

FALKTalk

Volume 11 Issue 5

April 2001



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From the Director...

In the mid-1970s, I was completing my doctoral studies, and I began to search for a topic for my dissertation. Unlike many candidates in Educational Administration, I was not interested in School Law, the Role of the Superintendent, or any of the myriad day-to-day logistical issues of school administrators. I was a middle school teacher, and I was interested in the student. And so I began a long journey along the road of concerns about student self-concept.

My advisor and my committee demanded that my dissertation consider a different topic, and although I complied, I never lost the lust for working with the nebulous concept of self esteem and how to address strategies which would help students feel better about themselves. It was only when I finished the dissertation that I found the key to my quest.

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From the PTA President...

Everyone these days is "wired".....to the internet. This allows me to ask you all to check out the Falk School web site: www.pitt.edu/~fls. Ms Herward, our hard-working librarian, has really made good use of this site, and you will find there the details of two upcoming and important library events.

The April/May Reading Initiative and the Spring Book Sale are both popular events and are right around the corner; both begin in April.

In addition to trying out the web site, I would also like you to use your computer skills and email me. I am seeking opinions and suggestions for the new food service that we have started using. By the time you read this, a month will have passed since its inception, and that is plenty of time for Falk parents to have feelings

(Continued on page 2)

Spring/Summer Calendar

April

School Library Month; T-Shirt Sale
April 2 - April 5—Achievement Testing, Parent Conferences, Library Book Fair
April 4—Intermediate Chorus performs for Primary class and parents at 10:30
April 6—Science Center visits Falk Intermediates
April 11 - 12—"Tales of Magic"
TBA—"E-I-E-I-Oops!"

May

May 12 - 13—Help install sound and light equipment for "The Wizard of Oz"
May 18—Spring Carnival, 5-10 pm
May 22-24—"The Wizard of Oz"

June

June 6—Last day of school; Kennywood Day

Summer

June 24-July 20—Summer Theater Workshop

Got Something to Share?

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

From the Director...(Continued)

*Your children
will feel good
about
themselves if
you show that
you love,
value, and
respect them.*

Self-esteem is so multi-faceted and dependent upon so many unconnected variables that even the experts have been responsible for misconceptions regarding this subject. Still, self-esteem remains a topic for discussion at all levels of the educational spectrum. My studies about student self-responsibility have provided the following direction.

Of course you and we want your children to feel good about themselves! The most important thing to remember is that your children will feel good about themselves if you show that you love, value, and respect them. Praise is important, but I have found in my research that the confidence factor is most important in assuring a robust, genuine, enduring feeling of worth.

We must allow our children to recognize the value of hard work and persistence in overcoming obstacles and striving to meet the high, but realistic, standards. Our faculty continually strives to provide opportunities for choice and decision-making within appropriate, challenging, realistic parameters.

Here are some ways that you can complement our work at home:

- Be sensible with praise—Applaud accomplishments that require effort.
- Use positive feedback—Tell your children why their efforts are important.
- Be honest—Children make mistakes, but it is important that we show them that we can learn from mistakes through constructive criticism.
- Go easy with the gifts—Gift giving makes parents feel good, but it doesn't work for children if they're used to having all of their desires met.
- Grades are important, but... love and approval should not be based solely on school performance—Stay relaxed and be supportive.
- Encourage challenges—Let students take on work that challenges them, and encourage them to persist. Success will boost their confidence and self-esteem.

—Bill McDonald

From the PTA President...(Continued)

about the food: its quality, its quantity, its variety, and its nutritional quotient. We have an ideal opportunity to create a great lunch program. Let me know what you think by emailing me at: ndelpresto@aol.com.

I cannot let my column end without plugging an upcoming PTA event or program. In May, the Carnival, our big outdoor (weather permitting) bash, occurs. The Carnival holds entertainment for eve-

ryone, and with every family's help and participation it is always a blast! It is the second fundraiser of the school year, and along with the Sally Foster gift wrap, the Carnival provides the PTA with the bulk of its operating capital. So the Carnival is very important to us; with that thought in mind I ask that every family buy at least one raffle ticket. Who knows, you may be that \$1000 winner this year!

—Nancy DelPresto

Website News!

A copy of the monthly menu is now posted on the Falk School's website: www.pitt.edu/~fls.

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>. The newest additions include pages for New Library Materials and Curriculum Resources. Book lists for Mr. Kramer's Social Studies Book Report project are linked to the Curriculum Resources page: Revolutionary War, Historical Fiction and Revolutionary War, and Biography. The MLA style sheet is also linked to the Library Documents page.

