

# GOOD NEWS!

## Friends on the High Seas: *Finding an Ocean of Possibilities*

AFTER YET ANOTHER ROUND OF SNOW late last February, we were all starting to show signs of having “cabin fever” and wondering if we’d ever be able to tuck away our down-filled coats and mittens for the season. It was clearly time to delve into something totally new and unexpected.

And so, we stomped off the excess snow from our boots and set our sights on a whole other world, home to over 1,000,000 species of creatures.



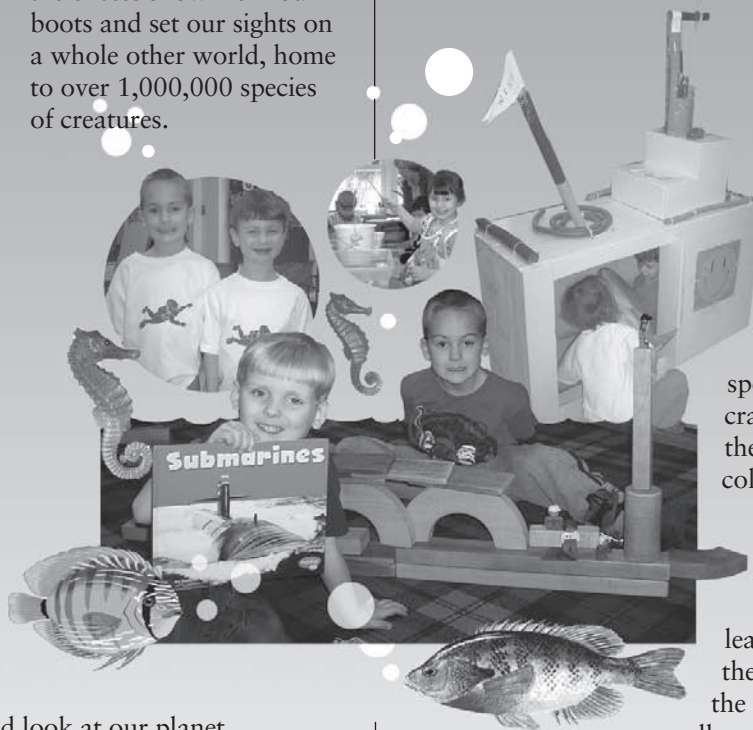
Friends took a great big breath and plunged into a two-week study of life under the sea.

We began by taking a good look at our planet and noticing how much water there is on Earth. Playing catch with a globe made this crystal clear; somehow, whenever we caught the globe, our fingers landed on blue! Friends talked about waves and Morning Friends made an “ocean in a bottle” for all to examine. A taste test of salty and non-salty foods at snack time helped all of us understand the difference between salt water and fresh.

One day, we took a surprising look at some of the many variations of a single species of sea creatures—jellyfish! Who knew that so many different kinds of jellyfish live in the ocean! Their names made us giggle. Some of our favorites



included the Dinner Plate Jelly, the Comb Jelly, the Lion’s Mane Jelly and the Giant Egg Yolk Jelly. Beautiful to look at, we learned that these animals are mostly comprised of water—with no heart, no brains, no bones and no eyes! And yet somehow, they get along swimmingly!



Friends were similarly captivated by other inhabitants of the deep blue sea. We loved reading about eels, sponges, sharks, seahorses and crabs. Friends were dazzled by the rainbow colors of various tropical fish.

Part of the fun was thinking about how scientists study the ocean and its many critters. Together, we learned about scuba divers and the submersibles used to study the deepest parts of the sea. Our yellow box, thanks to plenty of recycled cardboard tubes, morphed into our very own yellow submarine.

Each friend had an opportunity to take it on a test cruise; from its portholes the children spotted all kinds of marine life—dolphins, green sea turtles, Pink Meanie Jellyfish and the Giant Pacific Octopus! Singing just the right Beatles’ tune really helped set the mood.

As our voyage at sea was drawing to a close, we tried something bodacious to get our land legs back. We set out on a surfin’ safari; each friend caught a wave right next door in the social room! Listening to the Beach Boys, we gave surfing our very best try.

Truth be told: We were awesome!

