



The official newsletter of
San Francisco Bay Area Puppeteers' Guild
*Looking for updates and missed information?
Check for it at SFBAPG.ORG*

SFBAPG is a charter guild of the Puppeteers of America, Inc., a non-profit, tax exempt organization

June, 2018



Editor's note: Our last guild meeting on May 19 in Benicia was led by Art Grueneberger. Members gathered to learn how to work together to create a short, family friendly puppet skit. Your editor was not able to attend due to a conflict in my schedule and no one wrote up an article for the newsletter but hopefully there will be something more in the next newsletter. You can also see the skits developed at this meeting at the Menlo Park Library Puppet Festival Slam day, info in this newsletter.

Inside this Issue

- Election results
- Upcoming meetings
- review of workshop with DLUX puppets
- Visit to Lex Rudd's exhibits
- New puppet novel by Independent Eye
- Puppet Festival in Menlo Park
- Puppet Building for the O'Neill
- And More!

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From our Co-President

Tree your co-president here and I am very excited to announce our three new board members who will be joining the board of the San Francisco Bay Area Puppeteers Guild. A hearty welcome goes out to Gabriel Galdamez, Lynette Pinto, and Judy Roberto. Welcome aboard to the board! Gabriel, Lynette, and Judy ran unopposed and all the guild members that voted gave resounding unanimous approval.

I would like to thank our outgoing board members for their service who have come to the end their terms. A thank you goes out to Valerie Nelson who has done an amazing job as our treasurer. Also leaving the board is Fred C. Riley and Elizabeth Leonard finishing Mary Nagler's term. The guild is grateful for your service!

And the official report...

New Guild Board of Directors Elected: The Nominating Committee is pleased to announce that the candidates running for the Board of Director positions have been unanimously accepted by the Guild membership. Our new Board members are Lynette Pinto, Judy Roberto and Gabriel Galdamez. We are very fortunate that they will be sharing their skills and expertise on the board.

Many "thank you's" to Valerie Nelson (Treasurer) Elizabeth Leonard & Fred Riley, who will be leaving the Board. Thank you for all your work in support of the Guild. Your commitment to fostering the art of puppetry through our local Guild is an exceptional gift to all.

Submitted by the Nominating Committee: Lee Armstrong, Camilla Henneman, Elisheva Hart

Judy Roberto Recovering Update

Hi Guild Friends

Some of you have heard about Judy Roberto's accident. She tripped on an uneven sidewalk and had a terrible fall, breaking both arms. The left arm was really bad and the right arm break isn't as severe. As a person who always looks on the brighter side, she said she was happy that the damage to her puppeteering arm was less!

She's had surgery, which went well and she's on the mend. She wanted to thank Guild friends for their concern and cards. If you'd like to send her a card, Judy is at home, [1058 S. 5th St Apt 123 San Jose, CA 95112](#).



Call For Puppets!!!

The Guild is initiating a TRAVELING PUPPET DISPLAY which will be placed in Libraries that are willing to partner with us to educate the public about puppetry. We have a number of puppets that have been donated to the Guild over the years and need to collect and inventory them. We would also like to add to our puppet collection for the purpose of displaying a variety of puppets in the TRAVELING PUPPET DISPLAY program. If you have been providing a home for puppets that have been donated to the Guild or wish to donate a puppet to the Guild for use in this program please contact Barbara Grillo at bgrillo@contracosta.edu We will let you know more about our traveling puppets once their program embarks!

Review of "THE BASICS OF 'HOW TO PUPPETEER, INTRODUCTION TO HAND & ROD (MUPPET) STYLE PUPPETRY" presented by DEREK LUX PUPPETS, April 29, 2018 at our Guild meeting.

We met at the puppet studio (beautifully converted garage) in the home of Derek and Lauren Lux, in Concord. Besides having an awesome list of puppetry and theater accomplishments [see page 3 in SFBAPG's April, 2018 Newsletter], as a youth Derek was a member of our Guild for a couple of years in the mid-1990's.

Plus, later while living in Los Angeles, the twin team of Sean and Patrick Johnson. [SFBAPG's first pair of co-presidents] took Derek as a puppeteer apprentice into their organization, "SWAZZLE". Derek certainly is well connected to us!

