

# BERRYBROOK NEWS

*March, 2009*

*Spring, Oh Spring is coming  
Away will go the snow  
And we will sing together Hi lee Hi lee Hi lo.*

Monday, March 2	BPA presents Jeanine Fitzgerald 7:00 pm
Friday March 13	BPA presents Gerwick Puppets
Friday, March 20	Enrollment Forms Due
Wednesday, March 25	Berrybrook Board of Directors 7:00 pm
Thursday, March 26	BPA silhouettes with Cheryl Le Beaux

## *Notes from the Headmaster*

Big Ryan visited last week. Ryan is a storyteller and his visit was one of the wonderful children's enrichment activities sponsored by the Berrybrook Parent's Association. Ryan has visited Berrybrook before in the past and he is a hit every time. For a full 45 minutes the children listen attentively to his stories and songs and they laugh and laugh and laugh. One child commented to his classmates and teachers, "Actually, that was very funny." And they agreed. I try to go to all of Ryan's performances because I love to watch the children's reactions and comments. After his recent visit, I started to wonder what it was about him that holds the children's attention. Ryan is very unassuming. He comes dressed very casually and sits in a chair in front of the children. He does have a wonderful gift for voices and he brings along some beautiful stuffed animals and puppets. He does a few tricks with his baseball hat and he does some juggling and he is not afraid to get silly, but as I thought about the children and their rapt attention, I realized it is the stories that he is telling that really hook the children. They laugh heartily at his varied voices, but it is the words and ideas he communicates that the children respond to.

His stories are right on target for 3 and 4 year olds. They identify with his characters and what they are going through. One of his stories is "If I have enough for me, I have enough for you." Learning to share is a big part of a preschooler's life. They are most concerned with having enough for themselves, and just learning to consider having enough for others, so naturally they are

interested in that topic. Another story involves a character who is always forgetting. Over and over he says, "I forgot." As adults we ask children to remember so much – remember to say hello, remember to wash your hands, remember, remember, remember! So naturally, when Big Ryan is talking about a turtle who is always forgetting, they know exactly how the turtle feels and they appreciate what he is going through. Big Ryan also has a story that gets the children up on their feet and lets the children jump around and get silly. He encourages them to get really LOUD. Imagine, getting permission to use your outside voice *inside!*

He mesmerizes the children with his juggling, but only after he has made many failed attempts to keep all of the balls in the air. When you think of the number of times a three or four year old has to try something before getting it right, it's no wonder they love the idea that Big Ryan, an adult, also has to make a few mistakes before he succeeds. Big Ryan captured what teachers at Berrybrook already know, and he was able to put it all out there for the children in a unique and fun manner:

If there's enough for me, there's enough for you.  
People can't always remember everything.  
Sometimes it's fun to use a loud voice.  
Laughing with your friends feels good.  
Sometimes you have to try and try before you get it right.

At Berrybrook, teachers work at appreciating and preserving childhood. Even as they set high expectations for their students, they know about the trials and tribulations that come along with being three or four or five. Thank you to the BPA for bringing Big Ryan to our multi-purpose room. He reinforced some basic values we share about childhood and made us laugh at the same time.

*Pat Keeley*

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## *Parking Lot Safety*

Please remember that the parking lot gets busy at drop off and pick up.

- Please park in marked spaces, the fire lane by the sidewalk is for emergency vehicles.
- Turn engines off.
- Bring siblings with you.
- Hold hands in the parking lot.
- Lock the gate behind you.
- Supervise your children once you have signed out.
- Children must never be left unattended in cars or in the parking lot.

## *2 & 3 Day Classroom Activities*

The month of February was quite busy. Our Berrybrook tree was adorned with watercolor hearts and our classrooms were filled with red and pink valentines. The Berrybrook Post Office became a very busy place as children enjoyed dressing up as letter carriers, sorting the mail and stamping letters. Our visit to the Post Office was a highlight for the children. Another favorite activity was delivering valentines to classmates.

After vacation, we ended February by talking about BEARS. We talked about how bears hibernate during the winter and created our own miniature bear caves. The children navigated bear obstacle courses in the multi-purpose room and went on a bear hunt. Special thank you to the BPA for sponsoring Big Ryan who visited Berrybrook and entertained the children and teachers with his imaginative and funny stories

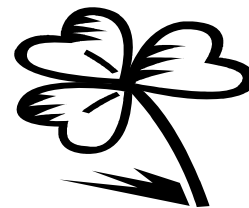
As we turn our calendars to March, we think of SPRING! After a long winter we are looking forward to spring activities and spending more time outdoors. We will continue to bird watch. Soon we will see some different birds returning to Berrybrook. We will also be watching our flower gardens, looking for green sprouts where we planted bulbs in the fall.

Classes will begin the month of March by celebrating Dr. Suess' birthday. We will read some of his books and create some interesting

Dr. Suess projects. As the month continues, housekeeping will become the Berrybrook grocery store. Children will be able to shop or take on the role of cashier or stock person. To enhance this experience we will take a field trip to the grocery store. Look for more news about that trip in your cubbies.

