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Next Guild Event

Come One, Come All to Fairyland's 75 Anniversary Celebration with a Special 2 Day Puppet Fair!



Every summer since 1956, Fairyland has been proud to host a world-class celebration of puppetry. This year, Fairyland is celebrating 75 years and Puppet Fair is a 2-day event, Aug 23-24. Fairyland is an important hub for the puppet community, and has been a training ground for many now famous puppeteers, including Frank Oz, Jerry Juhl (Muppets) Tony Urbano (Men In Black, etc.) local artists Randal Metz, Kevin Menegus, and many others. Puppet Fair is a wonderful opportunity to meet other puppet enthusiasts, see great shows and share your love of the art with others.

Volunteer! For decades, the SFBAPG has helped at Puppet Fair. Because this is their anniversary celebration, we are participating on both Sat & Sun, with a Make-a-Puppet booth, walkaround puppet greeters and a Guild Puppet Info booth. Please help by signing up at

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<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20F0A44ACAE2AA7F49-57426169-volunteers>. We hope all Guild members will volunteer a bit of time.

Membership: Admission to Fairyland is free to Guild members. The membership list is given to Fairyland for admission. If your membership has lapsed, please renew before 08/20 at <https://sfbapg.org/membership/>.

Entry Info: There are 2 entrance times. 10:30 & 12:30. Our host, **Maria Rodriguez** of Fairyland will meet us at the front entrance by the Big Shoe. Please arrive at least 5 minutes beforehand. Maria will check your name off her list, so we can enter on time. If you miss the 10:30 or 12:30 guild entrance, your name will be on a list at the box office for entry. If you have any trouble, ask the park attendant at the entrance to call **Maria**, who will come get you.

If you are bringing guests, they should buy tickets in advance and then tickets will be scanned at the gate.

Contact: If you have problems or questions, especially at Puppet Fair, contact Lee Armstrong (Guild Secretary) by phone or text 707 738-5906.

Guild Meeting & After Party: There will be a short guild meeting on Sat., after the 4pm show in the Cinderella area right next to the puppet theater. Come hear the latest puppet news and gather as a group. If you can stay a bit longer, the Puppet Fair After Party called Puppet People Potluck starts at 4:45pm in the Merry Meadow located right next to the puppet theater. It's a chance for past and present Fairyland puppeteers, Puppet Fair performers, Guild & Driveway Follies friends to gather together for an evening of snacks and conversation. Please bring something to share.



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: please note that Elizabeth Luce with “Splashy Sea Saga” is NOT going to be able to make it to the Puppet Fair this year. Replacement TBA.



(Photos of shows appearing at Puppet Fair)

Saturday, August 23:

- 11:00 – “What Makes a King” by Children’s Fairyland (Maya legend-Puppets and script by Randal Metz)
- 11:20 – Puppet Playdate hosted by Quercus in the Merry Meadow
- 12:00 – Vaudeville Follies [Fratello Marionettes](#)
- 1:00 – “Little Red Riding Hood” by [Puppet Art Theater Co.](#)
- 2:00 – TBA
- 2:30 – Puppet Playdate hosted by Quercus in the Merry Meadow
- 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”
- 11:20 – Puppet Playdate hosted by Quercus in the Merry Meadow
- 12:00 – “Puppet Lady”
- 1:00 – “Three Little Pigs” by [Magical Moonshine Theatre](#)
- 2:00 – TBA
- 2:30 – Puppet Playdate hosted by Quercus in the Merry Meadow
- 3:00 – Bob Baker Marionette Theater
- 4:00 – “What Makes a King” by Children’s Fairyland

The Puppet Fair is made possible in part by a grant from the **Cook/Marks Fund**.

Your Guild Library Will be at Fairyland Aug 23-24

The Guild library is a treasure trove of puppet books. Some of these books will be at the Guild Info booth on 8/23-24. Come, puruse, and check out.

You can also request a specific book(s) 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 select Resources. Email Lee Armstrong by 8/20 at library@sfbapg.org and she'll bring your book(s) to Fairyland.

