



EDITOR'S NOTE: This is very newsy newsletter, so use the 'view this email in your browser link at the top or use the 'view the rest of this email' link at the bottom to see the whole newsletter! (It now says "End of Newsletter" at the end so you know you saw it all.)

It's time to renew your guild membership for 2026!

Your Last Renewal Date 2024-01-01



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It is hard to believe, but 2026 is upon us, 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**. 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!

Renew Today!

From your (Guild) President

Looking back over this past year with SFBAPG, there is so much to be grateful for and proud of. We kept our creative connections strong through a number of online Show & Tell gatherings, sharing works-in-progress, clever fixes, and hard-won discoveries. We ventured a bit farther afield with what was, as far as anyone can remember, our first-ever guild meeting in Sacramento, and it was a joy to see familiar and new faces there. Along the way, members offered excellent workshops, including inspiring sessions by Fred Riley and Lisa Zagone that sent many of us back to our worktables buzzing with new ideas. We also had the privilege of supporting Fairyland's 75th anniversary celebrations, honoring a place that has long been a home for puppetry in the Bay Area. All of this happened while we continued the important behind-the-scenes work of transitioning SFBAPG into a nonprofit organization, and hosting many other meetings and events that keep the guild vibrant and welcoming.

As the new year begins, warmest wishes to each of you for health, joy, and renewed creativity. May your stories find eager audiences, your puppets move with unexpected grace, and your own artistic journey be supported by this unique community. Here is to another year of collaboration, experimentation, and delight in the art of puppetry.

GUILD ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY

Due to a booking conflict by the museum, this is a **CHANGE OF DATE from Sat., to Sun.**

The Party is now SUNDAY, FEB. 22, 1- 4 pm

Vallejo Naval & Historical Museum, 734 Marin St., Vallejo

A Holiday party in February? Traditionally, the Guild waits until the new year to celebrate the holidays, as Dec. is sometimes the busiest time of the year for puppeteers. So come to our **Annual Holiday Party**, where there'll be an amazing **Puppet Slam**, **Puppethalon** where tabletop puppets (and their puppeteers) show their skill at running a challenging obstacle course. Also refreshments, raffle, Guild library, games and an opportunity to see old friends and meet new ones. **Lots of fun, so bring friends and family to this great holiday celebration!**

Food: Please bring finger food to share (i.e. crackers, bread, chips, cheese, dips, fruit or veggie platter, cookies, etc. The Guild will provide tea, coffee, water, paper plates, utensils, etc. Please BYO beverage if not drinking tea, coffee or water. signupgenius.com/signupgenius.com

Puppetathlon: It's Ninja Warriors meets the Olympics with puppet athletes! This event is not to be missed, as tabletop puppets (and their puppeteers) traverse a challenging obstacle course with bravery and finesse. Come participate or cheer on your team.

Puppet Slam: Forbidden Puppet Cabaret's Michael and Valerie Nelson will host this collection of fun, interesting and varied short performances by a variety of talented puppeteers. This event will take place in the museum's theatre, and will be open to the public (guild members and their guests attending the guild party will get free admittance to the puppet slam!)

Puppet Exhibit: Show your Creations! There will be a table for you to share one or two puppets. Please bring a stand(s) and card with puppet name, builder's name, materials used. Thank you!

Raffle: Lots of great puppet items, with proceeds going to the Guild Scholarship Fund. If you have something you'd like to donate to the raffle, please contact the Scholarship Committee (valeriejnelson@gmail.com)

Volunteers: We need your help! There will be a Volunteer Signup in the Feb. newsletter.

Guild Library: Peruse and check out a wide variety of books on puppetry.



Help Support Guild Members Ilene and Mike

Ilene Kennedy and her husband Mike went through a frightening and unexpected ordeal in Dec. After a terrible car crash, Mike is thankfully able to walk, but he is still suffering from painful whiplash and the ongoing effects of the accident.

