



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.)

Hello Michael

It appears that your last renewal was 2023-01-13

If you need to renew for 2026, go to
<https://sfbapg.org/membership/join/>

Happy April Fools Day

The SFBAPG logo character is a fool or jester figure. Wikipedia tells us the wise fool is a "recognizable [trope](#) found in stories and artworks from antiquity to the twenty-first century; the wisdom of the fool often captures what [intellectualism](#) fails to illuminate of a thing's meaning or significance; thus, the wise fool is often associated with the wisdom found through blind faith, reckless desire, hopeless romance,

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*and wild abandon, but also tradition
without understanding, and folk
wisdom.” Sound like puppetry to you?*



Folkmanis Puppets “50 Years Of Fun” Celebration



Next Guild Event!

When: April 18, 10-5 pm.

Where: Children’s Creativity Museum, 221 4th St., S.F.

If you have read the March newsletter you know that April is a big month for our Guild as we celebrate Folkmanis Puppets’ 50th Anniversary. The April 18th meeting at the Children’s Creativity Museum (CCM) in SF will also be the grand opening of the 50 Years of Folkmanis Puppets display at the museum, the world premiere of the Folkmanis’ 50 year “50 Years of Fun” video, plus a Guild meeting featuring the work of this enterprising Emeryville business, founded by Judy Folkmanis in 1976. There will

be a reception in honor of Folkmanis and their contributions to the puppet community, both locally and nationally.

Our Folkmanis celebration is part of World Creativity Day - and a fitting moment to gather at CCM for the opening of the Folkmanis Puppet exhibit and to be a part of the CCM's Creativity Day which is a free event for the public. We will be one of many art community groups providing special activities. Here's more info on CCM's [Creativity Day](#)

10-2 The Guild will offer “Build-A-Puppet” tables and “Walkaround Puppet Greeters” using Folkmanis puppets (bring your favorite, or Folkmanis puppets provided).

2-3 An opportunity to see the museum and the Folkmanis display

3:15 - 4:30 Guild meeting & “Folkmanis 50 Decades” shared by Folkmanis Art Director, Allison Sieber, plus a celebration reception.

Volunteers: Please help us make this day special by volunteering. The activities from 10-2 will be similar to what we have done at Fairyland's “Day of Puppetry” with Build A Puppet Table (all supplies and instruction will be provided) and Walk around Puppet Greeters (bring your own Folkmanis Puppets or Folkmanis puppets will be provided). Also help with the reception. All volunteers please sign up here <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050E4BAEAB2AA7FC1-63286212-folkmanis>

Beth Choy (Hospitality) is looking for one or two people to help with food & beverages for the reception. She will take care of planning and ordering the food, but she will be out of town for the event. She needs 1 or 2 volunteers to pick up and bring the items to the venue. Please contact her directly at bokchoypuppets@gmail.com for questions or to help out.

The Guild Volunteers will be in 2 areas: The Build-a-Puppet will be inside at the Co-Lab & the Puppet Greeters will be part of Creativity Day in the Courtyard. This will be outdoors so please dress accordingly.

The Co-Lab: During the Creativity Festival (10am–2pm), the Guild and another partner will lead activities in the Co-Lab. From 2–5pm, the space will be available for the Guild's use. The Co-Lab is located across the courtyard, the entrance is separate from the museum's entrance, and since the event is free, the space will remain open and accessible to the public, so Guild members can access it anytime.

For those NOT volunteering, you can sign up at [Creativity Day](#) for the free events in the Co-Lab and courtyard.

Entrance to the museum: This is open to the public 10am-4pm with admission. The outdoor event is free. Guild members can access the museum anytime during public

hours if they adhere to their solo adult policy (leave ID at the door, wear a visitor/VIP pass) and pay admission.

Free Entry to the Museum: Guild members receive free admission to the museum between 2-3pm. We suggest you arrive at 2 pm, so you don't miss the Guild activities at the Co-Lab, starting at 3:15. [You must sign up here.](#) Guild volunteers are automatically signed up for free admission to the museum at 2 pm.

Parking: There are three parking lots within a block of the museum. [The Metreon parking lot:](#) 833 Mission St, San Francisco, CA 94103. [The Moscone Center parking lot:](#) 255 3rd St, San Francisco, CA 94103. [The Museum Parc parking lot:](#) 300 3rd St, San Francisco, CA 94107 (entrance on Folsom Street).