As a warm up to the 90 minute presentation we viewed some of the marvelous big puppets from DLUK's new 2 person performance, "Alice in Wonderland." [Description of this show is on page 9 in SFBAPG Newsletter's May, 2018 issue.] Derek and Lauren are the performers. Their goal next year is a 2 person puppet show of "Peter Pan."

A recommendation for puppeteers who need patterns, including those of the "Muppet" style, is to go to ProjectPuppets.com where you can buy downloadable patterns which are "as easy to use as paint-by-numbers! This site also has references to YouTube links which illustrate the making of these puppets and other types of easy puppets, etc.

Derek demonstrated various types of foam and how to cut it, which are used for various types of puppet heads including the "Muppet" style. Examples of "old experiments" of puppets were passed around so we could investigate the techniques of cutting and shaping.

Derek always starts with the puppet's head. First cheap foam is used to make mock-ups of the heads so he can see how they look when finished. He also mocks-up in foam one half of the puppet vertically from head to toe, as seen from the side. Since the puppet is symmetrical, Derek can "totally" visualize the whole puppet, with doing only half the work!

He demonstrated various body types used to make "Muppets." For instance a sack is used for the bodies of Oscar the Grouch and of Cookie Monster. A typical hand and rod "Muppet", like Fozzie Bear, has the puppeteer's hand and forearm inserted into its body.

We segued into Derek's method for teaching "Introduction to Hand and Rod ("Muppet" style) Puppetry". [Much of this workshop can also be applied to other types of puppets.) Some of his techniques are:

-Q. to the participants, What do you know that shows something is alive? A. Breathing.
THIS IS THE FIRST INTRODUCTORY STEP IN LEARNING TO MANIPULATE A PUPPET!
-don't chop words. Open your puppet's mouth to say words.



- rehearse sometimes with bare hands to see what is going on underneath the puppet.
- keep one of the puppet's hands in the default position, which is resting on its stomach. This helps keep that hand from creeping up and -oops!-covering the puppet's face.
- sort the students into 3 equal (in number) groups. Group by group all the participants do the same exercises. The 2 groups which are not doing the exercise are learning by watching, therefore no groups are allowed to work independently at this time.
- Have individual pupils come up to pick out their puppets, then stay up at the front. Don't pass puppets out to the seated ones! This =s too much tempting activity and distraction.
- to amp up control as a performer, begin with the manipulation exercise of Stand up and Freeze! and Whisper.
- LEARN PERFORMING AND MOVEMENT BY WATCHING A MASTER! For instance get a dvd of "the Muppet Caper". As you watch it, focus on only one puppet throughout, like Miss Piggy. See what Frank Oz [a founding member of our Guild as a teen] does with her. This equals a tutorial on Miss Piggy and Frank Oz!

-Sharon Clay who heads the Dublin 4-H puppetry group asked what to do to keep puppets from drooping and disappearing below the playboard when they are on stage for a long time. Various answers were given from individual experiences:

- Have the puppeteers lift weights, like full soup cans.
- Have the puppet ad-lib something like, "Oh, I'll go looking for something in the basement." This will give relief to the puppeteer and creates a way for the puppet to re-enter.
- Support the aching arm for a few nanoseconds by placing your empty hand underneath the elbow of the drooping arm.
- An excellent suggestion from Judy Roberto was to (pre-show or pre-entry of puppet) roll your shoulders forward several times. This is excellent for loosening tension. [Try rolling them backwards also, not only in preparation for performing but also for practicing manipulation.]

We practiced a musical routine to "You've got a Friend in Me" (familiar song from Toy Story movie) which goes something like this:

All puppet mouths are singing the words. They walk on to stage and turn to face the audience. Sway 4 times-side by side- in sync to other puppets and the music. Use the arm of the puppet to pat its stomach on the words "in me".

Derek says about MOST puppet movement. It is too big. Smaller is Better.

-Muscle Memory. Develop it by practicing until your body KNOWS how to hold your puppet, walk it, make entrances and exits, etc.

Before rehearsals, and the "real thing" go over sequences, run [verbalize] your lines, and preset the puppets in place.

Derek was asked who in the current puppet world is his favorite puppeteer at this time. His answer: "Basil Twist, because he is pushing the envelope." Experience Basil Twist at his studio in the West Village in NYC in Profiles-the New Yorker youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n1YatoKv3yU>

After the workshop we had a yummy outdoor potluck. Thanks to our hosting family, Lauren, Derek, and twin 4 year olds, Dylan and Dexter. Also to Sharon Clay who invited her Dublin 4-H puppeteers to attend the workshop!

