



Congratulations to newly elected board members, Heather Gobbée and David Garden, and re-elected board member Beth Choy, and a big welcome to Lisa Zagone who has stepped in to replace a previous board member.

The board and guild membership would like to extend a huge thank you to retiring board members Ilene Kennedy, who served as vice president and Valerie Nelson, who served as treasurer, for their years of service to the guild.

Hello, SFBAPG Friends! (from your guild president)

As we reach the midpoint of 2025, I want to extend a huge THANK YOU to every member of the San Francisco Bay Area Puppeteers Guild. Your passion, creativity, and community spirit have made this year truly special.

We've already shared some fantastic moments together, with workshops, performances, and hands-on puppet-making that brought smiles to kids and adults alike.

"What's next," you ask? Be sure to read through this newsletter for details on upcoming events and dates you want to save.

Share What You See!

If you spot any puppetry events, displays, or workshops in your community—whether it's a library show, a museum exhibit, or a street performance—please send the details to newsletter@sfbapg.org. We love to spread the word so all our friends and colleagues can join in the fun. The more we share, the stronger our puppetry community becomes!

Thank you again for making SFBAPG such a vibrant, welcoming, and creative group. Let's keep the puppets moving and the laughter flowing for the rest of 2025!

With puppetry gratitude,

Talib Huff, President, San Francisco Bay Area Puppeteers Guild

P.S. Don't forget to check out our website at www.sfbapg.org for the latest news, event updates, and resources!

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Step into the world of tabletop puppetry with acclaimed puppeteer, Fred C. Riley III in an immersive and dynamic workshop designed for performers of all levels.

WHEN: July 19-20, 2025, 10-3pm

WHERE: [Marin Theater Company](#), [397 Miller Ave](#), [Mill Valley, CA](#)

COST: \$200 (However, when registering, if you are a guild member, your rate will automatically change to \$175, supported through the generosity of the Nick Barone Scholarship Fund. If this discount doesn't happen, please contact membership@sfbapg.org)

Register at [Master the Art of Tabletop Puppetry ve 2-Day Workshop – SFBAPG – San Francisco Bay Area Puppeteers Guild](#)

This class offers a unique opportunity to learn the foundational techniques that bring puppets to life through the artistry of gravity, focus, and breath.

Whether you're a curious beginner or a seasoned puppeteer looking to refine your skills, this workshop will cover:

- The Basics of Tabletop Puppetry: Understand how gravity informs natural movement, how focus tells a story, and how breath brings subtle realism to performance.
- Solo and Ensemble Techniques: Learn how to animate a single figure with one, two, or even three puppeteers in harmony.
- Hands-On Training: Participants will gain practical experience manipulating tabletop puppets under Fred's expert guidance.

Fred C. Riley III is founder and artistic director of Odd Savvy <https://oddsavvy.com/>. He brings years of performance, directing, and puppetry expertise to this exciting class. Fred has worked with Jon Ludwig, Ping Chong, Janie Geiser, Yeng Feng, Josef Krofta, and Larry Reed, to name a few of the iconic directors that he has learned from over many years in puppet theater. He has performed marionettes from 9 foot to 7 inches tall. He has performed rod, moving mouth, Czech black, tabletop, mask, and every combination thereof. He has performed shadow with press screen, overhead, and 30 foot wide cinematic. He has directed and written for the Center for Puppetry Arts and many others. He choreographed for Ping Chong and Company. He has taught movement and puppet theory. He voiced many

puppets and has done voice over work for many companies. He has recorded and done sound design. Immediately after this workshop, Fred will be working with Basil Twist (MacArthur Genius winner) on “The Monkey King” at the S.F. Opera. His passion for collaborative storytelling and precision movement makes this a must-attend event for artists, educators, and theater enthusiasts alike.

Take a sneak peek at these whimsical tabletop puppets, lovingly hand-crafted by Lisa Zagone for this workshop!



Fairyland Celebrates 75 Years with a Special 2 Day Puppet Fair!



(Photos above of shows appearing Fairyland's Puppet Fair)

Every summer since 1956, Fairyland has been proud to host a world-class celebration of puppetry.

Spectacular puppet productions of the highest caliber are yours to behold at Fairyland for two days in a row, Aug 23-24.

Premiere puppeteers from all over the country bring their elaborate, exquisite art form to the park and add to the roster of delightful shows. Educational displays in the Merry Meadow allow viewers to learn about puppetry, types of puppets, and the history of the art form.

For many decades, the SFBAPG has helped at Puppet Fair. Because of their anniversary celebration, we are participating in both Sat & Sun, with a Make-a-Puppet booth, walkaround puppet greeters and a Guild Puppet Info booth.

This is a wonderful opportunity to meet other puppet enthusiasts, see great shows and share your love of the art with others. Please help by signing up at <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20F0A44ACAE2AA7F49-57426169-volunteers>

Admission is free for Guild members. Join us for one magical weekend of puppet fun!

