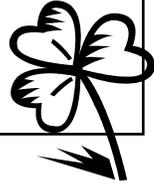


## March, 2011

<b>Wednesday, March 2</b>	<b>Berrybrook Board Meeting 7:30 pm</b>
<b>Thursday, March 10</b>	<b>BPA Meeting 7:00 pm</b>
<b>Friday, March 11</b>	<b>Professional Day, No School</b>
<b>Friday, March 18</b>	<b>Enrollment Forms Due</b>
<b>Monday, March 21</b>	<b>Strategic Planning Open Forum 7:00 pm</b>
<b>Thursday, March 24</b>	<b>Parent Discussion Group 7:00 pm</b>
<b>Wednesday, March 30</b>	<b>Berrybrook Board Meeting 7:30 pm</b>



## Notes from the Headmaster

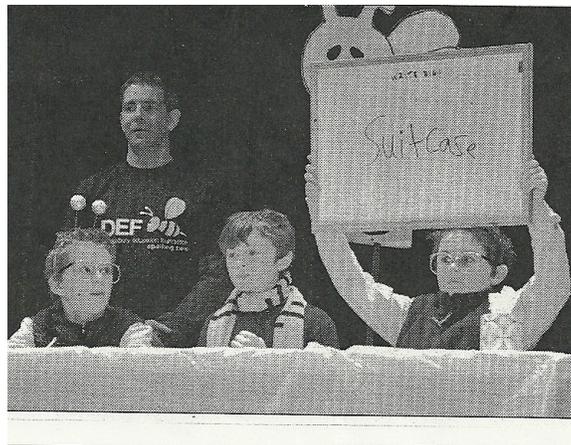
At Berrybrook, we are preparing children for life, and that includes kindergarten and beyond. I know we are successful in that endeavor because I have many opportunities to catch up with alum and hear about their lives ( like Christopher DeOrsay, who is a Berrybrook alum and now on our Board of Directors! ) I often see pictures of Berrybrook alumni in local newspapers and last week, I saw a photo of three boys, friends at Berrybrook, and still friends in 4th grade. They were in the paper because they were the winners of Best Name - "Despicable Bees" - and Champs of the 4th grade Spelling Bee. I remember fondly **Charlie Rubin, Cammack Shepler and Dylan Keating** as four year olds, and to me their success was inevitable. Seeing the three of them in that picture was even more special to me because they each have a sibling attending Berrybrook this year. Jack Rubin, Natalie Shepler and Annabel Keating are preparing themselves for future success right this minute! They are learning, as their brothers did, how to set a goal and reach it, and how to make and keep a friend.

In March, we begin to make plans for next year. First year families will be contemplating the expanded learning opportunities in one of our 4 or 5 Day classes and our second year families are beginning to think about Kindergarten, the next big milestone for children after Berrybrook. Parents wonder if their child is ready. Will they be able to manage the school bus? Will they be able to make the transition to a large school with many children of all ages? Will they make friends? Will they be happy? How will they cope with the academic work that will be presented? At Berrybrook, children have been prepared to be self-sufficient and self-confident. They will be able to express themselves and work successfully independently or in groups. Over the next three months, teachers

will observe the 4 and 5 Day children maturing by leaps and bounds and by next September, they will be ready and eager for the next step in their education.

I would like to reassure all parents that their children will do well beyond Berrybrook. They will do well because they have attended a developmentally appropriate preschool, but more importantly, they will do well because they have great parents. I urge all parents to remember that they are the most important factor in their child's development. School has its impact, but the primary influence on children will always be parents. Being a parent is a big responsibility and hard work. Believe in your child and stay involved with your child's school and your child will have what it takes to be successful.

Pat Keeley



Charlie, Cammack and Dylan.

Also from the Headmaster...