—Janie Scurti

## FROM THE CLASS OF 1996–1997

**Brad Chleboski**—graduated from Council Rock North. He will attend Fairfield University where he will study political science.

**Maggie Dillione**—graduated from Council Rock North. She will attend Case Western Reserve University in Ohio where she will swim and study biology/pre-med.

**Tyler Hamilton**—graduated from Council Rock North. He will be playing football and studying business at the University of Pennsylvania.

**Sam Kane**—graduated from Council Rock North. He will attend Bellevue College in Seattle, WA where he plans to study art and music.

**Kara Koenig**—graduated from Council Rock North. She will attend the University of New Hampshire where she plans to study marine biology.

**Sarina LaBold**—graduated from Council Rock North and will attend Cedar Crest College in the fall.

**Marielle Mangano**—graduated from Council Rock North. She plans to study nursing at the University of Delaware.

**Melissa Marchand**—graduated from Council Rock North. She will major in education at West Chester University.

**Dylan Mirales**—graduated from Council Rock North and will attend the University of Pittsburgh in the fall. He will double major in film and marketing communications.

**T. J. Mirande**—graduated from Council Rock North and he will attend Bucks County Community College in the fall.

**Erin O'Brien**—graduated from Central Bucks East and she will play field hockey at the University of Richmond. She plans to be a science teacher.

**Michael Parzych**—graduated from Council Rock North. He plans to study business at James Madison University.

**Elly Plappert**—graduated from Council Rock North. She will be playing field hockey and majoring in science of the earth systems at Cornell University.

**Evan Spitzer**—graduated from Central Bucks West. He will be studying photography and film at Ithaca College in the fall.

**Rachael Wolf**—graduated from Council Rock North and she will attend Lehigh University in the fall.

*We are most grateful to Karen Bryk for locating our graduates and sharing their good news!*

## NEW ARRIVALS

*These families have welcomed a new baby into their lives!*

**Naomi Brangan** ('09-'10 AM)—has a new brother, Oliver born in October 2009 to parents Olivia and Brian.

**Mairin Coughlan** ('09-'10 PM)—has a new brother, Lanty born in August 2009 to parents Alicia and Ray.

**Sam Eshelman** ('09-'10 AM)—has a new brother, Harrison born in January 2010 to parents Elizabeth and Bryan.

## MARRIAGE

**Susan Dinneen** ('83-'84)—daughter of teacher Jean Dinneen and her husband, Joe, married Jefferson Gillane on April 10, 2010. Teachers Karen Bryk and Janie Scurti, along with their husbands, enjoyed the festivities in the French Quarter! The newlyweds reside in New Orleans, LA.

**WE WOULD LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU!** Please send us your family's good news. Write to [dinn10@comcast.net](mailto:dinn10@comcast.net) or find us on FACEBOOK!

## Musings from a Music Teacher...

BY THE TIME YOU READ THIS, we will know if my tomatoes actually grew! This year, I decided to have a garden once again. When my girls were little, I always had one. It was so lovely for them to see the plants grow (when their tiny hands wouldn't pick them prematurely), and of course, there's nothing like fresh veggies. So, several weeks ago, I brought a shovel to the back yard, and dug up a patch. In my zeal however, to have a garden, I planted my tomatoes much too close. And so it is now an unintentional, agricultural experiment.

Musically, though, I think we had lots of success this year, at WFNS. We put on our mini musicals in the first part of the year. It's always fun to watch the kids come to the center, and create the show. And I loved the choreography we added in the little performance, that morning friends did at their holiday party, to "Santa Claus is Coming to Town." For me, that was cuter than words can express!

Square dancing has become a fun part of what we do in WFNS music class. Every child would pair up with a partner and did their own take on a do-si-do. I think square dancing was a favorite for many of our kids. I remember Mrs. Dineen saying one time, it was "more fun than a barrel of monkeys!" I could not agree, more.

The week I brought in two microphones was very cute, too. We invited the kids to come up to the mics with a friend, and sing "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star." Every child stepped up, and took this moment quite seriously. I think they thought it was fun to hear their voice so LOUD! Of course, when our little rocker friend, Race stepped up for his turn. He had a different idea, and launched into a rendition of "Shake, Rattle and Roll!"

