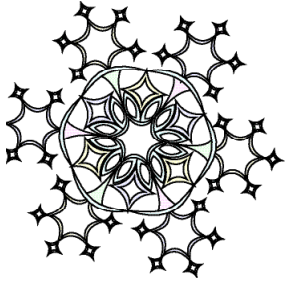


FalkTalk

Volume 13, Issue 3
December, 2002



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From the Director

Thanksgiving has come and gone. The winter break is less than three weeks away! I hope you are all more prepared than I am. I haven't even written the inside message for the Falk Holiday card! Meetings seem to be the biggest item on my schedule these days. The Vision process is in full swing - three of the committees have had their organizational meetings and have established goals related to their assigned responsibilities. I have received committee notes from each group, and they all have responded well to their tasks. I am sure that this degree of activity will continue well into December. Each committee has set one more meeting date before the holiday. I plan to report to the greater Falk community in January regarding the specifics of the ongoing process and the progress of each committee. I can tell you now that all participants are thoroughly involved and that many exciting ideas have already surfaced.

Meanwhile, the core planning committee is still working to describe the position of coordinating secretary for the entire Strategic Planning process. We desperately need someone who will coordinate the minutes of all committees and inform the planning committee of planned activities, etc. We will be looking for a part-time person for this position (approximately 10-20 hours per week), so let me know if you are aware of someone like this.

The Funding Committee will be meeting with me in the near future to discuss their responsibilities, most of which will center around the area of alumni giving. This is one very important committee if we hope to attain the goals established on the Strategic Planning timeline. These individuals have already presented interesting ideas in conversations that we have had at the school.

All in all, the future looks very exciting! Stay tuned for news in the new year!

– Dr. Mac

From the PTA President

As December blows in behind a gust of blustery weather, may I wish you and yours the happiest of holiday seasons. I've enjoyed watching the students file into school all bundled up for the cold, and remembering my own childhood excitement as the holiday season grew near.

The Falk PTA has had a "bundle" of projects to usher in this festive time of year. The annual fall talent show was a wonderful success for our students, teachers and staff on many levels. Not only did we raise over \$400.00 dollars for the Sunstein Scholarship Fund, but more importantly we raised the community spirit of the school to a new level. This was the first year that we not only had the whole school together for a day-long performance of some fifty acts, but we also christened our gymnasium with the first event of this kind. As the coordinator of the event, my goal and responsibility is to provide the performers with a safe and comfortable arena to show off their talents, however due to the cooperation of Dr. McDonald and our wonderful Falk teachers, the children also enjoyed a community day lunch during the break, with all age levels sharing their meals, and visiting each other's rooms. I was so pleased with everyone's behavior during the show, but the most impressive attitude came from the primary children, who sat quietly and calmly on the gym mats for the entire day! BRAVO! My special thanks to Dr. Mac, Dr. Conover, Mr. Critchfield, Sheila Talley-Armstead, Ms. Hunt, Ms. Cain, Mr. Ross, Ms. Maccarelli, Mr. Alba, Beryl Trauth-Jurman, Nancy DelPresto, Lori McDermott, Weasie Offerman, Fina Abramovitz, Cheryl Kubelick, Kevin McCann, Valerie Kramer, and Jeannette Trauth for their invaluable help. Look for improvements next year that will make this event better.

– continued on page 2

Calendar of Events

December 23 – January 3	Winter Holidays	January 17	No School
January 6	Classes Resume	January 20	No School

From the PTA President (continued)

“We must not, in trying to think about how we can make a big difference, ignore the small daily differences we can make which, over time, add up to big differences that we often cannot foresee.”

Marion Wright Edelman

Basketball season has started with practices morning and evening. Even Dr. Mac can be seen some mornings coming from the gym in his Falk School “coaching” sweat clothes. The new Falk apparel is available in the office from Ms. Talley-Armstead, and would make wonderful (and warm) holiday gifts. And speaking of gifts, the PTA owes another major THANK YOU to Kim Lincoln for the wonderful Holiday Gift shop she and her volunteers provided for us, just before the Thanksgiving break. Everyone was amazed and pleased at the quality and variety of the items Ms. Lincoln had carefully and dutifully collected throughout the year. I can truly say I got some of my best gifts to give my family and friends at the gift shop, and it felt wonderful to know each purchase benefited Falk. I can’t wait to see next year!

Betsy Levine Brown, Marc Brown, and Nancy Glynn did a wonderful job of fund raising as well, with the family portraits taken by i. Simon Photography. Again, the quality of the pictures was wonderful, and it was a great product for our families to get in support Falk School.

