

FALKTalk

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From the Director...

One of the responsibilities of Falk School faculty is to disseminate best practices by presenting at educational conferences or by conducting in-service programs for teachers.

On February 15, 2002, twenty teachers from the Avonworth School District spent the day at Falk School as part of an in-service project that four of our faculty are currently conducting in that district.

Three days earlier, two of our faculty had conducted an all-day workshop in the South Butler School District, and we will be visited by five of their teachers in the very near future.

Also, five of our teachers have been selected to present at the National Association of Laboratory Schools in Puerto Rico in the middle of March.

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From the PTA President...

I would like to thank all the parents and faculty who attended the February 12 General PTA meeting; we made quota, so to speak, and thus were rewarded with "PTA Cares" pins by Dr. McDonald.

Our own Mr. Wittig presented a wonderful interactive program on "Saving Something for Our Children." Greg, in a poignant and humorous way, conferred meaning on the nebulous concept of "quality time" between parents and children. This meeting was personally validating in that so many Falk parents spoke of the same hopes and frustrations that I have in communicating with my own children.

For me, the biggest take-home message was that, despite seemingly selective deafness, our children *do* hear what we

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Calendar of Events

MARCH

March 15 — Carnegie Science Center sleep-over

March 24 — Excellence in Teaching Marathon

March 21 — Intermediate attend Pittsburgh Opera's *Madama Butterfly* at Benedum Theater

March 25 — Pittsburgh Chamber Music Society presents *In Beethoven's Room* to Middle School and Intermediate students

APRIL

April 3 — Set-up for library book fair (after 3:00 p.m.)

April 4, 5, 8, 9 — Parent conference days; early dismissal days; library book fair

April 9 — Pack-up for library book fair (after 4:00 p.m.)

From the Director... (continued)

“I could not begin to promote the school the way I desire, unless I could count on the excellent instruction that is evident every day in every classroom.”

Each of these activities provides testimony to the talent and the commitment of our faculty to the development of outstanding education in our community, the nation, and even internationally.

As I walked around the school during the visit last Friday, I was very proud of the teachers I was observing throughout the school. From morning openings, to hopscotch math, to “getting inside the head of the Big Friendly Giant” to gain perspective from his point of view, to dealing with “zillions,” to musical practice, to making peanut butter sandwiches by following directions, to “floating and sinking” experiments, to measuring objects in the room and “rounding,” to writing odes, the faculty and students demonstrated why we have gained such a positive reputation as a K-8 school.

Our new brochure states that we are one of the premier lab schools in the country, and it was easy to discern the reasons as I traveled from classroom to classroom. I think that, sometimes, even I take this outstanding faculty for granted.

Principals from around the Pittsburgh accuse me of having the “ideal” job. When it comes to teacher competence, caring, and commitment, they are quite correct. I could not begin to promote the school the way I desire, unless I could count on the excellent instruction that is evident every day in every classroom.

I know that I am being a cheerleader for the stars in this column, but I hope you also can recognize those who make us great. Please drop in and thank them for the wonderful job they are doing.

— William McDonald

From the PTA President... (continued)

say to them. It may take years for them to acknowledge this, but let us hope they remember the love and kindness of our words.

In the last newsletter, I initiated a search for parents to serve on the PTA Executive Board. This search is ongoing, with a special need for someone to coordinate the Sally Foster fundraiser beginning in late summer. Lori McDermott will be transitioning from this post as she has accepted a position on the board as our newest Falk Fund trustee. Congratulations, Lori!

I look forward to seeing you at the following upcoming PTA events: the Carnegie Science Center sleepover on March 15 and the Excellence in Teaching Marathon on March 24 (note correction). In the meantime, have a great Spring Break!

—Lynn Billington

Library News

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, and a note of acknowledgement is sent to each teacher honoree and to others if the address is provided.

All Falk students, teachers, interns, and staff benefit from the continuous updating of the collection. A Winter Gift List of suggested gift books is available from Ms. Herward or on the library website at <http://tc.education.pitt.edu/library>. If you would like to make a donation or have questions about the Birthday/Gift Book Program, contact Ms. Herward (412-624-8010), Pam Greenhouse (412-422-2613), or Nancy Glynn (412-825-6545).

