



## Save The Date!

On June 7, 12:30pm to 4:30pm we will be having a guild meeting in the Sacramento area!

The theme will be Processional Puppets, Great and Small. The meeting will be held at 3308 Hunter lane, Carmichael CA 95608 (thanks to Marisol Himmel for sharing her space).

Current plans include a make-and-take of a simple parade puppet (BYOHGG, bring your own hot glue gun) along with presentations from various guild members on their experiences with parade puppet wrangling. More details to follow in the next newsletter.



## From the President

With the return of the warmer weather many of us are moving our shows to outside venues. Well this can be a breath of fresh air, you want to make sure that that is figuratively and not literally true. Speaking from

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experience, there is very little that is more embarrassing than having a wayward gust of wind blow your stage over mid-performance! This happened to us once when we were performing on what we thought would be a calm spring day. Little did we know what the weather had in store for us. There we were both with a puppet on each hand when suddenly the stage toppled forward leaving us completely exposed. Well it did elicit quite a reaction from the audience it wasn't the reaction we were looking for. You can bet your last swizzle that we anchored our stage from then on for any outdoor (and even some indoor) performances.

So I hope you all enjoy the warmer weather, but be safe out there!

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## It's board election time!

It's that time of year again where guild members are given the opportunity to vote for new candidates to fill spots on the board. Annually, we have board members that have either met up with term limits or come to the end of their first non-consecutive three-year term, choosing to run and serve our board again. We have an exciting ballot of candidates for members to choose from this year. Please fill out your ballot choices and submit before the June 15th deadline. The following are bios of our slate of San Francisco Bay Area Puppeteers Guild candidates for 2024. We have 3 openings to fill on the board. Please vote for our candidates (YOUR BALLOT WILL BE SENT SEPARATELY)



### **C E Choy “Beth”**

Beth Choy is a retired drama director who dedicated 20 years to building an award-winning high school theater program in the city of Fairfield. Her exceptional leadership earned her seven ARTYS and over 37 nominations. During the last 11 years of her tenure, Beth combined her passion for education and artistry as a self-taught puppet builder, teaching students to craft their own creations. These unique puppets were featured in shows for visiting classes, specialized shows for Special Ed classes, and primary schools, and then donated to special needs programs both within and beyond the district. Her innovative approach to puppetry in education gained recognition in California Educator's Magazine and local newspapers. Now retired, Beth focuses on selling professional puppets through her company, Bok Choy's Puppets, founded in 2019.

Since 2021, Beth has been an active member of SFBAPG, contributing in areas Membership and Secretary, and serving as Vice President. She values her time with the guild and is eager to continue supporting its programs. Beth's legacy lies in her creativity, dedication, and advocacy for inclusive arts education.



**David Garden Jr.** has worked in the film, theater, and art world for the past 25 years. He works in a variety of mediums and is a strong advocate of utilizing the materials strewn about our planet ... repurposing them into art pieces. His award winning short films have been exhibited throughout the U.S.. and Europe. He was an art instructor at Nimbus Arts for many years and is the executive director at White Barn Performing Arts venue. He produced the first Napa Valley Puppetry Festival last year.



**Heather Gobbée** is Sonoma County Arts Educator of the Year and presently teaches Visual & Performing Arts at Adele Harrison Middle School, Art & Yoga Therapy for neurodivergent adults with De Colores Arts, and directs with Backyard Kids Theater in Sonoma. Heather is a professional actor (AEA), Certified Yoga Therapist (C-IAYT) and Movement Educator with an MFA in Acting from Brandeis University and CA Teacher Certification in Theater Arts, PreK-12. Heather has performed and taught drama, improvisation, puppetry, yoga and creative movement for children and adults across NYC and CA. Heather is an excited



and active SFBAPG member, workshop committee coordinator, taught two workshops, a puppet build and performed in the Puppetathloon for the SFBAPG 70th Anniversary Northern CA Puppetry Festival. Last year Heather built giant lighted puppets with Andrew Kim, Animal Cracker Conspiracy and Donovan Zimmerman and taught “Under the Sea, Cardboard & Me!” a Reuse, Rebuild, Reimagine Junk Puppet workshop for National Endowment of the Arts Recipient Open Source Gallery’s KoKo NYC family program.