I have watched the Falk teachers gather students for many field trips in the last month. Ms. Krakowski took several students on an Art outing, and Ms. Maccarelli took seventh and eighth grade to Cozumel Restaurant for a luncheon to use their

Spanish expertise. Dr. Conover took a selection of talent show acts to perform at the Katz school of business for their annual holiday luncheon. Intermediate and Middle School enjoyed a day of pre-Thanksgiving roller skating, and many of the classes went on a “Harry Potter” movie excursion.

Marion Wright Edelman was quoted saying, “We must not, in trying to think about how we can make a big difference, ignore the small daily differences we can make which, over time, add up to big differences that we often cannot foresee.” This is a very powerful statement for Falk parents to keep in mind. One example of this attitude is the article that Nancy Glynn submitted on page two of University Times, regarding “Some Novel ways to help Falk School.” She thanks the community for their financial support of Falk with ideas of things they can easily do, such as Giant Eagle receipts and Advantage cards credits that benefit our school. Please follow this fine example, and try to come up with some ideas that can lend support to Falk through your own community connections. The world in general, and certainly a school that is nurturing the minds of the future, will be a better place for all of us because of small, but meaningful differences each of us can make. Have a great holiday season, and see you in January for more new experiences!

– Charlene Barnett

Music Notes



Falk’s musicians were very busy in November. On November 1st, several of our Intermediate Chorus members traveled to the Hilton Towers where they sang for the opening meeting of the University Council of Educational Administration’s International Conference. The next week, many of our talented students and parents performed in our annual Talent Show—thanks Ms. Barnett! Then on Nov. 22nd, some of our Falk family performed at a Thanksgiving Luncheon at the Katz School of Business. Everyone performed very well and we received many compliments. Congratulations to the following members of our Falk family who performed at this luncheon – Aaron Weidman, Ben Pashek, John Kinzel-Scherch, Ben Rafson, David Rosenberg, Peter Lambrou, Alex Carmine, Afton, Cameron and Charlene Barnett, Jodi Lincoln, Alex and Irene Habermann, Eli, Nathan and Neil Siegel, Stephanie Pinsky, Rebecca Ridge, Ben Grandis, Susannah Glick, Sarah Bass, Eric and Scott Stern and Sheila Talley-Armstead.

When our musicians weren’t travelling, they were enjoying guest performances at Falk. Jazz bassist Bob Magnussen put on a great show for our Intermediate and Middle School students on Nov. 1st. The Chris Norman Ensemble (courtesy of the Renaissance and Baroque Society of Pittsburgh) presented a fantastic program of Scottish folk music for our Primary and Intermediate students on Nov. 14th.

During November we also enjoyed the wonderful and “punny”, “Feelin’ Your Oats” presented by Room 116.

Congratulations to all our talented Falk family!

– LeeAnn Conover

In this edition of Falk Talk I am including an update on the middle school art curriculum and this year's projects and events. In the next Falk Talk I will include an update on this year's intermediate and primary art curriculum.

Middle School

In middle school the students study modern and contemporary artists and their artwork. They create a variety of art projects, often autobiographical in nature, inspired by the artists that they are studying.

6th grade, Cycle One

The sixth grade curriculum is a foundational unit, focusing on concepts such as drawing the human figure in proportion, drawing and sculpting the human figure to capture movement/action, gesture drawing, simple cartooning, shading of three-dimensional forms in both black/white and color, sketchbooks, portraiture, color theory and mixing, creating three-dimensional space with color and atmospheric perspective, and an exploration of a variety of media such as charcoal, oil pastels, pastel chalks, fabric dyes, and acrylic paints.

This year the sixth graders in cycle one studied Impressionism and artists such as Edgar Degas and Mary Cassatt. They created a number of projects related to Impressionist concepts of light, movement, and color. They also took a field trip to the Carnegie Museum of Art and toured "The Panopticon," viewing the artwork of many of the artists they had studied. At the museum, they created museum flipbooks, combining together at least three figure paintings and sculptures that they had drawn from observation in the galleries.

Also in this cycle, the sixth graders discussed the art of contemporary photographers who worked with the theme of teen identity. The students then created their own Artist's Book based on a home/family identity theme, using photographs they had taken with disposable cameras. Later in the cycle, they designed a silk scarf using fabric dyes, also based on a personal/family identity theme.

During this cycle, artist Hope Alcorn, Mia Alcorn's mom, visited the sixth grade class and shared a slide show and a demonstration of her artwork. All of the students created their own abstract paintings on industrial felt, inspired by her process and techniques.

The next sixth grade class that meets in cycle three will be exposed to the same concepts and projects. Their visiting artist will be a papermaker and former parent, Sue Schneider. Sue has recently returned from a 10,000 Villages Learning Tour, where she met with papermaking artisans in Bangladesh.

