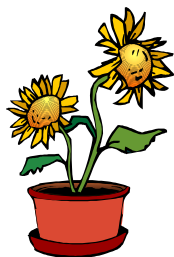


# FALKTalk

Volume 12 Issue 6

April 2002



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## From the Director...

Not too many months ago, at a PTA meeting, a new Board member asked the audience to name the most positive aspect of Falk School. The response was a resounding "our community." I agree.

We certainly have a very special community here at this school. We are one of the few institutions I know where so much trust, so much togetherness, and so much understanding of purpose is evident.

I realize that there are always some areas that can improve. I also realize that we will always be faced with challenges. But when I am present at Falk "events," I am always thrilled at how our community pulls together for the greater good of the school.

*(Continued on page 2)*

## From the PTA President...

A look at the outburst of activities at Falk School is enough to tell that spring has finally arrived! The library book fair, achievement testing, parent conferences, theater and music performances, the carnival and other events give dizzying testimony to this, despite the now wintry view from my window.

A wonderful kickoff to spring took place March 24 with the Excellence in Teaching's "Meaningful Marathon." An otherwise dreary day was turned into a fun filled, health consciousness-raising event and raised money for the worthy EIT fund. As you may or may not know, EIT raises funds for financial scholarships, recognizes teacher excellence, and most recently, has pro-

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Calendar of Events

### APRIL

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

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

April 23 — General PTA Meeting, 7:30 p.m.

### MAY

May 10 — Falk Talk submissions deadline

May 17 — Falk Carnival, 5:00-9:00 p.m.

May 29-31 — Middle School Spring Musical, *The Music Man*, 7:00 p.m.

## From the Director... (continued)

*“We are fortunate to have our community. We must strive to keep it and to improve it.”*

In the last few weeks, I have talked to parents attending school performances by our own students and by professional music groups, have seen parents presenting in our classrooms, and have been part of many discussions during the a.m. and p.m. comings and goings of those adults who are present in our environment each day. The overriding feeling is one of great warmth.

We are fortunate to have our community. We must strive to keep it and to improve it. We all must take a greater ownership of it — and that means more than appearing in the school or even supporting the school in a monetary fashion.

The challenges of running a successful program are becoming more difficult. We will be asked in the future to provide a better program. We will be asked to perform in different ways.

There will be different players involved and different stakeholders to consider. One thing is for sure - we must work diligently to ensure that our “community feeling” never disappears.

The Falk School Vision Committee has been working since October 2001 to identify the needs of Falk School in the future, and to develop the goals and the processes necessary to sustain our school. This committee will be reporting to many of our constituent groups before the end of summer 2002. When these meetings are announced, I hope all of you will attend. I know many of you will become active in the processes that must follow. The future of the school depends on you.

— William McDonald

## From the PTA President... (continued)

vided a giving tree, which will be unveiled at this year’s graduation. Thanks, once again, to the inimitable Charlene Barnett for organizing this event and to those who donated time and goods to the auctioned baskets.

Upcoming PTA events include the General PTA Meeting on April 23 at 7:30 p.m. Your attendance at this meeting is important as we will be electing next year’s PTA Executive Board officers. The proposed slate has been mailed to you.

As always, and in the interest of democracy and school spirit, nominations for these positions are most welcome. And always, always the PTA welcomes

those who would like to serve as committee members. I will have more on this next time, but, for now, let me say that the PTA fund-raising events and future plans for Falk depend on people who are willing to spend just a few hours (more or less) a month involved in their children’s school.

Soapbox aside; allow me to tout another event. Carnival ala Falk! Again expertly organized by Susan Marsee, the Carnival will be held Friday May 17 from 5:00 - 9:00 p.m. (see page 4). I can’t wait!

—Lynn Billington

## Library News

**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, the annual Library Book Fair, Poetry Minute, 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 <http://tc.education.pitt.edu/library>. These Reading Initiative activities continue into May.

**LIBRARY WEB PAGE** Visit the library web pages at <http://tc.education.pitt.edu/library> or use the link on the Falk School web page [www.pitt.edu/~fls](http://www.pitt.edu/~fls). Find information about the library staff, Book Fair, Reading Initiative activities, Curriculum Resources for class projects, and much more.

**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.

The library will continue to mail Birthday/Gift Book Program information three times a year, based on your child’s birthday. If you would like to make a donation or have questions about the Birthday/Gift Book Program, contact Ms. Herward (412-624-8010), Pam Greenhouse (412-422-2613), or Nancy Glynn (412-825-6545).

**THANK YOU** to those who recently made donations to the library: Allison Myer, Liam, Conor, and Maeve O’Donnell, Lucas Johnson, Smriti Aveeka Vats, Ben Grandis, Brittany Jones, Nalyn S. Komen, Maeve

O’Donnell, Anna Grandis, Daniel Hrusa, Conor O’Donnell, Bani Randhawa, Gabrielle Rubinstein, Sarah Hrusa, Liam O’Donnell, Nicholas Drohan and Ms. L. Herward.