Folkmanis Puppets “50 Years of Fun” Video



Fun was had at the Images in Motion studio on Sat., March 28th when Guild members volunteered time to bring over 80 Folkmanis puppets to life. Allison Sieber, Folkmanis Art Director assembled and transported this menagerie of treasure to Sonoma with the help of Nik Finch, the Prop Master. These puppets represented every animal the Folkmanis has produced over the 5 decades of their successful business enterprise. This included the archival animal puppets that Judy Folkmanis made and sold on the streets of Berkeley in the 1970's and 80's. It was exciting to have an opportunity to see and play with this characters!

The SFBAPG helped fund this anniversary video. Images in Motion donated their studio and Guild puppeteers and crew volunteered their time. Many thanks to: Jason Adair, Lee Armstrong, Heather Gobbée, David Garden, Gabrielle Greenberg, Art Grueneberger, Uel McGinnis, Wendy Morton, Hugo and Wing Shum.

This video will be part of the Folkmanis display at the CCM and also premiering at the April 18 Guild meeting.



Folkmanis in the News

We are already getting press on Folkmanis' 50th Anniversary, starting with The Sonoma Index Tribune's witty article, looping in the connections between mega studio Pixar, with it's across-the-street neighbor Folkmanis, to the Sonoma connections of the "Curly and Curlier" radio show on KSVY and then to the Images in Motion video studio in Sonoma. To understand the interweave of puppets, read more at

<https://www.sonomanews.com/2026/03/20/a-parade-of-puppets/>.

Folkmanis Puppets has been supportive of Puppeteers of America and UNIMA-USA and the national Puppetry Journal will run a feature article on the history of Folkmanis and their anniversary celebrations in an upcoming issue.

Guild Playboard

Call for Nominations for Guild Board of Directors

Do you share our common goal of promoting the art of puppetry in the Bay Area? If so, you might be interested in serving on the SFBAPG Board.

Eligibility: Candidates must have been members of the SFBAPG for at least one year prior to the elections.

Time Commitment: Attend approx. 6 Board Meetings a year, usually over Zoom, but sometimes in person and as many Guild meetings and events as possible. Each Board member must want to be an active volunteer, taking on such positions as President, V.P., Programming, Membership, Publicity & Social Media, etc.

Term limits: Each Board member shall serve for three years. Each Board member shall be allowed to serve no more than two consecutive three-year terms. Candidates need to provide a short bio and photo to the Nominating Committee, prior to May 20th, to be published in the May newsletter.

If you are interested, and we hope you are, we look forward to hearing from you!

Your Nominating Committee

Barbra Grillo - bgrillo@contracosta.edu, Michael Nelson - mnelson@sfbapg.org, Lee Armstrong - images@vom.com

Guild Programming Meeting

If you'd like to join the Guild Programming Committee, it meets on the 2nd Tues or each month at 6:30. The next one will be on Tues., April 7 at 6:30 and we'll be discussing the April 18 meeting and Guild ideas for the future. Contact Programming Chair Samuel "Uel" McGinnis, 3rd.eyed.lion@gmail.com or Guild Secretary Lee Armstrong, larmstrong@sfbapg.org for the Zoom link.

Check Out Our Guild Library Books at the April 18 Guild Meeting!



The Guild Library will be at the April 18 Guild Meeting at the Creativity Museum. 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.

Member News

Building a Softer World, One Puppet at a Time

From: Moddy Himmel

Many of you would agree that some projects seem to take on a life of their own.



Above, Heather Gobbee and Moddy Himmel with Big Mama at a video shoot.

I recently experienced this with Big Mama, a puppet I created for our growing storytelling and world-building project called Club Squatch. What began as a creative experiment between artists Annie Hobbs, Eva Lacy and myself has unfolded into something far more alive, collaborative, and meaningful than I ever anticipated.

Big Mama didn't arrive fully formed. She emerged slowly, shaped by instinct, play, and a desire to embody a certain kind of presence: grounded, wise, warm, and just a little mischievous. Artist Eva Lacy of Critterosity came up with her original design, and using a sack puppet pattern by Adam Kreutinger, I was able to bring Big Mama into our world as a live-hand puppet. The moment she came together physically, though, something clicked. Her posture, her voice, her pacing... it all felt less like invention and more like discovery. She had opinions. She had timing. She had a way of looking at the world that surprised us.

Big Mama is a central figure in Whimsy Woods, a fantasy forest we've been building that blends puppetry, animation, and real human connection and collaboration. Club Squatch is, at its heart, a community-driven experience. Through a "snail mail" subscription, members receive hand-crafted letters from Big Mama and delivered by fictional snails. These letters aren't just stories; they're invitations to slow down, to reflect, and to engage with a softer, more imaginative pace of life.

