

FALKTalk

Volume 11 Issue 4
February 2001



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From the Director...

I wish to thank all the parents for their cooperation during our bout with the stomach virus, February 8 and 9. We were quite busy because of faculty illness, and your "brown bags" were a great help during a very busy couple of days. No, it was not food or water poisoning. This virus has been attacking various school districts and businesses during the past month. We notified the health department, but they had no information for us. We can be thankful that the worst is over, and we can hope that it does not circle back to us again.

I would like to follow up on last month's column by again emphasizing the family. "You wouldn't think that renting a movie or having a pizza every Friday night would qualify as a family ritual—but it does, because it's something that parents and children look forward to doing to-

(Continued on page 2)

From the PTA President...

Although it is my job to promote the PTA and all its fundraising and school-wide activities, I feel that I must spend some extra "air" time selling the upcoming Excellence in Teaching Marathon.

The Excellence in Teaching Scholarship Fund is a product of the PTA and is funded by the PTA, although it maintains its own board and works independently of the PTA. The Excellence in Teaching Fund is the brainchild of Isabel Alcott, a past PTA president who passed the torch to the tireless Charlene Barnett.

Those of you who have been at Falk for four years or more will remember past Excellence in Teaching (EIT) events hosting a multicultural dinner followed by an auction to raise money for the Fund.

Charlene has changed the setting but not the intent of this fund-raising event,

(Continued on page 2)

Spring Calendar

February

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 Marathon

March 30—Science Olympiad competition at California University of Pennsylvania

April

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

May

May 18—Spring Carnival, 5-10 pm

May 22-24—"The Wizard of Oz"

Summer

June 24-July 20—Summer Theater Workshop

From the Director...(Continued)



gether. It's sort of a celebration marking the end of the work and school week. More importantly, it's the type of activity that helps families stay connected."

(Communicator, February, 2001)

I believe that family rituals are important to children. In an era where time seems to fly and weeks and months run into one another, I want to suggest that family rituals remain a constant of family life. Many families have rituals that center around birthdays, holidays, or religious celebrations. Here are a few more to consider...

Daily activities are important. Take the kids along when you walk the dog after dinner. Talk about the comics as you read the morning paper. After all, a ritual is nothing more than an activity that a family looks forward to doing together.

Annual activities—scrambled green eggs on St. Patrick's Day, heart-shaped cookies on Valentine's Day, a harmless prank on April Fool's Day—all of these can be yearly activities for the family. They do not take all day, but they come to be ex-

pected and appreciated as time passes. If some of these rituals flop, do not worry. Laughing about flops is probably just as important as discovering the memorable activities.

The nice thing about rituals is that they are never too childish, they do not have to reach perfection, and they will always provide nostalgia for all family members. It has been said that these rituals are not negatively affected by growing up or growing older, that the generation gap only provides a broader opportunity for the "fun" of it all, and that children and parents will cherish these special memories forever.

While there is certainly value in solemn family traditions, "silly rituals"—like a secret family handshake—can be just as important. Keep smiling, look for ways to laugh together, and, above all, enjoy each other's company.

Looking forward to your thoughts about this and all other matters...

—Bill McDonald

From the PTA President...(Continued)

and this year her creative energies will produce an EIT event that will *astound* you. I am not kidding!

With help from WTAE and the "Healthy 4 Life" team, she has added booths from the American Lung Association and the American Heart Association, a healthy "juice" bar, and dance lessons and demonstrations of Irish clogging, Latin salsa, and swing dancing. Every year this event gets better and BETTER.

The Excellence in Teaching Marathon is on Sunday, March 25th from 1:00-4:00 p.m. There is no soccer, basketball is over, and church services are done. There are no obstacles that I can foresee to spending three hours at Falk with your children in pursuit of health and a good cause.

You will consider it time well spent, and you will be reminded once again of the unique and amazing spirit of Falk School.

—Nancy DelPresto

Got Something to Share?

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

Library News

LIBRARY WEB PAGE Visit the library web pages at <http://www.pitt.edu/~herward> or use the link on the Falk School web page: <http://www.pitt.edu/~fls>.

BIRTHDAY/GIFT BOOK PROGRAM The library and the PTA coordinate a Gift Book Program as a means of expanding the library's 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, Gift Form, and suggested Book List are available on the library web site at <http://www.pitt.edu/~herward/>. The library will continue to mail Birthday/Gift Program information three times a year based on your child's birthday. If you have questions, contact Ms. Herward (412-624-8010) or Laura Zaspel Lawson (412-661-4856).