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

Each primary and intermediate class is given an opportunity to shop at the book fair during the school day. The tentative schedule for the classes is given below. Arrangements will be made for the middle school students to visit the Book Fair during the first two periods of the day. Students will be bringing home updated publicity.

Thursday — Rm. 111 and Rm. 221

Friday — Rm. 116 and Rm. 225

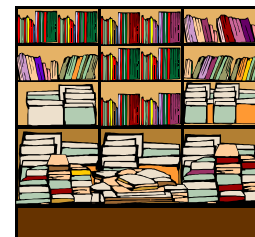
Monday — Rm. 115 and Rm. 222

Tuesday — Rm. 112 and Rm. 224

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

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

—Linda Herward



## Carnival!



**CARNIVAL! CARNIVAL! CARNIVAL!** Guess what's coming Friday, May 17, from 5:00-9:00 p.m.? You're right the first time, the Carnival! An all new, fun packed, not to be missed event for all Falk families and friends.

Again, we will feature the \$1000 cash drawing. Each ticket will cost \$20, and packets will be mailed to you with instructions and deadlines.

Charlene Foggie Barnett will help our eighth graders choose a theme for the middle school dance held in the cafeteria from 7:00-9:30, where Charlie Apple, "disc jockey supreme," will polish up your favorite CD's for the evening.

Nicholas Ridge and Nancy Del Presto are planning a new menu of tantalizing

goodies for dinner, while Bake Sale co-chairs Sally Sleeper and Lori McDermott are heating up the ovens for an overload of sugar!

Our favorite inflatables (Winston the Whale and Mama Dragon) will be pumped up for you to jump on and crawl through. We are adding a new contest of "cow milking" to test your competitiveness, and the money machine will be back to test your math and catching abilities.

Join us and make this the greatest Carnival yet. See you there!

—Susan Marsee  
Chair, Falk Carnival

## Excellence in Teaching

Thank you to all the students, parents, teachers, and staff who participated in our annual Meaningful Marathon, this year.

We made *cents with Dr. Mac*, as we walked or ran around our fun race track. Mike the balloon guy was there to make cheery balloon art, while the Excellence in Teaching Cheerleaders, led by Ms. Tracy Schwartz, gave us a boost of encouragement. The girls scouts painted our faces, and our healthy fruit smoothies were going faster than they could be made. All in all, it was a fun afternoon, that raised funds for the scholarship.

The silent auction and basket auction were huge successes, and we have even bigger plans for these activities next year.

The University of Pittsburgh Exercise Physiology team, led by Dr. Robert Robertson and Dr. Betsey Nagle, gave us health assessments and information. Joan Procopio and the Healthy 4 Life team from the Allegheny County Health Department

brought us wonderful displays and taught us a lot about healthy living, not to mention the "pig lungs" demonstration.

Special thanks to Dr. McDonald, Sheila Talley-Armstead, Laura Hunt, Don Wallace, Nancy Delpresto, Lori McDermott, Jeannette Trauth, Beryl Trauth Jurman, Alexis Lambrou, Hannah Ridge, Cameron Barnett, Stacy Stull, Tracy Schwartz, Lynn Billington, Viveca Meyer, Karen Cain, Tina Mattis, and Linda Spotts for their help and support.

Donations can still be made to the Excellence in Teaching Scholarship and sent to the Falk office. Even in today's difficult economy, we were successful with this fundraiser, and we had a ball doing it! See you next year... with a new twist!

—Charlene Barnett  
EIT Trustee

## Theater Arts

**CONGRATULATIONS** go out to Jodi Lincoln in room 225 for being selected as a finalist in the Pittsburgh Public Theater's Shakespeare monologue and scene contest. She was chosen as one of only 4 finalists from over 200 children in her age group in the Greater Pittsburgh area. *Great job Jodi!*

**HELP FOR THE MUSICAL "THE MUSIC MAN"** The Middle School Spring Musical — *The Music Man* — is just around the corner, and we are in rehearsals already. Every year we make the plea for parents to **HELP** on the many committees. We need you time, muscles, and yes **HELP!**

**THE COSTUME COMMITTEE** You do not have to sew to be on the Costume Committee. We need people that can **HELP** find, organize, etc. If you sew and would like to **HELP**, that would be great as well. This committee also organizes the parent monitors in the dressing rooms for the evening shows. You also do not have to be a Middle School parent to **HELP** on this, or any committee, for that matter.

This year we have two moms already **HELPING** who are from Primary room 112, Sabina Rosenfeld (Sophia's Mom) and Kim Lincoln a mom from Intermediate 225, and Primary 112, 115 (Jodi's, Sage's, and Bobby's Mom). Thanks for you **HELP** ladies. They are doing a great job, but they can use your **HELP!** If you can **HELP**, call Stacy Stull, Costume Committee Chairperson, (724) 274-0934.

**THE LIGHTING AND SOUND COMMITTEE** If costumes are not to your liking, we also have the lighting and sound committee. Last year we met the Saturday afternoon two weeks before the performance (this year we will probably meet Sunday, May 12), and a weekend day in the afternoon after the performance (this year we will probably meet Sunday, June 2). We will hang lights, hang microphones, tape cords, etc.

