

# CO-OP CAPERS

The Newsletter of the Williamsburg Parent Cooperative Preschool



## CO-OP CALENDAR

April 19-20 (Th-F)	No School/Parent-Teacher Conferences; AM 2's <b>WILL</b> meet
April 26 (Th)	Parent Education Program
May 6 (Su)	Carnival
May 25 (F)	Last Day of Classes
May 28 (M)	Memorial Day
May 29 (T)	Teachers Organize Clean-up
May 30-31 (W-Th)	End of Year Clean-up



### A note from our President, Molly Garies

What a busy and fun month March has been at Co-op! The arrival of spring was announced not only by warmer and longer days, but also by the increase in the number of activities! I am filled with gratitude for all the wonderful people who make such fabulous things happen at Co-op. As always, our teachers are creating magic inside the classroom, but we have had many parents who have been making a lot of fun things happen outside of school hours as well!

First, a very big thank you to **Amy Harris** and **Mary Lynch** for the superb job they did in organizing our annual **Pizza and Pajama Night**. Their effort in planning and organizing this event made for a safe, fun, and memorable time for all. It was a real joy to see so many of our Co-op families having such a great fun. Thanks to everyone who attended and helped to make the evening such a success!

A special thank you to **Shelly Adkins** for all the hard work and planning she did in order to provide the first ever **Co-op Night Out in New Town**. The book fair at Barnes and Noble followed by dinner at Cheeburger Cheeburger was a great evening. We had a large turn out and deeply appreciate all the families, present and past, who came to support our school. It was a fun and very successful evening for Co-op. Thank you to **Lanette McNeil** for organizing the wonderful crafts for the evening.

Finally, thanks to **all the families** who participated in our **Square 1 Art** program. There were many beautiful pieces of art submitted. In all, Co-op sent 59 pieces of original student artwork to be turned into magnets and other memorable items. We hope you will all enjoy your special keepsakes!

As we begin to look towards the end of the school year, please mark your calendar for two big upcoming events. Our annual **Parent Education Program** will be Thursday, April 26 and will feature a panel to answer your parenting questions. The **Co-op Carnival** will be held Sunday, May 7, and promises to be a fun time for all. I hope to see you and your families at these special events. Thanks for all you do to make Co-op the wonderful place that it is!

## **A note from our Director, Susan Axtell**

Thanks to all of you who so generously showered the Axtell grandchildren with favorite books. It was a joy to see your notes and choices--and to find this very precious "library" in a place of honor when we visited last weekend. Clark has great plans to read them all to his little sister! Thanks to Mary Lynch (and Amy Harris) for planning, toting, and mailing. As the Pizza and PJ Night--also their handiwork--proved, they are a powerhouse team! Thanks! Susan

### **CO-OP CARNIVAL RAFFLE DONATIONS**

It is time to start planning for this year's Co-op Carnival on May 6, 2007. If you are a consultant or a business owner, or know of anyone who would like to donate raffle items for this year's carnival raffle, it would be very appreciated. It is a good opportunity to have your products seen or make yourself known. Donations can be anything from individual items, to gift certificates or baskets. Anything goes. The carnival is such a fun time for all Co-op families, so please mark your calendar for May 6, 2007. If you have any questions or need more information, contact Joanna Jackson at 345-0504.

### **DONATIONS FOR CARNIVAL BOOK SALE**

Save your used books for the book sale at the carnival, coming in May. We will be collecting children's and parenting books in early April—check the center room for a cardboard box to place your donations. Thank You! (For more information contact Heather Sasinowska, 259-7341)



### **THANK YOU**

WPCP Parents, Thanks to all of you for the wonderful selection of books that were sent for Zoë. Clark is really enjoying all of them now and has been deciding for his sister which ones she'll like the best. They all complement our collection very well. Thanks for your generosity. Jenni Axtell

### **PARENT EDUCATION**

Is there life after Co-op? Will my children ever get along? Is my child ready for kindergarten? Join us for dinner and a lively **Panel Discussion** of YOUR burning questions on **Thursday, April 26<sup>th</sup>** at the St Martin's Episcopal Parish Hall. Panel members will include former Co-op parents and local teachers. We will start with a pizza dinner at 6 pm and jump into the program at 6:30. Childcare will be available from 6:30 to 8 pm. Please submit your questions and dinner/childcare reservations to the "Parent Panel Questions/ Payment" envelope located in the hallway at Co-op. Pizza and childcare reservations are due by Wednesday, April 18<sup>th</sup>. A box for questions will also be available the night of the event. One of the greatest benefits of Co-op is what you learn from

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### **PARENT EDUCATION**

Celebrate the friendships you made at Co-op this year with an evening of culinary exploration! Due to the success of last year's event, the Parent Ed Committee has scheduled another class with **A Chef's Kitchen** on **Monday, May 21<sup>st</sup>**. The program will be 30 Minute Meals II (all new recipes!) and the cost is \$39.50 per person. We need at least 22 people but not more than 26 people. So, reserve your spot by placing a check made out to "A Chef's Kitchen" in the appropriately labeled envelope in the Co-op hallway. Check out their website at <http://www.achefskitchen.biz/index.html>. Come get inspired or simply relax with a good glass of wine.

