



## **Save the date for the Guild Holiday Party**

**Saturday, February 21, 2026**

**Time TBD but in the afternoon**

## **Vallejo Naval and History Museum in Vallejo**

It has been a decades long tradition to not plan a holiday party for guild members in December since many puppeteers are busy performing at other people's parties during this celebratory season. Therefore it has been our tradition to have the party in the early part of the new year and celebrate any and all holidays. Join us for puppet fun in the New Year!



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## **Time to Renew (or Rejoin!) Your San Francisco Bay Area Puppeteers Membership for 2026**

It is hard to believe, but the year is swiftly drawing to a close, and with it, the current membership cycle for the San Francisco Bay Area Puppeteers Guild (SFBAPG) is coming to an end. We want to extend a huge thank you for your involvement and support throughout this past year. Your passion and commitment are what keep our vibrant community thriving, connecting artists, sharing skills, and promoting the wonderful craft of puppetry across the Bay Area. We sincerely hope you have enjoyed the workshops, performances, meetings, and

camaraderie we have shared, and we are excited to offer you the opportunity to continue being a part of our network.

The San Francisco Bay Area Puppeteers Guild membership year officially runs from **January 1st through December 31st**. However, you don't have to wait until the new year to secure your place in our guild! We are happy to announce that **renewal for the 2026 membership year is officially open now**. By renewing early, you ensure your uninterrupted access to all the fantastic benefits the SFBAPG provides. This includes discounts on workshops and events, the chance to showcase your work, access to valuable resources, and continued connection with a dedicated, supportive community.

Don't let your membership lapse! Or, **if you have let your membership lapse in the past, now is the perfect time to rejoin and support the Guild**. Taking just a few minutes today guarantees that you will be set for a full year of puppetry inspiration. Furthermore, consider **giving the gift of membership**. It is a wonderful way to treat yourself to a year of creativity and connection, or to surprise a friend, colleague, or aspiring puppeteer in your life with a gift that lasts all year long.

Whether you are renewing for yourself, rejoining after a break, or gifting a membership to a fellow puppet enthusiast, your support is a vital contribution that funds our programs and outreach efforts. We encourage you to visit our website today to complete the easy renewal process. We look forward to welcoming you back for 2026 and celebrating another year of innovation, creativity, and puppet magic!

## **[JOIN/RENEW TODAY](#)**

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### **Monkey King Tickets for Lucky Guild Members**

Wing & Hugo Shum, very active Guild members, went to one of the excellent puppetry workshops leading up to The Monkey King performances at the SF Opera. Wing met Cole Thomason-Redus, of the Opera's Department of Engagement, and in conversation shared info about our Puppet Guild. Cole mentioned that the opera might be able to help with a discount for tickets for Monkey King. She passed this info on and to our very great surprise and delight, the Opera contacted us regarding 10 free tickets for the dress rehearsal of The Monkey King. And then added 10 more tickets.

As the November newsletter had already gone out and we had only a few days to find recipients for this gift, our President Talib Huff volunteered to coordinate the ticket distribution. Michael Nelson immediately sent out a Mailchimp and John Arnold did a signup and got info on our website. All tickets were taken immediately.

Many thanks to Cole and the SF Opera for providing this wonderful opportunity. Thanks to Wing for seeking out this possibility. And to Talib, John and Michael for coordinating the distribution so quickly and making this happen.

**Congratulations Monkey King Puppeteers**

Congratulations to two of our talented Guild members, Fred C. Riley III and Esther de Monteflores. They were two of the three performers who brought the Monkey King puppet to life. Incredible work! No photos are allowed during performance, but here's a couple taken during the standing ovation. (photos below)



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## TV Puppetry Workshop with Lee Armstrong at Images in Motion

