

FALKTalk

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Got Something to Share?

If so, please send contributions to Rob Kass at kass@stat.cmu.edu or call 268-8723.

From the Director...

It seems as though there is never enough time here at the school to do all the things we have to do. The activities seem to grow dramatically each year. The "slack" times are fewer and fewer, and we roll from one season to another without the time to "kick back and smell the roses." The faculty and I are concerned about this, especially for our students. I thought I would use this time to pass on a few thoughts from a "Report to Parents" (Jan. 2001), which I receive each month from the National Association of Elementary School Principals.

Do your children have time to play every day? To just hang out? Or are their lives and yours ruled by their after-school and weekend activity schedules? According to a recent study, American children are increasingly losing out on play time as their parents schedule more and more activities for them. So it's a good idea not to pile too much on your children.

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From the PTA President...

A new year... and a new beginning. I think it is wonderful to have the chance to start over. Whether you make New Year's resolutions or you see January as an in-between month, a month for collecting your energies, you have the opportunity to refresh yourselves and your life. The PTA follows this contemplative philosophy, and we let January go by with nary an event.

February brings Bingo on the 25th. Don't forget the General PTA Meeting featuring alcohol and drug awareness on the 15th. March blows in the Carnegie Sleepover on the 16th and the Excellence in Teaching Walkathon on the 25th. Before long we will be thinking of the Carnival and Kennywood.

As we start 2001, I look forward to seeing you all at PTA events. Come on; jump in. For as John Lennon said, "Life is what happens when you are busy making plans."

—Nancy DelPresto

Winter/Spring Calendar

January

January 30-31—"The Little Red Hen"

February

February 15—PTA Meeting, 7:30pm

February 19—"Stuffee" visits Primary rooms

February 24—Giant Eagle "Apples for Students" program ends

February 25—Bingo, 3pm

March

March 5-9—Spring Break

March 16—Carnegie Science Center's Sleep Over

March 25—Excellence in Teaching Walkathon

March 30—Science Olympiad competition at California University of Pennsylvania

April

April 2 - April 5—Achievement Testing, Parent Conferences, Library Book Fair

May

May 22-24—"The Wizard of Oz"

From the Director...(Continued)

*WISDOM and
MODERATION:
Let these
words be your
motto.*

BEWARE OF BURNOUT. How are their grades? How are their moods? Are they really interested? Hectic schedules sometimes lead to short fuses and cranky kids. Having time to "veg" out can sometimes be more important than yet another dancing lesson or scout meeting. Make sure that your children are involved in activities that interest them and not necessarily because they interest you.

BE SELECTIVE. Keep activities to a minimum. Go with the seasons. Avoid "over-competitive-ness." An activity that meets once or twice a week is appropriate for elementary children. Your children need variety. Encourage them to try differ-

ent activities a month or two at a time. The goal of recreational and other out-of-school activities is to help children learn and have fun, not pressure them to excel.

MAKE "DOWN TIME" COUNT. Make sure that there is some time in your child's day that is totally unscheduled. Let them unwind, play or pursue whatever interests them. But do not just let them sit. Couch potatoes and computer geeks experience problematic issues too! Encourage them to interact with others in play situations.

WISDOM AND MODERATION. Let these words be your motto.

—Bill McDonald

Student Health

IMPORTANT REMINDER: For all students entering 7th grade in September 2001 and later, the three-vaccine Hepatitis B and the varicella (chickenpox) vaccine (or the date of the disease) will be required. This is a new requirement from the Pennsylvania Department of Health.

During this season of the cold and flu, it is sometimes difficult to decide whether a child is well enough to attend school. Since the health of each student is my major concern, please considering the following to help your child and his/her classmates stay healthy.

PLEASE DO NOT SEND your child to school if he/she has any of the following symptoms within 12 hours of the start of school: vomiting, diarrhea, a temperature of 100 degrees or greater, continuous coughing and/or sneezing, unexplained and/or contagious rash, yellow-green drainage from the nose, or inflamed or bloodshot eye(s) with yellow drainage (pink eye). These symptoms generally denote an infection. By keeping your child home and allowing him/her to recuperate, you help protect the other students from a similar infection and, more importantly, help keep your child from having a re-

lapse or getting another infection when his/her germ fighting strength is low. Regardless of symptoms and temperature, a child who is too ill to participate and learn should be kept at home.