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## A Magical Week of Creativity: Paperhand Puppet Project Workshop with Woander

Briana Yarbrough

At the beginning of April, artists of all ages descended on Mill Valley’s O’Hanlon Center for the Arts for a week-long mask-building and giant puppet workshop led by Donovan Zimmerman of the acclaimed Paperhand Puppet Project.



Known for their breathtaking storytelling through towering puppets, handmade masks, and shadow theater, Paperhand strives to share the art of puppetry, which Donovan described as “the people’s art form,” as a means to foster resilient networks of connection between each other as humans, along with the Earth, and to promote peace and justice.

The workshop was dreamed up and hosted by SFBAPG member Matthew Purdon, who wished to create giant puppets for Wylding Woods, an interactive experience for children offered by his new family play store, Woander in Mill Valley.

Participants gathered each morning to learn the Paperhand method of building with papier-mâché, cardboard, and clay, gathering a few tricks of the craft developed by Zimmerman and co-founder Jan Burger at their Saxapahaw, North Carolina studio. The workshop culminated with the creation of stunning masks and large-scale puppets that echoed mythic archetypes, nature spirits, and whimsical woodland creatures, true to both Paperhand Puppets’ and Woander’s creative ethos.

One workshop attendee described the experience as a “wonderful week full of inspiration,” noting the communal atmosphere of shared purpose and hands-on making. Another related that she “went

in pretty open-minded and learned that I really enjoy puppetry.”

Joining in the workshop were several of SFBAPG’s members, including Lee Armstrong (who worked to sew the body of the giant puppets out of large swaths of fabric), along with Fred C Riley III, Lisa Zagone, Dahlia Yarbrough, and Brie PetrucciYarbrough. Member Heather Gobbée joined the group for Donovan’s show-and-tell presentation and talk, which was well-attended by Mill Valley community members on Wednesday evening. Guild participants left inspired to bring more giant creations to life, and excited to share learnings with fellow members at future meetings and workshops!

The week concluded with a celebratory puppet parade through Mill Valley’s Friday Farmer’s Market, with drumming, dancing, and the group’s colorful creatures weaving through the booths. Making his debut in the parade was Drak, a powerful Stone Wizard who floated ceremoniously behind a majestic Giant White Egret, which led the playful troupe. Masked creatures included owls, a fruit bat, fox, an African wild dog, along with a couple of whimsical and bejeweled characters.



The joyful procession brought smiles and rave reviews from Farmer’s Market vendors, reminding everyone of the power of art to uplift our communities and awaken wonder.

Woander will be hosting future workshops that continue to root creativity in community by encouraging families and kids to get involved in the magic of mask and puppet building. Stay tuned!

*Group and parade photos by Bob Hemstock, Studio photos by Lee Armstrong.*



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## Shadowlight Productions News

We will be having a traditional Balinese wayang performance at Bindlestiff Studio on May 9th at 7:30 PM. This event features a sliding-scale pay-what-you-can admission, with tickets available for purchase at the door until 7 PM on the day of the event. I'm attaching an image of our flyer and an Eventbrite link below with details:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/arjunas-meditation-wayang-bali-by-larry-reed-tickets-1308871051549?aff=oddtcreator>