More info transportation, parking, etc. at <https://fairyland.org/visit/#hours-admission>

More info on Puppet Fair shows at <https://fairyland.org/event-calendar/puppet-fair-weekend/>

Full Schedule of Shows:

Saturday, August 23:

11:00 – “What Makes a King” by Children’s Fairyland (Maya legend-Puppets and script by Randal Metz)

12:00 – “Mother Goose Land or Jack & the Beanstalk” [Fratello Marionettes](#)

1:00 – “Little Red Riding Hood” by [Puppet Art Theater Co.](#)

2:00 – “Splashy Sea Saga” by [Luce Puppet Co.](#)

3:00 – [Bob Baker Marionette Theater](#)

4:00 – “What Makes a King” by Children’s Fairyland

Sunday, August 24:

11:00 – “What Makes a King”

12:00 – “Puppet Lady”

1:00 – “Three Little Pigs” by [Magical Moonshine Theatre](#)

2:00 – “Splashy Sea Saga” by [Luce Puppetry](#)

3:00 – Bob Baker Marionette Theater

4:00 – “What Makes a King” by Children’s Fairyland

June Guild Meeting in Sacramento

Our June meeting, held in the welcoming classroom space generously provided by Moddy Himmel, was a celebration of creativity and collaboration. Members and guests alike enjoyed a vibrant afternoon of learning, sharing, and hands-on creativity.

A highlight of the meeting was the engaging panel discussion on giant puppets. Three outstanding presenters—Michael Nelson, Elizabeth Leonard, and Heather Gobbee—shared their expertise and passion for large-scale puppetry. Each presenter brought unique insights, displaying detailed design lines and captivating photos that showcased the possibilities and challenges of creating puppets on a grand scale. The session reached an exciting peak with the unveiling of an actual giant puppet head: "Mama Cat." This impressive piece, ingeniously transformed from an Uncle Sam puppet, demonstrated the artistry and resourcefulness that define our guild. Members had the opportunity to examine the construction up close, sparking lively discussion and inspiration for future projects.

Following the panel, members participated in a make and take processional puppet workshop. The hands-on session was a resounding success, with participants of all skill levels collaborating to create vibrant puppets ready for parades and performances. The workshop fostered a spirit of creativity and camaraderie, reaffirming the guild's commitment to accessible and joyful puppet-making.

We extend heartfelt thanks to Michael Nelson, Elizabeth Leonard, and Heather Gobbee for their outstanding presentations and for sharing their creative journeys with us. Special gratitude goes to Moddy Himmel for providing her classroom space, which offered the perfect environment for learning and collaboration.



(Photos above) Mark Sage (with Michael Nelson in upper L photo), a long time guild member now living in Utah, surprised everyone by showing up for a meet and greet at the June guild meeting. Attendees learned about and made giant puppets in Moddy Himmel's wonderful workshop space. Also pictured are Elizabeth Leonard, David Baker, Olivia Huff (Talib was taking the photos), Lorelai, Brittany and David Angstead, Moddy Himmel, Heather Gobbee, and David Garden.

Giant Puppets on July 4

Since 2007, the Vallejo Giant Puppet Project has been parading giant creations through the streets of Vallejo. With crews of 25-30 folks, made up of Guild and community members, all kinds of processional street theatre takes place each year, with 2025 being no exception. This year the crew takes on the theme

of Immigration; America is for everyone. Anyone interested in joining the crew last minute can email mnelson@sfbapg.org or mail@magicalmoonshine.org. The parade is July 4, gathering at 9am, step off at 10am. Lunch at Nelsons to follow!

Rumor has it that the Woander crew is also doing a July 4 giant puppet parade in Marin County. No information about that was shared with the newsletter by press time.



**Napa Valley
Puppetry
Festival**
July 25-26•2025
At The White Barn
Saint Helena, California

The White Barn will host this multi-day event of performances, puppet making activities, interactive demonstrations, and more!

From the tiniest finger puppets to giant puppets, our festival will ignite the imagination, sense of wonder, playfulness and creativity of children and adults alike.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFO AND TICKETS](#)

For the second year in a row, Napa Valley Puppetry Festival will present a weekend of puppetry at the beautiful and pastoral White Barn performance space in St. Helena. Set in the hills above Napa Valley, this private estate will fill with puppet shows, puppet making events, a giant puppet parade and more. Last year's event was fantastic.

This year there will be performances by Fratello Marionettes, Magical Moonshine Theatre and Forbidden Puppet Cabaret will host a Saturday night puppet slam for adult audiences, featuring Brian Narelle with Warren Peace, Canine Poet, a new piece from Fred Riley and Lisa Zagone, Little Blue Moon Theatre, Uel McGinnis and more, with live music and adult refreshments as well.



Rare revival of Magical Moonshine's Cirque du Cafe at Folklore Cafe in Napa on July 13, 4PM.

Ordinary objects do the impossible in this table top cafe circus with live French musette accordion music. Not seen for many years, this Bastille Day celebration at Folklore will include such acts as salt and pepper shaker trapeze artists, a rather stern egg tamer, a wine bottle magician and much more. Tickets \$12.00. For more info, email us at mail@magicalmoonshine.org.

Swazzle Wins Best Comedy Short at Palm Springs Film Festival



Sean & Patrick Johnson of Swazzle Inc. built a snappy ice cream man puppet and performed it in a short film "Your Own Flavor". It has won Best Comedy Short at the Palm Springs International Short Film Festival 2025! The short isn't released yet, but the trailer can be seen at <https://vimeo.com/1078094936>. Congratulations to our two talented Guild members who make Swazzle a dynamic puppet company!

Classifieds

Wanted-Puppeteers for Giant Puppet Collective

SFBAPG member Hank Pellissier is hoping to start a Giant Street Puppet Collective. If any members of SFBAPG make or operate street puppets, and want to participate

with those puppets in a political rally - anti-war or anti-Trump - please contact Hank
at raccoon-action@gmail.com



Puppeteer Wanted

San Francisco Bay area puppeteer wanted to perform “Ubu Trump,” a short street theatre puppet play. Play portrays a comic tyrant and his wife, sort of an American Punch and Judy. For copy of script or other information contact jschech@sfsu.edu

