, we finally recovered our monies. This was all due to new regulations required about our organization and some of its members. They must have thought we were starting a puppet government. In 2007,the guild switched from a 4 member board to a 9 member board. Each elected member is to serve for three years, interchanging jobs,and then they rotate off. With Mary Decker’s help, the bylaws were updated and voted on in 2008. In 2010 our “Guild History”was finally updated and digitized. We celebrated our 50th birthday in 2011! (Our 60th was during Covid) From 2011 to today, Elisheva Hart helped keep our guild informed with constant reviews of puppetry events in the Bay Area, as well as historical puppetry articles from many venues. Much like member Ilene Kennedy has done in the last few years with her historical puppeteer bios titled “Our Amazing Puppet World.”

In 2020, Covid put a stop to our monthly in person meetings for about 2 years. Shows and classes were cancelled, and puppeteers sought government financial help as a “Gig” contractor. We all managed to stay together through the Newsletter, ZOOM and video performances. The puppet was used to do PSA’s about health problems, and puppet videos and tutorials were very popular online. We celebrated virtual

holiday parties, meetings, shows, classes and even Guild Challenges. And the best thing was that we made new friends all over the country! By mid-2021 things began to return to normal.

And our members were anxious to return to work. Ernie Fosselius (1970 - present) joined our guild in 2003. A master carver, filmmaker, inventor and puppeteer, Ernie soon amazed us with his satirical look at life and the world. Ernie co-created animated films for Sesame Street, was a sound editor for movies, created animated carved automata and was everything on his hit parody "Star Wars" film: "Hardware Wars."



Camilla Henneman (1980 - present) also joined us with a strong cinema background. Besides her distinctive puppetry, Camilla has worked with the Jim Henson Creature Shop and for many years supervised makeup, costumes, puppets and creatures for Rick Baker's Costume & Fabrication shop. Her film work is extensive, and she was also guild president!



Another guild member who excelled at creating puppets for film is Alexis “Lex” Rudd (1994 - present) Lex has designed puppets and plush toys for Folkmanis Puppets and Hasbro Toys. She has built creative, animated creatures for many commercials. She also appeared as a contestant on the “Jim Henson Creature Shop Challenge.”



Humboldt members Yumi Ozaki & Tanya Crowley (2000 - present) otherwise known as Quack & Wabbit productions, enchanted us with their clever puppet tales. Their premise is to promote a positive difference in the lives of children by teaching valuable life skills through puppetry . And they do!

Past president Tim Giugni(1995 - present) is founder of Teatro Calamari, a company that uses puppets, masks, and objects for the optimum puppet performance. Tim has toured internationally and won an Emmy for his work.



Also very interested in live and physical puppetry is member Fred C. Riley III (1986 - present), who founded Odd Savvy - a Movement Company. Fred has worked with Tears of Joy Theater, the Center for Puppetry Arts and Shadowlight Productions. He has built puppets for The Fratello Marionettes and is currently the Director of Larry Schmidt’s “Driveway Follies.” His mantra - “The art of puppetry has so much untapped potential.”



Combining puppetry and theatrical skills into full stage, live puppet performances, has always been the dream of Derek Lux (1983 - present) and his company DLUX Puppets, with his wife Lauren. Derek has interned with Swazzle Productions, the O'Neill National Puppetry Conference, and has taught at Michael Earl's Puppet School. An actor, fabricator, singer and puppeteer, DLUX does it all!



And we must not forget our tireless volunteers and board members over the past 24 years who kept our organization running smoothly. Such as Lisa Bady, Nick Barone, Glynn Bartlett, Pam Brown, Benny

Buettner, Mike Burroughs, Emily Butterfly, C. E. Choy, Sharon Clay, Bebe Conrad, Ron Coulter, Tom Crystle, Mary Decker, Nina Dees, Kathy Dodge, Michael Flores, Elizabeth Fuller, Margaret Bloom, Gabriel Galdamez, Daniel Gill, Nicole Graverley, Gabrielle Greenfield, Barbara Grillo, Elisheva Hart, Gregory Hayes, Marisol Himmel, Brian Hitchcock, Talib Huff, Baron Von Jabba, Sean Johnson, Ilene Kennedy, Nao Kobayashi, Risa Lenore, Ronna Leon, Elizabeth Luce, Roger Mara, Samuel McGinnes, Tim Miller, Kevin Menegus, Mary Nagler, Brian Narelle, Eli Nash, Valerie & Michael Nelson, Peter Olson, Forrest Patton, S. B. Parks, Jeff Pidgeon, Lynette Pinto, Artie Poore, Kamela Portuges, Janaki Ranpura, Mark Sage, Tia Smirnoff, Joel Schechter, Lettie Schubert, Padminia Sockkappa, Sandra Starr, Ruth Stotter, Brian Stokes, Rickie Vincent, Pam Wade, Gale Warshawsky, La Vera Wilson, Rob Witt, Susan, Paul and Chase Woolner, Annie Wong, Doug and Annie Zesiger. My deepest apologies if I missed anyone. And of course our noble Presidents in the 21st Century: (in order) Patrick Johnson, Anita Coulter, Brian Stokes, Randal Metz, Tim Giugni, Michael Nelson, Conrad Bishop, Art Gruenberger, Olivia Huff, Lex Rudd, Lee Armstrong, Glynn "Tree" Bartlett, Peter Olson, Judy Roberto, Camilla Henneman and John Arnold. Plus a special nod to "Life Time Guild Members": Kitty Adams, Pam Brown, Ralph Chesse, Elisheva Hart, Lewis Mahlmann, Mary Nagler, Mike Oznowicz, Gayle Schluter, Lettie Schubert, Tia Smirnoff, Wolo Von Trutzschler, and Dan Winkelman. Whew! Our Guild and Logo have certainly held up well over our 70 year run!



I'd like to end our history with this quote from past President of The Puppeteers of America Frank Ballard, in "Theatre Crafts" magazine:

"The art of puppetry has been the least studied and the most under-rated of all the arts: nevertheless it has a long history, tremendous vitality, strong contemporary developments, a range of possibilities wider than that of the "live" theatre. Puppeteers, through the puppet, may defy the laws of the universe and succeed. The puppet, no matter in what form it may be seen, is deep down in the human mind, a symbol of the human mind."

Bi-line:
For 33 years Randal Metz has been the Director of the Children's Fairyland Storybook Puppet Theater, the oldest, continuously running puppet theater in the United States. He is also creator of The Puppet

Company which tours California. He has written two histories on Children's Fairyland, and four histories and puppet making books on the art of puppetry.



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