

Hooked on performing

By Heather Murtagh
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It was through Mother Goose that Brooke Knight got her first break.

Not yet known by Knight at the time, she was 7 when the opportunity to read nursery rhymes arose.

"I heard myself on the radio," she said, and other people were so excited. "I thought, 'well this is fun.'"

She was hooked. Performing has remained an important part in Knight's life. And, after 18 years of Broadway By the Bay's artistic director, she's retiring from making seasons and creating shows at the end of this season.

Admittedly, the energetic Knight isn't sure how she'll deal with a lack of tasks come November. But she's focusing on the season ahead, which opens March 31 with "Forever Plaid."



Brooke Knight

Knight didn't start at the top. She took dance classes for years. As a high school student in Fresno, Knight was lucky enough to have a drama teacher who also taught at Fresno State. He invited her to take part in a college performance, making the decision to attend the school in her back yard an easy one.

Knight earned a theatre degree with a minor in psychology and continued her education at San Francisco State.

She ended up teaching in San Francisco, a position she left in the late '60s during a time of unrest on the campus. Knight sought guidance from a professor. Teaching at the college level had been her plan. Under his advice,



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Knight began work on her high school credential working with Allen Knight. Allen Knight was doing shows at Mills High Knight hadn't seen done before.

At the time she had always thought marriage wasn't in the cards, but that changed with Allen.

"It was a great 30-year marriage," said Knight.

Her husband died 11 years ago, but the pair shared many commonalities in their time together. Allen was a counselor and drama teacher at Mills. Knight took on the same titles at Aragon High School for many years. The pair never had children. Instead, they had theatre children and plays. Both were born to the couple annually.

Now Knight has a new challenge ahead: A new marriage and grandchildren.

Seven years ago, through a chance encounter, the energetic Knight met a man named Tom Broman. Last month the two got engaged. Broman brings with him two children and four grandchildren, the most recent one born on Valentine's Day.

"I skipped the mothering," said Knight who is truly enjoying her new role as a grandparent.

Before that can be the focus, Knight has one more season to get through.

Broadway By the Bay will be performing in a new venue this year, the Fox Theatre in Redwood City. New directors were hired and Knight is working on next year's season allowing for a smooth transition once her replacement is chosen.

Operations Manager Danielle Santana first met Knight in 2002. At the time, Santana was a high school kid who knew Knight as the woman with the paychecks at the end of each production. Since elevating her role from more than a kid on crew, she's had the opportunity to know Knight a bit better.

Knight, who often calls people sweetie darling, missed one production last year. Santana described the show as odd.

"She has an infectious energy," Santana said.

Although, what Santana may miss the most doesn't happen on stage but after. Once a show opens, most people go out that night to celebrate.

"Brooke always comes, buys the staff a drink. It's pretty consistent and one of my favorite parts. She can be herself," said Santana.

The staff will have a couple more chances to enjoy the drink out. And Knight is starting to think of life outside of Broadway By the Bay. She may teach pilates, improve her golf game and enjoy being a newlywed.

For more information about Broadway By the Bay visit www.BroadwayByTheBay.org or call 579-5565.