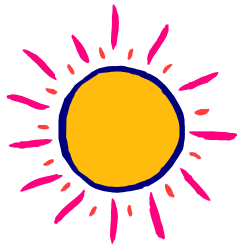


FALKTalk

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May 2002



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From the Director...

I spent most of the morning today watching rehearsals for the upcoming middle school musical. It appears I must have been caught up in the tornado from last year's production, because it seems that the velocity of my "spin" has dramatically increased during the last ten months. Although I am sure that there have been some details I have missed, I am confident that this year has been one of the best ever here at the school. Teachers and students have expanded the educational activities, parents have played a far greater role in our community, and my expectations of self have also

(Continued on page 2)

From the PTA President...

As I near the end of my term as PTA president, I reflect on the events of the past school year and look forward to the fulfillment of goals set for the upcoming years.

Credit for the success of this past year's PTA events goes entirely to the parents and faculty who contributed time, money and, effort to these events. Just look at how much was done! Funding for classroom "extras," the Sally Foster sale, the Holiday Gift Shop, Excellence in Teaching Walkathon, Carnegie Science sleepover, and the Carnival represent some of this year's PTA activities. Continued

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Calendar of Events

MAY

- May 21* — Deadline for ordering tickets to June 26th Pirates game
- May 29-31* — Middle School Spring Musical, *The Music Man*, 9:00 a.m. (28, 29, 30th); 7:00 p.m. (29, 30, 31st)
- May 29* — Musical Inspirations (4th grade)
- May 31* — Deadline for returning library books and magazines

JUNE

- June 4* — Middle School Picnic
- June 7* — 8th grade classes cancelled;

Graduation Dinner/Dance at William Pitt Union, 6:30 p.m.

- June 11* — Graduation Ceremony, 7:30 p.m. arrival at William Pitt Union
- June 12* — Last day of school; dismissal and Kennywood, 11:00 a.m.
- June 14* — Deadline for soccer shirt orders
- June 21* — Grade reports mailed
- June 25 - August 1* — Summer music lessons
- June 26* — Pirates' Bobble Head Night, 7:05 p.m.

From the Director... (continued)

“You and the kids, find a field of daisies. Make some unforgettable moments. Have a great summer!”

grown accordingly. All of these produce feelings of satisfaction.

At the same time, we have to plan for future activities and continued growth. A Vision Committee has been hard at work during the year. We are going to try to complete our work before the end of June. The final report will be written during the summer, and we will present the contents to the parent body and to the Board early next year. I can assure you now that it contains some exciting new directions for the school.

By the time you read this, the summer will have arrived. Please take note of these words from Nadine Stair (at age 89):

“If I had my life to live over again, I’d try to make more mistakes next time. I would relax. I’d be sillier than I have been on this trip. I would climb more mountains, swim more rivers and watch more sunsets. I would have more actual troubles and less imaginary ones. Oh, I’ve had my moments, and if I had it to do over again, I’d have more of them. In fact, I’d have nothing else, just moments, one after another... and, I would pick more daisies.”

You and the kids, find a field of daisies. Make some unforgettable moments. Have a great summer!

— William McDonald

From the PTA President... (continued)

success of the PTA depends on a constant influx of new parents. I ask you, one last time, to volunteer for the PTA. It is your opportunity to be “in the know” about classroom and special events and to be a contributing member of a wonderful organization.

One final thing I would like to mention concerns the new playground initiative. If you recall, I wrote about playground safety in a previous issue of FalkTalk. Our playground is in woeful need of upgrading to improve safety and recreation for our children. Professional estimates place the cost of a new playground at \$50,000. That sounds like a lot but really isn’t considering the well-being and enjoyment of our children. Look forward to next year’s fund-

raisers targeted for raising money for a new playground. Feel free to donate to the playground fund prior to these events. Checks can be made payable to the **Falk PTA Playground Fund** and may be mailed to school or placed in the PTA mailbox. The sooner we raise the money, the sooner our children will have their playground!

It’s time for me to say goodbye as PTA president. It has been a great, exciting year. I look forward to seeing you around school.