## TWO DAY TWOS—SUSIE POWELL



Spring is here...the grass is growing, the flowers are blooming, the birds are singing and so are the twos turning three. The children are delighted with the gentle spring weather and are enjoying fully their time on the playground. This change in weather accompanies great growth in their creative imaginations. At first glance it looks simply like children playing on the playground, but if you listen closely, it is so much more. Some days the children pretend to be dogs and baby dogs (not puppies), each with its own unique name, working on various projects including: cake baking, bone burying or simply running wild and free. Other days, dinosaurs roam the playground, most often engaged in nest building or fleeing the mighty T-Rex. Still other days find Flopsy, Mopsy, Cottontail, and Peter busily invading poor Mr. MacGregor's garden. Not only are their imaginations budding, but so are their social skills. Friendships are being formed and activities once pursued solitarily are far more fun now, as friends join in. Special friends greet each other with hugs and smiles. Smiles, giggles, and the spelling out of each others names are shared fun activities on the tire swing. Over and over friends climb, slide, and chase each other on the play set/castle/fort. Traffic jams are common around the figure eight. The playground is a hub of activity.

The growth of imagination and verbal skills is also evident inside the classroom. The children are engaged and accomplished artists, who tackle art projects with great interest. They tell elaborate stories about their artwork, one just needs to ask "Tell me about your picture." At circle time, the children sing "Open-Shut" independently and creep those fingers all the way to their heads. They look and listen intently to the story, adding the most interesting anecdotes. There is so much going on inside their little heads, and it is always interesting to hear what the children want to share.

While they use their words in so many grown up ways these days, their emotions are still so tender. They feel everything soooooo deeply. Pride in their independent achievements often accompanies the somewhat contrary desire to remind Mom that she is still so needed. Continue to show patience, love, and care to them at these times, and know that it is on its way to leveling out.

## ONE DAY TWOS—SUSIE POWELL



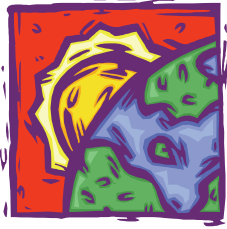
It is both a joy and a relief to see the children bound into the playroom with enthusiasm on Friday mornings. They all seem comfortable and confident at school. It is just now that all of them recognize me as "Hey you are my teacher." Each child comes in ready to explore just about everything in the playroom. Throughout the morning you hear: hammers banging nails into wood, marbles rolling down ramps, dinosaurs and dragons roaring and puffing, knights on steeds and princesses in towers speaking to their foes or subjects. Throughout the morning you see children: working hard on floor puzzles, creating marker masterpieces on the Plexiglas easel, and mixing, stirring, baking or pouring at the sensory table.

The children sit wiggly in chairs at circle singing "Open Shut" so robustly that I smile to keep from laughing. Some listen so carefully to the story, while others remind me "Ms. Pow too long!!" Children are honest in such a true way.

On the whole, they are at home in the classroom. Each child has his/her favorite area to play in. Some go to the play dough table, others to the kitchen, some to the playmobile, others to dress up, some to the art table, and others to the toys and manipulatives. For minute after minute after minute, they play happily, carefully, and deliberately, as two-year-olds should play. And I say two-year-olds because only two have turned three and the rest will grow into three in April, May, and over the summer. We will enjoy a birthday snack every time we meet from now until the end of May. Yum! Yum! Speaking of snack – the children know when it is time to clean up because they are ready to eat. So often I hear, "Ms Pow is it snack yet, I'm hungry!" They enjoy eating. It is probably the quietest time of the day now because they are so busy eating.

The playground is a great place to end the day. They all enjoy being outside. As it is in the playroom, there is not an inch of the place that is not getting full use. Shovels, slides, swings, and cars are moving-moving-moving and the children right along with them. They play with such gusto, it is joy to watch them have so much fun.

Thanks for all of your support and patience in getting the children (and me) to such a happy place!