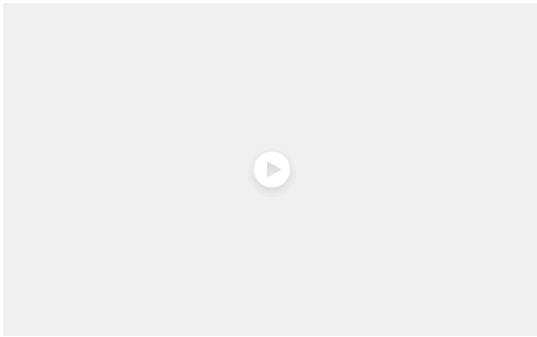
What has been most surprising is how strongly people have responded to her. I had the opportunity to take Big Mama with me to CritterCon, an event in southern California held earlier this month to raise funds for rescue organizations caring for urban wildlife. I set up a booth there and invite people to join Club Squatch. There were so many great interactions with Big Mama, from children high-fiving her and accepting some of her "purse candy" (with parent's permission, of course) and one woman even cried when Big Mama gave her a hug. It's as though Big Mama is meeting a need we didn't fully articulate at the outset, a need for reassurance, for softness, and for permission to slow down.

From a puppetry standpoint, bringing Big Mama to life has been deeply satisfying. She invites stillness in performance. She rewards subtlety. Every small movement carries weight, and every pause becomes part of the conversation. It's a reminder of the power of restraint in puppetry. A reminder that animation isn't always about motion, but about intention. And the

fact that she's a live-hand puppet adds to the feeling of community and collaboration. I am so grateful to Lee Armstrong and Bill Ferguson at Images in Motion for allowing the use of their studio, setting up a forest set, providing the lighting and helping to film a promo with her; and to Heather Gobbée for being mine and Big Mama's right hand gal.

Looking ahead, our plans for Club Squatch are both ambitious and delightfully open-ended. We aim to continue growing the snail mail subscription, expanding the world of Whimsy Woods through new characters and storylines. There are more residents waiting to be built and discovered—Walter the snail, Phyllis the fellow Squatch, and a host of others who are beginning to take shape.

We're also exploring ways to bring Big Mama and her world into more visual and performative spaces. This includes short-form video content, longer narrative pieces, and potentially live or recorded performances that allow audiences to spend more time in her presence. There's also a strong desire to maintain the tactile, analog heart of the project—keeping the handcrafted, slow-delivery aspect as a core pillar rather than something to outgrow.



At its core, Club Squatch is an experiment in connection: between puppeteer and puppet, between story and audience, and between people who may never meet but who share a moment of stillness through a letter or a character. Big Mama has become the anchor for that experiment, and in many ways, she's guiding us more than we're guiding her.

It's a rare and wonderful thing to feel like a puppet has taken on a life of its own. And it's even rarer to watch others recognize and respond to that life.

We're listening closely to where she wants to go next.

ClubSquatch.org

From Herbert Lange (our far-flung member in Germany)

Exciting news:

There is going to be a hand puppet exhibition at the MUSEUMSDORF HOESSERINGEN starting in early May. Martin and I are going to contribute to the program running from May through October by doing another RUMPELSTILTSKIN show, doing a guided tour with puppets and offering

two workshops - plus maybe presenting a naughty PUNCH & JUDY mini-performance.



March marionette shows, from Silvia Gonzalez Scherer

The Bitter Couple is a marionette puppet show. The puppets come from the Czech Republic and Ukraine. The show ran for two weekends in March in Hanford, CA. When I taught school, I used ventriloquism. Years later, when I co-founded a theater company I wanted to incorporate puppetry into it. We did hand puppets in a show called DON'T JUST LOOK during the pandemic and filmed it because we couldn't have an audience. (I filmed it and that's when I learned filming and editing.) Then I did another show called PEDRO THE PUPPETEER. It was a show with both humans and puppets interacting. We did a marionette puppet show and it was an adaptation of the novel DON QUIXOTE .

News and an Event from Fairyland

From Maria Rodriguez

The puppet theater is celebrating its 70th anniversary and there's a brand new puppet show premiering at Children's Fairyland on April 1st. Maria Rodriguez and Randal Metz built marionettes for this delightful and fun story from Puerto Rico! The show plays every day Fairyland is open (Wednesday - Sunday) at 11 a.m., 2 p.m., and 4 p.m. The show is included in park admission. But remember to enter Fairyland, adults must be accompanied by children and children must be accompanied by an adult.

"How the Coqui Got Their Name" April

1 - May 28, 2026

When Queen Parrot sees her friends feeling bored and losing interest in life, she decides to host a race with all the fastest animals. The prize? What the winner wants most. Find out who wins in this exciting tale from Puerto Rico.