LIBRARY GIFTS Thank you to those who recently made donations to the library: Sarah & Daniel Hrusa, Michael Bagnato, Eric Stern, Scott Stern, Nalyn S. Komen, and Alison Myer. Gifts were donated in memory of Bryan Fyalkowski's grandmother, Eleanor Freund, by Phyllis Hoole, the Gitomer Family, and Anita Morganstern, and gifts were donated in memory of Dr. Vollmer's father, Stanley Mazur, by the Greenhouse Family and Ms. L. Herward.

TITLE VI ALLOCATION Each year the Falk School receives Title VI funds through the Pennsylvania Department of Education. At Falk, these funds have been used to expand the library collection. Fourteen (14) books and thirty-seven (37) videos were ordered in May 2000 and received in January/February 2001.

LIBRARY BOOK FAIR The Library Book Fair will be held during the week of achievement tests and parent conferences: Monday-

Thursday, April 2-5. 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. The tentative schedule for primary and intermediate classes is given below. Arrangements will be made for the middle school students to visit the Book Fair during the first two periods of the day. Students will be bringing home updated publicity.

The book fair will be open until 6:00 p.m., Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday and until 4:00 p.m. on Thursday. Parents are encouraged to stop in before or after conferences. Please note that the fair will be closed at 4:00 p.m. on Thursday.

Volunteers will be needed to work during the Book Fair, to set up on Friday, March 30 after 3:00 p.m. and to pack up on Thursday, April 5 after closing at 4:00 p.m. Contact Ms. Herward (412-624-8010 or Lherward@home.com) or Ann Kelton (412-244-5722) if you would like to help.

TENTATIVE BOOK FAIR SCHEDULE

Monday: Rooms 112 and 225

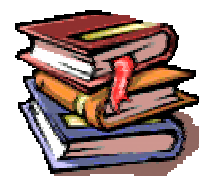
Tuesday: Rooms 116 and 222

Wednesday: Rooms 111 and 221

Thursday: Rooms 115 and 224

SCHOOL LIBRARY MONTH—APRIL In April and May, the library celebrates "School Library Month" with special events. Families are encouraged to participate in the April-May Reading Initiative by keeping a Reading Calendar (grades K-5), filling in Book Badges for the reading chain and page tally, selecting books at the annual Library Book Fair, and joining the Falk School community in a school wide SSR Read-In. Please support these activities. Look for information to be mailed home or visit the Library Web Site at <http://www.pitt.edu/~herward>. Due to vacation time in April and other special events, the reading activities will continue into May.

—Linda Herward



Spring Carnival



CARNIVAL! CARNIVAL! Guess what's coming Friday, May 18, from 5-10 p.m.? That's it.... the Spring Carnival!

This event is sponsored by the PTA and manned by you, the parents, and enjoyed by all. It will feature our highly successful \$1000 drawing, which last year gave us over \$3000 to use on behalf of our children.

Our now annual Carnival dance will be planned and executed by the eighth graders, and it will take place from 7-10 p.m. in the cafeteria. Charles Apple (Father Apple) will spin your favorite

discs.

Nicholas Ridge and Nancy del Presto will be your hosts for an eating extravaganza, and plenty of baked goods will be on hand to add to your calorie intake.

Games will again include the fabulous inflatables, some new rentals, including a "catch the dollar bills" machine, and the De Franco obstacle course. Bring a change of clothes to participate in the obstacle course and the dunking booth; it's **wet!**

So please join us and make this the greatest Carnival yet. See you there!

Music Notes

We hope you will help us celebrate "Music in our Schools" by coming to Falk and sharing your talents with us. By now you have received a letter of invitation to attend your child's Music class and perform for us. This program was very successful last year, and we are looking forward to it this year.

Fill out the form on your letter or call me (383-9617), and I will be glad to schedule a date when you can share your talents with the Falk children. You can sing, play an instrument, dance, lead us in a musical activity, or anything else. Whatever your talent is, we would love to experience it! We are a wonderful audience and really appreciate our parents, siblings, grandparents, etc. performing for us.

Our Second Graders are starting March with a special treat. They have been selected by the Pittsburgh Sym-

phony Association to be the demonstration class for their Spring Meeting. Docent Pam Meyer (aunt of Falk students Geoffrey and Deryn Beaman) will lead our students in a docent demonstration lesson. This event will be held at the Concordia Club in Oakland on March 1st.