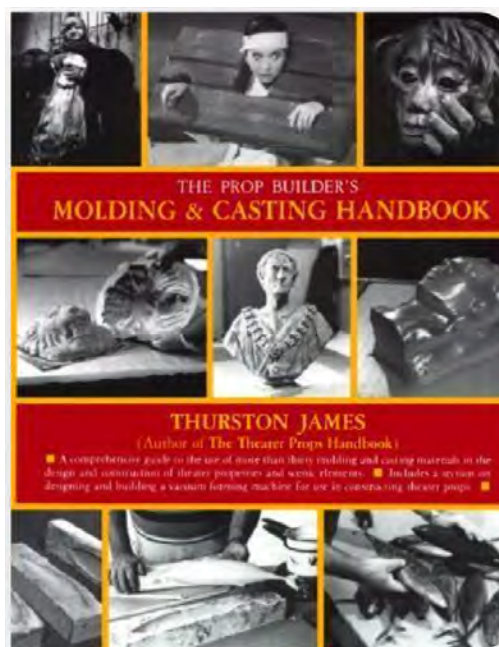


Their car was completely totaled, and medical bills and daily expenses are quickly piling up. As they work to recover physically and emotionally, the financial strain has made this season especially challenging. We're asking friends, family, and community members to consider making a donation to help Ilene and Mike cover expenses and get through the holidays with a little more stability and peace of mind. Any amount helps, and your kindness means more than words can express. Thank you for considering supporting them during this difficult time.

Donate to Ilene and Mike today!

Library Book Review from Board
Member Samuel Uel McGinnis
“The Prop Builders Molding & Casting
Handbook” - author Thurston James

This book really has helped me and I have read it multiple times. It provided great pictures and detailed instructions on making props through molding and casting, using multiple materials.



This is a skill I would like to develop more, through reading other books in the guild library. I recommend this book for those who want a glimpse into the fabrication process. Even if you don't believe you have the skills, this is always something that is great to learn.

Check Out Our Guild Library Books!

The library will be at the Holiday Party, which is a great opportunity to check out some books. The Guild Library is a treasure trove of hundreds of books on puppetry. History of puppets, construction, stages, puppets in education, etc. can all be checked out. If you want a specific book, you can pursue the available books online by going to <https://sfbapg.org/library-online/>. Or if at www.sfbapg.org select Resources, then Library. If you see a specific book, or want books on a certain topic, contact our Guild librarian, Lee Armstrong at library@sfbapg.org. Library borrowers need to have been members for at least 6 months or leave a check to cover the cost of the book, if not returned. Books will be brought to the next "in person" event. **If you have a library book to return**, please return it at the next "in person" meeting or mail it back ASAP to Lee at 720 Ladera Dr., Sonoma, CA 95476.

Guild Programming Meeting

If you'd like to join the Guild Programming Committee, it meets on the 2nd Tues of each month at 6:30. The next one will be on Tues., Jan 13 at 6:30. Contact Programming Chair Samuel "Uel" McGinnis, 3rd.eyed.lion@gmail.com or Guild Secretary Lee Armstrong, larmsstrong@sfbapg.org for the Zoom link.

Message from Head of Programming Samuel Uel McGinnis

I really enjoyed planning and attending these events. I would like to sincerely thank this guild as I leave the guild board in the middle of 2026. This holiday party will be the last party I get to organize “hands- on.” I will still be involved with the guild with my own project Puppet Show at the End of Time. Here is a link to a slam piece I did for the SfPuppetSlam in Oct.

<https://youtu.be/lbs1V3vdvgw?si=O4xjkP3hzBucFfUR>

Here's a List of Some of the Programming from 2025 (last year!)

January

Sunday, Jan. 12 Holiday Party, PuppetArt Theater (Art Grueneberger) "Tommy's Space Adventure plus 2nd annual Puppetathlon hosted by Magical Moonshine Theatre

February

Feb 28, 2025 6:00 PM Guild Show-and-Tell (Zoom) hosted by Moody Puppets

March

Mar 16, 1:00–4:30 PM March Guild Meeting – Animating Puppets: Eyes, Eyebrows, and More!

Marin Theatre Company, Mill Valley, CA

2:00pm Guild Social Meet & Greet plus brief SF Bay Area Puppeteers Guild Meeting.

1pm Pre-Meeting “Intro to Puppetry” with Lee Armstrong

2:30pm “Eye Mechanisms for Puppets” Demo & “hands-on” workshop with Lisa Zagone

April

Friday April 4th 6pm Show and Tell hosted by Moddy Puppets

June

June 7 12:30 to 4:30 Carmichael CA, Giant Puppet Workshop & guild meeting

July

July 19-20, 10-3pm, Marin Theater Company, 397 Miller Ave, Mill Valley

Fred C. Riley III in an immersive and dynamic workshop designed for performers of all levels.

