

# Potomac Association of Cooperative Teachers

## P.A.C.T. Newsletter

Established in 1961

February 2013

Issue 1 of 4



Marc Armitage, Playworker

PACT Spring Conference

March 12, 2013

*Keep Calm and Play On  
The Doing Approach to Playing – teaching,  
learning and the reality of children's play*

### Who Is Marc Armitage?

Mr. Armitage is a middle-aged, UK citizen who coined the term playwork. In his own words (taken from his website): "Put simply, playwork is about enabling children and young people to play by providing sympathetic and adaptable environments in which they can do so without the need for direct adult involvement ... it is not 'adult-led' or 'child-led' but 'play-led'...Playwork defines play as 'what children and young people do when they follow their own ideas and interests in their own way and for their own reasons'. There is no external goal or outcome expected in playwork and certainly nothing that is easily measureable."

PACT co-president Jennifer DeBernardis, an Anglophile, has been following Mr. Armitage's blog ([www.marc-armitage.eu/](http://www.marc-armitage.eu/)) for a couple of years. When she and co-president Nancy Renner discovered that Mr. Armitage would be on the East Coast in March, they didn't hesitate to book him as our Spring Presenter. His philosophy is in line with our Spring Presenters of years past (Jacky Howell, Marla McLean and Victoria Brown).

On the back of this newsletter is the form to sign up for this conference.

### Looking Ahead

*By Co-Presidents Jennifer DeBernardis & Nancy Renner*

Greetings PACT Members! We are pleased to announce Marc Armitage as our presenter at the March 12 conference at Cedar Lane. One of our goals as incoming co-presidents is to bring in talent from out of the area, thanks to your support through your membership dues. Marc will speak on "The Doing Approach to Playing--teaching, learning and the reality of children's play". He will also engage us in some hands-on active learning we can bring back to our classrooms. Well-known on the other side of the pond, we are delighted to bring Marc to PACT as part of his North American East Coast tour, Keep Calm and Play On. Feel free to invite parents from your school communities to attend for the Spring Conference Only fee.

Another PACT goal this year, is to fill our vacant spots on the Board. I (Jennifer) am looking at a proposed slate of officers from 1997/98 which shows many names still active in our association. This list from fifteen years ago had 31 positions; our current list has about 13 positions -- being filled by about 10 people. Our hope is that when you read this, *you will think of yourself as someone who can give a little time this year to strengthen our board and spark our mission*. Our board meets twice a year and accomplishes the rest of its work through email discussions. See our OPEN positions on the next page of this newsletter. Some historical positions that have fallen off of our list but sound intriguing are Mission Statement, Legislative, Teachers' Job Clearinghouse and Support for 2's Teachers. Maybe you have a talent not listed or an interest you think would serve PACT well. Please let us know if you would like to join us. **We are particularly hoping to attract more Virginia involvement in the Board.**

Annette Fitzpatrick has our PACT website up to date; it holds lots of information for members, including newsletter archives, the slightly amended by-laws and much more...[pactconference.org](http://pactconference.org).

Our information, board and director's listservs are all used for communication germane to those groups. Feel free to post job listings, teacher training opportunities and information pertinent to our field You may subscribe by sending a message to [subscribe-PACT-info@yahoo.com](mailto:subscribe-PACT-info@yahoo.com) or [subscribe-PACT-directors@yahoo.com](mailto:subscribe-PACT-directors@yahoo.com). We look forward to seeing you on March 12!

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### PACT Board

#### *Co-Presidents*

Jennifer DeBernardis  
(SSNS) (MD)  
Nancy Renner  
(Fort Hunt) (VA)

#### *VP Programs*

Marcy Mistrett  
(Amazing Life Games) (DC)  
OPEN

#### *VP Membership*

Annette Fitzpatrick (MD)

#### *Secretary*

OPEN

#### *Treasurer*

Janise Allyn-Smith  
(SSNS) (MD)

#### *Logistics & Hospitality*

Dawn Matthews  
(Tauxemont) (VA)  
Bernadine Occhiuzzo  
(Cedar Lane) (MD)

#### *Exhibits/Resource Tables*

OPEN

#### *Folders/Evaluations, Newsletter Editor*

Pamela Trunk (MD)