We also had fun with a unit on American folk music. The kids especially sang their hearts out on "If I Had A Hammer," and "Oh Susannah!" And the kids really had a good time on instrument day,

when we had a trombone, saxophone, drum set, guitar, banjo, and flute. We spoke about the different kinds of instruments that exist: brass, wind, string and percussion. They really liked playing the snare and cymbals.

It was another LOUD music class day at WFNS.

And of course, watching the children progress with their reading of music rhythms is a particular thrill for me. We studied basic music rhythms, and the children learned to read them. I think this was something that they felt proud of, and all of us were very proud of them. What a rush to see these little ones, clapping out quarter notes, half notes, and whole notes, and knowing they had to stop for a quarter note rest. They were very impressive!

The kids learned some music terms, and learned to incorporate them when they conducted the class ensemble. The boys seemed to especially like forte (loud).

WFNS kids had another stellar music year. And I had another wonderful year, of watching them grow, and the privilege of being a small part of their young lives. I really do come home, and talk about your children, to my own children, who are all now fabulous teen agers. Thank you all, for allowing me to share my passion with your children.

Have a great summer. And I'll let you know how my tomatoes did, next Fall. Musically always,

—Cathy Block



*Cathy and Race Rambam get ready to jam.*

## As We Leave This Special Place

ONE AUGUST DAY four years ago, our family found our new house and Wrightstown Friends Nursery School both on the same day. What a special day that was to find these two special places to raise our children—our home and our first school. We were certain on that day that we had found what we were looking for, as certain as we are today, as we leave what is indeed a very special place.

We are grateful that both of our children have had the opportunity to be a part of the WFNS community, to be children here—to play and learn through play, through their hands, hearts, and minds. We are grateful that they have been known and understood and embraced, each as they come, in all their uniqueness and difference. We are grateful for such artful and committed teaching, where, every day, meaningful work is so expertly embedded in play, and in our children's lives and what they care about: Lily the Bear, the chrysalis project, book club—these have all taken on a life of their own in our home. We are grateful for a place where the back room is regularly transformed into a wooded forest, a colonial home, a night sky,



*The Schmucker Family—Adam, Emmett, Clare and Jessica.*

an underwater seascape, and grateful for that amorphous yellow box! This is a place where our children have learned what it means to be a F/friend and have come to understand that to be in school means to be a part of a school family. This is a place that can pull off magic, cultivates a solid ground, and never forgets that relationships are what connect us all.

Over the past several years, there has rarely been a day, for both of our children, when we didn't have to drag them away from the glorious WFNS playground; now, it's we parents who simply don't want to leave this very special place. Not too long ago, a new friend of mine, upon seeing Claire and Emmett one day, smiled at them, then looked at me and said, "these

two light right up!" The truth is, this light has been sparked, and cultivated, and nurtured at Wrightstown Friends Nursery School, and I can think of no greater gift. A thousand times thank you to our dear friends Jean, Janie, Karen and Karen—for starting our children out with everything that school should be. How grateful we are that our children's first notion of school has been Wrightstown Friends. With love,

—Adam, Jessica, Claire, & Emmett Schmucker

## WFNS Gets A Move On

Our versatile yellow box underwent many transformations during Transportation Week in March. It started the week as a car, complete with road maps and a traffic light. We built our own city called "Friendstown" and learned why we need traffic lights and signs to make it safe for everyone to drive around town. Playing "Red Light, Green Light" was a fun way to practice what we learned. A new fleet of trucks arrived in our classroom and we loved driving the bulldozers and dump trucks through a table top gravel pit.

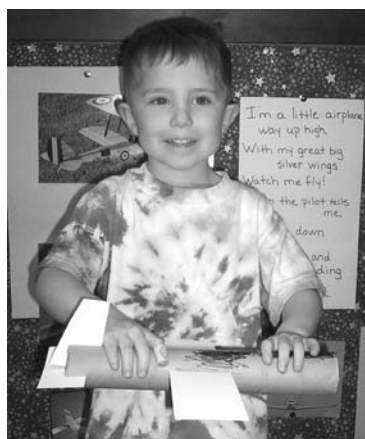
The "Wrightstown Friends Express" steam train awaited our arrival on Tuesday. We took turns being the engineer, feeding the fire and driving the train. The conductor gave the "All Aboard" call and collected tickets, and the passengers headed to different cities for sight-seeing and shopping. We learned that freight trains have many different kinds of cars, and we built a variety of flat, box, hopper, and tank cars out of many colorful shapes. We even assembled our own train

cars out of graham crackers, mini vanilla wafers, Froot Loops, and lots of icing for a tasty snack. At pick up time, parents might have thought a real train had pulled right into our classroom when they heard us blowing our hand made train whistles—whoo, whooooo!