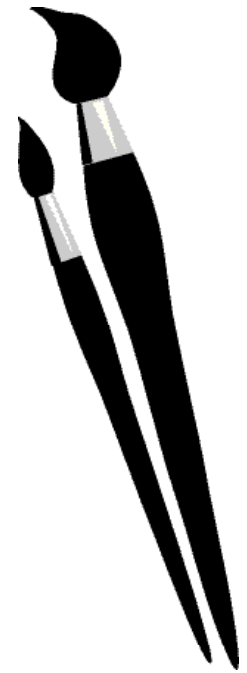
7th and 8th grade, Cycle Two

In 7th and 8th grade, the students revisit and build upon the concepts introduced in 6th grade. New concepts such as contour drawing and right brain-upside down drawing are introduced.

This year the students worked with the theme, "Portraiture and Identity." After an introduction to the history of portraiture from the Renaissance to Contemporary times, the students created the following projects inspired by the work of Modern and Contemporary artists such as Pablo Picasso, Robert Arneson, Andy Warhol, and Frida Kahlo:

- After studying the found object assemblage sculptures of Picasso, the students created their own assemblage portraits, using wood scraps.
- After reading about and discussing the contemporary clay portrait sculptures of Robert Arneson, the students created their own 3-D clay portrait busts, using stylistic elements of fantasy, expressionism, and realism.
- After viewing videos, reading articles, and discussing Abstract Expressionism, Pop Art, and the life and work of Andy Warhol, the students created their own 'Warhol' acetate collages, using images from his silkscreen prints of famous people. They visited the Warhol Museum and participated in the three-hour Warhol Workshop. The students were engaged in gallery discussions, drawing and writing activities, a viewing of a Warhol film, and a collaborative silk screening activity in the Factory. The Workshop focused on the current exhibition, Americanisms: Shaping Art and Culture in the 50's, where the students studied the work of Andy Warhol in the context of the Abstract Expressionists of the 50's.

Currently the students are studying Surrealist artists such as Rene Magritte, Salvadore Dali, and in particular, Frida Kahlo. They are creating an acrylic painting that incorporates a plaster casting of their face, using personal symbolism, dream imagery, and Surrealistic compositional devices. They will be writing artist statements about the meaning of their paintings and include them in the upcoming display.



One other project completed during this cycle included the design of a silk scarf, using fabric dyes, based on a personal or family identity theme.

The next 7th and 8th grade cycles (cycles four and five) will be involved in similar projects and activities.

**Middle School Special Elective
(Advanced Printmaking)**

Every year the students in the advanced printmaking special elective hand-silkscreen 500 holiday cards. These cards are then sent out to alumnae, families, and friends of Falk. This year Charley Lafe and Ben Pashek created the two designs that were chosen for the front of the cards.

Recently, Linda Metropulos, Charley's mom and founder of Artists and Cities, arranged a field trip for the students in the special elective to visit the Ice House in Lawrenceville. At the Ice House, the students met four artists working in their studios—political cartoonist Rob Rogers, metalsmith Jan Loney, photographer Karen Meyers, and Tom Petropoulos, the founder-director of Zaxel, a video technology company.

Art on Display

Check out the following art displays around the school:

- Animal Homes made with clay and natural materials, kindergarten, room 115. Front hallway display case.
- Clay Playgrounds, first and second grade, room 112. Front hallway, display case.

- Action Figure Wire Sculptures, sixth grade, cycle one. Stairwells.
- Pop-out Portraits, sixth grade, cycle one. Cafeteria and middle school stairwell.
- Felt Abstracts, sixth grade, cycle one. Art Studio.
- Dragon Collages, inspired by Eric Carle, third and fourth grade, rooms 221 and 222. Stairwells.
- Books about Special Stuffed Animals, kindergarten room 115. Front hallway.
- Story Quilt Books, inspired by Faith Ringgold's Tar Beach, first and second grade, rooms 111 and 116. Front hallway and stairwells.

Coming Soon: Clay Portrait Sculptures, seventh and eighth grade, cycle two. Front hallway display case.

Coming Soon: Acrylic Paintings, seventh and eighth grade, cycle two. Middle School hallway.

School of Education Holiday Card

A drawing of the Cathedral of Learning in winter by Elizabeth Roll in room 224 will be on the front of the School of Education holiday card this year.

Would you like to share your artistic interests?

Any adult who is interested in coming into the art studio and sharing your artistic interests with the students, please let me know. In addition to this year's visiting parents, over the past few years we have been fortunate to have Mary Weidner, Deb Brandon, and Charlee Brodsky come in to work with our students and share their expertise.

– Pam Krakowski

Falk School Halloween Party



Everyone had a great time at the PTA's Halloween Party. The children had wonderful costumes and did a terrific job with their holiday poems and greetings. You could tell that Dr. Conover had been working hard by the sound of the Intermediate Chorus' "spooktacular" show.