March is also the time for Spring Conferences. Your children have grown tremendously over the past few months - physically, emotionally and socially. This is a wonderful time to once again share information and observations regarding your child's development.

You have brains in your head  
You have feet in your shoes  
You can steer yourself  
Any direction you choose  
~Dr. Suess



## *4 & 5 Day Classroom Activities*

The month of March will be filled with many exciting activities for the 4 and 5 day students. We will start off with the study of Dinosaurs. Children at this age find these animals fascinating and enjoy learning about them. They will be painting huge creatures and large bones, singing songs and reading books about dinosaurs and will pretend to be Paleontologists.

## TRICERATOPS

How many horns do you have?  
None of course.  
How many horns does a bull have?  
Two, of course.  
But me, but me, I have three.  
I'm very special you can see.

How many lips does a bug have?  
None of course.  
How many lips do you have?  
Two, of course.  
But me, but me, I'm unique.  
Instead of lips I have a beak,

How many legs does a fish have?  
None of course.  
How many legs do you have?  
Two, of course.  
But me, but me, I have more.  
I'm so glad that I have four.

Triceratops with three long horns,  
A beak like a parrot,  
And a frill where his neck is.  
Triceratops with four big legs  
And a tail in back.

St. Patrick's Day will be celebrated with music, dance and art projects. The children will explore the color green, learn some facts about Ireland and on the 17<sup>th</sup> enjoy Irish Soda bread for snack.

Although winter is winding down the playground is still windy and chilly. Please continue to send winter clothing (jackets, snow pants, boots, mittens and hats) so that the children can stay warm while participating in outdoor activities. On March 20<sup>th</sup> at 7:44 AM spring will finally arrive. The children will be observing the

change in the trees and will be watching for some signs of nature growing from the ground. One sure sign of spring is the arrival of the American Robin. The following is a special song that we sing and sign when we see them bob bob bobbin' along.

### ***When The Red, Red Robin Comes Bob, Bob Bobbin' Along***

When the red, red robin comes  
bob, bob bobbin' along, along.  
There'll be no more sobbin' when  
He starts throbbin' his old,  
Sweet song.

Wake up, wake up you sleepy head.  
Get up, get up, get out of bed.  
Cheer up, cheer up the sun is red.  
Live, love, laugh and be happy.

What if I've been blue,  
Now I'm walking through  
Fields of flowers.  
Rain may glisten but still I listen  
For hours and hours.

I'm just a kid again,  
Doin' what I did again.  
Singin' a song.  
When the red, red robin comes  
bob, bob bobbin' along.

When the nights are cold and the days begin to warm up above freezing the Maple Trees will be ready for tapping. Buckets will be attached to the trees to collect the sap, which will then be boiled down to make delicious syrup. At the end of our busy month, after enough sap has turned into syrup, the children will enjoy a special treat with a sugar on snow party.

**Reminder from the  
4 & 5 Day Classes!**



Check for the full moon this month on the 10<sup>th</sup>. It will rise at 6:34 PM only one minute after sunset.

*Parent's Association*

Dear Parents,

Hope everyone enjoyed their travels or time home with the family during President's Holiday week! The month of February passed by quickly, especially with preparations for our community event with Jeanine Fitzgerald- "Parenting Together." It is always wonderful to be in a community of friends learning to better motivate and educate our children. Another tremendous response was to "The Three Little Pigs and Other Tales" – a SOLD OUT performance by the Gerwick Puppets. Hope children and parents alike will enjoy their unique artistry in telling these old fairy tales. Still to come this month is our Silhouette fundraiser. Don't forget to sign up and capture your children in timeless silhouettes on March 26<sup>th</sup>, 9:00 pm to 5:00 pm. There are still some remaining slots, but they are going fast!

As we look ahead, April will be another busy month with Sibling Story times for each of the classes, the Snake Lady visiting the older children's classrooms, and the Pizza Garden event for the younger children. We will also move into high gear to begin preparations for our Spring Fling family event scheduled for May 12<sup>th</sup>. This year's theme is the Carnival!

Please consider volunteering to help out in the planning or by becoming a committee head (Donation Solicitation, Decorations, Food, Set Up/Clean Up, and Entertainment). Email me at [tammyakirk@yahoo.com](mailto:tammyakirk@yahoo.com) – we would love to get your ideas and uncover any hidden entertainment talents (juggling, magic, etc)!

Our calendar for the remainder of the year is posted on the BPA bulletin board and on the Berrybrook web site! Thanks again to Sherry Monroe for the terrific job in keeping us updated on-line! Plans are coming together to add several other exciting events (a pajama party/movie night and an aquatic enrichment program sponsored by the Duxbury Beach Preservation Society).

Looking forward to a great spring with blooming flowers (and spirits)!