Parent involvement is crucial to the success we enjoy at Berrybrook. Parents volunteer in classrooms, participate in birthday celebrations, collect recyclables, cook, sew and donate items needed. In addition to these wonderful gifts, every Berrybrook parent is a member of our Berrybrook Parents' Association. The BPA coordinates activities that contribute so much to the life of our school and to the programs we offer. Without the contributions from BPA dues and the fun fund raising events, enrichment programs in music, story telling, animals and other subjects would not be possible. Without the BPA, the family centered Harvest Festival could not have been enjoyed by so many in our community and we would not be planning our fourth annual Spring Fling for the month of May. **Mimi Gallagher, Cheryl Kilduff, Heather Canty, Martha Dennison, and Pam Campbell** deserve special notice for contributing so much this year. They have made a tremendous contribution of time and energy to our school. With only three months left in this school year, the group will be starting to plan for the future, and part of the planning includes finding replacements for current officers and other positions. Please consider serving Berrybrook as a BPA volunteer for the 2011-2012 school year. Over the next few months, the BPA will be identifying a new President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer, as well as classroom parents for each group. In addition to being a lot of fun, it is exciting, satisfying and rewarding work. It is a tremendous opportunity to enhance the quality of the Berrybrook experience for all of our families and for yourself. Think about it!

## First Year Program News

The month of February was full of LOVE! Valentines, daily projects and songs to sing for those we care about. Thank you for assisting the children in creating their Valentines brought from home. They enjoyed passing them out to each of their classmates. Valentine snack celebrations may have included pink cupcakes and frosting, candy hearts, red jello, strawberries, pink marshmallows, cherry drink etc. What a treat!

The classroom Post Office provided an opportunity to role play before the first field trip to the real local Post Office. Hope all your children's valentines found their way to your homes. February also found time for creating and painting recycled creations, or learning about bears in winter.

The long month of March will provide plenty of time for learning and discovering in such areas as Transportation, Dinosaurs, Musical Instruments, Grocery Store, Dr Seuss and of course St. Patrick's Day!

Thank you for your continued support in the classroom and as teachers we support your challenging job as a parents. We can work together to guide the children toward a wonderful life.

Mrs. Capasso,  
Mrs. Delano,  
Mrs. Dunn  
Mrs. La Forest,  
Mrs. Piccuito and  
Mrs. Pisani



## Second Year Program News

Time "Marches" On! Yes, for children March is the third month of the new year and the seventh month of the school year. It is a month full of change and reflection, of moving forward and looking back...a gathering of new knowledge and sharing of knowledge previously accumulated. Children at Berrybrook are constantly learning about math, science/nature, history/social studies, pre-reading skills, art and music. Most importantly they are learning appropriate social interactions necessary for life-long success.

Berrybrook is a school proud of it's traditions and March is a month in which two of our oldest traditions are celebrated..."tapping the Maple trees" and "making Irish soda bread.

"Tapping the Maple trees" is an important part of our March science curriculum. It is as though the Maple trees are "Super Heros" awakening from a long winter's nap and producing sap which when boiled becomes delicious syrup. Any Maple tree will do for making syrup although there may be variations in taste. The trees tapped at Berrybrook are Norway maples.

Another long time tradition is making "Irish soda bread". This activity incorporates math into the experience. Children learn to measure and level ingredients. They count how much has been measured and figure out how much more is needed to complete the recipe. It is a time for concentration as well as having fun. Remember, it's the process not the product which yields the greatest learning.

"Dinosaurs" are a favorite March activity. Children watercolor on paper dinosaurs, make dino bones of paper mache', learn dino songs and gather knowledge from books and stories. Presenting the thought to children that at one time dinosaurs (flying, swimming, walking) may have lived right where Berrybrook is today, perhaps at the very spot where they are now sitting, helps the children connect the past to the present. Connection is important to the learning process. Sharing their new found knowledge with their family allows them to feel that what they have to offer is valued information and worthy of being listened to.

Another example of how important connection is to children is looking at the copyright on a book you are about to read with your child. Figure out how old the book is and connect it. For example: " This book was written in 1950. Your Grandmother may have listened to this story when she was just four years old!" A statement such as this will increase the child's interest because the child can connect a person she knows with the age of the book. How many children ever think about their grandparents ever being four years old??? Yes, connection sparks interest and interest is critical to learning.