Thank you to all the fifth graders and Middle School students who operated the carnival games and helped clean up. Thanks also to the following parents for their help: Betsy Levine Brown, Lynn Epstein, Mindy Frohlich, Karen Goldman, Dinnie Goldring, Lei Gong, Pam Greenhouse, Irene Habermann, Cindy Han, Kim Higgins, Hyun Kim,

Susan Shaiman Kimelman, Laura Kinzel, Deb Laurie, Rachel Mathier, Sarah Peterson, Sherre Round, Barb Rubinstein, David Sanders, Peg Schmidt, Sharon Semenza, Judi Teeter, Ramona Walls, Rhonda Wasserman, Lonna Wilkinson and Allan Wells.

Thanks also to the teachers who helped with this event: Mr. Critchfield, Dr. Conover, and Ms. Hunt.

- Barbara Bianco & Sabina Rosenfeld

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 sometimes 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. If you would like to make a donation or if you have any questions about the Birthday/Gift Book Program contact Ms. Herward (412-624-8010), Bonnie Gorscak (412-243-3672), or Beatriz Kanterewicz (412-521-7168).

Library Gifts

Thank you to the students and families who recently donated books to the library: **Linda Metropulos, Emma Tulksy, Mary Ellen Watt-Morse, Jacob Watt-Morse, Maggie DelPresto, Jeffrey DelPresto, Intermediate Chorus, Nicholas Zurawsky, Derek Green, Yoni Atar Krupski, Adi Atar Krupski, and Colin Wilson.** More complete information concerning these gifts is published on the library web site, <http://tc.education.pitt.edu/library>.

Visit the Library Website

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

Falk Middle School Apparel

Most Items are Here and Ready to be Sold!

The new apparel items will soon be appearing on the Falk School website, along with a printable order form. In addition, I will be sending home order forms and they will be available in the main office. You are also welcome to come in to the office to see the items that are available. Any questions? Please call Sheila E. Talley-Armstead at (412) 624-8021.

Ms. Herward maintains a website for the Falk School Library. The site includes information about the library staff, curriculum resources, class schedule, parent volunteers, policies and procedures, the Gift Book Program, new library materials, special events, MLA Work Cited stylesheet, the library catalog, and magazine collection.

December is often a time for gifts. The Library website includes a description of the library's Gift Book Program, the Gift Book Form, and an updated Holiday Gift Book List. The Falk School website (www.pitt.edu/~fls) includes a link to the library website.

J. Patrick Lewis to Visit Falk School

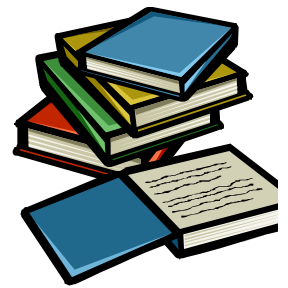
Children's author and poet J. Patrick Lewis will visit on Thursday, March 13, 2003. The author of over 33 children's books, Lewis' school visits promote poetry, storytelling, and the love words through an interactive experience. The day will include three large group presentations (primary, intermediate, and middle school) and if time permits visits to the classrooms. Prior to the visit books will be sold for autographing. Book sales help offset the cost of the author visit. Details to follow.

—Linda Herward

Down Under Coffeehouse

For a winter's evening of fun music, the Down Under Coffeehouse will feature Pittsburgh's premier jugband The Monongahela Sheiks, featuring Bill Weiner, Jack Stein, Steve Weber, Marc Reisman, and Falk School's own Mr. Ross. The Mon' Sheiks play Acoustic Blues, Ragtime, and Popular American Music from the Early 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s. The concert will be on Saturday, January 18th from 7:30pm to 9:30pm in the basement of the Allegheny Unitarian Universalist Church on the corner of North Ave and Resaca Place on the Northside. For more information, see <http://trfn.clpgh.org/auuc/> or contact Stephen Hirtle at hirtle@pitt.edu.

—Stephen Hirtle



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FalkTalk

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Annual Bingo Party

New this Year!

Bring money and come at 1:00 p.m. to take a chance on winning from the following:

- Chinese Auction
- 50/50
- Games of Chance
- Door Prizes

All proceeds go toward the new Falk playground!!

If you have anything you would like to donate for the Chinese Auction, or know someone or a business that would like to donate, please contact Sheila E. Talley-Armstead at (412) 624-8021 (daytime) or (412) 241-2945 (evening). Anything will be greatly appreciated!

Please return to this portion to the main office

Annual Bingo Party You Pick the Day

_____ Saturday, February 22, 2003

_____ Sunday, February 23, 2003

Doors open at 1:00 p.m.
Bingo starts at 3:00 p.m.

Please bring donated items to the main office
as soon as possible.

Questions?
Please call Sheila E. Talley-Armstead
at (412) 624-8021.