Does your child seem to pick up every passing bug? Consider these suggestions to bolster his/her immune system. Providing a smoke-free environment makes a significant contribution to a child's general good health, as does eating right, sleeping well and exercising regularly. Being sleep-deprived, undernourished or stressed makes some kids (adults, too) more susceptible to a virus once they are exposed. Children tend to need 8 to 10 hours of sleep each night to be adequately rested. Many of our children's activities are sedentary. Parents may have to build-in opportunities for active play, such as bike riding, roller blading, etc. Many of the complaints I see every day are the result of skipping breakfast and/or staying up too late, rather than illness.

The medication policy has been mailed to every family and must be followed when medication is to be taken in school. Please schedule medication to be given at home, if at all possible, particularly over-the-counter medications.

Many thanks to our two parent volunteers, Diane Lambrou, RN and Janice Anderson,

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Library News

LIBRARY WEB PAGE Ms. Herward has revised the library web pages. Visit the site at www.pitt.edu/~herward or use the link on the Falk School web page www.pitt.edu/~fls. The site includes information about the library staff, class schedule, parent volunteers, MLA Works Cited style sheet, circulation policies and procedures, the Gift Book Program's information letter and gift form, and the magazine collection. Look for improvements throughout the year.

BIRTHDAY/GIFT BOOK PROGRAM The library and the PTA coordinate a Gift Book Program as a means of expanding the library collection while commemorating special times and special persons: birthdays, holidays, grandparents, teachers, interns and sometime even pets. An appropriate bookplate is placed in each book. All Falk students, teachers, interns and staff benefit from the continuous updating of the collection. The Gift Book letter and form are available on the library web site (see above address). If you have questions about the Birthday/Gift Book Program, contact Ms. Herward (624-8010) or Laura Zaspel Lawson (412-661-4856).

LIBRARY GIFTS Thank you to the students and families who recently donated books to the library: donations in memory of Bryan Fyalkowski's grandmother, Eleanor Freund, by Phyllis Hoole, Anita Morganstern, the Giotomer family, Molly Hirtle, Sarah & Daniel Hrusa, the Dealy family, Andrew Brown, Sophia Rosenfeld, Maeve O'Donnell, Shana Leshko, the Lincoln family, Alexis Lambrou, Peter Lambrou, Rev. K. & Dr. L. Conover in memory of Susan Farley, Ms. Sarada's

mother, Jill Pinsky, Stephanie Pinsky, Tae-woon Danny Kim, Colin S. Wilson, Jodi Lincoln, Sage Lincoln, Mr. D. Ross, Patrick Herward, Chris Waterkotte, and Ms. L. Williams. More complete information concerning these gifts is published in the Library Newsletter.

LIBRARY VOLUNTEERS Parent volunteers provide valuable support to the library program. During primary book circulation time, volunteers assist students in selecting books and checking out books on the library circulation computer. Classes generally have book circulation every two weeks. Two volunteers are recruited for each homeroom and alternate assisting in the library with book circulation. This usually results in a once a month commitment. One volunteer is needed for room 115, Ms. Sarada (Wednesdays). Volunteers need not have a student in room 115. Volunteers usually work from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm. Contact Ms. Herward for details at 624-8010. Volunteers also provide clerical support. This year Beate Salter assists with periodical management.

LIBRARY BOOK FAIR The annual Library Book Fair will be held the week of achievement tests and spring parent conferences, Monday, April 2 through Thursday, April 5. Set-up will be Friday, March 30. The purpose of the Book Fair is to encourage reading of quality children's books and to raise additional funds to expand the library collection. Scholastic, Inc. will supply a "Literature Book Fair." Volunteers will be needed. Contact Ms. Herward if you would like to help at 624-8010.

—Linda Herward

Current Library Volunteers Schedule

Tuesday Room 112
Kim Lincoln – Sabina
Rosenfeld

Wednesday Room 115
Betsy Levine Brown –
volunteer needed

Thursday Room 111
Joe Grabowski – Laura
Zaspel Lawson

Friday Room 116
Jenny Grandis – Diane
Hobley

Student Health... (Continued)

MD. These moms generously offer their time to ensure Health Room coverage on days I am not in school. If you have a medical background and might occasionally be available to assist in my absence, particularly during the 12 noon to 1 pm "medication hour,"

please call me. (I will be attending the NALS Conference in February. If you might be available to assist during this time, please call me as soon as possible.) Thank you for considering this unique volunteer opportunity!