At the end of the week, we found our yellow box converted into an airplane ready for high-flying adventures. Each pilot wore a headset to talk to the control tower, operated the joy stick to control the ailerons and elevators, and pushed the foot pedals to steer the plane. Did you know that you steer an airplane with your feet and not your hands? What a surprise! We couldn't contain our excitement when we looked out the window to see Aquarius, a jet just our size, waiting for us to climb aboard and head off into the wild blue yonder. It arrived with Steve Bryk and Victor Holmlund, both members of the New Jersey chapter of the Experimental Aircraft Association. Mr. Homlund built Aquarius especially for pre-school aged children to experience flying during the EAA's Young Eagles events. We took turns flying Aquarius through a variety of maneuvers while talking to Mr. Holmlund through real pilot headphones. Mr. Bryk, who flies real airplanes along with model planes and helicopters, demonstrated how to fly a model helicopter, including loops and dives. We especially liked watching Mrs. Dinneen try her hand flying the helicopter—good thing it was just a model!

Transportation Week was filled with excitement and we put our imaginations to work as we learned about the different ways people get from place to place. From the train tracks on the earth to high up in the sky, we can't wait to see where our trusty yellow box takes us next!

—Karen Bryk



*(Left) Joe Dowd and Mr. Homlund discuss controls of the Aquarius. (Right) Hank Butler makes and flies his own plane!*

## Our Adventures in Reading

EVERYONE HAS A DIFFERENT definition of adventure. Many travel to seek it. Still others find adventure in unexpected places. My favorite adventures have always been found within the covers of books. Opening a book is like going on a treasure hunt. Years after I began my journey of reading, I still look forward to this wonderful pastime and the joy each page will bring me. This year, I wanted to take our students along on a special adventure in reading.

The children in our school are especially fond of story time, as are the teachers. Looking for another way to foster a love of reading in our classroom and to provide a way for parents to get involved in the process, we decided to form The Morning Friends Book Club. From its inception, our book club was a big hit!

The idea of a book club is nothing new. The idea has taken root and has trickled down to even our youngest readers. The Morning Friends Book Club is a simple one. We did not want either a parent or a child to worry about their participation being right or wrong. Our books were chosen for ease and fun. We wanted the children to value reading as another social activity. After the book was assigned, parents were encouraged to read it several times with their child and to loosely discuss it. We had several copies on hand to borrow if necessary. This year, we read three books and had three special book discussion days.

Although it was not the initial intent, the characters in this year's choices were all animals. We especially loved reading Don Freeman's classic *Corduroy*. Watching each child enter on our first discussion day, clutching their book, brought smiles to our faces. After we made a craft using corduroy and had a special bear-themed snack, we watched the DVD based on the book that Morning Friend, Simon, shared with us. *Corduroy* was definitely a memorable character!