Please bring back any borrowed books. If you can't make Fairyland, please mail back to Guild Librarian, Lee Armstrong at 720 Ladera Dr., Sonoma, CA 95476.

Parade Puppets Welcome at Fairyland's 75th Birthday Party

Labor Day, Monday, September 1, 2025



If you can't come to Children's Fairyland for their annual Puppet Fair and still want to help them celebrate their big 75th birthday (or if you came for Puppet Fair and this too sounds fun) please consider volunteering to be a part of a parade from Bart to Fairyland on September 1, 2025, 9:30 a.m. to 10:00. Then stay out front of the park to welcome guests for the big day! It would be amazing to have a few giant puppets to walk the parade back to the park, but any size of puppet is welcome. You can leave whenever you'd like, but if you'd like to stay, there is a special Puppet Meet and Greet before the 11am show that starts at 10:45am. The new show is called, "Tío Conejo's Big Wish." It is Fairyland's first fully bilingual show and the first puppet show written and created by Maria Rodriguez for Fairyland.

If you'd like to participate, please contact Uel McGinnis, Programming Head, at programming@sfbapg.org and he'll put you on the list and will be your contact at the parade. At 10:30, Maria Rodriguez will escort you to the puppet theater, in time for the talk and 11 am show.

Check out other Fairyland Special activities at <https://fairyland.org/>

SHARI & LAMBCHOP

A FILM BY LISA D'APOLITO

At the [Smith Rafael Film Center](#) in San Rafael
on August 10 at 4:30 pm

"The moving cinematic tribute Shari Lewis
deserves." – Christopher Llewellyn Reed, [Film](#)

[Festival Today](#). Watch the trailer [here](#).



Lee Armstrong, Guild Librarian, who worked on Shari's last TV project, will introduce the documentary. The Center welcomes the Guild and has provided a promotional code, SHERI25, (not case sensitive) which will reveal a \$9 ticket. If you'd like to join Lee and other Guild members, email her at library@sfbapg.org to sit together, or just turn up. Also, if desired, the Center is downtown with lots of opportunities to go out for beverages and conversation afterwards.

Before Fred Rogers and Jim Henson, there was Shari Lewis, a children's television pioneer whose whimsical characters and ebullient spirit have guided generations of children. Raised in the Bronx by a proud feminist mother and a professor father who moonlighted as Peter Pan the Magic Man, Shari became a multitalented dancer, singer, and magician. But when an injury sidelined her dance aspirations, she channeled her creativity into a passion for ventriloquism, creating the now beloved sock puppet characters Charlie Horse, Hush Puppy and, of course, Lamb Chop. From her early years of TV success to the blow of her show's cancellation to her 1990s comeback, Lisa D'Apollito's (*Love, Gilda*) heartfelt documentary charts the life, loves, and career hits and misses of a spunky perfectionist whose talent and perseverance stand as a testament to women's power and forever changed the landscape of children's entertainment. Featuring interviews with ventriloquists inspired by Lewis alongside nostalgia-rich clips and home movies, this vibrant portrait brims with the same warmth, wit, and magic that defined her, celebrating the power of imagination and the inner child within us all.

**Tabletop Puppetry Comes to Life in Two-Day Masterclass with Fred C. Riley III,
July 19–20, Marin Theatre Company – Mill Valley, CA**



Puppets took center stage in a remarkable weekend workshop as the Marin Theatre Company hosted the *Tabletop Puppetry Masterclass* with master puppeteer **Fred C. Riley III**. Over two immersive days, participants of all skill levels dove deep into the art of tabletop puppet manipulation, emerging with new insights, skills, and a shared sense of creative discovery.

Fred's workshop was notably inclusive, offering everyone—from absolute beginners to seasoned performers—a supportive space to explore and refine movement techniques using tabletop puppets. His thoughtful, structured approach focused not only on mechanics but also on intention, storytelling, and presence.

