

# Dramatic Dynamo! Karen Noel Directs 20th Performance at Lafayette School

By Trina Audley



Karen Noel at work directing

Photo Trina Audley

This June marks the 20th year that second grade teacher, Mrs. Karen Noel, has directed the school play at Lafayette Elementary. That may not seem very interesting...until you see one of her productions.

"It is astounding what she can do with 4th and 5th graders to create semi-professional, fun musical productions each year," reports one parent. "Her enthusiasm for music and the stage becomes a part of each child, from the lead performer to the stage hand."

As a result, many Lafayette Elementary School students go on to pursue musical theatre. Mrs. Noel's own children are no exception. Once Lafayette Elementary play participants themselves, Leslie and Adam Noel both enjoy careers in music today. Adam Noel directs music at Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School, and Leslie runs the Peter Pan Foundation, a non-profit company that promotes causes through musical productions.

Mrs. Noel is revered by

20 years of Lafayette Elementary School students and families for her dedication. This is perhaps best demonstrated each year when Mrs. Noel turns the spotlight on veteran performers. "She invites any audience member who has ever participated in a Lafayette School production to line up and speak about the role they played," says third time parent producer, Barbara Vogel. "As you listen to the 'kids' (sometimes they're in college), Karen Noel's influence is revealed. It can take a while to hear from everyone, but it's worth it!"

Although Mrs. Noel reports that "this year's script is a bit of a stretch," she's unafraid. "*The Pirates of Penzance* offers British humor. The cast may not get it all at first, but they're learning a lot and having a great time!"

*The Pirates of Penzance* will be performed on June 4th & 5th at 1pm and 7pm in Lafayette School's multi-purpose room (950 Moraga Road). Tickets are \$5.00/adult and \$2.00/child