LIBRARY GIFTS Thank you to those who recently made donations to the library: **Anna Grandis, Ben Grandis, Nalyn S. Komen, Maeve O'Donnell, Gregory S. Wilson, Logan Styche, Molly Tonsor, Erin Higgins, Matt Belenky, and the Ettensohn Family.** More complete information including dedications is published in the Library Newsletter.

LIBRARY INTERN Ms. Ximena Miranda, a graduate student in the School of Information Sciences, School Librarian Program, will be working with Ms. Herward in the library on Tuesdays and Thursdays for five weeks in January and February. She is working with primary, intermediate, and middle school students in the library and in the content area classes.

TITLE VI ALLOCATION Each year the school receives Title VI funds through the Pennsylvania Department of Education. At Falk, these funds have been used to expand

the library collection. Eighty-one (81) books were ordered in January and should arrive this spring

LIBRARY BOOK FAIR: NEW DATES, NEW LOCATION (*Thursday – Friday, Monday – Tuesday, April 4 – 5 & 8 – 9, 2002 in School Gym*) The purpose of the Library Book Fair is to encourage reading of quality children's books and to raise additional funds to expand the library collection. This year the Book Fair will be held on four of the parent conference days (early dismissal days) in the school gym. This new location will provide more space and greater flexibility in displaying the books. More volunteers will be needed to accommodate this new location. To volunteer, see the information below.

Each primary and intermediate class is given an opportunity to shop at the book fair during the school day. The tentative schedule for the 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.

Thursday	Rm. 111 and Rm. 221
Friday	Rm. 116 and Rm. 225
Monday	Rm. 115 and Rm. 222
Tuesday	Rm. 112 and Rm. 224

The book fair will be open until 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, Friday, and Monday, and until 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday. Parents are encouraged to stop in before or after conferences. ***Please note that the fair will close at 4:00 p.m. on the last day, Tuesday, April 9.***

Volunteers will be needed to work during the Book Fair, to set up on Wednesday, April 3 after 3:00 p.m. and to pack up on Tuesday, April 9 after closing at 4:00 p.m. Contact Ms. Herward (412-624-8010 or herward@pitt.edu) or Ann Kelton (412-244-5722) if you are able to help.



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Library News... (continued)

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 or sent home, or visit the Library Web Site at <http://tc.education.pitt.edu/library>. Due to the vacation time in April and other special events, the reading activities will continue into May.

—Linda Herward

Spanish Classes



During the last two weeks, the seventh grade Spanish classes have been studying Hispanic culture. The students have chosen significant holidays and celebrated all aspects of the holiday in Spanish class.

Some groups invited native speakers to visit the class and present authentic materials.

Ms. Mac would like to thank the parents for all their active involvement.

On February 5, twelve (12) eighth grade Spanish students participated in a world language competition at Slippery Rock University. Apparently, 1,200 high school students also competed in this event!

Excellence in Teaching

On Sunday March 24, 2002 the Roy J. Creek Excellence in Teaching Scholarship Fund will host its annual fundraising event, the “Meaningful Marathon” from 1:00-4:00 p.m. in the school Cafetorium and Gymnasium.

As always, we have planned an imaginative and fun afternoon for students, parents, faculty, and staff. Our emphasis this year is on nutrition and health, and our Marathon will involve each homeroom in our “Healthy 4 life” race, silent auction, basket sales, and refreshments, among

other exciting additions still in the planning phase.

Please mark your calendar, and look for information in your mail about how you can enjoy this fun fest to its fullest. To volunteer, or donate to our auction please contact Charlene Barnett at 412-247-5351. See you there!

—Charlene Barnett,
Excellence in Teaching Trustee

Summer Theater Workshop

We started *Actors Civic Theater* last year to create a fun and meaningful summer experience for our Falk kids. We had such a great time last summer that the workshop is back. The brochures were sent home, and registration forms are starting to come back already.

