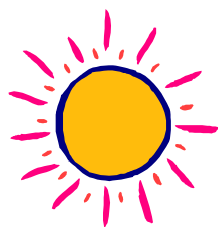


FALKTalk

Volume 11 Issue 6

May 2001



Inside This Issue:

Page 2

- * Director's Letter, Continued
- * PTA President's Letter, Continued

Page 3

- * Library News

Page 4

- * Primary News
- * After School

Page 5

- * Health News
- * Excellence in Teaching

Page 6

- * Music Notes
- * Middle School

Page 7

- * Computer Room News

Page 8

From the Director...

The April 24 PTA meeting provided an opportunity for me to talk with a small number of parents about the pilot lunch program we have implemented during the last two months. It was interesting to hear their questions about the rationale for the possible change and their responses to my answers.

It is sometimes difficult to present all sides of a complex issue, and the lunch program is no exception. I will soon be sending you a packet including menus, questions, and a graph so that you can provide feedback on your feelings about this pilot program. I will use this data to help me develop a position and design an implementation strategy.

The faculty and I have had discussions and have identified a number of concerns. No final decision will be made before summer, but drafts of a plan need

(Continued on page 2)

From the PTA President...

This letter represents a first and a last for me. It is the last letter that I will write as PTA President. At the end of this school year, I will move on to the Falk School Board as a parent representative.

After holding the post of PTA Treasurer for 4 years, I was not certain how effective I would be as a president. But there have been no disasters, no political maneuverings, and no budgetary glitches. So far, I have held the fort down.

However, before I go out, I want to tell you about a first for me and for you. In looking to improve the physical plant, as well as work toward realizing several of Dr. McDonald's goals for the school, Falk School will begin an Annual Giving Fund.

It appears that Falk School is in line to receive little, if any, money from the University (even though they have just finished a capital campaign). So we need

(Continued on page 2)

May/June Calendar

May

- May 7—Pittsburgh Symphony Concert (fourth grade)
- May 12 - 13—Help install sound and light equipment for "The Wizard of Oz"
- May 14—Special PTA Meeting, 7:30 pm
- May 15—Falk School Band Concert, 7:30 pm
- May 17—Idlewild Park (primary students)
- May 18—Spring Carnival, 5-10 pm
- May 22-24—"The Wizard of Oz"
- May 24—"Charlotte's Web" at Playhouse, Jr. (primary)
- May 25—Tiny Tots Pittsburgh Symphony Concert (kindergarten)

- May 29—South Park Picnic (eighth grade)
- May 30 - 31—Cedar Point (eighth grade)

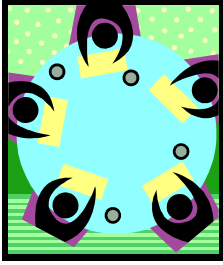
June

- June 1—Graduation dinner and dance; deadline for returning library books
- June 5—Graduation, 8 pm
- June 6—Last day of school; Kennywood Day

Summer

- June 24-July 20—Summer Theater Workshop

From the Director...(Continued)



to be in place as soon as possible. Thanks in advance for the information you will provide.

Several other topics were discussed during the evening. It is evident that the complexities of our relationship with the university and the school of education warrant more explanation.

A number of parents voiced the need for more open forums. The PTA took note, and I am sure that you will see more programs such as this in the future. In response to one suggestion, I am asking all parents who are also university faculty or staff, or who are members of the medical community here at the university, to attend a special meeting on Monday, May 14 at 7:30 pm. The agenda for that meeting will focus on ways in which this group can provide support to the school and its various needs.

Although the hierarchy of our relationship with the university has been recognized for a long time, I believe that we could raise

the awareness of what we do and what we need if we provide some dignified "noise" from this faction of our parent body.

I have already received support from several people who attended the PTA meeting and perhaps now is "the time" for this type of action. We have reached the limit of our space and resources. We must initiate some serious discussions about the "vision" for the future of Falk School.

I will also be asking the Board to participate in a vision "retreat" over the summer. Our faculty have already spent a major portion of the year developing goal statements for this purpose, and we will begin this vision process at the beginning of next year.

We have much more work to do. I hope we will have a large crowd for this meeting. I need your help.

—Bill McDonald

From the PTA President...(Continued)

to start at the beginning and raise the money by ourselves and for our children.

Whether your child is in Primary, Intermediate, or Middle School, they experience issues every day: classes in the stairwells, small lockers, and antiquated bathrooms.... *Where does anybody park?....* Wouldn't it be great if all the classrooms had computers that were wired to the internet?... And what about a bigger library and separate auditorium?

By early summer, you and I should receive the first letter from Falk School asking for non-tuition monies. I hope each and every family reads it and responds.