—Susan Sholtis



Music Notes

*Mark your
calendars for
"The Wizard
of Oz," May
22-24!*

The Year 2000 went out with a bang in the Music Department. Kindergarten and sixth grade students attended Pittsburgh Symphony concerts at Heinz Hall; the Intermediate Chorus sang for the Primary Students' Breakfast; and 112 students presented "This Old Gingerbread House."

Congratulations to all the members of our Falk family who performed for the November luncheon at the Katz Business School. This is a wonderful outreach to the campus community. Performers included: Susan Dannhauser; Jackie Hayes; Sarah Feldman; Sarah Bass; Ben and Steve Hirtle; Lauren and Luke Kelley-Chew; Jessica, Kristy and Sheila Talley-Armstead; Jessica DeFranco; Eva Bitran; Afton, Cameron and Charlene Barnett; Alex Carmine and Anjali Rao.

Middle School Music classes closed out 2000 participating in an integrated unit, "Music and Japanese Culture." Ms. Mori-

moto joined us in class as we experienced Japanese music and traditions first-hand. These classes were a wonderful experience, and the final presentations of Japanese festival music were great! January 2001 marked the beginning of the Middle School's production of "The Wizard of Oz." Mark your calendar now; you won't want to miss this one! Performances will be May 22-24.

As a special way of celebrating "Music In Our Schools' Month" last year, we invited family members of Falk students to come to Music classes in March and share their musical talents. The program was a huge success with over 25 performers coming to sing, play instruments, dance and lead sing-alongs! Soon you will be receiving a letter to sign up for this year. I hope we can have even more performers visit our classes this March. It was a great experience for everyone last year, and I'm looking forward to this year's performances.

—Lee Ann Conover

After School

We have been keeping ourselves busy inside. The children are tolerating being cooped up inside, but it is only midwinter. We had four exciting visits from the Science Center. The last program was about the incubation cycle of chickens, and they brought live chicks for the kids to observe and touch. It was fun!

If there are any parents that would be interested in future programs, we could set it up but would have to charge a fee. The fee would vary depending on the number of interested families (\$2-\$85 per program). The last four programs were paid for by the school, and that was our limit. Please call the After School office if you would be interested in future visits from the Science Center. The programs are divided by grade level.

We have also just begun another 6 week session of chess classes with international

chess master, Jerry Meyers. We have 17 students participating in the classes.

Basketball season is well underway. Our children have enjoyed cheering on their older friends during the home games. We have really enjoyed the new bleachers!

Lastly, we would like to thank the parents who helped in After School right before winter break, when our Pitt students went home for the holidays. Thanks to Dawn Lea (son Warren in room 115), David Sanders (son Avery Feingold in room 116), Pam Greenhouse (daughter Rebecca in room 111) and Jeremy Metcalf. We survived that week thanks to you!!

Enjoy the rest of the winter. Keep your fingers crossed that the groundhog does not see his shadow!!

—Jackie Metcalf

Primary School News

Room 111 will perform their class play entitled “The Little Red Hen” on January 30 and 31st. The students enjoyed preparing the performance and are eager to show off their talents.

“Stuffee” from the Children’s Museum will visit the Primary rooms on Monday, February 19. This is an in-school program for the Primary Team’s unit on the Human Body.

Valentine’s Day will be a simple celebration in each of the classrooms. Children who choose to send Valentines will have an opportunity to do so. (There are 24 students and 2 teachers in each classroom.)

If you did not already return your report cards, please sign and return them as soon as possible.

Middle School Science

Roller coasters have been the focus of the 7th and 8th graders. Construction and the physics behind it have engulfed these students. Themes include “The Spider’s Web,” “The Farmhouse,” “Little Italy,” and “New Year’s Eve.”

Sixth graders have been studying Human Biology, specifically the skeletal and muscular systems.

A poster contest was sponsored by the Allegheny County Health Department for

middle school students. The topic was “Preserving Our Environment—Protecting Our Future.” Falk faculty and staff judged the 33 submitted posters. Five were chosen to be sent to the Health Department, including: Sanna Herwald (7), Emily Hric (7), Lauren Kelley-Chew (8), Caitlin Laemmle (7), and David Muenzer (8). Good luck to all finalists.

Science Olympiad practice will be starting soon. We compete at California University of Pennsylvania on March 30.



Room 224 and 225

Room 224 and 225 are studying the rainforest and endangered species. In Social Studies, Pennsylvania is the focus. In Language Arts, our student authors are writing, editing and illustrating their own ABC books.

Period One Reading spent January working with six middle school students. These six worked with small groups as facilitators of Reading Clubs.