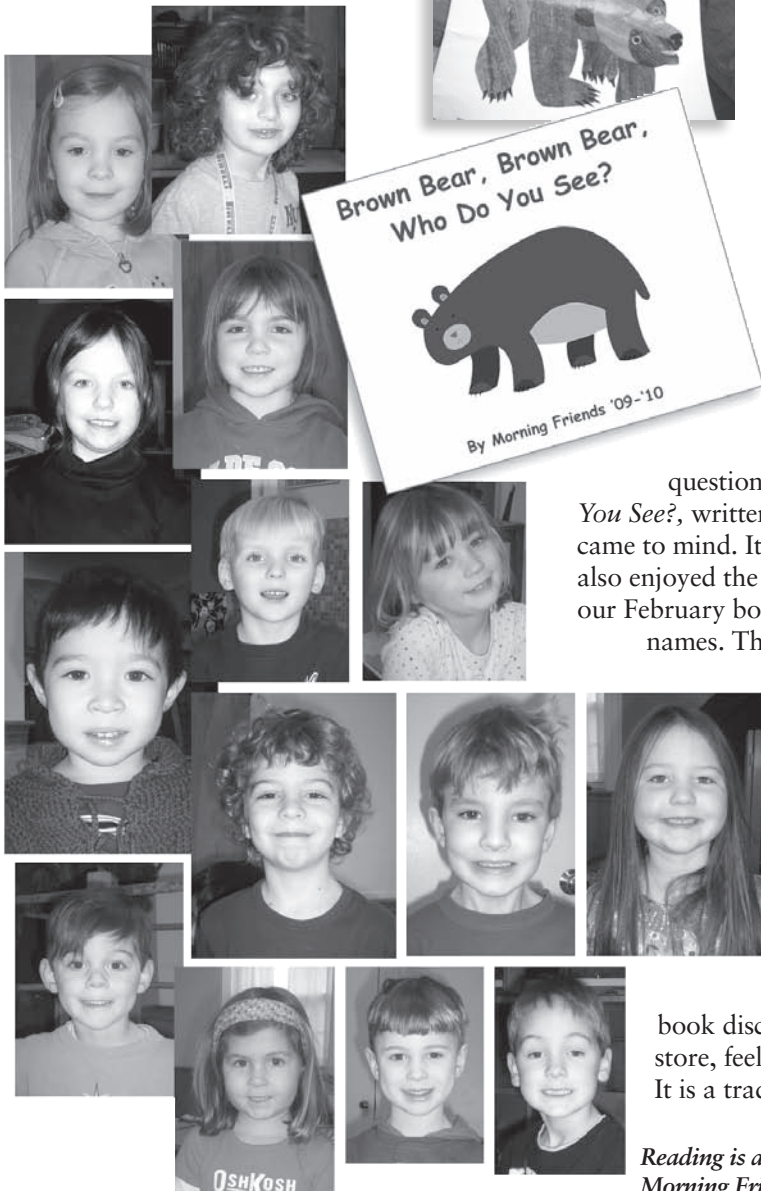
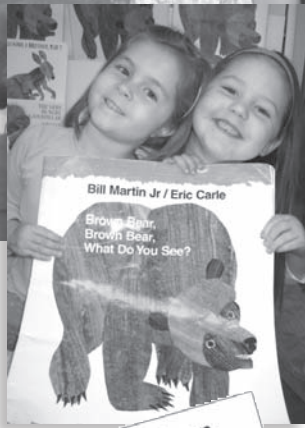
As we ventured into a very cold winter, we were looking for a very joyful book to spark our interest. The rhyming questions and response sequences in *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?*, written by Bill Martin, Jr. and illustrated by Eric Carle immediately came to mind. It was fun hearing about the childhoods of both of these men. We also enjoyed the other books that they wrote and illustrated. The highlight of our February book club was making a similar book with our own pictures and names. The children were thrilled to be authors and illustrators.

As we came to the end of the year, the subject of kindergarten was fresh on our minds. Reading *Miss Bindergarten Gets Ready for Kindergarten*, written by Joseph Slate and illustrated by Ashley Wolff was a natural choice. Enjoying the antics of Miss Bindergarten and those whimsical animals made us feel excited and self-assured about moving on to a new school. Reading this book was a lot of fun, too. We were happy to introduce it to our children.

This summer, I will continue my adventures in reading. A highlight will be attending the book club that I have with my own friends. We will laugh, eat and even squeeze in a book discussion. If you see me traveling the aisles of a library or a book store, feel free to make a suggestion for The Morning Friends Book Club. It is a tradition that we will happily continue!

—Jean Dinneen

*Reading is always an adventure. And such fun!  
Morning Friends students appeared in their own book.*





Terri and Megan McKendry.