Day One: Solo Manipulation – *Focus, Gravity & Breath*

The first day of the workshop centered on solo manipulation. Each participant was tasked with controlling a tabletop puppet alone, a challenge that demanded both precision and subtlety. Fred demonstrated a short piece of choreography, guiding puppeteers through the movements of walking, looking, and gesturing—all while maintaining the illusion of breath and gravity in the puppet.

Participants repeated the piece multiple times, gradually finding rhythm and still moments in their performances. With each repetition, clear improvements were visible as the puppets came to life.

Day Two: Ensemble Performance – *Three Minds, One Puppet*

The second day brought a shift to ensemble work, where teams of three shared control of a single puppet—one performer each for the head, hands, and feet. This collaboration allowed for more dynamic and expressive performances. Groups revisited the choreography from Day One, but this time, the puppet had more potential for movement. Teams explored basic walks, slow motion movement, swimming and more. Each group had their own table, each table became a stage and it was quite mesmerizing to see puppets, all animated with care and coordination.

Behind the Scenes Support

Thank you to **Fred** for giving this workshop. Fred was joined by **Lisa Zagone** and **Jessica Nguyen**, who assisted with demonstrations and provided hands-on support to participants throughout the weekend. Lisa also hand-crafted every tabletop puppet used in the workshop—many of which found new homes with attendees after the event. Jessica documented the weekend with a series of beautiful photographs, some of which you see here.

This two-day masterclass was made possible through the support of the **Nick Barone Scholarship Fund**, which awarded two scholarships and provided \$25 discounts for Guild members. And to the **SFBAPG** for supporting this two-day venture, with a special shout out to Lisa for coordinating the workshop and Valerie for writing all the checks. Additional thanks to **John Arnold** for your invaluable help with registration. Thank you Uel McGinnis for social media outreach, and Wing Shum who ensured everyone was well-caffeinated and had snacks.

The **Marin Theatre Company** provided a great venue, and **Jackie Katz**, MTC's Education Director, welcomed participants with warmth and enthusiasm.

To Fred, his assistants, the volunteers, the Guild, and every participant who showed up ready to learn and explore—**THANK YOU**. This weekend wasn't just about puppets; it was about community, creativity, and the joy of bringing characters to life, one movement at a time.

And good news! Fred will be hosting a future series of workshops, including advanced techniques for tabletop, shadow theater, choreography starting with workshop Sept 20 & 21 at Paul Drescher studio in Oakland. Details to come.

And lastly, from one of the participants...

Something that really resonated with me during Fred's workshop was the subtle emphasis on silhouetting. I think it's a concept that can easily become subconscious. Trying not to cover the puppet as much as possible makes a lot of sense, though it's not something I spend a lot of time thinking about. For me specifically, many of the puppets I tend to work with don't even put me in a position where I'm consciously thinking about silhouetting. So when I'm working with a puppet that has a lot of direct manipulation without controls, it pushes me to think more critically and creatively about how I am using and puppeteering that puppet. – Hugo Shum



Guild Programming

Programming would like to thank not only Fred & Lisa and all the people who made the Tabletop workshop such a success, but also David Garden Jr. for putting together the Napa Valley Puppet Festival. Two events in back to back weekends were really great, and did a lot to help promote the art form. - Uel McGinnis, Programming Chair

All Guild members are welcome to attend the Guild Programming meetings. Bring your ideas and help create events that further the art of puppetry. Programming meetings are on the 2nd Tuesday of each month on Zoom. The next one is **Tues. Aug 12 at 6:30**. If you'd like to attend, please contact Uel at programming@sfbapg.org for the Zoom link.

Guild Members Celebrate July 4 with Giant Puppets in Vallejo

The Vallejo 4th of July parade once again featured the Vallejo Giant Puppet Project, with an entry themed around how the United States was built on immigration, as well as celebrating the local aquatic ecosystems and environment. Guild members joined local community volunteers, forming a group of almost thirty puppeteers to bring the giants to life.