And as my eldest child and I prepare for our first (another!) Falk School graduation, I will be especially reminded of how Falk School has guided him, nurtured him and allowed him to grow at his own pace. This

school instilled in him an "enquiring mind," an interest and approach to learning he would not have gotten at any other school.

Falk School enables each and every child to feel special, smart, and important. What great lessons to learn so early in this life's journey.

As I remember these gifts Falk School has given my son (and my other children, too!), I will know that giving back to Falk will not only be easy but a pleasure. It is my hope you all will feel the same way.

Many thanks to each and every person who has supported me, encouraged me, and worked with me and next to me all through the school year. You have made it an easy and rewarding year.

PS. Everyone come to the Carnival!!!!!!

—Nancy DelPresto

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://www.pitt.edu/~herward/>. If you would like to donate a book(s) and do not have the necessary information, please contact Ms. Herward, the librarian (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 May, June, July, and August. If you have questions, contact Ms. Herward (624-8010) or Laura Zaspel Lawson (661-4856).

THANK YOU to those who recently made donations to the library: Eric and Scott Stern, Amy Tran, Sarah Hrusa, Todd Stone, Bryan Persinger, Nalyn S. Komen, Susannah Glick, Bradley Stone, Dr. W. McDonald, Olivia Kubelick McCann, Weasie Offerman, Brittany Jones, Drew McDermott, Sage Lincoln, Sarah Finegold, Patrick Herward, Maeve O'Donnell, and Conor O'Donnell. 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 \$6,093.22. These new books should keep students, parents, and teachers busy reading for some time. The library made a profit of \$1,523, about the same as last year. These funds will be used to purchase additional materials for the library. Ann Kelton coordinated this event. Thanks for a job well done!

Thank you to all the volunteers who worked at the Book Fair: Ann Kelton, Nancy DelPresto, Ms. Morimoto, Mr. Critchfield, Jessica DeFranco, KK Karasic, Laura Hritz, Ms. Williamson, Beatriz Kanterewicz, Tara Swanson, Shelly Ross, Cindy Han, Sabrina Rosenfeld, Diane Hopley, Stephanie Swoveland, Debra Brandon, David Sanders, Kim Lincoln, SooYoung Kwon, Debbie Moss, Christina Andrews, Carol Krupski, Pam Greenhouse, Lisa Tamres, Deborah Brandon, Jamie Stern, Mindy O'Donnell, Floh Thiels, Cheryl Kubelick, Edda Kapi Blume, Fane Freund, Diane Law,

Laura Zaspel Lawson, Fabi Cheistwer, Betsy Levine Brown, Debra Bruckman, Diana Lambrou, Judy Esman, Debbie Rubinstein, Marcia Kurs-Lasky, Stacy Stull, Sally Rafson, and Ed Eadon.

Special thanks go to Ann Kelton and the students in Ms. Williamson's class. Ann recruited and scheduled the volunteers and worked with Ms. Herward on all aspects of running the Book Fair. Thank you, Ann 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 April 25, eight hundred two (802) books have been read (or listened to) totaling 65,397 pages. Last year the total pages read at the end of May was 215,741. Watch the numbers get bigger and paper Reading Chain grow during May. Remember everyone in the Falk community (parents, siblings included) is encouraged to participate by sending in Book Badges. Additional Book Badges are available in the K-5 homerooms 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.

—Linda Herward

RETURN LIBRARY BOOKS

All books and magazines are due in the library at the end of May. This allows time for letters to be sent home to parents indicating overdue books. 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.

Primary News

The Primary Team children raised a total of \$2359.07 for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. Many thanks to everyone who made a donation. Special recognition goes to Alix Glynn, who raised over \$100, and Avery Feingold, who raised over \$300!

Room 115 performed *E-I-E-I-Ooops!* on April 25 and 26, and everyone did a terrific job. On Tuesday, May 1, the entire primary team attended the 16th Annual Intergenerational Arts Festival at William Pitt Union on lower campus. The students participated in 3 hands-on workshops, saw the Dancing Demons perform, and watched a puppet show. Thanks to the PTA for providing financial support for this special activity. On Thursday, May 17, the primary team is

going to Idlewild Park to stroll through Storybook Forest and play in Jumpin' Jungle. The following Thursday, May 24, we will see *Charlotte's Web* at the Playhouse Jr., and on Friday, May 25, the Primary K students will go to a Tiny Tots concert at Heinz Hall.

We will wind up the year finishing our Pittsburgh unit, studying Transportation, and investigating Air and Water.

Primary parents: **please** be sure your child has a complete change of clothes, of the correct size, suitable for the current weather, in his/her locker. Torn, wet, or muddy clothing sometimes has to be changed, even if your child never has "accidents"!

After School

Where did the year go? June always arrives before we know it. Most of our Pitt After School workers have gone home for the summer. We thank them for a great year and wish them a fun and safe summer. We have made some adjustments to our schedules and hired a few familiar faces to fill in our gaps.