—Lynn Billington

Middle School

Believe it or not, there is only about a month left in the school year. With the Spring Musical several weeks away, the month of May promises to be a very busy time. In 6th and 7th grade Language Arts we finished our unit on “The Parts of Speech” and have moved into our “Literature Clusters.”

Students are asked to read three to five books. The clusters are organized around one of three ideas: author, theme, or genre. Each individual cluster is organized around a focusing idea. This focusing idea formulates the topic of the final paper, due at the end of the unit. For example, the “Gang Life” cluster has three novels: *Rites of Passage* by Richard Wright, *Rumble Fish* by S.E. Hinton, and *Scorpions* by Walter Dean Myers. The focusing question is “Since these novels are set in different decades, how has the view of gang life changed and remained the same?” This paper should be typed (if possible) and must be at least three pages (750 words). Direct quotes are a requirement for the final paper.

In conjunction with the clusters, we are teaching the elements of fiction: characteri-

zation, conflict, setting, plot, theme, and motif. The students are writing one page mini papers on these elements, basically two elements per book. For example, characterization and conflict for book one, setting and plot for book two, and theme and motif for the final book.

Reading schedule and due dates for papers:

1. Book One by May 6, Characterization and Conflict—May 10
 2. Book Two by May 17, Setting and Plot—May 20
 3. Book Three by May 28 Theme and Motif—May 31
- * Final Paper—June 7

In 8th grade, we have just finished reading *The Catcher in the Rye* by JD Salinger. The students will be writing two short papers explaining the significance of several key sections of the novel.

We are also starting our final research project. Students have been asked to choose an issue that many adolescents face today: peer pressure, drugs, cliques, violence, the media, etc. They are to do some general re-

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From the PTA Vice President

I would like to thank all of those parents who attended the General Membership meeting and voted for our 2002-2003 slate of officers. I will be privileged to serve as your PTA President for this term. Our PTA Executive Board has a strong lineup of volunteers for various positions, as well as exciting and fun ideas for the upcoming school year. This year's president, Lynn Billington, incoming Vice President Pam Greenhouse, Dr. McDonald, and I have put our collective effort into this process, and we are very pleased with what we see for the future of our parent-teacher organization.

There are however, still some positions that need to be filled. The PTA will be including a letter with the Falk School packets that come in the summer for parents to complete and return to the office. This let-

ter will ask about your special talents, hobbies, and interests, and will include possible options for your involvement in our parent group for next year. Please fill this out and return it to the office, as we are very excited about what our parents add to the wonderful experience students have at Falk.

This year's executive board, with Lynn Billington at the helm, is to be commended for all their hard work and a job well done. As always, our greatest reward is what our children receive from the PTA's efforts. We hope that you will play even a small part in the upcoming year. You may call me with suggestions or to volunteer at 412-247-5351. Have a great summer, and see you next year!

— Charlene Barnett

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. 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://tc.education.pitt.edu/library>.

If you would like to donate book(s) and do not have the necessary information, please contact Ms. Herward, the librarian (412-624-8010) or look for the Library Table at the Spring Carnival. Letters and book lists were recently sent for students who have birthdays in for May, June, July, and August. If you have questions contact Ms. Herward (412-624-8010).

THANK YOU to those who recently made donations to the library: **Arbil Lopez, Melanie Halligan (former Falk teacher), Rachel Weingart, Ted Permigiani, Henry Permigiani, Todd Stone, Bradley Stone, Bryan Fyalkowski, Ms. L. Herward, Rebecca Greenhouse, Rev. & Dr. K. Conover, Sara Finegold, Daniel Finegold, Sanna Herwald, Andrew Marcus, Dr. Meyer Sonis, Ms. D. Carleton, Alex Zukoff, Ricky Hritz, Paul Tolomeo, The Del Presto Family, Drew McDermott, Olivia Hric, Emily Hric, Olivia McCann, and Julia Blume.** More details of recent gifts will be published in the Library Newsletter.