## EARTH CORNER: NON-TOXIC SPRING CLEANING

Adapted from Annie Berthold-Bond, Care2.com

The best explanation I have heard for what spring cleaning is, and why, is that it is a custom left over from times before electricity, when everything in people's houses was covered with soot from candles, fireplaces, kerosene, and lamp oils used for heat and light during the winter. By the spring, every inch of the home had to be cleaned to rid it of the layer of soot. Given that we now use relatively clean methods of heating and lighting it seems the practice of spring cleaning has persisted long after such a cleaning overhaul was needed.

Rational or not, spring cleaning is a tradition many of us still like to do, if for no other reason than to turn over a new leaf, and for this I am offering here some of my favorite nontoxic cleaning recipes. I must say, I do love to get winter dust out of my house when daylight is returning in the spring. There is nothing like the sun streaming in the windows to show all the cobwebs. I like opening the windows and doors to circulate fresh air to chase out the stale indoor air of a closed up house.

Learning to clean from scratch—making home-made recipes—can truly work if you take time to understand a bit about the chemistry behind how the materials work. Here are the five ingredients that I find to be the safest, most effective, and useful for cleaning.

**Baking Soda:** A commonly available mineral full of many cleaning attributes, baking soda is made from soda ash, and is slightly alkaline (it's pH is around 8.1; 7 is neutral). It neutralizes acid-based odors in water, and adsorbs odors from the air. Sprinkled on a damp sponge or cloth, baking soda can be used as a gentle nonabrasive cleanser for kitchen counter tops, sinks, bathtubs, ovens, and fiberglass. It will eliminate perspiration odors and even neutralize the smell of many chemicals if you add up to a cup per load to the laundry. It is a useful air freshener, and a fine carpet deodorizer.

**Washing Soda:** A chemical neighbor of baking soda, washing soda (sodium carbonate) is much more strongly alkaline, with a pH around 11. It releases no harmful fumes and is far safer than a commercial solvent formula, but you should wear gloves when using it because it is caustic. Washing soda cuts grease, cleans petroleum oil, removes wax or lipstick, and neutralizes odors in the same way that baking soda does. Don't use it on fiberglass, aluminum or waxed floors—unless you intend to remove the wax.

**White Vinegar and Lemon Juice:** White vinegar and lemon juice are acidic—they neutralize alkaline substances such as scale from hard water. Acids dissolve gummy buildup, eat away tarnish, and remove dirt from wood surfaces.

**Liquid Soaps and Detergent:** Liquid soaps and detergents are necessary for cutting grease, and they are not the same thing. Soap is made from fats and lye. Detergents are synthetic materials discovered and synthesized early in this century. Unlike soap, detergents are designed specifically so that they don't react with hard water minerals and cause soap scum. If you have hard water buy a biodegradable detergent without perfumes; if you have soft water you can use liquid soap (both are available in health food stores).

**Mold Killers and Disinfectants:** For a substance to be registered by the EPA as a disinfectant it must go through extensive and expensive tests. EPA recommends simple soap to use as a disinfectant. There are many essential oils, such as lavender, clove, and tea tree oil (an excellent natural fungicide), that are very antiseptic, as is grapefruit seed extract, even though they aren't registered as such. Use one teaspoon of essential oil to 2 cups of water in a spray bottle (make sure to avoid eyes). A grapefruit seed extract spray can be made by adding 20 drops of extract to a quart of water.

For more detailed green cleaning recipes and tips, go to: [www.care2.com/channels/solutions/home/3300#more](http://www.care2.com/channels/solutions/home/3300#more)



**Caution: Make sure to keep all home-made formulas well-labeled and out of the reach of children.**



### All-Purpose Cleaner

1/2 teaspoon washing soda  
2 teaspoons borax  
1/2 teaspoon liquid soap or detergent  
2 cups hot water



Combine the washing soda, borax, and soap in a spray bottle. Pour in the hot water (it will dissolve the minerals), screw on the lid, and shake to completely blend and dissolve. Spritz, wiping off the cleanser with a rag as you go. For tough dirt, leave the cleanser on for a few minutes before wiping it off. Shake the bottle each time before using. Shelf Life: Indefinite

### Soft Scrubber

(for bathtubs, sinks, Formica and showers)

1/2 cup baking soda  
liquid soap or detergent  
5 to 10 drops antibacterial essential oil, such as lavender (optional)

Place the baking soda in a bowl; slowly pour in the liquid soap, stirring all the while, until the consistency reaches that of frosting. Add the essential oil (if using). Scoop the creamy mixture onto a sponge, wash the surface, and rinse. Make only as much as you need a time; natural soft scrubbers dry out.