Warm Regards,

Tammy Kirk, BPA President

## ***Let Them Fly***

Within the last week I have made two observations that on the surface seem unrelated, but are indicative of unyielding forces of nature at work: my daughters' pants are suddenly 1-2 inches too short and in the late afternoon a bright light now streams into my kitchen. The increase in daylight is strangely coinciding with the increase in my daughter's limbs. These annual events though somewhat predictable, always fill me with both anticipation and a bit of trepidation. As much as I yearn for spring and an end to our long winter's hibernation, it seems to spurn an acceleration of the passing of time and the changes that accompany it. The mounds of snow considered semi-permanent fixtures only a few weeks ago have melted away and will soon reveal the first buds of spring. The snowsuits and winter gear that have become a daily necessity will soon be shed like the skin from a reptile revealing a sleeker more mature, more capable version of our children's former selves. This is the time of year that we, as parents, often struggle to adjust to all the changes that come at us so fast and furiously.

As a former Berrybrook parent I remember clearly feeling a shock that we were required to think so far ahead to what the future might hold. In March of year's past I held either a letter offering one of our children a place in a second year class at Berrybrook or the realization that my child was headed to kindergarten sooner than I could imagine. For most parents there is an acknowledgement of and much discussion revolving around the anxiety associated with how our children will handle the transition to a new classroom, new teachers, new classmates, a new routine and greater expectations. Often we don't even recognize to what degree that anxiety stems from our uncertainty about how we, ourselves, will handle letting go as our child grows up.

It is important to accept that as our children grow and progress, the nature of our involvement in their lives must change accordingly. I remember well the difficulty as a parent of second year Berrybrook student trying to comply with the request to make our goodbyes a quick process and trying not to feel slighted by the fact I was not welcomed into the classroom as freely as I was in the year prior. All of the parents were asked by the Berrybrook teachers (in the kindest, gentlest way) not to push our (now older) children on the swings. It was one of the hardest things for me as a Berrybrook parent: not to give in to the sweet sing-song requests of my own (and on occasion even other parents') children to give "just one starter push, please, PLLLLLEEEEEASE"! How could I not help them? Wasn't my job as a good parent to help my kids whenever they needed me, to make sure they didn't suffer the anguish of difficult struggles or worse, failure? But the wise voices of the Berrybrook teachers who have watched so many kids tackle those same swings would reassure me: "Just let them try. They might struggle a bit at first but if you let them try on their own you will be amazed by how quickly they get the hang of it."

Ironically, the swings are the focus of one particular Berrybrook memory that stands out more vividly than all the rest. It was a chilly, but sunny March day. I

arrived a bit early for pick-up and I was coming in the gate just as the children were pouring out onto the playground. The bare ground had at last reappeared and for the first time in a while the children had free access to the swings without the impediment of mounds of snow or the constraints of snowsuits, mittens or clunky boots. My daughter, Isabel, (at that time a second year student) and her friends charged out and headed directly for the swing-set, oblivious to the fact that any of the parents had even arrived. At first I moved toward the swings assuming that the kids were out of practice and would likely “need” a boost to get going. (I was willing to risk a gentle reprimand from the teachers given the circumstances and everyone’s festive mood). But in the blink of an eye they were on the swings and with a few strong thrusts of their lets they were off! I stopped and watched in amazement as they all pushed and pulled and FLEW . . . higher and higher and HIGHER!

I will admit that initially a wave of panic shot through me and I had to resist the temptation to yell for them to slow down. They were soooooo high. What prevented me was the sound . . . of pure GLEE! I have never since and may never again witness such sheer joy and such undeniable triumph. They were shrieking with delight, their wide grins reflecting the rush of excitement as they flew through the air and I couldn’t help but recognize that they had reached those great heights all by themselves.

The other thing I recognized in that moment was that my own appreciation of the event as it unfolded would not have been as rich if I had not been standing back a bit removed from it. As much as I had always derived great pleasure from pushing the children, I could not fully appreciate the scene when I was so mired in it. I liken it to the painstaking work of some of the great impressionist painters. If you have ever had the good fortune of seeing one of Monet’s works in real life it is awe inspiring to look at these enormous works and appreciate how they must have come to be. The artist would have spent unimaginable hours at an arms-length from the canvas painstakingly placing one splotch of paint at a time. It was not until he stepped back, far away from it, that he would have been able to fully grasp and relish in the magnitude of the masterpiece he had created.

At each phase of our children’s development we must appreciate that, like Monet, we have already painstakingly laid the foundation for the “masterpiece” that will become their life made up of the accomplishments and achievements that will appear on their canvas. We should never underestimate their capacity to take on new challenges, adapt to new situations and handle some degree of uncertainty and even adversity. If we don’t ultimately “let them” go into the classroom without us, “let them” climb on the big yellow bus, “let them” try and fail and know that that is often part of the process required to achieve success they will never learn to “fly”. If we go too far in our attempts to “help”, not only do we risk undermining their own self confidence, we may also deny them (and ourselves) the unadulterated joy that comes with the realization that they have achieved a goal or overcome an obstacle all on their own.

*Kristen Diamond, Berrybrook Board of Directors*