THE LIBRARY BOOK FAIR was a great success! No attempt was made to count the total number of books sold, but gross sales totaled \$7,455 (last year's total was \$6,097). These new books should keep students, parents, and teachers busy reading for some time. The library made a profit of \$1,864 (last year's profit was \$1,523). These funds will be used to purchase additional materials for the library. Ann Kelton and Mary Tolomeo coordinated this event. Thanks for a job well done!

Special thanks go to Ann Kelton and Mary Tolomeo, who recruited and scheduled the volunteers and worked with Ms. Herward on all aspects of running the Book Fair. Thank you, Ann and Mary, for your kindness and patience.

SPRING READING INITIATIVE School Library Month activities extend from April through May at Falk. The reading initiative will end May 31. Students who turn in their **Reading**

Calendars to Ms. Herward will receive a "Totally Awesome" Reading Certificate and several bookmarks. A **Read-In**, a school wide SSR (sustained silent reading), will be held in the gym on a date to be announced. The entire Falk School community is invited to participate. Parents are encouraged to bring something to read and join in the fun. The **Reading Chain** is currently "snaking" its way around the library ceiling. The **Chain** will be moved to the gym for the **Read-In**. Thank you to all who have supported the library's reading activities.

As of May 8, one thousand eight hundred and fourteen (1,814) books have been read (or listened to), totaling 122,207 pages. Last year the total pages read at the end of May was 231,458. Watch the numbers get higher and the paper **Reading Chain** grow during May. Remember everyone in the Falk community, including parents and siblings, is encouraged to participate by sending in **Book Badges**. Additional **Book Badges** are available in the K-5 homerooms, Mr. Wittig's room, and the library.

FALK CARNIVAL Falk School Library will have a table at the carnival. Books will be on display for selection as Gift or Birthday Books for the library. These books will all become part of the library collection. If a book is chosen as a gift book, an appropriate bookplate will be placed in the book. The money donated will be used to purchase more books for the library.

Each year, about 30% of the books added to collection are purchased with donated funds. Thanks to the generous support of Falk families, the library has a wide selection of new library books. Even if you are not making a donation, stop by the Library table and look over the newest additions to the library collection.

RETURN LIBRARY BOOKS All books and magazines are due in the library at the end of May. This allows time for letters indicating overdue books to be sent home to parents. Please make every effort to return books to the library before June 1. If any books "turn up" during the summer, please return them to the school office.

—Linda Herward

Library Book Fair

The Book Fair held during the first week of April was a resounding success, with over \$1800 raised for the Library, a 22% increase from last year. In addition, the Library received \$150 in free books from our vendor, Scholastic Book Fairs

New this year was the “Wish List” program, in which teachers could list books that they would like for their classrooms. Many Falk families generously “granted wishes” by purchasing these books and donating them to specific teachers. The library also benefited from this program, as many families donated books listed by Ms. Herward.

Thanks to everyone who shopped at the Fair and many, many thanks to the numerous volunteers who made it all possible: Deb Brandon, Jim Carmine, Nancy DelPresto, Rebecca Einhorn, Holly Feiler, Nancy Glynn, Pam Greenhouse, Mimi Herward, Linda Herward, Laura Hunt, Bea Kanterewicz, Loretta Matheo Kass, Doe

Krug, Diane Lambrou, Debbie Laurie, Laura Zaspel Lawson, Dawn Lea, Betsy Levine-Brown, Diane Litman, Lori McDermott, Yoko Morimoto, Karin Randhawa, Barb Rubenstein, Paul Scherrer, Ruth Sproull, Jill Standley, Stacy Stull, Donna Taylor, Sothi Tran, Jiping Wang, Dan Weeks, and Deb Zuroski.

Several student also helped pack up the books at the end of the Book Fair: Molly Tonsor, Triston Zuroski and his little sister, Weisie Offerman, and Becca Ridge. (I hope we didn't miss anyone.)

Finally, special thanks to Dr. McDonald and Ms. Hunt for allowing us to use the gym and for setting up tables; and to Ms. Herward for all the work that she put into making this year's fair such a success.

— Ann Kelton and Mary Tolomeo

Music Notes

Many thanks to the more than twenty musicians who shared their musical gifts with our Falk school students as part of Music In Our Schools Month. Everyone did a wonderful job, and the children loved the performances.