### Mold Cleaner and Inhibitor

2 teaspoons tea tree oil  
2 cups water

Combine the ingredients in a spray bottle, shake to blend, and spray on problem areas. Do not rinse. The strong odor will dissipate in a day or so. Shelf Life: Indefinite

### All-Purpose Window Wash

1/4 cup white distilled vinegar  
1/2 teaspoon liquid soap or detergent  
2 cups water

Combine the ingredients in a spray bottle, and shake to blend. Spray on, then remove with a squeegee, paper towel, or newspaper. Shelf Life: Indefinite



### Basic Wood Cleaning Formula

1/4 cup white distilled vinegar  
1/4 cup water  
1/2 teaspoon liquid soap or detergent  
A few drops jojoba or olive oil.

Combine the ingredients in a bowl, saturate a sponge with the mixture. Squeeze out the excess, and wash surfaces. The smell of vinegar will dissipate in a few hours. Shelf Life: Indefinite

### Floor Cleaner with Fragrant Herbs

1/8 cup liquid soap or detergent  
1/4 - 1/2 cup white distilled vinegar or lemon juice  
1/2 cup fragrant herb tea (peppermint is great as it adds antibacterial qualities)

Combine ingredients in a pail or bucket. Swirl the water around until it is sudsy. Proceed as normal.



**Happy 37<sup>th</sup> Earth Day!**

April 22, 2007



**GLOBAL WARMING:  
YOU CAN HELP ON  
A LARGER SCALE!**

**Need a few suggestions on how to celebrate?**

- Skip one car trip a week or carpool
- Eat lower on the food chain (2-3 vegetarian meals a week)
- Stop junk mail ([www.newdream.org](http://www.newdream.org))
- Use energy-efficient light bulbs
- Move the thermostat 3 degrees
- Eliminate pesticides
- Grown native plants
- Build birdhouses
- Inspire two friends to do the same!

There is a Williamsburg chapter of CCAN starting up (Chesapeake Climate Action Network).

They will be having monthly meetings at the Unitarian Universalist Church.

Contact Rachel Gross for more information at 229-7992.



*Celebrate Arbor Day on April, 2007*



Arbor Day is a nationally-celebrated observance that encourages tree planting and care. The following are some statistics on just how important trees are in a community setting.

- "The net cooling effect of a young, healthy tree is equivalent to ten room-size air conditioners operating 20 hours a day." -U.S. Department of Agriculture
- "Landscaping, especially with trees, can increase property values as much as 20 percent." - Management Information Services/ICMA
- "Shade from trees could save up to \$175 per year (per structure) in air conditioning costs." -Dr. Lowell Ponte
- "In laboratory research, visual exposure to settings with trees has produced significant recovery from stress within five minutes, as indicated by changes in blood pressure and muscle tension." -Dr. Roger S. Ulrich Texas A&M University

**Good Ideas for a Great Arbor Day Celebration:**

**Get people into action.** Ask a civic group to promote a paper drive to gather paper to be recycled and save a tree. Use the proceeds to buy a special tree to plant in a park or other special public place. Organize a tree identification hike. Pass out buttons. Give away trees.

**Celebrate Arbor Day in a personal way** by planting a tree yourself. It is an act of optimism and kindness, a labor of love and a commitment to stewardship. Start a tree seed in a cup, or a seedling in a pot. If you have no place to set it out later, give it to someone who does, and then watch it grow together.





# Crafty Kids: Springtime Fun!

\* Go for a nature walk, pick some flowers—violets and flax are abundant around our yard right now—and some small leaves and ferns. Using waxed paper, press them until they are dry. Make bookmarks with contact paper and ribbon. Make it even more fun by bringing a wildflower identification book on your walk and learn a new flower or two!

\* Make a compass rock for a garden; find a large enough rock, learn the four directions, have fun painting a rock and practicing the letters N, W, S and E.

\* Fill a plastic bag with some poster or acrylic paint, snip a hole at one corner, and paint on paper on the driveway. You might want to use newspaper underneath for those inevitable messes. Instant Jackson Pollock masterpiece!

\* Take those empty seed packets—vegetable or flower—and cut and paste them to a terra cotta pot to make a decoupage pot. When it is dry, give it one more gluing all over and it is ready to use! You can plant flowers in it, keep gloves and trowels in it, or give it away as a gift.

\* Have any old shoes lying around? Line them with some plastic, pour dirt in them, and plant some pansies, seedlings, or flower seeds and line them up under a tree or on your front steps.

For potluck dinners that are kid-friendly, or just for a healthy snack, try **ladybugs on a stick**.