The Intermediate Chorus is preparing a program for our parents and the Primary classes as a part of our "Music in our Schools" celebration. Watch for an announcement regarding the date for this special concert.

Reminder: If you haven't marked your calendars yet, make sure you save May 22-24 so you can attend the Middle School's production of "The Wizard of Oz."

—Lee Ann Conover

Primary School News

Room 116 will be performing “Hearts and Tarts” on February 27 and 28.

The P2 students are helping the Pittsburgh Symphony with a docent demonstration during a meeting at the Concordia Club in Oakland on March 1. The

P2 students will also get to “Meet the Orchestra” at Heinz Hall on March 30.

If you haven’t returned your child’s report card yet, **please do so!** Remember, you may keep the “Art” report card; Ms. Krakowski kept copies.

Room News

Rooms 224 and 225 are studying the rainforest in Science and Pennsylvania (geography and history to the present) in Social Studies.

Be aware that March is Book Report Month. Students should work 30 min-

utes a night on the report to keep up.

Rooms 221 and 222 are getting read for their class play, “Tales of Magic,” to be announced soon.

Please remember to send in signed Report Cards.

Excellence in Teaching Marathon

It’s time for our annual Roy J. Creek Excellence in Teaching Scholarship event, being held on Sunday, March 25 from 1:00-4:00 pm at Falk School.

Come dressed to sweat, as we have invited WTAE Television’s “Healthy 4 Life” team to help us step up the fitness and health aspects of our event.

Our running/walking track will be dedicated to only those interested in doing those activities. If track work is not your thing, or if you still have energy left after your run, you and your children can take swing, Irish, and Salsa dance lessons from our team of Pittsburgh’s finest professional dance teachers and workout with our own fitness instructor, Julius Dawkins of Pitt fame.

This year, the celebrities will pose with you for your very own event picture button, and maybe you’ll get to workout, run, or dance with one! You’ll enjoy our healthy munchies and make your own

blender health drinks.

Various health organizations (such as the American Heart Association) will be on hand with displays and advice. While you take a break from your workout, you can bid on items in our silent auction, have your face painted, or get a fun figure balloon. And our Falk Cheerleaders will be there to cheer on all participants.

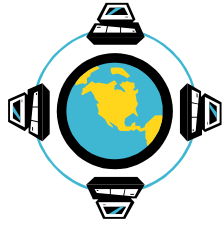
Remember, all of us, no matter what our age or ethnic background, need to keep our health in the forefront of our lives. And we all want to spend time with our families. What better way to spend a Sunday afternoon than keeping fit with the people we care about at our “Meaningful Marathon”?

If you have questions or auction items to donate, please contact Charlene Barnett, 412-247-5351.

—Charlene Barnett



Computer Room News



Are there any "Survivor" fans out there? The computer program is helping students to survive this winter by offering the following engaging and challenging projects:

MIDDLE SCHOOL students are currently enhancing both their "I-Search" papers and computer skills. In a collaborative project with Mr. Wittig, students are using the Internet to research more information and download expressive images (photos, logos, and text). Library books, magazines, home photos, and other sources are being scanned. The digital camera is included as students imagine creative ways of taking pictures in relation to their "I-Search" question.

Images from all these sources are combined into collages using "Microsoft Word 2001." Collages may also include photo captions, fanciful titles, and body text. The end result will show colorfully printed and attractive pages inserted into their "I-Search" papers.

Students are learning a multitude of computer skills, including layout, composition, and patience. Look for additional printed copies of their work on a bulletin board outside of the computer room.

INTERMEDIATE STUDENTS are researching "Pittsburgh" on the Internet, which ties in with their academic studies of Pennsylvania. Students have learned how to find information, download images and text, and paste them onto an electronic piece of paper in Microsoft's Word 2001.

As in middle school, intermediate students will compose one or two attractive and informative finished pages. The pages will be laminated and combined into a book about what makes Pittsburgh one of the United States' most livable cities.

PRIMARY COMPUTER STUDENTS are also working on a collaborative project with Mrs. Sarada's current Social Studies theme: Neighborhoods. We have a fun and educa-

tional software program called, "Neighborhood Map Machine" by Tom Snyder. Students create maps of imaginary neighborhoods while learning computer skills that include: keyboarding, use of the mouse, clicking, deleting, and dragging. This program also teaches graphing skills and includes a mystery component that promotes critical thinking.