Thanks also to all who attended the Intermediate Chorus Spring Concert in April. The Chorus did a great job, and we were happy to see so many friends in the audience. The Spring Instrumental Concert was held on Tuesday, May 14th. All three of our Falk Bands (Intermediate, Middle School and Jazz) performed. There were also many fine soloists and small ensembles. Thanks to all who participated in the concert by performing, attending, or bringing cookies for the reception following the program.

Falk students will be making two more trips to Heinz Hall this year to participate in programs offered by the Pittsburgh Symphony. On May 17th, the 2nd Grade students will see Meet the Orchestra. The 4th

Grade students will attend Musical Inspirations on May 29th.

Meanwhile, back at Falk, the big Middle School production of *The Music Man* will run from May 28th through May 31st. There will be 9:00 a.m. matinees on May 28, 29 and 30, and a 7:00 p.m. show on May 29, 30 and 31. The Intermediate Chorus will perform during the intermission of each show. Hope to see you all there; you won't want to miss this one!

Summer lessons will be offered again this year for any Falk students who wish to receive instruction on piano, recorder, guitar, flute, oboe, clarinet, saxophone, trumpet, trombone, or drums. The program will run from June 25th through August 1st. Lessons will be offered on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. More information and a registration sheet will be coming home soon.

— Lee Ann Conover



Sports News



ATTENTION SOCCER PLAYERS: Sign-ups are now being held for Fall soccer teams. Anyone who will be in sixth, seventh, or eighth grade next Fall is eligible to play. Contact Ms. Hunt to sign up.

Last year it took more than eight weeks for our supplier to deliver soccer shirts, so this year we are placing the order by **June 14th**. Please send in your shirt order before that date to: Ann Kelton, 1020 Macon Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15218. The shirts are available in adult small, medium, large, and extra large and cost \$17.00. Please make checks payable to Ann Kelton. Contact Ann at 412-244-5722 or akelton@earthlink.net with any questions.

Ms. Hunt is still looking for soccer coaches for the Fall. There is only a six week commitment of 3-4 hours per week. You don't have to be a soccer expert (our kids think they know it all already, right?); you just need the willingness to work with kids. If you think you might like to give it a try, contact Ms. Hunt.

A parent is needed to take over ordering of shirts for the middle-school **Basketball** teams. This is a very small but crucial commitment of 3-4 hours per year. Please contact Stacy Stull at 724-274-0934 if you can help out. Thank you!

— Ann Kelton

Middle School... (continued)

search so that they can narrow their topic into a manageable search question; for example, "What influence does peer pressure have on adolescents' self esteem?" The second part of this research paper will have the students compare their findings with the personal narratives the class has written over the past two months.

The final paper is due June 5th, the day we board the bus to Cedar Point. However, I certainly encourage everyone to have it done before that day.

Important 8th Grade Dates:

- May 10: Field trip to the Carnegie Library to do research
- May 29, 30, 31 (evening): Musical Performances
- June 4 (bring your own lunch): Middle School Picnic
- June 5 and 6 (we get back at 10:00 p.m.): Cedar Point
- June 7: No School for 8th graders
- June 7 (dinner at 6:30 p.m., WP Union): Graduation Dinner Dance
- June 11 (7:30 p.m. arrival at WP Union): Graduation Ceremony:
- June 12, 11:00 a.m.: Last day of school; dismissal and Kennywood

— Greg Wittig

OTHER IMPORTANT REMINDERS Middle school finds itself in the midst of rehearsals and performances for this year's musical *The Music Man* during the last three weeks of May. Sandwiched into those weeks are the eight remaining academic class days with math finals, language arts final papers, geography tests, and completed projects in science and Spanish. The first week of June is packed full of events: graduation rehearsals picnic at South Park (Tuesday), Cedar Point eighth grade class trip (Wednesday and Thursday), Tour-Ed Mine field trip for grades 6 & 7 (Thursday), and graduation dinner and dance (Friday evening).