T-Shirt Sale

There are still some T-shirts and fleece jackets available. We will continue this sale throughout the year until everything is gone. Sizes are still limited; you can call to see if

your size(s) are available or stop in to see what is left. Thank you for supporting the Middle School Fund!

—Sheila E. Talley-Armstead, 614-8021

Carnegie Science Center Sleep Over

Holy OmniMax Theater! It’s here! Mark your calendar. The Carnegie Science Center’s Sleep Over will be held Friday, March 16th. Participation is limited to

the first 100 people and **tickets go fast!**

Tickets are \$28 per person. Make checks out to “Falk PTA.” Remember, children must be accompanied by a parent.

Computer Room News



What your children are learning...

PRIMARY: Students are nearing the end of a creative writing project using the software application program "Storybook Weaver." Students browse through a myriad of graphic backgrounds and objects, which encourage their imaginations. They follow the minimum standard format of a title page, a first page representing the beginning of each story, a second page representing the middle of each story and a third page representing the end of the story. Students begin by using inventive or "as it sounds" spelling but are encouraged to learn the process of editing text. These stories will be printed in color and sent home soon! Their next project will involve keyboarding with "Kid Keys," a newly acquired software program (a gift) resulting from your efforts in the selling of Sally Foster products. Thank you parents and PTA!

INTERMEDIATE: Students recently began a new and exciting project about Pittsburgh. Using the Internet, students learn how to search for information about Pittsburgh's history, culture, sports, people and places. This information is saved to Microsoft Word and organized into a printed report. This requires numerous computer skills that include: searching the Internet, saving graphics and text from the Internet, opening and closing various software programs simultaneously, organization and printing.

MIDDLE SCHOOL: Cycle 3 is nearing the end of a very empowering and highly skilled multi-media project titled "All about Me." Students are creating PowerPoint presentations about their lives that include clip art from a variety of sources, the scanning of family photos, use of our digital camera, and hyperlinks. In addition, students are collecting daily information from www.quicken.com. These stock quotes are recorded in Microsoft Excel and will eventually be plotted into a graph.

LASTLY: Every effort is made to choose these projects in accordance with Technology Foundation Standards for Students and to integrate subject matter with current academic classroom projects. The next time you happen to be in the school, please take a look at the student projects that adorn the walls near the gym and computer room.

THE FALK WEB SITE has a new address: www.pitt.edu/~fls. Keep an eye on this site for examples of student work, general school information and news by our faculty!

SCHOLASTIC SOFTWARE ORDERS: Each month, parents have the opportunity to order computer software. Look among your child's take-home papers for monthly software catalogs. Remember to send checks made out to "Scholastic" (no cash!).

GIANT EAGLE: This program ends on Saturday, February 24th. Give yourself a pat on the back for your contributions! Our current total is \$75,000, with a goal of \$20,000 more. The more Giant Eagle receipts we collect, the more equipment we can acquire, and ultimately more choices can be offered to our students!

CONTRIBUTIONS: A Giant thank you to: The Brown Family (daughter Cortlyn), The Grandis Family (children Ben and Anna), The Kim Family (son Danny), The Watt-Morse Family (children Anna Grace, Mary Ellen and Jacob), The Weinstein Family (son Zach), The Caplan Family (children Brian, Scott and Julie), The Cohen Family (daughter Julia), The Glynn Family (daughter Alix), The Grabowski Family (son Russell), and The Weeks Family (son Patrick). Again, thank you!

For more information and/or comments, contact Ms. Bianco at 648-8459.

Visit the new Falk website at
www.pitt.edu/~fls

Help Earn "Apples" for the Students

Help Falk School earn free computers and other teaching tools by sending in Giant Eagle Register tapes! The program ends Saturday, February 24, 2001.

Collect register tapes from relatives, colleagues, friends, business associations and everyone else you know! Remember to:

- Highlight the total AFTER coupons (the total actually paid) on each tape with a marker.

- Add up tapes in batches of approximately \$1,000. Secure each batch (folded flat, not rolled) with a rubber band.
- Write the total of each batch on a piece of paper and secure it to its batch under the rubber band. Please DO NOT staple or roll the batches.

Questions? Call Ms. Bianco at 648-8459.



B-I-N-G-O!

IT'S BINGO TIME AGAIN!!! The annual Family Fun PTA event will be held in the cafeteria on **Sunday, February 25 at 3:00 pm**. Come have a lot of fun; there will be plenty of food to eat. Everyone can win! And there will be prizes for all ages! Bring your luck and all your family members and friends, as well as a favorite dish that will feed at least 12 people. This year we will have pizza delivered, so bring things that go along with pizza.