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://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 (624-8010) or Laura Zaspel Lawson (412-661-4856).

THANK YOU to those who recently made donations to the library: Evan Adams, Benjamin Hirtle, Greg Wilson, Nancy Cai, Claudia Rubenstein, Hanna Malvin, Jillian Herschlag, Nicholas Drohan, Mary Ellen Watt-Morse, Jacob Watt-Morse, Yulian Tamres-Rudnicki, and Lucas D. Johnson.

LIBRARY BOOK FAIR Thank you to everyone who made this annual event a great success: parent volunteers working at the Book Fair, teachers adjusting their schedules, and especially Ann Kelton for chairing the event. Look for more Book Fair news in the next Falk Talk.

SCHOOL LIBRARY MONTH—APRIL Special events are planned in April and May to celebrate "School Library Month." These include encouraging family reading using a Reading Calendar (grades K-5), building a Book badges chain and page tally, participating in the annual Library Book Fair, and having 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 www.pitt.edu/~herward. Due to the vacation time in April and other special events, the reading activities will continue into May.

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 our 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.

—Linda Herward



Primary News

The current social studies unit topics for primary classes are Pittsburgh and transportation. We had our Hop-a-thon, and everyone did a great job! The total donations will be announced in the next FalkTalk.

Room 115 will perform E-I-E-I-Oops! in late April. Dates and times will be sent to room 115 parents in early April.

Ms. Salvi will be doing speech and language screening of Primary students in May.

Health News



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

PREVENTING SICKNESS Have you, your child, or someone in your family had the experience of picking up one of the circulating viruses? If so, you know it is no fun.

Difficult as it sometimes is to make arrangements for an ill child or to take off a few days from work to care for him or her yourself, **please** resist the temptation to send an ill child to school. We have all seen first-hand how easily and quickly these bugs can infect everyone in their way! Plan ahead for those inevitable sick days, as few children escape childhood without having at least one now and then.

We do our best to provide temporary care (up to an hour) for children who become ill in school; however, as a child who is sick in school exposes other children to the same germs, they may later end up re-infecting him or her! It can become a vicious cycle.

Please stress the importance of hand washing to your child. Proper hand wash-

ing is the most effective method of preventing the spread of disease. Many children have been taught to wash their hands with warm water and soap, rubbing their hands together (paying particular attention to palms, backs of hands, between fingers, and around fingernails) for about 10-15 seconds (about the amount of time it takes to sing "Happy Birthday"). Although the children are reminded often to wash their hands in school, additional follow-up and discussion at home will help reinforce this simple but effective task.

Many, many thanks to Ann Kelton (mother of Ricky and Laura Hritz) and Nancy DelPresto (mother of Paul, Maggie, and Jeffrey) for their time commitment and compassion in caring for our children during my days away to attend the NALS Conference in February and the PASAP (Pennsylvania Association of Student Assistance Professionals) Conference in March.

If you have any medical background and think you may be interested in an occasional day or part of a day to help out in the Health Room, please call or stop in. The medical staff at Falk School actually consists of me, myself, and I, so I am grateful (as are the students, staff, and faculty) for parents who can offer assistance in this capacity.

— Susan Sholtis, RN, 624-8023

Room News

Room 225 will be sponsoring a raffle for all intermediate students during the week of March 27. Students who enter the raffle will have an opportunity to win a \$10.00 gift certificate for the Falk School Book Fair (April 2-5). Raffle tickets are \$0.50, and those interested can see a student in room 225.

Intermediates are working hard and having fun. Fifth graders will begin to write their own picture books, including

illustrations. They will read them to the Primary.

Rooms 224 and 225 in Science are finishing a flip book and brochures on endangered animals. In social studies, rooms 224 and 225 are finishing their study of Pennsylvania.

Rooms 221 and 222 will be performing "Tales of Magic" on April 11 and 12. April is also the month they begin a unit on bridges.

Music Notes

Many thanks to all the wonderful performers who shared their musical talents and interests with our Music classes as part of Music In Our Schools Month. We had a wonderful variety of performances ranging from euphoniums to kazoos and from Folk Music to Opera.

Our performers included: Cheryl Kubelick, Olivia McCann, Eric Stern, Scott Stern, Susan Kimelman, Sabina Rosenfeld, Paul Swanson, David Sanders, Greg Wittig, Tong Lee, Peg Schmidt, Dan Weeks, Sharyn Koch, Steve Hirtle, John Wilson, and Anne LeBaron (who will be performing in May).