The week of early dismissal was a success. We tried a whole bunch of new things that seemed to go over very well with the children. (My favorite was the Sundae Social, despite the mess!!!) I also want to thank all of the intern teachers for helping us cover the extra hours that week.



Just a few odds and ends.... We have added carrots to our daily snack menu. If a child does not want or like the snack of the day, we will have carrots as an alternative. The snack menu for the month is always posted near the door by the sign out sheets and in the cafeteria. We do this to give a heads up to students and parents.

There will be no After School on Friday, May 18 because of early dismissal (1pm)

for Spring Carnival. We hope to see everyone there for this fun festivity! Also, the last day of After School for the year is Tuesday, June 5.

Lastly, as most of you know, I have been asked to teach in room 225, as our very dear Kisha Davis travels abroad to teach in Japan for the year. I am very much looking forward to this opportunity but will miss all my kids at After School. I have enjoyed the thrills and daily challenges that were a part of this position. Luckily, Mr. Cesar Canizares has agreed to take over as director of the program. I was so grateful to have worked with him this year (and his brother Yamil in 98/99!!!). He has been a blessing for this school and all of our children. I know I leave the After School program in the very best of hands. I also want to congratulate Mr. C, who will be getting married in July.

I have enjoyed getting to know and spending time with your children. Have a safe and relaxing summer!

—Jackie Metcalf

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.

SAFETY BASICS As the warmer weather begins and sunshine invites us and our children outdoors, please keep a few safety basics in mind. By now, the importance of using a bike helmet is old news. Rather than use space to tell what you already know, I would like to let you know about a recall of about a quarter million bike helmets because they may not provide adequate protection from impact.

The recalls involve products made by Variflex, NHS, and First Team Sports. Variflex helmets account for the majority, with a recall of 240,000 "X-Games Aggressive" models in black, white, or chrome. A large label inside these helmets reads "SGS CPSC CY50159;" these were sold in sporting goods and discount department stores from October 1999 through September 2000 for about \$20. Return your helmet to the store where it was purchased for a refund or replacement.

For information on all recent product recalls, including the roughly 1,000 NHS helmets, visit the U. S. Consumer Product Safety Commission at www.epsc.gov.

Is there a scooter parked at your house? Approximately five million scooters were sold in 2000, an increase from almost zero the previous year. From January through October 2000, an estimated 27,600 persons sought emergency care for scooter-related injuries.

On the basis of data from in-line skating and bicycling, many of these injuries might have been prevented or reduced in severity had protective equipment been worn. Helmets can prevent 85% of head injuries, elbow pads can prevent 82% of elbow injuries, and knee pads can prevent 32% of knee injuries.

Do take advantage of the milder weather to increase physical activity, for you and for your children. Don't overlook the use of protective equipment, which can simply and effectively reduce or prevent injuries.

—Susan Sholtis, RN, 624-8023

Excellence in Teaching

Thank you to all who helped make the Excellence in Teaching Marathon a huge success. Due to the efforts of volunteers, and school wide participation, we were able to raise over \$5,000.00 for the scholarship.

We also wish to thank the following: WTAE TV and the Healthy 4 Life Campaign; WTAE Newscasters Marilyn Brooks, Mike Clark and Sheldon Ingram; Linda Duchak and the Allegheny Health Department; Dr. Robert Robertson and Dr. Betsy Nagle from the University of Pittsburgh Exercise Physiology Department; Dance and fitness instructors Eileen Corcoran, Marlon

Silva, Julius Dawkins, Caitlin Reynolds and Ben Rich; American Cancer Society; American Lung Association; Southwest PA AHEC; Respiratory Alliance; Interns Michelle Rodden, Joy Tigue, and Melissa Prokopchak; the Falk Intermediate Girls Cheerleading Squad; Girl Scout Troop 1408; Cadet Troop 522; Sheila Talley-Armstead; Laura Hunt; Stacy Stull; Steve Hirtle; Ruth Feldman; Jane Dirks; Steve Jurman; and Jeanette Trauth.

The Excellence in Teaching Board Salutes the concern and dedication to our cause. See you next year!!!

—Charlene Barnett

Music Notes

May is going to be an extremely musical month at Falk. Two groups of students will be going to Heinz Hall to attend Pittsburgh Symphony concerts. The Fourth grade students will be attending the May 7th concert, and the Kindergarten students will be attending the May 25th concert.

There are also big events happening at Falk during May. The Second Annual Falk School Band Concert will be held in the Falk School cafétorium on Tuesday, May 15th at 7:30 p.m. The Intermediate and Middle School Bands will perform as will several soloists and ensembles. We hope to see a good crowd for this special event.

We also hope to see everyone again the next week when the Middle School's pro-

duction of *The Wizard of Oz* will be presented on May 22, 23, and 24 at 7:00 p.m. Come join our huge cast and crew as we take you "over the Rainbow" for a wonderful evening of fun and music. The Intermediate Chorus will also be performing at Intermission during the productions.