Besides what the kids themselves learned, we also learned their reactions and abilities. Also thanks to Sharon's daughter, Kristen Clay, who faithfully provides Sharon with transportation to Guild events.

Lauren was very busy with the twins throughout the meeting. Child sized hand puppet stages were in the boys' bedroom and also the play area. Puppetry sure is rubbing off on these fortunate children. One of them gave a puppet show for the diners! Way to go! Puppetry-and our SFBAPG- sure needs both of you to follow in the footsteps of your Parents! by Elisheva Hart

REVIEW OF LEX'S PUPPET AND CREATURE WORK EXHIBITION by Elisheva Hart

Lex sent a Guild Shout Out "Hey all! I'm having an exhibit of my puppet and creature [costumes] work this Saturday and Sunday [May 19th and 20th] ...in Sebastopol...turn in at the big yellow duck!" [A small travel art-trailer.] Definitely not just another road side attraction along the Gravenstein Highway. This was the real thing! I went Sunday afternoon.

Such an amazing display! Lex's work was sized from full human size animal body costumes down to finger puppets! Many samples of the original puppets which she designed and built for Folkmanis, our local puppet factory, were displayed. She designed 15 or more puppets which were produced by Folkmanis during the course of about 4 years. She dreamed up at least

10 others which did not get produced, due to the limited slots for new puppets each year.

Another appreciative visitor mentioned that Lex's large bears, foxes and other life size creatures looked like taxidermy to him. Our tender hearted puppet artist did not care for this analogy, so the word "Lexadermy" was created.

Fellow Guilders, Beth Marie Deenihan and Tom Crystle, came from Sonoma to view the display and also take photos, to smooze, and support Lex. There was fabulous free homemade pie provided by the artist who lent Lex inside studio space for her creations and patio space for fellow guild member Artie Poore to display his unique puzzle paintings.

Keep our eyes open Guilders for Lex to announce-this summer- the opening of her new Studio "DREAMS AND VISIONS" which will be a puppet studio plus a variety of fabric craft classes. Some of these will include wonderful opportunities to learn new ways to treat and use fabric, including a technique of burning the fabric to create designs.! The location of Dreams and Visions is at 6544 Front Street, Forestville, located in West Marin County.

Check out Lex's very well designed web site <http://www.dreamsandvisionsart.com> where you can join her mailing list for more details about the opening and classes. She is aiming for an opening of the shop on June 16th, and soon after will release info on the classes.

At the exhibit Lex had postcards of her work for sale! I purchased a set of 6 different ones which feature her life sized "Lexadermy" creatures posed in real locations around Forestville, Bear Republic Brewery, Forbidden Island and Pioneer Town. The post cards has such titles as "The long, fuzzy arm of the Law" (Fox as sheriff), "Hitchin'" (2 bears thumbing a ride to the river), and "Bears n Beers" (2 bears drinking brews in the authentic Bear Republic Brewery setting).

Currently there is a special price for readers of the SFBAPG Newsletter of \$1.50 per post card and \$7.50 for all 6 (such a deal!) Contact Lex at bluehyena@gmail.com for further information.



I had an opportunity to show these very amusing postcards to my family the following Sunday. They thought the cards are awesome. Even my 12 year old grandson enjoyed them, and.... so will you!

Puppet Novel by Guild Members

Novels don't often concern themselves with puppeteers, but that's changing in June. That's when Guild members Conrad Bishop & Elizabeth Fuller's new novel *GALAHAD'S FOOL* is published. The official book launch is 4 p.m. on Sunday, June 10, at Main Stage West in Sebastopol. For more info, email eye@independenteye.org.

A year after the death of his co-creator and soul mate Lainie, a grizzled puppeteer struggles to build a solo show. But what Albert Fisher intends as a lightweight spoof turns sharply personal, and he labors to birth a raw myth of love and loss. His aging, pot-bellied Sir Galahad launches a second mad quest for the Holy Grail. To follow him, his lady secretly changes guises with their frail, androgynous Fool. As his play evolves, Albert finds kinship with Galahad's despair and dogged vision, and opens to the risk of change.