## Annual Auction: *Under the Sea*

OUR WONDERFUL SCHOOLHOUSE was transformed into a world “Under the Sea” at this year’s auction. The annual auction, which was held on Saturday April 24, 2010, is our flagship fundraising event, uniting parents, Meeting members and alumni for a fun evening. The families of both the Morning and Afternoon Friends spent countless hours preparing for the event, and the results were amazing. Not only did the school benefit financially from the generosity of the families, alumni, Meeting members and local businesses, but new friendships were built and bonds created that will last a lifetime. All who entered the building on auction night marveled at the smiling faces that greeted them through scuba masks.

The handiwork of each of the Morning and Afternoon Friends followed everyone through the schoolhouse reminding us of the reason that we were there: to support the growth, development and spirit of each of the children and future “Friends.” The annual auction would not be possible without the support of all of the current and past school families, meeting members and local businesses. We are most grateful to our auctioneer, Bruce Orishak, for his generosity and expertise. The children of WFNS say “Thank You!”

—Terri McKendry



*“The more we  
are together,  
the happier  
we’ll be!”*



## Special support for Wrightstown Friends Nursery School

WRIGHTSTOWN FRIENDS NURSERY SCHOOL has been delighted to receive three very generous grants in the past year. The Zeldin Family Foundation awarded us \$3,500 with the help of Marc Williamson. This grant was used to support our very special music program with Cathy Block. Both the children and the teachers look forward to the days that Cathy comes in to play music with them. They’ve even written music with her.

The Walter V. & Judith L. Shipley Family Foundation granted the school \$3,000 to be used for general operating support. The grant was made in honor of the faculty and staff of the Nursery School. In these difficult economic times this was an especially important gift to WFNS. This allowed WFNS to help subsidize operating costs such as utilities, insurance, playground maintenance and more.

This year a generous anonymous gift of \$10,000 from a member of the Wrightstown Friends Meeting was given to be used for scholarship support. This extraordinary support from a Monthly Meeting member is especially exciting for our School and demonstrates the ongoing commitment of the Membership to the WFNS program.

These grants have enabled Wrightstown Friends Nursery School to continue its mission and commitment to providing a superb education to children throughout the region as it has for the last thirty-three years. So many children have started their educational journey at Wrightstown, sitting in the circle, learning to share, learning to sing or play an instrument and delighting in the excitement of learning. The generosity and endowment from all of our donors, especially in difficult economic times, ensures that our Nursery School continues to be a very special place for our children to thrive. Thank you!

—Peter Pearson



*Three generations of the Pearson Family enjoy our annual fishing trip!*



*(Left) Afternoon Friends embrace autumn beneath the William Penn Oak Tree. (Right) Friends' art imitates life in the block room. (Below) Morning Friends visit their adopted tree.*

## Bringing the Outside In at WFNS

Close your eyes and think of Wrightstown Friends Nursery School. Chances are, the very first images that come to mind are ones that depict the physical surroundings of our schoolhouse. Ah, those lovely and lovingly maintained grounds—an integral part of the WFNS experience. What an idyllic place for young children to play and laugh and grow and learn, too!

Late last September, our nursery school children enjoyed an exciting weeklong study of trees. And we had such fun being “arborists” during that stretch of time that trees, in fact, became a recurring theme throughout our school year together.

Lots of fair weather enabled us to spend plenty of time getting up close and personal with all of the trees surrounding us at school. Our playground rule about “not climbing trees” in order to protect them began to really resonate with the children. Together, we discovered that trees are “huggable” for many reasons. Trees provide us with oxygen to breathe and wood to make everything from houses to rubber balls! They give us shade on sunny days and some trees bear yummy fruit for us to eat.

Friends learned that, like all of us, trees have different body parts. We read all about the roots (they work like drinking straws!), the trunk, the bark, the sap, the branches and the leaves. Imagine our surprise when we found out that a tree will actually sweat in warm weather; an experiment with a plastic baggie strategically placed on a maple leaf limb told us so!

With so much newfound knowledge, our young arborists helped create a virtual forest in our classrooms. Morning Friends tore colorful paper into just the right shapes for their very own trees. Afternoon Friends created some lovely leaf and bark crayon rubbings. Both classes helped to paint lots

of “bark” onto mural paper for the tree “growing” in the block room. Our “tree” changed with the seasons. Briefly, it was an apple tree. Later in the autumn, orange, yellow, red and brown leaves dangled from its branches. Winter time brought dainty snowflakes to our tree. And in the spring, new leaves sprouted and flowers bloomed inside, mirroring exactly what was happening outside.