*No experience is necessary to **HELP**.*

Comfort on a ladder is a **HELP**, but we can use your **HELP** holding a ladder as well. Come and join us! We had a fun time last year. The Lighting and Sound Committee Chairperson is James Critchfield, (412) 624-8274. Call me, we'll do lunch!

**THE MIDDLE SCHOOL MUSICAL FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE** We also have a new committee this year — the Fundraising committee. This committee will **HELP** in collecting ads from parents for the playbill and sending them on to Ms. Bianco (our Computer teacher).

Members of this committee also will **HELP** in selling refreshments during the Intermissions of the evening performances (Wednesday May 29th, Thursday the 30th, and Friday the 31st, all at 7:00 p.m.). Call Nancy DelPresto ((412) 247-4129), Musical Fundraising Committee Chairperson, if you can **HELP** with our fundraising needs or have an idea for the committee.

**PLEASE HELP!**

—James Critchfield  
(412) 624-8274



## Music Notes



March proved to be a very musical month. The Intermediate students enjoyed a trip to the Benedum Center for a “Behind the Scenes” look at Pittsburgh Opera’s *Madama Butterfly*.

Two other programs came to school. The Renaissance Music Ensemble *Ex Umbris* presented a wonderful program on March 14th, and (at the time of this printing) we are looking forward to a presentation of “In Beethoven’s Room,” which will come to Falk on March 25th.

Many family members and friends of Falk students accepted our invitation to share their musical talents with our students as a way of celebrating Music In Our Schools Month. Many more are coming in April, so if you haven’t signed up yet, please call Dr. Conover and she will be happy to schedule your visit.

Pam Meyer, a docent from the Pittsburgh Symphony, will be visiting Room 115 on March 27th. She will help prepare the students for their trip to Heinz

Hall for a Tiny Tots concert on April 3.

Falk students are also making a lot of their own music as we prepare for special events in April and May. Rooms 112 and 115 are busy preparing their class plays. The Intermediate Chorus is preparing an April concert, and the Jazz Band, Middle School Band, and Intermediate Band are preparing for their annual May concert.

The Middle School has also begun its rehearsals for our May musical, *The Music Man*. We hope to see all of you at these events.

—Lee Ann Conover  
412-383-9617

### Contributions?

Please send any contributions to Amy Scerba at [ascerba@mindspring.com](mailto:ascerba@mindspring.com). If possible, attach your article as a Microsoft Word document. Or, just send the article in the body of an email message. Thank you in advance for your cooperation!

The next submission deadline is **May 10**.

## Computer Room News

**TECHNOLOGY GRANT** I'm pleased to announce that I was awarded a technology grant through a program at the University Of Pittsburgh titled *PT3* (Preparing Tomorrow's Teachers for Technology). The focus of this grant is to bring technology into the classroom.

Mr. Wittig, Ms. Edmundson, Mrs. Williamson, Mr. Reagle, Mrs. Metcalf, Ms. Jones, Ms. Wertz, and Dr. McDonald are all participants in this project, which I will oversee. The participants will create lessons in which teachers and students interact with new technology. The grant award includes a new Macintosh laptop, a computer projector, a *SmartBoard* (a revolutionary interactive whiteboard), and the software *Geometers Sketchpad*.

**SPRING IS HERE!** (at least, according to the calendar!) Spring is often a time of transition, a time to renew, to breathe, and to enjoy. The computer program will also breathe fresh air as students change gears.

**MIDDLE SCHOOL** is busy practicing for the new operetta, *The Music Man*. Students who are not performing will still be involved as they help to produce the program handout in the computer lab. Eighth grade cycle 5 middle school students will begin to learn how to produce an interactive multi-media slide show using *Hyperstudio* software. *Hyperstudio* also provides students with the beginning stages of computer programming. Sixth grade cycle 5 students will begin with Keyboarding and move into spreadsheets and slideshows.

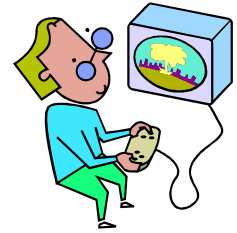
**INTERMEDIATE** is juggling three on-going projects: Keyboarding, Scanning, and Spreadsheets. At this time, we have just begun to type handwritten stories using *Microsoft Word*. Thank you to all the parents who have been encouraging their children to practice keyboarding in the evenings at home!

**PRIMARY** has been having fun learning how to create "webs" using the software program *Kidspiration*. Webs allow students to put their thoughts into categories and link them through shapes, pictures, and words.

**VIDEO GAME LABELS** Lastly, I'd like to remind you to be especially aware of the age label warnings on video games. Those labels refer to age appropriate visual content (violence, language, and sex).

A recent study concluded that children would act more aggressively after viewing violent video and computer games. So *please* encourage your children to look for the label "E," meaning suitable viewing for everybody! Thank-You!

—Barbara 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 (412-624-8010) for a complete list of the Heartwood books.

**APRIL'S 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

**APRIL'S Supplementary Books**

*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'S 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

**MAY'S Supplementary Books**

*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