

Magicians, puppeteers, mime troupes greet customers

Bookstore's added attraction: entertainment

Story and photos by
PAT BORDMAN

Bookstores are usually for quiet
browsing - not the spot to find a
magician, puppeteers or mime.

That theory doesn't hold at the
Children's Bookshop at Applegate
Square in Southfield.

Customers have become accu-
tomed to the frequent entertain-
ment at the shop and it seemed last
Sunday that most of all its fren-
zied fun was for children.

They used no props. Costumes
were limited to a simple group out-
fit.

With a sole backdrop of shelves of
books, the Five presented fresh,
spirited and animated renditions of
stories. The audience had no trouble
using their imagination to fill in the
stage paraphernalia.

"We're combining literature with
fun. It's not so formidable to the
child," says shop owner Judy Ten-
nen.

Fun was certainly in evidence at
a recent Sunday afternoon show.

A group of Birmingham Groves
High School drama students per-
formed. Calling themselves the Fabu-
lous Five, they offered mime, story
readings and skits, all based on chil-
dren's books taken right off the
store shelves.

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HIGHLIGHT of the presentation
was a book by Judith Viorst, "My
Mama Says There Aren't Any

Zombies, Ghosts, Vampires, Cre-
atures, Demons, Monsters, Fiends,
Goblins, or Things, but... Sometimes
Even Mamas Make Mistakes."

Because of the store's layout, and
it's intended use as a bookstore,
there is no clearly defined area for
stage.

The proximity of audience to actor
is only a child's arm length.

"It's a very informal
atmosphere," Ms. Tennen said. "The
children sit on the floor. They don't
feel they're in the rigid structure of
the theater or an auditorium, and
they're very relaxed."

"I think they have fun."

But it is a bookstore first and
foremost.

"The emphasis is definitely on
reading. I want it to be a bookstore,
but I think the other things make it
appealing."

ATMOSPHERE is a key to suc-
cess at the Children's Bookshop
where children are the most impor-
tant customers. They are expected to
browse, read through the multi-
tude of choices, to touch, to ask
questions, to make requests and to
participate in this store.

Child visitors get a natural feeling
that the store is intended just for
them. And it is.

The clincher is a secret room
available only to small children
because only they will fit inside.
But, adult customers have a place
as well.

There is an adult section with selec-
tions on child-rearing, nutrition,
and other family matters.

Ms. Tennen feels the weight of
responsibility for recommendations.

"The parents come in and they
want books on death, divorce and
adoption," she said. "They want

something that is rational and not
maudlin. I have to make judgments
and it's a difficult thing to do."

"I feel tremendously responsi-
ble."

Why a bookstore just for chil-
dren?

"I think people are very aware of
what their children read and they
see them coming home with things

from the paperback store and
they're upset," Ms. Tennen said.

"I WORKED in a bookstore be-
fore starting this one and became an
expert on children's books because
nobody else cared or knew. There
seemed to be a tremendous need for
guidance."

Ms. Tennen contends that al-

though parents want help, they don't
want to have to sit down and read
things first.

"This place affords a service,"
she said. "The children are pleased
to come in here. They love the books
and the ambience."

At 1 p.m. on Dec. 23 the Fabu-
lous Five will again perform at the Chil-
dren's Bookstore.



Father Bob Dock, left, holds daughter Bonnie on his lap and watches son Bradley Dock (right) as the Fabulous Five from Groves High perform their mime and storytelling. The group will perform again at 1 p.m. Dec. 23 at the Children's Bookstore in Applegate Square.

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CITY OF FARMINGTON
OPPORTUNITY FOR A PUBLIC HEARING

All interested persons are hereby advised that the City of Farmington is proposing the improvement of the Farmington Road/Salwassie Road intersection at the River Rouge. The proposed improvement includes the construction of a new intersection at Farmington Road and Salwassie Road at the River Rouge. Both roads will be upgraded to four lanes (61 foot wide pavement) at the intersection.

In addition to the new pavement, the existing bridge over the River Rouge will be removed and replaced with a 30'11" x 10'8" culvert. The bridge will be closed during construction and thru traffic will be rerouted by a signed detour. Local traffic will be allowed to access up to the bridge site.

Information concerning this project, including preliminary plans and an evaluation of the social, economic and environmental aspects of the project, is available for public review and copying at the Office of the City Manager, 23600 Liberty Street, Farmington, Mich.

The project is proposed to receive Federal aid under the Federal Aid Urban Systems, and under provisions of Federal Law, any person who would be affected by the proposed improvement, may request in writing that a formal Public Hearing be held concerning the social, economic, and environmental effects of this project. Such a request should be mailed to the City Manager, 23600 Liberty Street, Farmington, Mich. 48336. This request must be received on or before January 3, 1980.

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