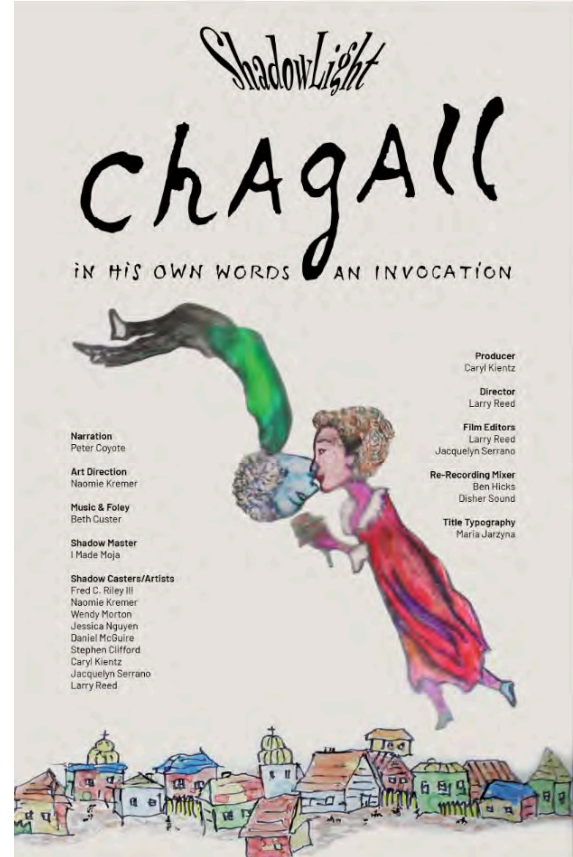
Additionally, our unreleased short film, *Chagall in His Own Words: An Invocation* (2025), will be screening at Gray Area for the [Love Lives in SF Film Festival](#) on May 9th from 5:00 to 9:30 PM.

RSVP link below:

<https://partiful.com/e/TA9WVlrTsRplos4KPdHf>

*Chagall in His Own Words: An Invocation* is an avant-garde shadow theater film that brings to life the early experiences and artistic inspirations of painter Marc Chagall. Using handcrafted puppets and layered shadow techniques, the film visually interprets Chagall's autobiography *Mein Leben*, offering a dreamlike exploration of his childhood, cultural influences, and artistic evolution. Narrated by Peter Coyote (English) and Tchéry Karyo (French), the film serves as an engaging educational resource for international audiences.





## From Ilene Kennedy

This is a hand puppet that I did while resting. It's all hand stitched baby Harp Seal ready to put a smile on a child's face this Christmas (This is to be A Kennedy Puppets Christmas Donation).  
 Designed by ILENE Kennedy

## Heather Gobbée is Sonoma County's Creative Educator of 2025



*(L-R) Martin, Heather and Phoenix Gobbée*

*Heather Gobbée is the deserving recipient of the Creative Educator of the Year award given by Creative Sonoma at the Luther Burbank Center in Santa Rosa. “The Arts Educator of the Year Award honors professional arts educators working with the K-12 population,” a press release announcing Gobbée’s award said. “It recognizes individuals who have made significant contributions to the advancement of arts education over an extended period.”*

*Heather is currently teaching visual arts to Adele Harris Middle School in Sonoma.*

*Recently she guided over 60 students as they created their own “muppet-style” puppets. She then directed them in the school talent show, where the puppets performed a show-stopping “NUEVAyol” by Bad Bunny with great success. When a student at the school was asked what he liked best in the talent show, he said “The puppet show. It had a puppet DJ and everything!” They have been invited to repeat their performance at Sonoma High School.*

*She has served as a director and associate director at Backyard Kids Theatre and taught adults with neuro divergences at De Colores Arts, a Sonoma-based community arts center. Heather is a very active member of our Guild, where she played a major role in bringing the N. CA Puppet Festival to Sonoma last year, and also taught a workshop on puppet improv and another on tabletop puppetry.*

*Below is an excerpt from the presentation tribute...*

*“This year’s honoree brings over 20 years of experience as an educator and has made her mark across disciplines-drama, puppetry, yoga and visual arts-while always centering creativity, inclusion and connection.*



*Heather has worked in public schools, private preschools and arts organizations, often designing programs from the ground up. She leads with compassion, especially in her work with neurodivergent students, creating welcoming spaces where every child feels seen, heard and empowered to express themselves.*