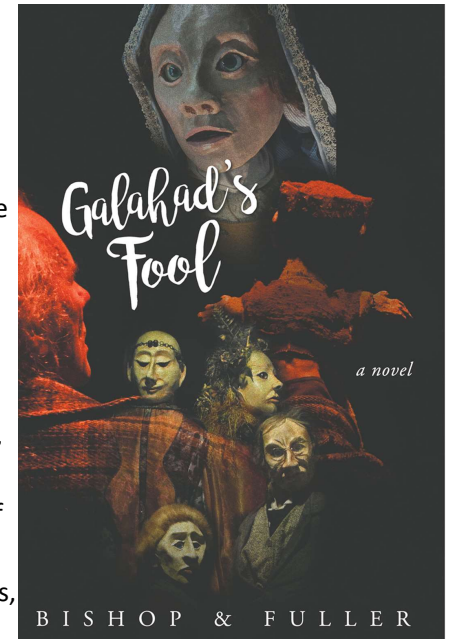
Bishop & Fuller know Albert Fisher well, having worked together as playwrights, actors, and puppeteers since 1969, crisscrossing the USA for more than 3,500 performances, along with creating 50+ plays and four public radio series.

"We left college teaching forty-seven years ago to go on the road with our own plays and our two kids bouncing in the back of a Dodge van," Fuller comments. "But one of these days, one of us won't have the other. That thought spurred the story, which is tender overall, but it cuts pretty close to the bone."

"A life in theatre or Galahad's quest or a long-term love, all these involve risking loss," Bishop adds. "Getting old is the same, but we've not seen a better alternative."

"We made Albert a puppeteer because puppetry involves the writing, the sculpting, the staging and the acting, so if you've launched a challenging project, you're facing multiple challenges," Bishop explains. Puppetry hasn't been the entirety of their work, but a significant part, with puppet stagings of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*

Publication date of *Galahad's Fool* by WordWorkers Press is June 1st. Distributed through Ingram, it can be ordered at any bookstore. Signed copies are available from the authors through their blogsite www.DamnedFool.com. Their other books include a novel, *Realists*, a memoir, *Co-Creation: Fifty Years in the Making*, and two anthologies of their plays.



Building a Puppet for the O'Neill

By Tree

This is Purple Pete. He is going with me to the O'Neill Puppetry Conference

this June. As you can well imagine I am very excited to be going. This will be my first time attending the conference. For those of you who have never been to the O'Neil, a lot of preparation goes in to pulling it all together to attend.

The application process is rigorous and thorough. Lots of writing. Applicants are pushed to think hard about puppetry and what it means to them as well as to get clear on intentions for going to the conference. Since I am going to be studying with Phillip Huber for the main strand, I need to bring along a puppet to work with while I'm there. I will be developing a three to three and a half minute, short strung, cabaret marionette piece. I decided I wanted to start fresh with a new puppet. To design and build it specifically for the piece I will be working on. It's been quite a journey. The puppet has been rather involved so I thought I would share with the guild a bit about my build process for this puppet.



My intention was to create a sort of Comedia clown character since I will be using masks as part of this performance. I also really want a puppet that has a lot of possibilities for movement. The result is to create flexibility into his body construction to facilitate his physicality. Because of this I've probably spent the most time building this puppet to date. Wouldn't surprise me to figure out that I may have put in around 200 hours into this little being. Having spent this much time building a puppet, I can say the results are definitely worthwhile.

The most frequent question I get asked is, what is your puppet made out of. For those of you who are curious here is the answer:

Purple Pete consists of head shoulders, arms, hands and feet made of super sculpey (polymer clay - the gray stuff). I made as many pieces as I could with hollow parts to reduce weight.



The broken head pictured actually is a blessing in disguise since it offers a cut away view of the hollow head and how it attaches to the body. One thing I'm finding I like about this puppet building method, is that when puppet parts do break accidentally, the pieces don't shatter into tiny bits. The breaks are pretty clean so a good dose of epoxy seems to do the trick. If he had broken before he was painted, he could have actually been repaired by adding and reinforcing with more polymer clay and re-baking the mended piece. On another puppet I accidentally dropped my Makita screw gun and broke the head and was able to repair it good as new using this method.