Information on Summer Music Lessons will be going home soon. Instruction is offered on piano, guitar, flute, oboe, clarinet, saxophone, trumpet, trombone, French Horn and percussion instruments. If you wish more information please call Dr. Conover at 383-9617.

—Lee Ann Conover

Middle School

End of year activities are upon us. Full-scale rehearsals are underway for *The Wizard of Oz*, which will be presented Monday, May 21 through Thursday, May 24. The previous Friday (May 18) is the Carnival, and the following Tuesday (May 29) is the South Park picnic. As it is the policy with all of our field trips and school-day events, we expect all students to attend. Please obtain the information/permission slip, sign the appropriate sections, and return it to Mr. Kramer by Friday, May 25.

Eighth graders will board the coach for Cedar Point at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, May 30 and return the following night (Thursday, May 31) at approximately 11 pm. Parents, please fill out the permission/pick-up/telephone instructions sheet and return it to Mr. Wittig.

We've experienced another successful set of parent conferences with our new system and therefore anticipate using the same method next year.

Ms. Corcoran has already mailed home the graduation activities schedule to parents of eighth graders. If you have not done so, please return the diploma information and graduation fee to Ms. Corcoran. The graduation dinner and dance are scheduled for Friday evening, June 1, and graduation is at 8 pm. on Tuesday, June 5.

Congratulations are in order for David McColloch, who represented Falk at the state-level geography bee sponsored by National Geographic. He placed fifth in the state.

Congratulations to Lauren Kelley Chew, who was a finalist in the Allegheny County Health Department's poster contest, "Protecting Our Environment, Preserving Our Future." Her poster is on display until the end of April at the Carnegie Science Center.

Questions? Call Mr. Kramer (383-9615).



Computer Room News



DEAR PARENTS: I want to communicate what a privilege it has been for me to teach your children this school year. Thank you!

It is our goal at Falk for our students to be above and beyond computer literate; we want them to be “computer comfortable.” Part of my job includes picking and choosing what aspects of computer technology will spark the students’ imaginations while teaching necessary skills based on computer “standards” and the academic curriculum.

Each year our computer program is refined and enhanced. This school year (2000-01), the primary students experienced fun and learning with Kid Pix, Neighborhood Map Machine, and JumpStart 2nd grade.

The Intermediate Students sharpened their word processing, research, and graphic skills with Microsoft Word. They are currently beginning a collaborative research project about India. Different Middle School cycles began with the presidential campaign, moved on to a collaborative “I-Search” project, and produced a Microsoft Power Point Slide Show based upon their lives. Sixth grade is currently working on an electronic book report about their favorite author. This cycle's middle school students were treated to an enlightening conversation with Mr. DeHart (Lizzy's Dad) about the beginning of the computer industry, the beginning of e-mail, the United State's concern with computer security issues, his involvement in tracking down Internet “bad guys,” and his predictions about computer technology in the future. Thank you Mr. DeHart!

Please contact me if you are interested in sharing your insights/professional experience in the world of computer technology with Falk Students.

Next year's intermediate students will begin to explore electronic communication through e-mail, while the middle school students will explore using our new digital camcorder and video editing.

HELP FALK SCHOOL EARN FREE COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY THROUGH CARTRIDGE RECYCLING

It is with great enthusiasm that we announce our newest fund-raising initiative: ETCEP, The Educational Technology and Conservation Exchange Program.

ETCEP provides an opportunity for schools and their community to save empty laser and inkjet cartridges in exchange for over 5,000 **free** hardware and software technology products. With over 275 million cartridges thrown away last year alone, we have a real opportunity to save the environment and to update our school's computer technology at the same time! Plus, the ETCEP program will help us to teach our children that recycling makes dollars and sense!

Laser and inkjet cartridges are found in printers, fax machines, and desktop copiers at homes and businesses. Your place of employment can support us by registering for the ETCEP Adopt-A-School program or by you heading up the collection at work and bringing them to us.

To make this initiative a success, **we need your help!** To offer your assistance, please contact Nancy Glynn, parent volunteer (412-825-6545, evenings, or momalix@aol.com) or Barbara Bianco, computer specialist (412-383-8459 or bbianco@pitt.edu).

Complete details on qualifying cartridges, collection sites and the Adopt-A-School program will be distributed in the fall. But, in the meantime, please start saving empty laser and inkjet cartridges **now!**

Thank you in advance for your participation and cartridges! Have a great summer!

—Mrs. Bianco

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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.

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. Steptoe
- *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. DePaola
- *Sachiko Means Happiness*, K. Sakai
- *Saying Good-bye to Grandma*, R. R. Thomas
- *The Wednesday Surprise*, E. Bunting