

## Cleaning the Barn

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I've been cleaning out the barn. We're having a large party...50th anniversary for my son's parents-in-law (my son married the daughter of friends of mine; how nice is THAT?!) and here is this huge space, open at each end—when we roll the giant doors aside—for a breeze to come through; and the walls are perfect for tacking up photos, etc, so there will be tables set up, and lots of food, and friends and kids and dogs and the whole wonderful thing that happens on family occasions.

Also in the barn is the Mickey-and-Judy room, the little theater, where last summer my granddaughter, Nadine, and her friend Annika, both of them 11 years old at the time - visiting from Germany, put on a puppet show which they had written, rehearsed, and for which they had made the puppets. The amazing thing was that Annika spoke no English at all. Nadine speaks both English and German - she always has, since when she was acquiring language she had an American dad (my son) and a German mom. Nadine's dad died when she was two. But after that her mother spoke English to her so that she would keep the language of her American family.

At any rate, here they are (Nadine on the left) with their puppets after a wildly successful performance of "The Bad Prince" during which Annika read her English dialogue phonetically and beautifully. There were fourteen people in the audience and each of them gave the show a rave review. The sign above the puppet-theater-window, which is hard to read in the photo, says THE LIVELY VIRTUOSO THEATER ARTS COMPANY, FOUNDED 2002.

The sock puppets, a little moldy, are in The Green Room still, along with the HISS, BOO, and APPLAUSE instructional signs. So I've been smiling with nostalgia as I clean the barn.

Nadine is in the USA again this summer, but this time in Florida, so that she can see where she was born thirteen years ago this fall. I'll fly down Thursday to see her and her mom. Now she is a Lively Virtuoso at ballet, horseback riding, and violin, and I think so often about how proud her dad would be of her, how proud we all are.

Tags: Untagged