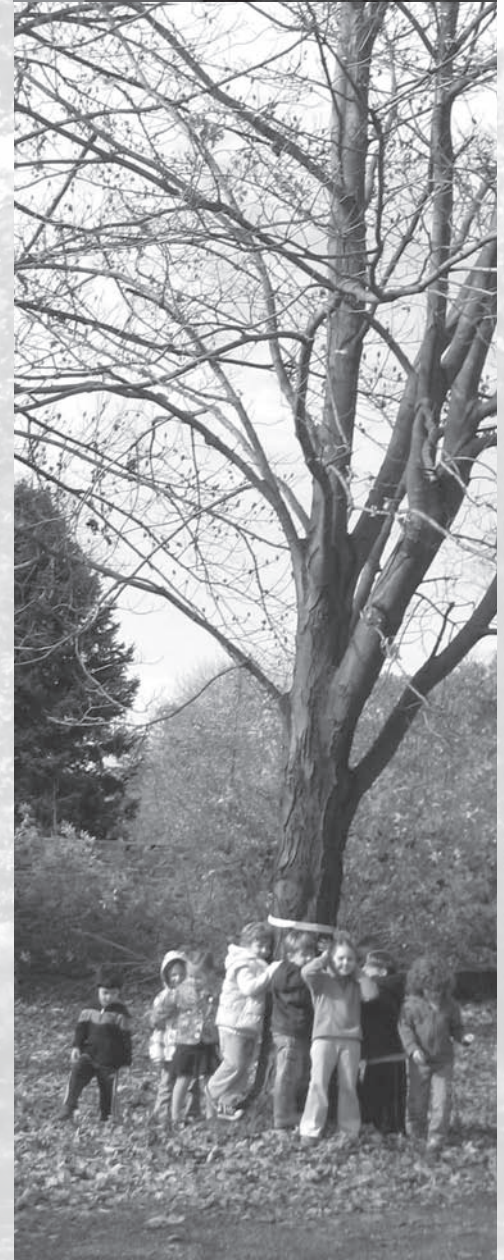
One day, the children arrived at school to find that Mrs. Pearson, our resident “Mother Nature,” had managed to bring the outside in, in a way we could have never imagined. Using the “bones” of a beach umbrella and lots of real bamboo branches, she designed a beautiful willow-like tree right on the middle of the block room rug. Friends loved taking turns laying down and gazing up into the branches.