The *Summer Theater Workshop 2002* will be from **June 23 to July 27**. It is a **5-week** Theater Arts day camp for children who have completed Kindergarten through 12th grade.

For the first four weeks, classes will be five days a week from **10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.** at Falk School. The final week will be devoted to rehearsals for the kids' shows and will be split between Falk and the Hazlett Theater (former home of the Pittsburgh Public Theater) on the North Side. A detailed schedule for the final week, with times and locations for each class, rehearsal, and performance, will be announced soon after registration is completed (sometime in June).

For the convenience of parents who start work before 10:00 a.m., we will provide a **Morning Care Program** that will be available from **8:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.**

The kids will be working with an excellent staff of practicing theater professionals, who

share the same philosophies of our Falk faculty—child-centered instruction and hands-on learning.

The workshop's curriculum features classes in acting, singing, dance, voice and speech, improvisation, mime, juggling, make-up, rehearsal/performance, and a new program devoted to technical theater (lighting, scenery, properties, sound, and costume design).

Last summer, Falk parents who work in the area and sent their children to the workshop found that our camp was affordable, convenient, and a great way for our kids to meet new friends in a fun, creative, and supportive atmosphere.

Avery Finegold, a Falk School first grader (Room 116) participated in last summer's workshop; during one of the theater activities, he said, "Mr. Critchfield, I'm not having a good time, I'm having a **great** time!"

Falk students get a **\$100 discount!** Pass the word! For more information and a registration form, visit www.geocities.com/ActorsCivicTheater or call my office at 412-624-8274.

—James Critchfield



Music Notes

March is national *Music In Our Schools Month*, and many special events will be happening around that theme.

For the third year in a row, I am inviting any members of our Falk extended family to come to a Music class and share your music interests with the children.

In the past we have had many moms, dads, grandparents, aunts, brothers, and sisters perform in our various classes. We are a great and appreciative audience, and it is great for Falk's budding musicians to see how music is important in the lives of the people who are most important to them.

A letter will be coming home soon for you to choose a date for your visit. Whether you sing, dance, play an instrument (a kazoo was a big hit last year!) or do anything else of a musical nature, we hope you will sign up and join your child's Music class for a wonderful performance.

On March 21st, all the Intermediate classes will be attending Pittsburgh Opera's *Behind the*

Curtain performance of *Madama Butterfly* at the Benedum Theater. (Did you know our own Ms. Morimoto is going to be in *Madama Butterfly*?)

On March 25th, The Pittsburgh Chamber Music Society's School Touring Program of *The Beethoven Project* will come to Falk to present a program for the Middle School and Intermediate students.

The program, *In Beethoven's Room*, was written by Falk's own playwright, Lynne Conner (Miles and Roy deKlerk's mother). It features three actors and a string quartet.

Our Intermediate Chorus is preparing a special program for our families and the Primary children to be presented near the end of March. Details will follow shortly.

I hope to see many of you around Falk during this special month. Happy music in our schools month!

—Lee Ann Conover

Falk Fundraisers



TARGET TAKES CHARGE OF EDUCATION

Remember to use your Target Guest Card when making purchases at any Target stores or at www.target.com. Target will donate to us **1%** of your purchases. In addition, 1/2% of qualifying Target Visa purchases outside of Target stores or www.target.com will go to Falk.

You can participate by designating the Falk School on your Target Guest Card application. All you have to do is:

- Get an application at any Target store or at www.target.com.
- If you already have a Target Guest Card, you can sign up for the School Fundraising program by calling 1-800-316-6142 or by visiting www.target.com.
- Enter the Falk School ID number, **15303**.

If you have any questions about this program, please contact Nancy Glynn at 412-825-6545 or momalix@aol.com.

APPLES FOR THE STUDENTS It's still not too late to register your Giant Eagle Advantage Card! The Giant Eagle Apples For The Students program runs through **Saturday, March 23, 2002**, so there is still time for you and your family and friends to help us earn valuable points for the Falk School.

