

Meet Mary Ann Etzler

President, Central Florida Association for Women Lawyers

When she is not a successful litigation attorney, community leader, judicial candidate or CFAWL Board President, **Mary Ann Etzler** has been spotted as her alter-identity Batgirl, saving the world from the Riddler (good natured husband Bruce) with the assistance of Batman and Robin (sons Luke and Zack). Yet Mary Ann is a woman of many identities. When not Batgirl, Mary Ann's position as scientist with NASA has been captured with two astronauts in this rarely seen photo.



In fact, if you look carefully on the streets of Central Florida on October 31 at dusk, Mary Ann can be seen in any one of her multiple different identities including a happy pirate and a first mate. Each year, Mary Ann discovers creative ways to modify one simple wagon, create a fantasy dream come true and give her two adopted sons Halloween memories that they will never forget. "It all started with that stroller on Luke's first Halloween," explained Mary Ann. It was a momentary thought process and then it became clear to her. Somehow Mary Ann could see how one baby stroller, some cardboard boxes, paint and a lantern light could become a train and: **THE LUKE EXPRESS** was born! Then as Luke grew, came the wagon and the pirate ship, the bat mobile and the shuttle.

Each year, Mary Ann lovingly crafts a fantasy for her sons with a wagon, planks, some dowel rods, toilet paper rolls, tissue paper, disposable pie plates, card board boxes and one amazing imagination. Of course there are Mary Ann's secret ingredients, which make each year special for her family, friends and neighbors. "Batgirl and Riddler were a lot of fun," Mary Ann muses while taking a moment away from her pressing litigation caseload to reflect on Halloween's past.

"I had to dye a white t-shirt green along with some white fabric for the face mask, make and cut numerous question marks to sew on the Riddler's shirt, design both masks (mine and Bruce's), create a pattern on tissue paper, try out the pattern to see if they were correct sizes, then I had to sew both masks by machine and by hand. I added fabric lining to get my 'ears' to stand up, and then added the design on my mask. My cape was pretty easy but my arm spikes were a challenge. Then I simply cut out a batman symbol from yellow felt and sewed it onto a black shirt. Add black shorts, black pantyhose, black ...shoes and voila!I have to admit, though, the shuttle was my favorite!"

It should be noted that the shuttle is an exact to scale replica model of the Discovery. Mary Ann obtained some photographs of the shuttle, made to-scale drawings and designed her ship accordingly. As she detailed how she configured the boxes and dowel rods; the 2" x 4" planks and the toilet paper rolls; and the colored tissue for the flames blowing from the propulsion pipes and some carefully affixed packing materials I was amazed. Each detail of the vessel was precisely crafted. "You are an engineer" I exclaimed! And Mary Ann admitted her love of that art.

Yet nothing can compare to her love for her family. When Mary Ann and Bruce decided to open their homes and hearts to Luke and Zack through adoption, nothing could have prepared them for the joy to come. This is why you will often hear Mary Ann talk about her two sons, or encourage women to explore adoption, or see her dash out of a meeting in order to have just one more precious moment with "the boys."

Every Halloween, as this family approaches a door to collect goodies, the neighbors wonder: what will they be next?? Yet there is one thing that we can all be sure of: Whether she is Batgirl or a scientist, a matey or pirate, a lawyer or engineer, a singer (yes that too) or a wife, a daughter or sister or dear friend there is one thing that Mary Ann will always be first and foremost: **A MOM.**