*By DahliaYarbrough*



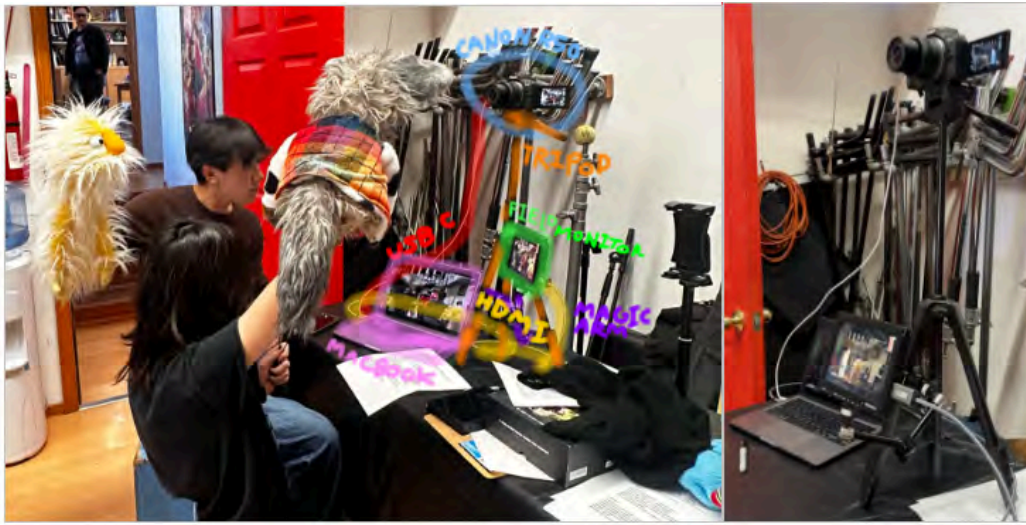


A day of monitor work and Snapple Crunch snack auditions took place in Sonoma this November during Lee Armstrong's TV Puppetry Workshop, hosted at [Images in Motion Studio](#). Puppeteers learned many helpful tips from how to achieve perfect eye focus (including an interesting lesson on the subtle eye focus techniques used by Dave Goelz when working Gonzo), how to lip sync to some of our favorite songs, and developing characters using a short skit.

It was so entertaining to watch the different approaches to the script, including delightful improv and unique voices from each group! The ability to practice with a professional monitor set up (complete with amazing lighting designed by Bill Ferguson) was extremely helpful, allowing for the participants to experience what it is like to work on a real Henson set (and fool around with improvised scenes during lunch). The addition of Hugo Shum's portable monitor set up (Scroll down for an explanation of Hugo's set up!) also showed how monitors come in all shapes and sizes (even in the form of an iphone connected to a Macbook and screen mirrored)!

Shoutout to Adie Valavanis and Kieron Robbins from Images in Motion for working the camera and troubleshooting during some technical difficulties. Thank you so much Lee for giving Hugo and I the opportunity to take this incredible workshop!

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## Simple Monitor Solution for Puppetry

*By Hugo Shum*

I brought a small mobile monitor setup to the workshop. The entire system was fully self powered, meaning it didn't need to be plugged into any outlets and could have been brought outside. With its small size and decent power supply this setup could virtually go anywhere. Every monitor setup has 3 things in common

1. a camera - the device capturing or broadcasting the image
2. a connection - usually a cable such as HDMI or VGA that links the camera to the display
3. a monitor - the screen that outputs the image from the camera

My setup utilized a feature on my camera to essentially get double the available monitors using my computer. I used a Canon R50, which can function as a webcam, allowing me to directly connect my camera to my laptop using a USB-C cable. This itself could have been good enough but I was able to do more. From there connecting a field monitor to the laptop with a HDMI cable I was able to mirror the computer's image onto the small monitor. An advantage of using the computer as a middleman was that I could record the footage directly to my laptop and also adjust the image output if I wanted to crop it or flip it. Though I could have also directly connected using a HDMI cable to my camera and field monitor, but I chose this method because it allowed me to maximize the amount of monitors I could have.

Another even simpler method, but limited to Apple devices is screen mirroring. This feature allows you to wirelessly mirror one device's screen on another, such as sending a phone's display to a MacBook. Using this you could create a monitor setup mirroring your phone while using the camera. This can be a convenient method to people already with Apple devices, but sometimes there can be noticeable delay and it requires Wi-Fi.

It's important to note that you don't have to buy the same equipment I used. As I said, all you need is those three basic components. You may have an old TV at home, or you might find a

cheap one at a thrift store. You might even have an old camcorder lying around that still works. Any of these can create a simple and effective monitor setup with no expensive gear required.

With all of that being said, here are the links to the things that I used, but I do strongly encourage you to try and use what you already have.