*Congratulations Heather!*

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## **Woander Opens Its Doors to Magic and Imagination in Mill Valley**



*Nestled in a charming storefront at 73 Throckmorton Avenue in Mill Valley, Woander celebrated its Grand Opening on Saturday, March 19. Visitors were welcomed by an enchanting mix of puppets—both large and small—alongside puppet-making activities, a magician, and of course, the new store itself.*

*The brainchild of Guild member Matthew Purdon, Woander is designed as a community hub where families and children can come together to explore games, attend creative workshops, and immerse themselves in magical experiences inspired by the Wylding Woods. Woander also features a wide variety of Folkmanis puppets.*

*Opening day featured a cast of extraordinary puppet characters. Barnaby, a lively green troll who played hopscotch and chatted with children, was created by Eric Wright of Puppet Kitchen in New York. A playful chipmunk and a soaring hawk, crafted by Hobey Ford of North Carolina, delighted the crowd. Agnor the dragon made a transatlantic journey from England, while Moss the caterpillar was built by talented Guild member Lisa Zagone.*

*More giant puppet characters will be unveiled in future chapters of the Wylding Woods adventures and during the upcoming Mill Valley Music Festival on May 10–11.*

*Congratulations to Matthew Purdon and his team for creating a welcoming home for imagination, storytelling, and community connection.*



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## Learn How to Film Puppets with Swazzle!



You can't film puppets without puppeteers! But, have you ever wondered how to hide the puppeteers? How do you frame the shots with puppets? Why is it so important for puppeteers to use a monitor? We answer all of these questions and more in our new How to Film Puppets video! Check it out at [How to Film Puppets - YouTube](#)

Also, while you're there, click on other Swazzle puppet demos and tips on their Youtube channel.

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## Fairyland @ 75: A Legacy of Magic



*Fairyland's rich history is highlighted this spring at the Oakland Museum of California (OMCA) in an installation titled **Fairyland @ 75: A Legacy of Magic** invites visitors to learn more about Fairyland's history, evolution, and enduring magic.*

*The collaborative installation includes a timeline of Fairyland's journey, a "then and now" look at its beloved park attractions, and a glimpse into the park's bright future. Visitors will discover miniatures created by local artists, photos of Magic Keys through the decades, and even one of Fairyland's original Jolly Trolley cars for kids and families to climb aboard. This feature celebrates Fairyland's lasting legacy and role in shaping Oakland's cultural landscape.*

*(except below from the Oaklandsider)*

*Kymberly Miller Ex. Director of Children's Fairyland planned the exhibit with Lori Fogarty, Ex. Director at the Oakland Museum. Longtime puppet theater director Randal Metz and Shannon Taylor, the director of art and restoration at the park put the exhibit together. Both Metz and Taylor have deep roots in Fairyland. Metz joined the park 55 years ago and has held various jobs since. Taylor has worked at the park for 15 years, volunteered before, and visited the park as a kid. One of the items in Metz's collection on display is his "Fairyland lifetime pass," which he received when he was 11.*

*For the complete article, go to **Oaklandside Fairyland at 75***

*Come visit this time tunnel of Fairyland history, open until Dec 7th. And mark your calendars for Fairyland's Day of Puppetry on BOTH days 8/23-24. This will be a special 75th celebration of shows and exhibits!*

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## The Portal to MIDDLEOF is Opening!