#### *Video Club*

Nancy Renner (VA)  
Cindy Walsh (DC)  
Jennifer DeBernardis (MD)

#### *Past President*

Maureen Ingram (MD)

### An Introduction to PCPI

*By Lesley Romanoff*

How has the conversation about early childhood education changed over the years? Please consider the thoughts of Helen Knowlton's editorial published in a Parent Cooperative Preschools International, PCPI, 1962 newsletter. "In these times of hopeful change in the total educational process from kindergarten to college, I think it is vital that we, parents and teachers, give careful thought to just what we want for our children. In the important early school days, how can we set the school stage for present satisfactions that lead to the best future development? It is obvious that, without rapid advances in science and technology and with our entry into the space era, our children will grow up in a world quite different from that in which even the youngest of parents today grew up."

What do we want for our children? That they grow up into sturdy, self-confident, capable, and independent individuals, able to cope with pressures and frustrations that we cannot even anticipate. We must begin, we are told, in early childhood, where the foundations for future learning are being laid. Even in the nursery school, the controversy is raging over curriculum. What should teachers be teaching? Is it because the teaching team in a participatory model school consists of teachers and parents that these institutions have held fast and firm, decade after decade, to the importance of how a child learns and that the how is through play?

I believe the answer is a resounding "yes." I arrive at this certainty through my interactions with other PCPI members during listserv conversations, face-to-face meetings and through the facebook conversations and shares. When I first began my association with at Takoma Park Cooperative Nursery School as a co-oper I could not have told you definitively what PCPI was all about. Without a better way to describe it, our school inherited our PCPI membership. It was simply something the organization did each year. As a co-oper, I did not have any familiarity or direct connection with the organization even though a PCPI brochure was given to me around the time I enrolled my older son with the school! Now I know, PCPI is a long-standing organization founded in 1960, and through this historical context it offers strength and wisdom, which is similarly offered through membership in PACT.

Perhaps the difference is that the combination of parents and educators give voice to experiences, skills, and knowledge that I do not possess. This diversity of skills and thoughts are the wellspring of the parent cooperative model. For instance, if I have questions of a legal nature there are members who are lawyers. If I have questions about communications, there are members who are familiar with web-design and media options. My favorite thing, though, is that when I wonder about options for vitalizing or revitalizing community, there are people who have been doing this cooperative business for a long time and they don't just have one or two ideas about community building, they have about 20! **[Continued on pg. 3]**

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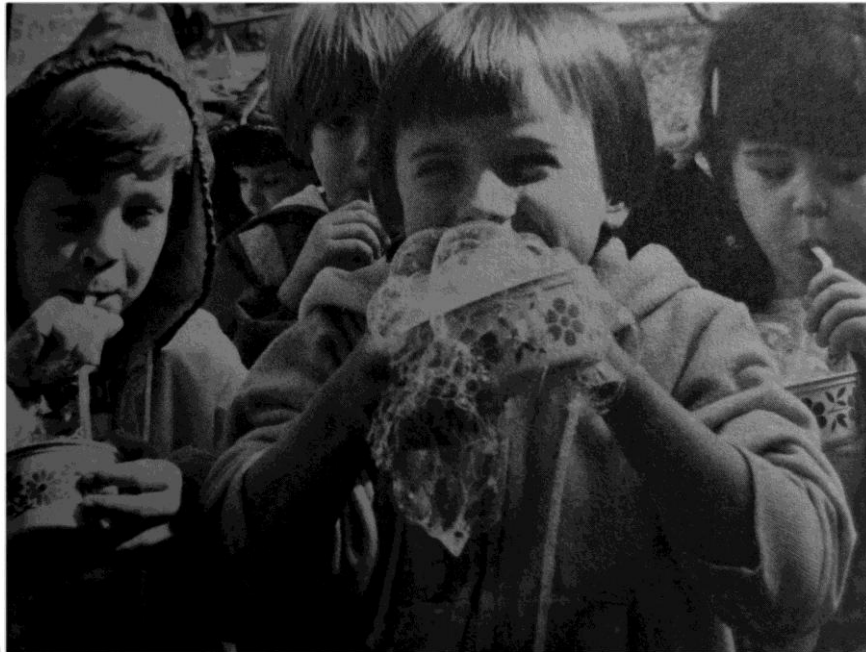
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[...continued from pg. 2. Intro to PCPI...]