They are working in groups of three, which aids in the development of planning and cooperation skills. From an observer's position, I'm hearing a lot of raised, excited voices!

REMINDERS—GIANT EAGLE's Apple for Students program is coming to an end on February 24, 2001. After that date, please get those saved receipts to me as soon as possible. I will not be able to include any receipts after March 2nd.

Currently, we have a preliminary total of \$150,000 in receipts. I have my eye on purchasing a Panasonic Digital Camcorder, which will allow our students to create and edit movies. Alix's mom (Nancy Glyn) has been responsible for the computing, bundling, and shipping of these receipts. Without all of your efforts, Nancy would not have been able to do this for our school. Thank you to everyone!

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, NO CASH!** Make checks out to "Scholastic."

Will you or someone you know be celebrating a birthday, graduation, or family event? Consider a monetary gift to the computer room on their behalf. A decorative card of acknowledgement will be sent upon your approval. Smile, Spring's-a-comin'!!!

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

Summer Theater Workshop

You should have received, by now, a brochure/registration form with information concerning the Summer Theater Workshop that will be held here at Falk School from June 24 through July 20. If you did not receive a brochure, or you have misplaced it, please inform me and I will see that you receive one.

The workshop will last four weeks and start each day at 9:00 a.m. The children will study Acting, Musical Theater Dance, Vocal Ensemble, Voice and Speech, Special Theatrical Seminars, and Rehearsal/Performance until 4:30 p.m.

The members of the Summer Theater faculty are of the highest level in their professions (performing arts educators professional performers, and technical production experts).

I have directed Summer Theater Arts programs for both the Pittsburgh Playhouse School at Point Park College and for Pittsburgh Musical Theater (formally Gargaro Productions) for the past six years. **It is a great way to spend a summer's day!** Dr. McDonald and I have decided that we would like to have this kind of fun summer activity available here at Falk for our students.

I have started a new company, **Actors Civic Theater**, to give an infrastructure to the workshop. This will allow me to hire an excellent faculty and provide freedom to make the kind of purchases I have been hoping to make for the Theater Arts Program at Falk School. Purchases will include new curtains for the stage, a new lighting system, new sound equip-

ment, mirrors for dance classes in the gym, costumes, props, paint, and building materials.

Enrollment will be open to any child who has successfully completed Kindergarten through the 8th grade. The workshop will not be limited to Falk school students only. We will, however, give Falk students the first opportunity to enroll. Enrollment is limited to the first 50 students to enroll in each the Intermediate and Middle School aged groups and the first 20 Primary aged students to enroll.

The cost for the full day, four-week summer theater program will be \$700. Falk students will receive a \$100 award to be deducted from the Summer Theater Workshop tuition.

After talking to many Primary parents who are interested in the workshop for their children, I now realize that it would be helpful for the workshop to be offered as a whole day program. **There will not be a half-day program for the Primary aged children as I had stated in an earlier FalkTalk.** The Primary will have a whole day Program offered from 9:00 to 4:30. An additional deduction of \$50 will be awarded to a student's tuition for each participating student recommended to the workshop (up to 4 students recommended).

If you have any questions about the Summer Theater Workshop, please contact me at PghSKRUJ@aol.com or at my office phone, 412-624-8274.

—Mr. James Critchfield



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

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Place address here

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.

MARCH

Main Books for Hope:

Angel Child, Dragon Child, M. Surat
The Cherry Tree, D. Ikeda
We Be Warm Till Springtime Comes,
L. Chaflin
Fly Away Home, E. Bunting
Knots on a Counting Rope, B. Martin, Jr.
How Many Days To America, E.
Bunting

Supplementary Books for Hope:

Amigo, B. B. Schweitzer
Aurora Means Dawn, S. Sanders
Dogsong, G. Paulsen
The Jazzman, M. H. Weik
Kumi and the Pearl, P. M. Martin
The Mountain That Loved a Bird,
A. McLerran
My Grandmother's Journey, J.
Cech
Odette, a Springtime in Paris, K.
Fender
Owl Moon, J. Yolen
*Sadako and the Thousand Paper
Cranes*, E. Coerr
Sarah, Plain and Tall, P. MacLachlan
Song of the Swallows, L. Politi