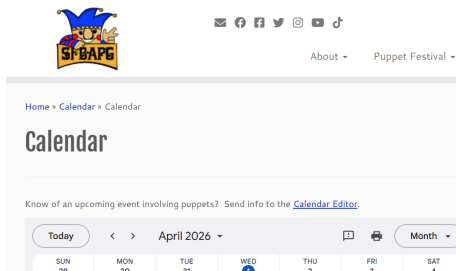
Puppets by Maria Rodriguez and Randal Metz. Story by Maria Rodriguez in partnership with cultural consultant Eli Jacobs-Fantauzzi. Scenery by Shannon Taylor. For more information and tickets visit: Fairyland.org

From Mark Segal

Throughout my performing career, keeping a journal or sketchbook was always an essential part of my process. Since I stopped performing due to the pandemic, I have fully embraced journaling and recently wrote a short guide and companion on the subject. I am offering this guide to the first 25 puppeteers at a 50% discount. You can find it here:

<https://rightjournalproject.gumroad.com/l/offmc/puppet50>

Events



Thanks to member **Jason Lee**, our guild calendar is newly refreshed and filled with great puppet events (too many to list here) so make sure to visit the calendar for lots of great puppet related shows, workshops and events.

New to our calendar for APRIL

Sat Apr 4, 1-5pm

Puppet Craft Night/Stitch & Bitch (Maker Faire Prep Party)

Sat Apr 4 - Sun Apr 5

LaunderLand Circus

Children's Creativity Museum Theater, 221 4th St, San Francisco, CA 94103

Puppet Themed Films Showing at the Poppy Jasper International Film Festival

(lots of dates; also see March Newsletter for more details)

For more information about the festival, visit pjiff.org

Sat Apr 11, 10am-12:30pm & 2-4:30pm

Puppet Making with the Pros!

Mon Apr 27, 7-8:30pm

Learn Puppeteering with the Pros!

And a large variety of performances by Fratello Marionettes on multiple dates

Also listed are the featured items in this month's newsletter, below



At The Planetarium in April!

Enjoy the magic of performing with puppets! Join award-winning puppeteer Lee Armstrong for a hands-on workshop where you'll practice 4 basics to bring your character to life, add in a bit of character development and tips for performing in front of an audience and behind a stage. And as puppet is a perfect spokesperson for social media, this workshop will end with working on TV puppetry techniques geared to recording with your phone.

This workshop is perfect for puppeteers, actors, teachers, librarians, youth leaders, and creative teens, This workshop mixes art, storytelling, and performance in a fun

way.

Reserve a seat here: <https://events.ticketleap.com/tickets/ragtagshows/bring-a-puppet-to-life-for-stage-social-media>

BYOP (Bring Your Own Puppet) or puppets will be available courtesy of Folkmanis Puppets.

Beginner to Intermediate. Age: 13+, Class Minimum: 6 & Class Maximum: 16



Lee Armstrong (*shown above with several non-humans*) is a professional puppeteer and co-owner of Images in Motion (www.imagesmedia.com), a studio that brings stories to life with TV puppetry. A Regional Emmy winner with 10 national Telly awards, Lee has shared her love of puppetry with audiences of all ages—teaching hundreds of workshops for kids, teens, and adults across the country. Her credits include Jim Henson’s original *Fraggle Rock*, *Follow That Bird*, *Being John Malkovich*, PBS programs, commercials, and more. Whether on screen or in person, Lee delights in showing how puppetry mixes art, performance, and pure imagination.

Carnival of Psychos

Sat Apr 18, 2026 8:00 PM - 9:30 PM

The Great Star Theater in San

Francisco in the heart of

Chinatown. [Tickets](#)



One-act opera with silhouettes, circus and a live band of carnies.

Calamitous carry, Samson Y Hiss, the award-winning composer and record-holding one-man band, brings his psychotic ooze of opera, silhouettes and circus to The Great Star Theater in San Francisco, CA. The theatrical experience features an

original story, operatic vocals, circus performers, stunt artists, overhead projector and silhouettes and a live band.

Patient 51 escapes an insane asylum, falls headfirst into a traveling carnival and flees across the desert from the authorities—a wake of vultures. Patient 51, a newly committed anarchist, endures experimental shock “therapy.” There’s Manhattan, the militant head nurse who turns patients into guinea pigs. And Joplin, the carnival fairy and fearful employee of a traveling sideshow. Carnival of Psychos isn’t a place, but a theatrical escape hatch into terror and lunacy.

Doors 7:00 PM - Show 8:00 PM - No intermission

End of Newsletter. A big thanks to all our newsletter contributors.

Send your articles, photos, reviews, classifieds, updates, tips, etc., to newsletter@sfbapg.org before the last day of each month.



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