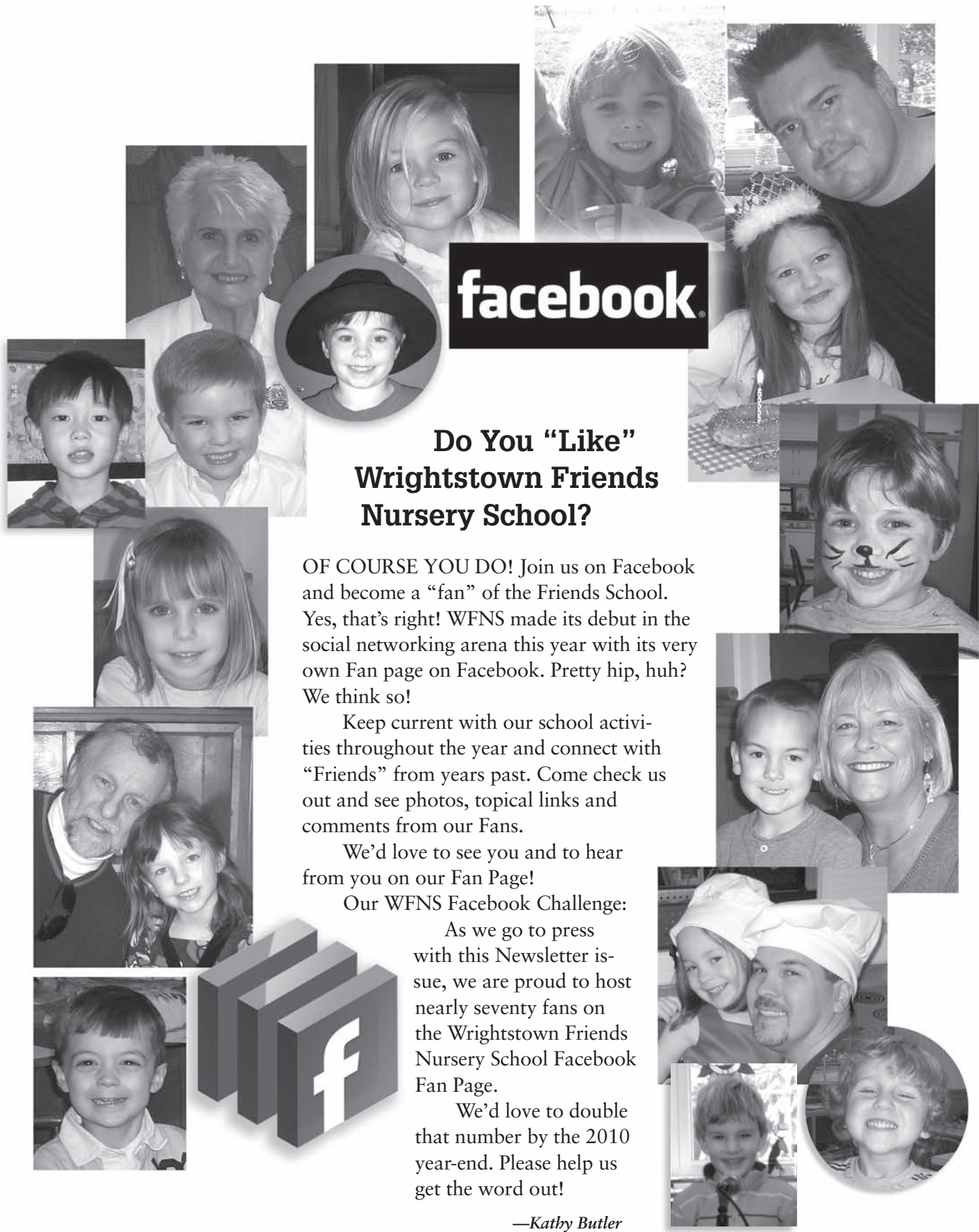
Fortunately, as the school year progressed, we continued to celebrate trees in various ways. In December, for example, we counted all of the evergreen trees on our grounds. Morning Friends “adopted” a gorgeous maple tree that stands at the top of our driveway beside the Meetinghouse. The children observed their tree—decorated with a pretty bow—from season to season. Later in May, Afternoon Friends took a walk among towering trees in the woods belonging to Kate Shipley’s family.

Of course, since learning about trees was such a significant part of our school year, gathering around the William Penn Oak Tree at our Closing Day picnics was especially meaningful to all of us. Our wonderful school families surprised the teachers with the gift of a new tree to further enhance the WFNS landscape! This summer, a weeping cherry from this year’s Morning Friends and Afternoon Friends will be planted near our playground.

We look forward to watching our new tree bloom and grow—just like all of our nursery school children.

—Janie Scurti





## Do You “Like” Wrightstown Friends Nursery School?

OF COURSE YOU DO! Join us on Facebook and become a “fan” of the Friends School. Yes, that’s right! WFNS made its debut in the social networking arena this year with its very own Fan page on Facebook. Pretty hip, huh? We think so!

Keep current with our school activities throughout the year and connect with “Friends” from years past. Come check us out and see photos, topical links and comments from our Fans.

We’d love to see you and to hear from you on our Fan Page!

Our WFNS Facebook Challenge:

As we go to press with this Newsletter issue, we are proud to host nearly seventy fans on the Wrightstown Friends Nursery School Facebook Fan Page.

We’d love to double that number by the 2010 year-end. Please help us get the word out!

—Kathy Butler





**“Merrily, merrily,  
merrily, merrily,  
Life is but a dream.”**

Visit WFNS at  
[www.wrightstownfriends.org](http://www.wrightstownfriends.org)

*...see inside!*

# GOOD NEWS!



Wrightstown Friends Nursery School  
Box 293 ■ Penns Park, PA 18943