The puppet parade entry was led by the swimming mare, of Mare Island (Mariano Vallejo's mare was lost, then found on the island, giving it its name.) The mare's head is controlled by cables by a puppeteer at the back of the puppet, and can move both up and down and look side to side as it "swims" in the Bay.



Behind the mare, acting out the story of the search for the lost mare, came Mariano Vallejo and wife, Benicia, in a small boat, calling to the crowd, asking if they had seen the lost horse.



Following this historical tale reenactment came the whimsical submarine with pelican puppet pilot, created by Lisa Zagone and Michael Nelson, and brought to life by Fred Riley III.



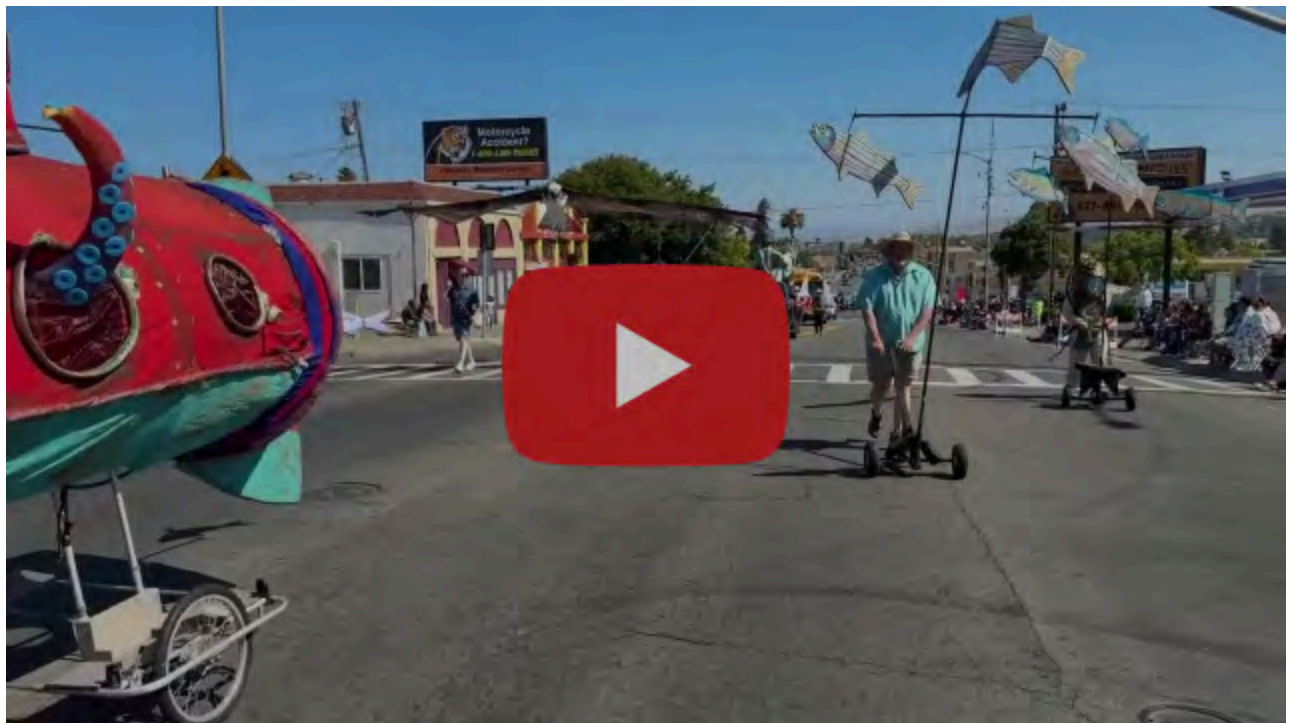
Above, Lisa and Fred mount the seagull mobile to the submarine.

The submarine was accompanied by deep sea divers and fish from the SF Bay/Napa River ecosystem. The fish were being hunted by a large osprey puppet (ospreys now regularly nest on Vallejo's Mare Island.)



Above, Valerie Nelson is safe underwater, as the osprey hunts above.