Because there are three 4/5 day classes and because our Berrybrook program is child-centered, not all classes are working on the same project at the same time. Many of our projects are ongoing. Just as adults are unable to write a book, knit a sweater or paint a portrait in one day, neither are children able to complete some tasks in one block of time. Ongoing projects allow the child to add to and subtract from their creations and have time to concentrate on their work without feeling hurried. Even in our everyday

freeplay curriculum, children are able to create with Legos or playdough and keep their creations in their own tray or container. How comforting for children living in this "here today, gone tomorrow" world to know that their creations are waiting for them when they return to Berrybrook...how special that is.

One last thought about learning. Facts are important and equally so is imagination. Without imagination there would be no dreams to pursue, no inventions, no discoveries, no moving forward. Thoughts are things and imagination is thought.

Let's all imagination a better world to live in. Children have ideas, too. Let's listen to them. They are our future. Time" Marches" On.

The Second Year Teachers,  
Miss Bent, Mrs. Caddle, Mrs. Fosdick,  
Mrs. LaForest, Mrs. O'Neil, Mrs. Neal,  
Mrs. Rosen and Mrs. Swan



**Summer Enrichment**  
The Berrybrook Summer Nature Program will be offered again this year during June and July, on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 9:00 – 1:00. Children must be 4 by September 1<sup>st</sup> to register. Current Berrybrook families will have the opportunity to register first, and then families from the community will be invited. All families will receive complete information about the program and registration the week of March 21, 2011.

## Board of Directors

I attended Berrybrook from the Fall of 1969 to the Spring of 1971, the first floor of the Farm House accommodated the Nursery School and Kindergarten was upstairs. I recall Saltines for snack, journeys to the stream in the woods, making candles and a magical ritual called "sugar on snow". The cubbies were there, the low ceilings were not. I believe some of the building blocks the children use now are the very same I used as a child, I am an architect now and I credit Berrybrook with giving me my first grand building project. The details are fuzzy now and many Berrybrook experiences I'm sure have completely faded away.

My two daughters have been to Berrybrook and now have had the blessings of these same experiences. They have also experienced many new things as well. Of course they are in our beautiful new school building now and on the new playground and hang their coats in new cubbies. During discussions at our Board meetings we sometimes refer to the old this or old that when trying to decide what to do and how to help the teachers and the school. "Remember the old blue slide behind the Farmhouse?..." I remember it when it was brand new and the most exciting addition to our daily outdoor recess, if the slide is old, then so am I.

The Board and the Teachers recently brainstormed ideas of what "Berrybrook means to you". I thought of this for a moment and those memories left from from so long ago were recycled again. I also thought of my girls and what they will remember of their time here. Berrybrook is a place to make memories, both old and new.

Christopher DeOrsay, Board & Alum

## Board of Directors Strategic Planning Update

As you know from last month's Newsletter, the Board has formed a committee to coordinate a strategic planning process that will evaluate our strengths and needs, and will focus our energies to make sure Berrybrook School is healthy for years to come.

The committee is in the process of identifying data that needs to be gathered as part of the process, and how we will go about collecting it. Research, surveys, focus groups and interviews are all being considered. On February 16th, the committee and our planning facilitator, Teresa Goode, had a three hour meeting with the Berrybrook staff to get their input on the critical success factors for the strategic plan. It was a very lively discussion with a wide variety of ideas expressed. Going forward we will be reaching out to current and past families, students, board members and teachers as well as members of our larger community to ask for their input, starting with a Strategic Planning Community Forum on Monday, March 21 at 7:00 pm.

Our communication plan includes regular updates in the Berrybrook Newsletter and parent email. Plans for posting strategic planning information on our web site are in the works and we are hoping to arrange a variety of methods for parents to communicate feedback to the committee. The Strategic Planning Committee and the entire Board of Directors are committed to this process and we are excited about the many wonderful possibilities available to the Berrybrook Community.