There are many types of polymer clays available these days and a variety of colors to choose from if you are so inclined. I usually like to paint my creations so for me the color of the clay usually doesn't matter. Strength and durability are more important for me. I'm rather curious to try the German polymer clay

Fimo Puppen. One website describes it as "extremely pliable and dimensionally stable". It was created specifically for doll making. My understanding is that it retains a flexibility the regular polymer clays do not have after baking. Most polymer clays are pretty rigid once they are baked which is totally fine in sculptural applications but with puppets having some built-in flexibility to the material would be a plus. In my research on polymer clay, I've discovered different brands of polymer clay can be mixed together. The general wisdom seems to be that the clay is baked at the lower temperature setting for the two brands being mixed.

The other great thing about polymer clay is that you can bake in aluminum wire armature to fingers as pictured. This

adds structure and strength. I also use aluminum sheeting cut into tongues that are drilled with a hole for the pivot point of the axle joint for fixed puppet joints like elbows. Knees, and ankles. Aluminum is considered the best metal to use to bake into the clay since it doesn't conduct excessive amounts of heat which could potentially cause the polymer clay to burn and potentially weaken the joint.

Now back to the rest of the puppet construction story. The torso is cane basket strips. The pelvis and butt under his little green shorts is carved balsa wood. His legs are bamboo grown and harvested from my back yard. He also has black onyx faceted beads for eyes. The facets are nice because it adds a twinkle to his eyes. I've also noticed it adds a bit to the illusion that perhaps he just blinked.



As I started to build him, I started to get a bit nervous about the weight after sculpting the head, shoulder, arms and hands out of the polymer clay. That is why I switched to lighter weight materials for other body parts. As it turns out I think my choices have ended up putting most of the weight in parts of a marionette where having weight is an advantage. I think he weighs in around 2.5 pounds which I don't think is too bad for a 27.5 inch tall puppet.

So there you have it for this article on building of Purple Pete. If you have any questions or need of advice please feel free to contact me through the guild. Happy puppet building!

The Guild Founders Scholarship Committee is happy to grant Tree Bartlett a scholarship to help him attend the O'Neill workshop.

August Guild Meeting at the Puppet Fair at Fairyland, Oakland

Sat., Aug 25 Fairyland Puppet Fair 10:00-4:00 & Guild Meeting 4:30 to early evening

Our traditional August Guild meeting at Fairyland on Sat. is a mini Festival with a number of puppet shows from 11-4:30 and a special guest for the Guild meeting. Fairyland's mini Fest continues on Sunday with more puppet shows. Show schedule, puppet exhibit, craft table info, etc. will be in the July & Aug newsletters.

Menlo Park Library's Belle Haven Branch is having a puppet festival this summer! Here's the link and their schedule.

<https://www.menlopark.org/puppetry> (listing continued next page)

Puppet Slam – June 3

The Menlo Park Library's Belle Haven Branch is hosting a summer Puppetry Festival, kicking off with a "Puppet Slam," with mini shows by several members of the San Francisco Bay Area Puppeteers Guild. The free event will take place at 2:00 p.m. at the library, located at [413 Ivy Drive](#). For more information, visit menlopark.org/puppetry, or phone 650-330-2540.

The Itty-Bitty Variety Show – June 17

The Menlo Park Library's Belle Haven Branch will host a performance by Caterpillar Puppets, presenting its Itty Bitty Variety Show featuring the "Three Little Bla-Bla-Blas." The event is free, thanks to the Friends of the Menlo Park Library, and will take place at 2:00 p.m. at the library, located at [413 Ivy Drive](#). For more information, visit menlopark.org/puppetry, or phone 650-330-2540.

The Puppet Circus – July 1

The Menlo Park Belle Haven Library will host a performance by The Puppet Company, presenting its Puppet Circus featuring dozens of hand puppets, rod puppets, and marionettes, including elephants, lions, clowns, and a tightrope-walking bear. The event is free, thanks to the Friends of the Menlo Park Library, and will take place at 2:00 p.m. at the library, located at [413 Ivy Drive](#). For more information, visit menlopark.org/puppetry, or phone 650-330-2540.

The Puppet Man – July 15

The Menlo Park Belle Haven Library will host a performance by Magical Moonshine Theatre, presenting its show "The Puppet Man," featuring a walking, talking, interactive puppet stage. The event is free, thanks to the Friends of the Menlo Park Library, and will take place at 2:00 p.m. at the library, located at [413 Ivy Drive](#). For more information, visit menlopark.org/puppetry, or phone 650-330-2540.