The 2nd grade students did a wonderful job at the Pittsburgh Symphony Society's Spring Luncheon and docent demonstration lesson. They will be going to Heinz Hall on March 30th to hear the "Meet the Orchestra" concert.

The Intermediate Chorus will be performing for the Primary classes and parents on Wednesday, April 4th at 10:30. We hope many of our parents and family members will join us as we sing "Journey to the Past," "Shekere," "Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious," "Listen," "Beep, Beep," and other favorites.

Congratulations to Falk students Stacey and Stephanie Chen who recently won awards in the Duquesne University Young Artists piano competition. Stacey placed 2nd in the 9 and under solo piano competition, and Stephanie placed 3rd in the 12 and under category.

Don't forget to follow the Yellow Brick Road on May 22- May 24 when the Middle School will turn Falk into the Emerald City as "The Wizard of Oz" takes the stage.

—Lee Ann Conover

After School

Spring is here! We are anxiously awaiting spring-like weather but have managed to keep very busy and entertained in After School.

By now, I am hoping that all parents are aware of the early dismissal April 2-6 due to parent/teacher conferences. After School will begin at 1:00 each of these days and run until 6:00. We are planning many activities to fill the extra two hours. Our teacher interns will each be spending one day with us to help supervise the children.

Some of the upcoming special events will include a game day. Children will be asked to bring a game from home that they would like to play with their friends (board, electric, or card). Also planned is an indoor Olympics. Prizes will be awarded to all participants.

For our older students we are going to try to plan an athletic tournament (hockey,

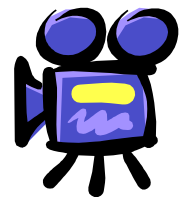
basketball, etc.). The Science Center will be coming on Friday, April 6 for our intermediate children and doing some hands-on scientific exploration.

Other ideas include: bingo with prizes awarded, a cheerleading clinic, and craft activities. We are planning a movie day, and we will pass out popcorn on this day. Children will have the opportunity to just hang out with friends or participate in any of the explained activities.

We are trying to provide a variety of activities for all our children's ages and interests. Please feel free to use After School any or all of these days. We will post a list of the week's events by the door leading to the playground.

Please call if you have any questions about this week or anything else.

—Jackie Metcalf and Cesar Canizares



Computer Room News



The big news is that Giant Eagle's Apple For The Students program is OVER! Special thanks to Nancy and Alix Glynn who counted, counted, and counted some more to get us a final dollar total of \$246,279.09! Yea!

We used this amount redeemed to purchase a Sony Cybershop Digital Camera, a Panasonic Digital Palmcorder, JumpStart 6th grade software and 12 Wilson 12" Softballs. (We only had one working digital camera, and it is a very popular item that is used by the whole school. The digital palmcorder will allow us to make movies and edit them on the computers.)

Most of all, thanks to all the parents, caregivers, family, and friends of Falk School who collected, collected, and collected those register tapes!

Despite the addition of these purchased items, our school's need for computer equip-

ment and supplies is never-ending. Tax time is upon us, and many people choose to donate their tax refunds to worthy institutions. Please consider The Falk Computer Gift Giving Program for Birthdays, Holidays, Special Events, Tax and Memorial Donations.

- Simply write a check to "Falk School," and include the notation, "For Computer Gift Giving Program."
- Send check c/o Mrs. Bianco by way of the school office.

A decorative card will be sent to the honoree, and your gift will be acknowledged in FalkTalk. If you do not wish to have this information publicized, please let us know!

If you would like to make a special donation or need additional information, contact Mrs. Bianco at 648-8459.

BINGO!

Bingo was a BIG success! Thanks to all of the Bingo Callers and volunteer clean up and set up committees. Thanks to all who participated in making this a fun time for the Falk Family.

Special thanks to the Glynn Family (Alex in room 115) for the donation of bingo slips and chips. Special thanks to the Famili

Family, owners of Rialto Pizza in Greenfield, where we got our delicious pizza. They will be joining the Falk family next year.

I hope more of the Falk family will join us at our annual bingo event in 2002!

—Sheila E. Talley-Armstead
Special Activities, 624-8021

T-Shirt Sale

For those of you who don't know, the T-shirt sale will be running throughout the year until everything is gone. The proceeds will go to the Middle School Fund to help keep the cost down for their dances, 8th grade graduation, and Cedar Point Trip.

These T-shirts can make good representation at Falk School Events and at the Kenywood Picnic. Order forms are in the hallway on the first floor and in my office. You can come into the main office after 9:00 am to place your order and pick it up on the spot.