Dr. McDonald will be one of our Bingo callers this year, but we are also looking for

Middle Schoolers to volunteer as bingo callers. Bingo forms are already out. If you need one, please stop in the Main Office or have your child stop in to get it. So get those forms in as soon as possible to help get an accurate count of how many will be attending. The cost is \$4.00 per adult, \$2.00 for 12 and under, and free for 3 and under.

If you have any questions, please call Sheila E. Talley-Armstead at 624.8021 or 241.2945, or Lori McDermott at 577-3550.

—Sheila E. Talley-Armstead

David McColloch Wins Falk Geography Bee

David McColloch, grade 8, won the school-level geography bee and a chance at a \$25,000 college scholarship. The grades 4-8 school-level bee was the first round in the 13th annual National Geographic Bee sponsored by the National Geographic Society. The winners from each participating school, including David, have taken a written test for competition at the state level; up to 100 of the top scorers in each state will be eligible to compete in their state bees on April 6, 2001.

The National Geographic Society with its co-sponsors will provide an all-expense paid trip to Washington, DC for state champions and their parent/teacher escorts to participate in the Bee finals on May 22 and 23. The first-place national winner will receive a \$25,000 college scholarship; second-place and third-place winners respectively receive \$15,000 and \$10,000. Alex Trebek, host of

"Jeopardy!", will moderate the national finals.

Falk students in grades 4-8 participated in the school-level preliminary rounds and will receive certificates of participation. Those students who advanced to the school-level final rounds were Sanna Herwald, David McColloch, Evie Moreno, Renata Nelson, Quynh Nguyen, Sarah Rafson, Hanna Ridge, Bryan Schrear, Paula Tonsor and Kate Walsh.

The championship round consisted of two finalists, Paula and David, Paula answering one of three questions correctly and David answering three of three correctly. Consequently, David took the qualifying exam for the state bee in Harrisburg, and we await word of his success at that level. He has qualified twice before for competition at the state level: as a sixth grader he placed 4th in the state and as a seventh grader he placed 8th. We wish him continued success.

—David Kramer

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FALKTalk

The Heartwood Program

THE HEARTWOOD PROGRAM is a literature-based ethics curriculum for children. The program uses illustrated books from representative cultures around the world to help children understand seven attributes: courage, loyalty, justice, respect, hope, honesty and love. The stories are primarily folklore, legends and hero tales. The books are read aloud in class and then discussed. The different attributes are featured throughout the school year according to a schedule. Parents are encouraged to read the books aloud with their children. Many of the books are available at the public library. Falk School Library has most of the main books and many of the supplementary books. Stop in the library after school Tuesday through Friday between 3:10-4:00 or before 8:30 to arrange to borrow books. Contact Ms. Herward (624-8010) for a complete list of the Heartwood books.

JANUARY Main Books for Justice:

Androcles and the Lion, J. Stevens
The Sign in Mendel's Window, M. Phillips
The Tale of the Mandarin Ducks, K. Paterson
Prince Boghole, E. Haugaard
The Warrior and the Wise Man, D. Wisniewski
Nettie's Trip South, A. Turner

Supplementary Books:

Chicken Sunday, P. Polacco
The Eggs, Alike
The Enchanted Book, J. Porazinska
Faithful Elephants, Y. Tsuchiya
I Am Your Misfortune, M. Rudolph
Korean Cinderella, E. B. Adams
The Little Red Hen, P. Galdone
One Fine Day, N. Hogrogian
The Rough-Face Girl, M. Martin
The Story of Ferdinand, M. Leaf
Strega Nona, T. DePaola
Three Gold Pieces, Alike

FEBRUARY Main Books for Respect:

Crow Boy, T. Yashima
The Wall, E. Bunting
The Great Kapok Tree, L. Cherry
Last Look from the Mountain, C. Marron
Miss Rumphius, B. Cooney
How My Parents Learned to Eat, I. Freidman

Supplementary Books:

Dragonfly's Tale, K. Rodanas
Africa Dream, E. Greenfield
The Blind Man and the Elephant, L. Quigley
Brother Eagle, Sister Sky: A Message from Chief Seattle
I Have a Sister-My Sister Is Deaf, J.W. Peterson
Island Boy, B. Cooney
The Legend of the Whale, I. Stansfield
Masai and I, V. Kroll
The Village of Round and Square Houses, A. Grifalconi
Who Owns the Sun?, S. Chbosky.