July 25th & 26th, St. Helena, Napa Valley Puppetry Festival - 2nd second annual puppetry festival

August

Aug 23–24 Children’s Fairyland, Oakland, Fairyland’s 75th Anniversary Puppet Fair & guild meeting

September

Sept. 7: 2pm. 2201 Poplar Street Oakland, Paul Drescher Ensemble Studio Open House

October

Oct. 5 10am -3:30 Sonoma Community Center, Workshop: Explore Puppet Building & Performance with Lee Armstrong

Oct 5: SfPuppetSlam

Oct 29–31 Larry Schmidt’s Driveway Follies

November

Nov. 8, 10 am Images in Motion Studio, Sonoma. TV Puppetry workshop with Images in Motion

Nov 12 6:00 pm. SF Opera, 301 Van Ness Ave, San Francisco, CA

The Monkey King — Dress Rehearsal - Free Tickets Event

Guild Events: Any Guild member can plan a Guild event. You can even plan a Guild event to a show you are giving. If you hear of any activity or show which would be of interest to puppeteers, you can post an announcement in the newsletter. If there are multiple show dates, the person organizing the event selects a day and time for everyone interested to attend as a group. People are responsible for purchasing their own tickets, unless the organizer arranges for block seating, in which case the attendees sometimes pay the organizer or the Guild, depending on who purchased the tickets. Afterwards, members sometimes get together to discuss the show and socialize.

CLOWN DADDY IN HAMLET

Friday, January 16, 2026 7:30- 8:45 PM

Throckmorton Theatre, 142

Throckmorton Ave., Mill Valley ([map](#))

Tickets:

<https://www.throckmortontheatre.org/>

The lines are learned; the stage is set—but where are the actors?! With a full audience waiting, Clown Daddy must tackle Shakespeare's most tangled tragedy, Hamlet, all on her own.



With a little help from some unforgettable companions (mainly her puppet ensemble) she will take you on a riotous ride that just might change the way you see Shakespeare forever.

Show Run Time: 75 minutes

Ages 13+

Bold, brilliant, and a bit bonkers, Clown Daddy, aka Ellie J, will bring your imagination to where it enjoys being. Classically trained in acting at Atlantic Theatre Company in New York and eccentrically educated in dynamics of movement at L'École Internationale de Théâtre Jacques Lecoq in Paris, she has found a way to brilliantly break the mold of stuffy theatre norms, clasp intense story-telling and character work with humor that defies expectations. She wonderfully balances the profound with the profane, lightheartedness with depth, and sincerity with a beautiful dose of frivolity.

www.clown-daddy.com

Guild Event: There will be a number of Guild members at this show. Tickets are general seating, so if you'd like to sit together, arrive at 7 pm and we'll try to find seats together. Questions? Call or text Lee at 707 738-5906 cell



SF Sketchfest:

Co-created by award-winning director and producer Brian Henson ("Muppet Christmas Carol", "Muppet Treasure Island"), and the production's director and host Patrick Bristow ("Ellen", "Seinfeld", "Curb Your Enthusiasm", "Whose Line Is It Anyway?"), Puppet Up! – Uncensored is never the same show twice, effortlessly blending increasingly unhinged feats of improv comedy with the unparalleled skill and originality of Henson puppeteers. Based on suggestions from the audience, the puppet mayhem – starring the unforgettable Miskreant puppets – showcases both the improvised puppet action projected live on screens above the stage, and the puppeteers racing around below in full view of the audience to bring it all to life. Performances also include recreations of classic pieces by Jim and Jane Henson that have not been performed for audiences in decades.

Appearing at SF Sketchfest with Brian Henson and Patrick Bristow are Grant Baciocco, Raymond Carr, Peggy Etra, Donna Kimball, Ted Michaels and Colleen Smith.

Puppet Up! – Uncensored is not recommended for anyone under 16 and anyone under 14 will not be admitted.

Puppet Up! VIP Experience with Brian Henson at 7:30pm

Limited Availability. Add on to any ticket when purchasing. Must have a separate ticket to early or late performance.