You'll need

- Red grapes
- Strawberries
- Mini chocolate chips
- Honeydew melon



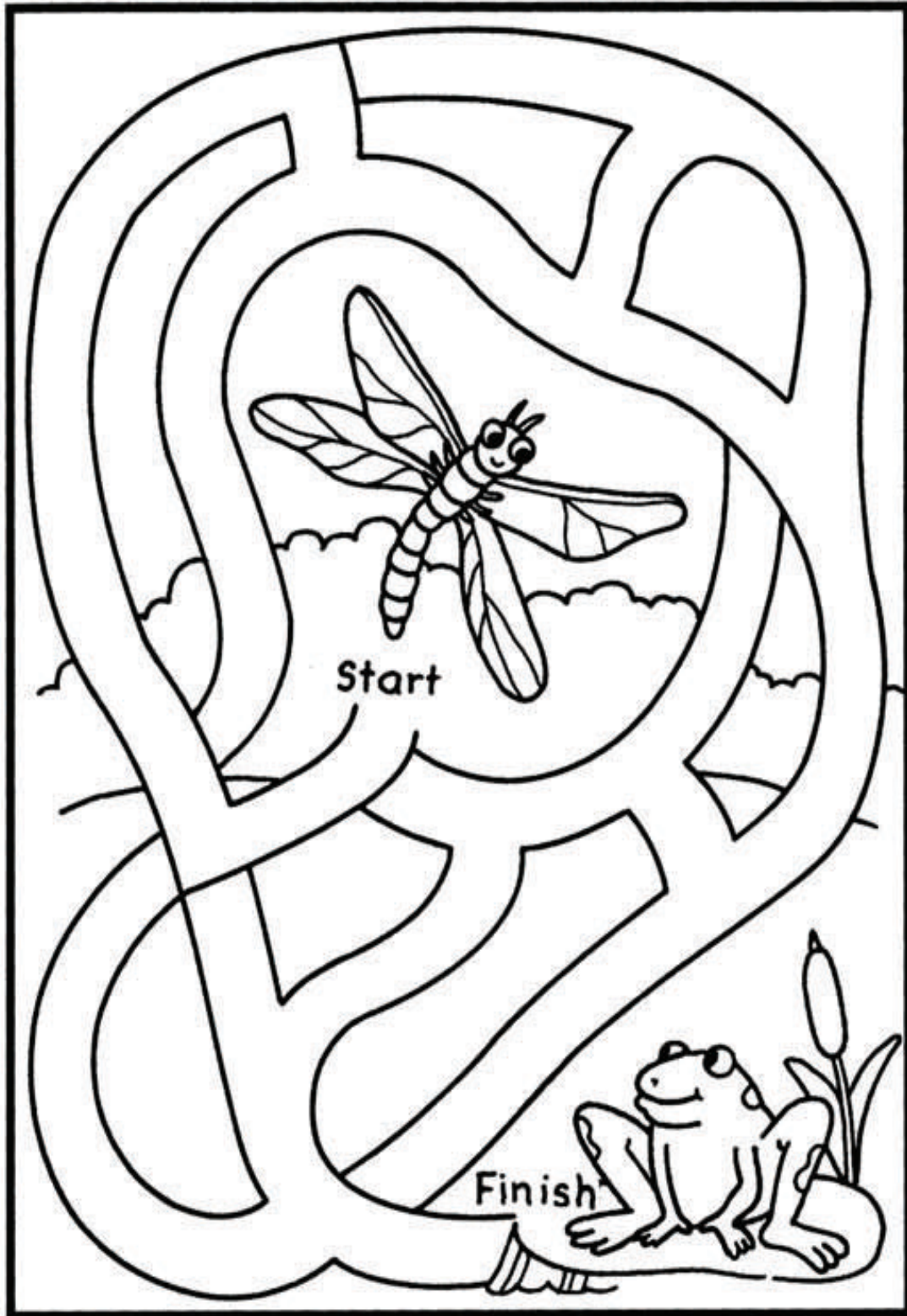
For the head, push 1/2 of a red grape onto a skewer, a hulled strawberry on for the body, and score the back for the wings. For spots, use a toothpick to gently push mini chocolate chips, tips down, into the strawberry. Arrange the skewers on a peeled, seeded honeydew melon half. ENJOY!

**Check out this website:**  
[www.butterflyalphabet.com](http://www.butterflyalphabet.com)

Naturalist photographer Kjell Sandved has a book and a poster of butterfly wings he photographed with the alphabet and numbers 0-9 on them. At the website you can click on "Butterfly E-cards" to write your child's name in butterfly letters!

—from Wondertime, Feb/March 2007





Dragonfly wants to visit Frog on his lily pad in the pond. Show her how to get there.