The program is easy; all you have to do is this:

- Register at 1-800-474-4777 or www.gianteagle.com.
- Enter the Falk School ID # **0335**.
- Shop with your Giant Eagle Advantage Card, and each scan will help our school earn FREE equipment.
- Don't forget to give the Falk School ID number to your family and friends!

If you have any questions, please contact Nancy Glynn at 412-825-6545 (momalix@aol.com) or Barbara Bianco at 412-624-8459 (bbianco@pitt.edu).

ONLINE SHOPPING The Online Shopping Program is an online shopping mall that hosts over 200 e-commerce stores. When you purchase products through the Directory of Stores, Online companies pay a commission of 5%-20% to FundingFactory, just for promoting their store! 100% of those earned commissions are returned to the Falk School to be used to purchase playground or technology equipment for our school.

To participate:

- Visit www.fundingfactory.com/shopping.
- Enter our zip code (15261).
- Select "Falk School" from the list of participating organizations.
- Then...start shopping!

Prices, availability, and access are the same as before; the only difference with this shopping experience is that you will be helping to enhance our children's access to much-needed playground and technology equipment.

To learn more about the FundingFactory Online Shopping Program and to view a list of e-tailers, visit www.fundingfactory.com/shopping or call Nancy Glynn at 412-825-6545 or momalix@aol.com.

BOXTOPS By clipping Box Top logos from over 330 participating General Mills products, you can help raise money for the Falk School. **Falk School earns 10 cents for each Box Top** we redeem.

Money received from the Box Tops can be used to purchase any items at the school's discretion, not just computer technology. Box Tops for this school year must be redeemed by **March 30, 2002**, although they can be saved all year (so don't throw any of them out!).

We ask that you submit the Box Tops to your child's homeroom teacher on a regular basis so as to ease the burden of counting them when the deadline nears.

For more information, please contact Nancy Glynn at 412-825-6545 or momalix@aol.com.

Computer Room News

FEBRUARY is such a drab month with winter at its harshest and no holidays to share with friends and family. *Computer studies to the rescue!!! With new and invigorating projects!*

PRIMARY has just completed the creation of Valentine pictures using Microsoft *Word's* Draw Toolbar. Most people have this on their computers. This is a fun area for kids to practice and experiment with newly learned computer skills. Telephone me if you need a quick refresher so that you can help your children reinforce their computer lessons.

Presently, primary is beginning to learn a bright and fun new application program, *Kidspiration*. "Using the proven principles of visual learning...symbols make it simple to create and use graphical organizers, webs, concept maps, and other visual learning diagrams. From the thought webs and maps, students can expand their ideas into written thoughts."

INTERMEDIATE AND MIDDLE SCHOOL

Thanks to all those parents who are encouraging their children to practice their newly learned typing skills each evening for ten minutes. Please continue to have your children practice correct finger placement whenever you see them on the computer. At home typing practice should continue through the next month or so, regardless of what we are doing in the school computer lab.

Our most recent project is titled "Pets" and involves calculating the total number of pets per class, the total number in each category of pets per class, and the pets' birth dates or dates of acquisition. The survey of pets (data) is logged onto a Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet. Students marvel at the automatic features of computer spreadsheets.

Our next project will introduce the multimedia program "Hyperstudio." Students will create slide shows about their life within Falk School.

THANKS to the Alcorn family for their recent *contribution* to the computer lab. The computer lab is always in need of extra funds to buy more software and other equipment. Your generosity is appreciated!

Lastly, I am always in search of people who would like to help in the computer lab. I can be reached at 412-648-8459 or bbianco@pitt.edu.

Finally, remember to check out our wonderful school website: www.pitt.edu/~fls.

—Barbara Bianco



Contributions?

Please send any contributions to Amy Scerba at ascerba@mindspring.com. If possible, attach your article as a Microsoft Word document. Or, just send the article in the body of an email message. Your assistance is greatly appreciated!

The next submission deadline is **March 22**.

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FALKTalk

The Heartwood Program – Hope

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 (412-624-8010) 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

MARCH

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