***The Puppetry Institute, Capitola Mall, 1855 41st Ave D-06 , Capitola, CA***

*Step into a realm where puppetry meets technology and imagination reigns supreme. Middleof invites you to dive into a surreal experience where every corner unveils a new enchantment. As you wander through its 5000 sq ft multisensory landscape, prepare to interact with larger-than-life mythical beings that come alive through touch, movement, artwork and light.*

*Operated by The Puppetry Institute, a local non-profit dedicated to the arts, Middleof not only promises a feast for the senses but also supports young artists through its scholarship program. A third of the installation's profits will fund these initiatives, fostering creativity and providing employment opportunities for Bay Area actors and artists. More Info at <https://www.thepuppetryinstitute.org/>*

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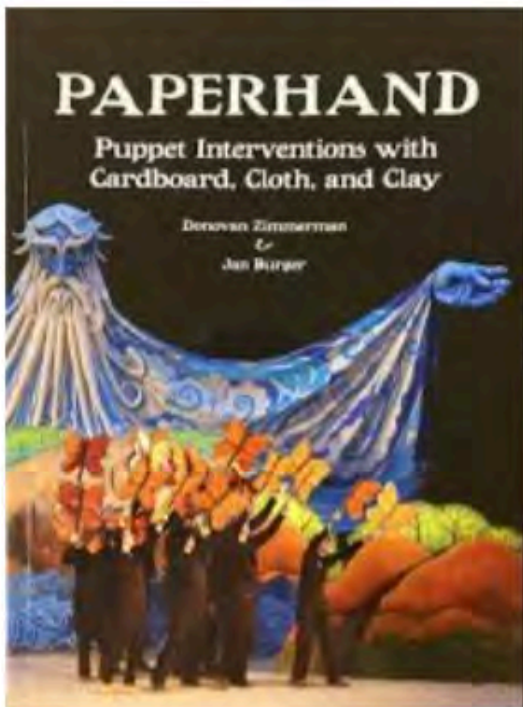
## Heather Gobbée Shares Photos

Thank you @adamkruetinger, dahlia & hug o for their Snoof & Making of a Monster patterns and advice. Thank you Allison at Folkmanis for their donated puppets which allowed kids morning my class to participate in the Talent show & upcoming State of The District on May 6th





## NEW: Paperhand: Puppet Interventions Joins Guild Library



*This visually-stunning book is a lookback on Paperhand Puppet Intervention's two decades of giant puppet pageantry, community-building and genre-defying art. Co-creative founders/directors Donovan Zimmerman and Jan Berger share memories of the genesis of Paperhand and its 23 completely original and enchanting puppet pageants, plus interventions, parades and glimpses behind-the-scenes, revealing how they deftly weave together the strands of art and environmental activism into "artivism" that inspires audiences to revere and protect the natural world.*

*It's a deep dive into the myth, the ethos and beauty behind their craft and is a giant love letter to the Paperhand community of ingenious dreamers, makers, musicians and puppeteers.*

*Paperhand: Puppet Interventions and other Guild library books will be available for checkout at the June 7th Guild meeting in Sacramento. You can also request a specific book from the hundreds of*

books, from the history of puppets, construction, stages, puppets in education, etc. It's easy to see what books are available by going to <https://sfbapg.org/library-online/>. Or if at [www.sfbapg.org](http://www.sfbapg.org) select Resources, then Library. Then contact the Guild Librarian, Lee Armstrong at [library@sfbapg.org](mailto:library@sfbapg.org). If you have a borrowed book, please return it at the June 7th Guild meeting. If you can't make the meeting, please mail it to Lee at 720 Ladera Dr., Sonoma, CA 95476.

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## New episode of Under The Puppet is available May 1!

My guest is puppeteer, builder and director Adrian Rose Leonard! Adrian has one of my favorite path to puppetry stories so far. She's puppeteered on TV shows like Waffles & Mochi's Restaurant, Crank Yankers and Mr. Neighbor's House as well as movies such as If It Bleeds and The Butthole Surfers: The Hole Truth and Nothing Butt. She's also directed several projects including short films and music videos. She's a huge proponent of Puppetry Guilds and we talk at length about what the LA Puppetry Guild did for her puppetry career.

Episode is available May 1, 2025, wherever you get your podcasts or at [underthepuppet.com](http://underthepuppet.com) <<http://underthepuppet.com/>>