Silly Goose and Val – July 25

The Menlo Park Belle Haven Library will host a performance by Silly Goose and Val, a fast-paced, funny musical show featuring puppets, ventriloquism, dancing, singing, and "100% audience participation!" The event is free, thanks to the Friends of the Menlo Park Library, and will take place at 4:00 p.m. at the library, located at [413 Ivy Drive](#). For more information, visit menlopark.org/puppetry, or phone 650-330-2540.

Frankenswine – July 29

The Menlo Park Belle Haven Library Branch will host a performance by Puppet Art Theater, presenting its show "Frankenswine," about a pig on a quest for a brain. The event is free, thanks to the Friends of the Menlo Park Library, and will take place at 2:00 p.m. at the library, located at [413 Ivy Drive](#). For more information, visit menlopark.org/puppetry, or phone 650-330-2540.

The Carnival of the Animals – August 12

The Menlo Park Belle Haven Library will host a performance by the Fratello Marionettes, presenting its show "Carnival of the Animals," Wedding three classic tales to the fanciful musical score by Camille Saint-Saens. The event is free, thanks to the Friends of the Menlo Park Library, and will take place at 2:00 p.m. at the library, located at [413 Ivy Drive](#). For more information, visit menlopark.org/puppetry, or phone 650-330-2540.

Randel McGee & Groark the Dragon – August 26

The Menlo Park Belle Haven Library will host a performance by Randel McGee & Groark the Dragon, featuring a lively combination of ventriloquism, comedy, storytelling, and memorable melodies. The event is free, thanks to the Friends of the Menlo Park Library, and will take place at 2:00 p.m. at the library, located at [413 Ivy Drive](#). For more information, visit menlopark.org/puppetry, or phone 650-330-2540.

HANDY CONTACTS

SEND YOUR NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS BY THE LAST DAY OF THE MONTH TO newsletter@sfbapg.org

SEND YOUR CALENDAR LISTINGS ANYTIME TO events@sfbapg.org

Dear Mrs. Bandersnoot!



In a younger life, I taught Sunday school to 12 4th graders. What an opportunity to use puppetry! We wrote a play based on our curriculum, made simple puppets, and began rehearsals. What a disaster! Certain of the little "Angels" pushed and shoved each other constantly back stage. Alas, when casting, I did not consider that their puppets appeared on stage next to each other (processions, etc.) which encouraged this scrapping. The rascals managed to overturn the stage! Needless to say, quote the Raven, "Nevermore!"

How to do cast control? I'm sure this can be a problem in other contexts than the church basement!

Thanks, signed, "Burnt Out to the Max"

Dear Burnt Out to the Max!

Child wrangling is an art form in itself. Puppeteers are used to manipulating without resistance. We puppets have our limitations, but do not rise up in open defiance. We are floppy, pliant and need you to give us purpose; to tell our stories, so we tend to cooperate! Children want to have the experience of playing (Child's work) with puppets and often are easily over excited. Mary and I talked about it and she offered a few suggestions based on her work as a

Child/Puppet Wrangler. 1) Employ the teacher. Your coming to his/her classroom is an opportunity for the teacher to learn something new also, so do not let them slink off to get coffee or grade papers. They have established systems (Clapping hands, whistling, etc) to get their charges attention and to settle them down, so let the teacher know at the outset that is your expectation for their participation. 2) Start with an overview of what the kiddos can expect to happen, like: first we are going to read the script, then decide parts, work on the puppets, then walk it through while the paper Mache dries and learn lines....You can even write it on the board so they can refer to it as you roll along. Order dispels chaos. 3) Talk about theater and how each person's part is important and how it is "collaboration" – teamwork. Thus, everyone needs to do their part to the best of their ability for the good of the whole. Anyone disrupting that process will not be included and only one warning will be allowed. 4) Encourage good behavior and participation. Children generally like to please, so praise good behavior and cooperation freely and often. This has worked well for Mary. 5) Be firm, but kind. Separate troublemakers. When they understand she means business and will remove anyone who is messing about, things can proceed, and fun had by all!

Best Wishes in all your Child Wrangling endeavors! Mrs. Bandersnoot

To submit a question to Mrs. Bandersnoot, email Mary Nagler mary.nagler@gmail.com. (Mrs. Bandersnoot lives with her and Mary will relay the message!) Or, give Mary a call (707) 303 0093 **No question too silly**. Silly is good!