Sincerely,  
Mark Longsjo,  
for the Board of Directors

## Berrybrook Parents' Association

Dear Parents,  
February was a quick month. So much to do, so little time. With Valentine's Day and school break it seemed the month was over before it started! March is looking very busy as well.

This month the BPA will be hosting a Moms Night Out March 3 at 7:30 pm at the Kingsbury Club. Please stop in to say Hi and stay for refreshments and catch up with other Berrybrook moms.

We were glad to have Eddie Spaghetti back in February and he will come again in March. Also in March, the children will have an enrichment program about animals presented by members of the Soule Homestead Education Center in Middleborough. Thank you again to all of the families who contributed dues this year and helped to make this year's enrichment programs possible. Remember, the BPA welcomes dues contributions anytime during the year.

We are getting ready to start planning the Spring Fling for this May. This event is a fun way for families to get together, enjoy refreshments and celebrate the success of the school year. Please join us at our next meeting, **Thursday March 10 at 7 pm** to help plan this event.

We are also looking for parents who are interested in being a classroom parent next year as well as officers for the BPA. Please contact me or Mrs. Keeley if you have any questions about any of these positions. They are all great ways to be more involved in our community!

Thank you,  
Mimi Gallagher

## Parent Discussion Group

The February 17<sup>th</sup> meeting continued on the topic of Discipline-Part 2. The evening opened with a reminder "Discipline is not punishment it is guiding and teaching". Several areas were discussed including bedtime, brushing teeth, eating habits, meal planning, frustration (parent and child), different parenting styles, choices/consequences, etc. All areas where discipline is necessary but finding the right balance of words and actions is the challenge.

Special thanks to Karen Gallagher for her presentation on the recent Parenting series by Lynn Reeves-Griffin.

Karen provided handouts and spoke about Lynn Reeves-Griffin's approach to parenting which focuses on raising children who feel self confident and loved.

Please join us on Thursday, March 24<sup>th</sup> for "Dad's Night Out". This traditional PDG for Dad's only has been popular. Handouts will be available on various topics or bring your own thoughts and concerns.

Mrs. Delano, Mrs. LaForest and Mrs. O'Neil

Tuition payment #8 is now due.

2 Day \$ 235.00

3 Day \$ 345.00

4 Day \$ 428.00

5 Day \$ 505.00

Payments #2 - #9  
are due the first of the month from  
September through April with no tuition  
payment in May.

## It Seems to Happen Every Year

Kris Delano

January, February & March are truly a time of learning. This is because by this time children are very comfortable at Berrybrook.

The children...

- \*know what is expected of them,
- \*understand and follow the daily routine,
- \*have found their favorite places in the classroom,
- \*are aware of their classmates (even though they may not know all their names),
- \*have built trust in their teachers to go to them with a concern, or for comfort.

The children are therefore more ready, willing and able to learn because of this level of comfort and understanding.

The children are...

- \*willing to put more time into a project,
- \*able to converse more with new friends,
- \*trying newly acquired skills to solve conflicts,
- \*able to wait their turn,
- \*willing to tackle a new challenges

... just to name a few achievements!

As usual, a lot of growth has taken place in the first half of the school year. We can only imagine what will take place during the remainder of our memorable time together!

*(Mrs. Delano teaches in the 3 Day and 2 Day Classes in Room 3.)*

### A Springtime Tradition



Painting “blown eggs” is a spring tradition at Berrybrook. Children have been creating these beautiful works of art for many years. It is a precious project that requires help from families. Classrooms need “blown eggs.”

If you are interested in donating a few eggs (brown or white) that you have “blown” at home we would appreciate it very much. It is tricky but easy to do. Simply poke a hole in both ends of the egg. A turkey skewer or push pin work well. Each hole should be about the size of a paper punch hole. If you break the yoke it is easier to blow. Blow into one hole and the egg comes out the other. Please rinse egg shell inside and out. Berrybrook teachers will spray the eggs with a bleach solution before children paint them.

Experienced Berrybook parents will tell new parents that the end result is worth the effort. **Please bring eggs into school by Friday, April 1.**

Thank you!  
Berrybrook Teachers