For the month of April only, I am running a special on T-shirts. Buy one T-shirt and get \$2.00 off a second purchase of any item except the Falk school decals. You will automatically get a FREE Falk decal with your purchase. So you are actually saving \$3.00!!!

Stop in and pick up your T-shirt and savings now!

—Sheila E. Talley-Armstead
Falk School Office, 614-8021

Theater News

The Middle School musical this year is the stage version of the well known and probably the best-loved American movie musical, "The Wizard of Oz." The shows will be performed on the following dates:

- **Monday, May 21st at 12:30 pm** (middle school audience)
- **Tuesday, May 22nd at 9:00 am** (primary audience) and **7:00 pm** (general public)
- **Wednesday, May 23rd at 9:00 am** (intermediate audience) and **7:00 pm** (general public)
- **Thursday, May 24th at 7:00 pm** (general public)

Producing a production as large and as challenging as "The Wizard of Oz" can come at a great cost. At an estimated cost of \$4,000-\$5,000 for a one week rental, the greatest expense for this show is the costumes. That is why I am writing this plea for **HELP!** I am not necessarily seeking any financial **HELP** at this

time. I am, however, looking for volunteers to become members of a costume committee to **HELP** design, construct, find, beg and/or borrow—I'm sorry; I cannot condone stealing!—any and all of the costumes or costume materials for this wonderful project.

I could also use some **HELP** on the weekend of May 12th and 13th to install the light and sound equipment (no experience necessary).

HELP will not be limited to Middle School parents; on the contrary, anyone who would like to **HELP** will be welcome. If you feel that you would like to **HELP** create a wonderful theatrical event here at Falk school, please call me ASAP at 412.624.8274. If I haven't yet articulated our great need for **HELP**, I will try to do so now.....

H-E-L-P!!!

—Mr. James Critchfield

Summer Theater Workshop Update

I am very happy with the Falk School students' excitement about the Summer Theater Workshop and the early registration from the Falk community. I am also glad that I had given you a head start to register before I advertised outside of Falk.

I will soon be sending advertisements to the Post-Gazette, other local newspapers, and some local newsletters. I am anticipating that the workshop will be filled because of the high quality of the faculty and the competitive

cost to the patrons.

So this is now your last chance to sign up for this year's Summer Theater Workshop before it is opened to the general public.

If you would like more information about the great fun that we have planned or a registration form, please visit Actor Civic Theater's new website at: www.geocities.com/actorscivictheater.

—Mr. James Critchfield

Kennywood!

Order forms for Kennywood tickets will be coming home in the beginning of April. Please respond as soon as possible to assure that the right amount of tickets are ordered. The cost will be \$16.50 for the Ride-All-Day pass. Remember, you will be able to order extras that can be used throughout the summer.

The new rides this year are **THE PHANTOM'S REVENGE** and **THE CRAZY TROLLEY!!!**

Hope you can come on June 6, 2001...
THE LAST DAY OF SCHOOL!!!

—Sheila E. Talley-Armstead



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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.

APRIL Main Books for Honesty:

The Empty Pot, Demi
Osa's Pride, A. Grifalconi
Our King Has Horns!, R. Pevear
Roses Sing on New Snow, P. Yee
The King's Fountain, L. Alexander
The Gold Coin, A. F. Ada.

Supplementary Books for Honesty:

The Dragon's Robe, D. Lattimore
A Pair of Red Clogs, M. Matsuma
A Penny's Worth of Character, J. Stuart
Sam, Bangs and Moonshine, E. Ness
Striding Slippers, M. Ginsburg
Summer Wheels, E. Bunting
The Talking Eggs, R. San Souci
Taro and the Tofu, M. Matsun
The Treasure, U. Shulevitz
The Truthful Harp, L. Alexander
The Winter Wife, A.E. Crompton.

MAY Main Books for Love:

The Rag Coat, L. Mills
The Seeing Stick, J. Yolen

Honey, I Love, E. Greenfield
Magical Hands, M. Barker
Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters, J. Step-
toe
Annie and the Old One, M. Miles

Supplementary Books for Love:

Blackberries in the Dark, M. Jukes
Grandma Didn't Wave Back, R. Blue
The Hundred Penny Box, S. B. Mathis
The Keeping Quilt, P. Palocco
The Legend of Scarface, R. San Souci
Love You Forever, R. Munsch
*My Mother is the Most Beautiful
Woman in the World*, R. Rehyer
Nana Upstairs and Nana Downstairs, T.
DePaola
Now One Foot, Now the Other, T. De-
Paola
Sachiko Means Happiness, K. Sakai
Saying Good-bye to Grandma, R. R.
Thomas
The Wednesday Surprise, E. Bunting