Graduation is set for Tuesday, June 11 at 8:00 p.m. at the William Pitt Student Union, quickly followed by 11:00 a.m. dismissal Wednesday and optional Kennywood Day. Grade reports will be mailed June 21 (if there are no outstanding bills).

Please remind students to begin returning borrowed materials: library books, textbooks, etc. Also, by now mid-term progress reports should have been signed and returned, missing homework submitted, and any missed tests (including California Achievement Tests) made-up.

—David Kramer

Theater Arts

In the tradition of other smash hits like *Guys and Dolls* and last year's *The Wizard of Oz*, the Middle School students have been preparing since February to present the American musical theater classic, *THE MUSIC MAN*. 75 students will perform 6 shows on stage (triple cast), 12 have worked on sets and props, and still more have worked on lights, sound, construction, costumes, playbill production, sales, and back stage run crews.

The shows will be performed:

- **Tuesday, May 28, 12:30 p.m. — Middle School and Carlow Students**

- **Wednesday, May 29, 9:00 a.m. — Primary**
- **Wednesday, May 29, 7:00 p.m. — General Public**
- **Thursday, May 30, 9:00 a.m. — Intermediate**
- **Thursday, May 30, 7:00 p.m. — General Public**
- **Friday, May 31, 7:00 p.m. — General Public**

"Break a leg!"
— James Critchfield

Computer Room News

As the end of the school year closes in around us, I need to thank you for allowing me to be a part of your children's lives. It's important to me that you know how I value each and every student's unique personality and energy. I try to choose classroom projects that will engage and challenge each class' overall character.

Each year I am blessed to be a part of Falk School and to teach in the area of computers. This area is forever-changing. There is always additional information on the Internet to stimulate ideas and CDs that make mundane tasks like keyboarding (i.e., KidKeys) fun!

The definition of summertime has different meaning for each family. Some people fill up each waking hour with activities, while others prefer to do as little as possible. Some people have no choice due to work and child-care responsibilities. When planning for this summer, I'd like to encourage you to have your children enroll in a summer technology

course as a means of keeping their skills intact and giving them a boost of self-confidence.

Here's a list of Pittsburgh area summer camps which emphasize technology, including computers, robotics, engineering, kite-building, inventing and more: <http://pittsburgh.about.com/cs/technologycamps/>

Lastly, we are always looking for technology volunteers, people who want to help during their child's class, teach a technology skill, or speak to the students about an occupation related to technology. Do you know of an interesting website that I and/or the students should see? Do you have ideas about what you'd like to see your child explore in the area of computers? All volunteers, websites, financial donations, and feedback are welcome! E-mail me: bbianco@pitt.edu or telephone me at 412-648-8459.

Have a great summer!

—Barbara Bianco

Carnival

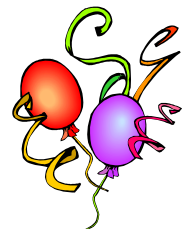
"Come one, come all"—for the time of your life. Carnival is almost here!

Bakers are gearing up to make fabulous sweets. Fingers are itching to compete in the Cow Milking contest. Money hungry children are already estimating how many dollars they will catch in the Money Machine.

Did we mention the drawing/raffle? Tick-

ets for the \$1,000 are waiting for you to purchase (they're probably in your purse!). Win \$1,000 and add it to your child's college fund!

"Come one, come all" on May 17th, 5:00-9:00 p.m. Middle school dance is 7:00-9:30 p.m.



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Place Address Here

FALKTalk

Kennywood and Pirates Day

*For those who ordered
Kennywood Tickets...*

Tickets will be sent home with students around the 1st week of June. Parents, please check with children or check their backpacks. I will try to get our usual pavilion over by the Log Jammer.

A map will be included with the tickets to show you how to get there. Have fun! See you there on the last day of school, June 12th!

For the Pirates Fans...

You still have until May 21st to get your orders!

Tickets will be sent home before school is out. Parents, again, please check with your children or check their backpacks. See you on the exciting Bobble Head Night! The game starts at 7:05 on June 26.

Any questions? You can reach me at 412-624-8021

— Sheila E. Talley-Armstead

Congratulations to Mrs. Sheila E. Talley-Armstead on her 25 years at Falk!