Since this history is also well documented, PCPI has a rich resource library. As I mentioned earlier, the PCPI brochure was something that we purchased in bulk to hand out during admissions season. A copy of *It's the Camaraderie: A history of parent cooperative preschools* by Dorothy Hewes has been passed on to each board president for years and years and now with our heightened awareness of the PCPI benefits, it is now, bookmarked and dog-eared to a fair-thee-well. Access to these printed materials and the list serve as well as grants for parent education programs and travel to meetings are all available to members.

Resources for members may be something easily enumerated, but the overarching benefit is one of what I call unified voice and this returns to the excerpt of the 1962 newsletter article included above. Consistently, when informed parents and invested educators work together, they are able to accomplish something grand and long-lasting. The parent-cooperative model is the right model. The larger our numbers, the richer the history, the longer the impact, the better it makes us all. If you are not a member of PCPI, please consider joining. If you are already a member, make sure to take advantage of its resources and thank you for sharing your expertise and insight. We hope to see you at the PCPI Annual Conference in Portland, Oregon, April 25 through 27. In addition to tours of fabulous cooperative schools and mingling with cooperative people-in-the-know, Teacher Tom (Tom Hobson) will be hosting a workshop on the 27th. In Tom's words, "I'm excited to be participating and meeting a bunch of co-op colleagues." Me too, Tom, me too.



Published in in the PCPI's *Journal*, Volume VIII Number 1, Fall 1977.  
Rockville Presbyterian Cooperative Nursery School, accompanying a  
poem by the 1976-1977 four-year old class entitled *Bubbles*.

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## SPRING CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

This registration form must be returned by **March 4, 2013**.

If you are a 2012-2013 Individual Member (fee paid Fall 2012): No fee to attend Spring Conference. Please e-mail [Annette.fitzpatrick@verizon.net](mailto:Annette.fitzpatrick@verizon.net) to confirm attendance.

If you are **not** an individual member, then there is a \$30 fee. Make check payable to PACT. Complete registration form and mail with your check to: Annette Fitzpatrick, 7203 46th Street, Chevy Chase, MD 20815.

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number (home) \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address (will be used only for communication concerning PACT) \_\_\_\_\_

School name \_\_\_\_\_ Director's name \_\_\_\_\_ phone \_\_\_\_\_

School e-mail \_\_\_\_\_ Web site \_\_\_\_\_

How many years have you been involved with Early Childhood Education?

\_\_\_\_ Rookie (0-3 yrs) \_\_\_\_ Veteran (4-10 yrs) \_\_\_\_ Seasoned Veteran (10+ yrs)

Are you interested in serving on the PACT Board? Yes \_\_\_\_ Maybe, need more info! \_\_\_\_\_

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### DIRECTIONS TO CEDAR LANE UNITARIAN CHURCH

**From Washington, DC:**

Go north on Wisconsin Ave (Rt. 355) Rockville Pike, through Bethesda, past the Naval Hospital to Cedar Lane. Turn right at the traffic light onto Cedar Lane, and continue .7 miles to the Church entrance (marked by a low sign) on the right near the top of the hill (second driveway after the light at Beach Drive).

**From the Beltway Outer Loop (westbound I-495):**

Take exit #33, which splits into two ramps. Bear right; take the one marked "Connecticut Avenue North, Kensington." When you get onto Connecticut Avenue, move to the left lane as soon as possible. Turn left at the traffic light onto Beach Drive. Follow Beach Drive about .5 miles through the park to a traffic light at Cedar Lane. Turn right onto Cedar Lane and proceed up the hill to the Church entrance that is marked by a low sign.

**From southbound I-270 or Beltway Inner Loop Exit 35:**

Exit at Rt. 355 south (take DC - not VA- spur; left exit from spur) to Bethesda. At the second light turn left onto Cedar Lane Church is .7 miles past Rockville Pike. The Church entrance (marked by a low sign) is on the right near the top of the hill (second driveway after the light at Beach Drive).

**Metro:**

Closest stop is the Red Line's Medical Center. Walk north about .5 miles on Rockville Pike/Rt 355 to Cedar Lane and .7 miles east on Cedar Lane, or take Ride-On bus #35 which stops near the corner of Beach Drive and Cedar Lane.