[5 pm tickets:](#)

[9pm tickets:](#)

NOTE: IF THE ABOVE TIME LINKS DON'T WORK FOR YOU...<https://sfsketchfest.com/2026-lineup/>



January 24: RumpleStuntskin by Pop & Go Puppets

- **San Mateo Public Library at 11:00 AM**
- **Foster City Public Library at 2:00 PM**

Spinning gold is so outdated. The Moto-daredevil Rumplestuntskin knows the secret to awesome motorcycle stunts and he's willing to share it, for a price.

Jason Adair of Pop and Go Puppets (Auburn, CA) has been performing for children since 1995 as a puppeteer, storyteller and musician. In addition to performing around the state, his work as a shadow puppeteer with New England's Flock led him to perform at the Eugene O'Neill National Puppetry Festival and later with S.F.'s Shadowmakers as part of the first American troupe to perform at the International Shadow Theatre Festival in Schwaebisch Gmund, Germany.

Member News

Steve Norman and his wife Shannon are new residents at Stoneridge creek. Steve's father, Eric and uncle, Len Piper founded the National Puppet Theatre in the early 1950's. They toured the Midwest performing primarily at schools. As time passed the touring company branched out to television, fairs and other venues.

Steve's cousins, siblings, wife and children have all performed puppet shows and some have gone on to careers in theater and puppetry.

Says Steve Norman, "My family started the National Puppet Theatre, a few years before I was born. Making puppets and doing puppet shows was just a normal part of growing up in the Norman family. My earliest memory is being set down for a nap in an open puppet trunk as a toddler. While most children went on a vacation during the summer months, I was traveling the country performing with my family."

These puppets are from The Nutcracker Suite. They were packed in storage for many years until Steve's daughter and her husband rebuilt and restored the show to its original charm in 2008. Steve and his wife have performed the Nutcracker many times.





Also we have a Elephant puppet free for the asking - it is a whole body puppet designed for someone under 6' tall - 5' 8" or 5' 10" - i needs some work and I don't have a recent picture. It s from The Greatest Show on Strings, which was origally a 3 ring puppet circus in the late 60's but has gone through many changes through the years. Email me at revnorman@me.com if interested. It is in San Jose. I don't have a recent picture to send with this email



From Herbert Lange in Germany

THE MANY FUN MISHAPS OF INTENSE COOKIE BAKING!

performed by Mr. Martin as Mr. Franz and Mr. Herbert as The Blue Bird,
including an original behind the scenes shot

This will definitely be my very last contribution to the SFBAPG newsletter in 2025.
Love and peace and everything nice to all!



From Mathew Pudone and Woander

Woander participated in Mill Valley's Winterfest with a giant parade owl puppet built by guild member Lisa Zagone, and flown by guild member Matthew Purdon. "We wanted to bring the spirit of the animals into our celebration. We were inspired by the endangered northern spotted owls who reside in the Marin woodlands," says Woander owner Matthew Purdon. We were joined by local children who carried lanterns alongside the owl. We hope to make this an annual community ritual with more local participation next year.



From Kennedy Puppets (Ilene and Mike Kennedy)

Happy New Year to everyone! I hope you all had a wonderful Christmas.

It has been a very busy time at Kennedy Puppets. We have been working on several projects, including donating 73 puppets to a woman in the Fairfield area who distributes food, clothing, and other essentials to those in need. Hope had a great time helping create many of them while I worked on other puppets that are now nearing completion.

I have also been busy with a few restoration projects. We are currently preparing several puppets for Easter to give to children, and we are already getting a head start on preparations for Christmas 2026!



New episode of Under The Puppet

is here and we have an incredible interview with Rita Peruggi to kick off 2026.

In 1981, Rita Peruggi was hired by The Jim Henson Company as a production assistant on various projects including Rocky Mountain Holiday with John Denver and The Muppets.



She then moved on to the role of producer for the company working on many projects such as the Jim Henson Play along Videos, Muppet Vision 3D, Dinosaurs, Dark Crystal Age of Resistance, Earth To Ned and Fraggle Rock Back To The Rock. Outside of the The Jim Henson Company, Rita has served as Producer on Jack's Big Music Show and Yo Gabba Gabba! and the updated Yo Gabba GabbaLand!. I talk Rita Peruggi about all of these projects and more on this

episode of Under The Puppet. Available wherever you get your podcasts or listen directly at underthepuppet.com <<http://underthepuppet.com/>>

End of Newsletter-
A big thanks to all our contributors!



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