[Camera- Canon EOS R50](#)

[Field Monitor - FEELWORLD FW759](#)

[FEELWORLDNP-F550](#) (The monitor company is a little funny, they don't include a battery when you buy the monitor)

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## From far flung guild member Herbert Lange in Germany

Fun moments from our little **HALLOWEEN** show at our door in Suderburg on Friday, October 31, 2025:

Mr. Franz, a cool guy in a bathtub, wants to explore the chills and thrills of being frightened at night. Mr. Bluebird, his best friend and home buddy, tries to frighten him using monsterlike brushes and a long spoon (pics # 1 and 2) - but to no avail at all: Mr. Franz is quite amused and even feels pity for what Mr. Bluebird is trying out so eagerly. Mr. Bluebird finally gives up bringing in a floating net filled with sweets. And this is the very moment that gives Mr. Franz the true and most horrible creeps in his life (pic # 3). He runs off because he is so very much afraid of all the sugar ... We had nine runs of the show with Mr. Martin Lessmann manipulating Mr. Franz and Mr. Herbert Lange playing Mr. Bluebird.





## Hamlet, A Finger Puppet Musical

In November, Tiny Globe Theatre with Magical Moonshine Theatre premiered Hamlet, the finger puppet musical, at Folklore in Napa. The cast are all commercial finger puppets of famous people, made by the Unemployed Philosopher's Guild (and sold with magnets in the back of their heads to use as refrigerator magnets.)



Valerie and Michael Nelson joined Tiny Globe-er Ruth Berggren to put on a hyper-abridged version of Shakespeare's play with all the expected soliloquies and some unexpected musical numbers as well. The show runs about 45 minutes and features a wealth of fun stage effects as well as some pretty decent puppetry, considering the puppets are finger puppets. At the end of the opening performance there was laughter and tears, so, job well done. Part of the drama and humor is the finger puppet body count that piles up in the graveyard throughout the play (photo below.)

Discussions are in works for an additional performance at the White Barn (home of Napa Valley Puppetry Festival.)





## New Puppet Venue Announced

Need a place to do your puppet show? We are thrilled to introduce a brand new all-ages, substance-free performance space in the East Bay: **The Planetarium** in Richmond!

We have officially signed the lease on this 120-capacity DIY venue, and our vision is simple: keep it unexpected. While we love music, our goal is to create a home for everything that doesn't quite fit the standard mold—specifically puppetry, performance art, and experimental theater. We believe the Bay Area needs more accessible spaces for these unique art forms, and we want The Planetarium to be that hub.

We are booking our shows through our new entity, Ragtag. We have some exciting dates coming up fast:



This Week: We are launching a Kickstarter to help fund necessary electrical repairs.

December 6th: Our "Soft Launch" show.

January 3rd: Official Grand Opening.

January 16th: A special evening of variety, including a puppet show featuring our very own **Risa Lenore!**

We have programming scheduled throughout January, but we are actively looking for acts to fill our 2026 calendar. We would love to collaborate with Guild members to bring more puppet arts to Richmond.

If you are interested in booking an act, organizing a showcase, or simply want to learn more about the space, please reach out to [kirk@ragtagshows.com](mailto:kirk@ragtagshows.com).

Thanks! Kirk Pearson (they/them)

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## Under The Puppet

The final episode of Under The Puppet for 2025 is here and it is an absolute honor to welcome the legendary Louise Gold to the show. A trained theater performer, Louise began her puppetry career working on the second season of The Muppet Show where she'd play many characters including taking on the role of Annie Sue, much to Miss Piggy's dismay. In addition to continuing to work with The Muppets, she'd go on to work on Dark Crystal, Sesame Street and the Sesame Street spin off The Furchester Hotel where she played the hotel's proprietor Furnella Furchester. She's also worked on Spitting Image, The Ghost of Faffner Hall, Dodge's Pup School and many many more puppetry projects. I talk to Louise Gold about her incredible

career on this episode of Under The Puppet. Available wherever podcasts are found or listen right at [underthepuppet.com](http://underthepuppet.com) <<http://underthepuppet.com/>>

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## The Guild library is a treasure

**trove** of puppet books. You can request a specific book(s) from the many books in the library, 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. Email Lee Armstrong at [library@sfbapg.org](mailto:library@sfbapg.org) and she'll bring your book(s) to the next "in-person" meeting.

**Please bring back any borrowed books.** If you have a book and didn't return it at the last in person Guild meeting, please mail back to Guild Librarian, Lee Armstrong at 720 Ladera Dr., Sonoma, CA 95476.



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