Bringing up the rear of the giant puppetry entry was Lady Liberty, with her welcoming sign, and a bevy of boat people, following behind her, immigrating to the U.S. The crowds watching got it and enthusiastically cheered the pro-immigrant messaging.



Napa Valley Puppetry Festival, 2025

The White Barn in St Helena hosted its second Napa Valley Puppetry Festival last week. Guild board member David Garden produced two days of shows, puppet crafts, and a giant puppet parade with food, Folkmanis puppets and lots of family and adult puppet fun. Many guild members performed or attended the event, set in the beautiful hills west of St Helena. Fratello Marionettes and Magical Moonshine Theatre brought family fare, and the evening slam included Uel McGinnis, Elizabeth Leonard, Dalrymple Macalpin, Lisa Zagone, and Michael and Valerie Nelson



Above, left, festival director and guild board member, David Garden. To right, kids (and adults!) had a chance to pick up a puppet and do their own outdoor show at the fest.



Above, Vallejo Giant Puppet Project had a new salmon to chase in the festival's giant puppet parade, which featured Mill Valley's Woander giants as well as puppets presented by Suskol Intertribal Council and others.



At the Saturday night Forbidden Puppet Cabaret, guild members Uel McGinnis (shown in puppet form) and Elizabeth Leonard joined other guild members to present an evening of puppetry for adults to a nearly full house.

Festival Director David writes (and shares the photos, below): **Folks had a great time at the Napa Valley Puppetry Festival last weekend. Puppet making, Giant Puppet Parade, great performances by The Puppet Man, Fratello Marionettes, Magical Moonshine Theatre, and a fantastic Forbidden Puppet Cabaret! Thanks to all who made our little festival a delight.**





Needed: Puppets Created by Lettie Schubert



Mill Valley will be celebrating its 125th anniversary on the Labor Day Weekend. As part of the celebrations, we would like to share the work of Lettie Schubert with the current Mill Valley community and the Bay Area.

Lettie Schubert was a founding member of our Guild, a past President, a tireless supporter of puppetry, as well as notable TV and stage puppeteer. If anyone has any puppets or other materials of interest that could be on display during the celebrations on Labor Day, Monday Sept 1st, please contact Lee Armstrong, Guild librarian ASAP at library@sfbapg.org or 707 738-5906 cell. The puppets will be attended at all times during the display. More info about the celebrations can be found at: <https://www.cityofmillvalley.gov/2128/Mill-Valley-Celebrates-125>

Matthew Purdon, Woander 415-407-5954



New episode of Under The Puppet arrives August 1, 2025. My guest is the wildly creative Vanessa Valliere! Vanessa Valliere creates original solo theater shows combining elements of clown and puppetry. She's performed these shows all over the world and often performs at the Chicago International Puppet Theater Festival. She's also toured with the Manual Cinema and she recently attended the National Puppetry Conference at the O'Neill for the very first time. You can hear my chat with Vanessa wherever you get your podcasts or over at UnderThePuppet.com



Film “Sunlight” Recommendation, by Grant Baciocco

On June 13 I went and saw the film *Sunlight*, Starring and Directed by ventriloquist Nina Conti. You have probably seen her videos online with there puppet Monkey. This is one of the most powerful films I’ve ever seen. I couldn’t stop thinking about it for days after. *Sunlight* is hilarious, shocking, weird and heartwarming, but it’s also near impossible to explain the plot. It’s not for kids, I’ll say that much. Nina is in the Monkey suit for 90% of the film and the emotion she gets out of the face that only has a moving mouth is incredible.

The screening I went to featured a talkback afterwards with Nina and her costar and the writer of the film, Shenoah Allen. During the talkback I asked her how many Monkey suits were used in production (because they get wet, dirty, etc in the film). Only two were used, which surprised me, but this was a super low budget film. Currently the film is available to rent or buy from Amazon or Apple and I highly recommend it. I've watched it twice since I bought it and I won't stop singing it's praises for a long time.

Ilene Kennedy shared some photos of her recently made puppets.



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