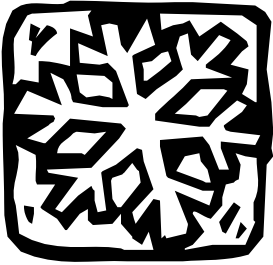


# FalkTalk

Volume 14, Issue 3  
December, 2003



*I have "grown up" here at Falk, and for nearly 36 years, I have thoroughly enjoyed the various positions I have held at the school.*

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## From the Director

At the October meeting of the Falk School Board, I announced my intention to "step down as Director of Falk School, effective June 30, 2004. It is customary to give a year's notice so that the university has the time to conduct a thorough search in order to fill the vacant position. Although news of my departure has already filtered down through the community, I have waited till now to make a formal announcement. The Dean informed me yesterday that a national search will begin in January and will continue until a suitable candidate has been identified. The Search committee will include members of the Falk School Board and several others yet to be named, and the entire Board will ratify the final selection. This process has always worked well in the past, and I am confident that the committee and the Board will fill this opening with an excellent individual.

This decision has not been an easy one for me. I have "grown up" here at Falk, and for nearly 36 years, I have thoroughly enjoyed the various positions I have held at the school. But with nearly 42 years in this "business", my wife and I have decided that its time to enter a new phase of my life. I leave at a time when the future seems very bright for the school. The faculty is extremely strong and committed, the staff is excellent, and the parent body is extraordinarily supportive. Optimist that I am, I know that the school could continue to demonstrate its superiority without a Director - at least for a time. But this is a time of opportunity. The Board, the Strategic Plan Committee,

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## From the PTA President

By the time you read this edition of FalkTalk, the 2003 Holiday Gift Shop will have come and gone. The holiday shop seems to appear almost effortlessly, each year – but those who coordinate it and those who volunteer their time in setting it up, staffing it, and packing it up when it's done, know it is a year-around activity. The purchasing of each year's inventory continues throughout the year, as does the making of some of the items by Falk School's girl scout troops. On behalf of the PTA,

I want to thank Kim Lincoln and all of this year's volunteers for their extraordinary effort. While the holiday shop is primarily done as a PTA service, rather than as a fundraising activity, in recent years it has begun to raise a significant amount of money for Falk School.

I would like to use this month's column to write about what the Falk School PTA does, in addition to fundraising, and what the PTA's fundraising

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## Calendar of Events

Dec 23-Jan 2	No School – Winter Holiday	January 23	End of 2nd Quarter (P,I)
January 5	Classes Resume	February 12	PTA Meeting 7:30pm
January 16	No School	February 20	No School - In Service Day
January 19	No School	March 5	End of 2nd Trimester (M)

## From the Director (continued from page 1)

and the university administration are poised to collaborate in exciting new ways.

*I am sure that the results only enhance the environment that all of you have chosen for your children.*

I am sure that the results only enhance the environment that all of you have chosen for your children. The Board, the Committee, and I will keep you informed of the any and all progress as it happens.

The next several months are always filled with Falk happenings. I look forward to seeing all of you many times before June. Have the most wonderful of holidays.

– Dr. Mac

## From the PTA President (cont. from page 1)

supports. I presented this same information at the fall New Parent Welcome, but it occurs to me that it is information that all Falk parents should have. Although fundraising is one of our most visible activities, the Falk School PTA is much more than that. The PTA is a vital means of communication among parents, teachers, the school administration and the University. As a university-affiliated laboratory school, the PTA works closely with the University of Pittsburgh and with the Falk School Board to promote the best interests of the children and the school.

*The majority of what we do is about time and energy. We organize, meet, plan, volunteer our time, make phone calls, send letters – whatever is needed. And none of that requires money.*

What are the activities of the PTA? The Falk School PTA coordinates and oversees: the annual fall New Family Welcome, the Sally Foster gift wrap sale, the annual multicultural picnic, publication of the Falk Directory, editing and publication of FalkTalk, we support the Falk Library by providing parents from primary grades to help with circulation days, as well as providing parents to help with the Gift Book Program and the Book Fair, and we provide funding for annual enrichment activities like author appearances, dances & musical performances. We oversee the Falk Fund, the room parent process (and the telephone tree), the Halloween Party, the holiday gift shop, bingo in the late winter, an annual Excellence in Teaching event, the Carnival in the spring, publication of the yearbook and, of course, Kennywood Day. The majority of what we do is about time and energy. We organize, meet, plan, volunteer our time, make phone calls, send letters – whatever is needed. And none of that requires money.

Fundraising, however, is an important activity with the ultimate goal of helping to advance the mission of the school. We obviously would not be able to do what we do for the school and for our children if we didn't have the funds to support us. Where does the money go? Here is last year's

PTA spending, in order of the amount of funds spent: playground funds, enrichment funds (to the teachers for non-budgeted items), enrichment speakers, Special Activities, FalkTalk, holiday gifts for staff, Excellence in Teaching scholarship fund, PTA meeting speakers, Sunstein Fund, end of year teacher's lunch, general administrative expenses, and the New Family Welcome. At the end of each school year, surplus PTA monies are split in some fashion (by vote of the Executive PTA Board) between the Falk Fund and the Excellence in Teaching Fund.

Finally, news about the playground. As I noted in the first issue of FalkTalk this year, a dedicated group of parents, teachers, and playground experts put together a design for a new playground, and we were in the process of gaining University approval to proceed. I'm pleased to report that the approval process has been successfully concluded, and we will be moving forward with Phase I of the playground refurbishment. Phase I will replace the playground in the space currently known as the back playground, leaving other areas of the back playground as green space. The timing is dependent upon ground preparation and lead time to get the equipment in – but we are hopeful it will begin to take shape soon. Phase II will involve engaging the same type of process to look at upgrading the front playground space, basketball court, and perhaps the field. If any of you would like to participate in Phase II planning, please let me know. The playground news comes at a great time – as a piece of holiday cheer. With that, I wish all of you a safe and happy holiday season!

– Pam Greenhouse

## LEGO League 2003

Seven students from the Falk School Robotics Club participated in the FIRST LEGO(r) LEAGUE Mission Mars robot challenge held on Saturday, December 6, 2003, at the Carnegie Mellon University National Robotics Engineering Consortium.

Over 1,000 nine to fourteen-year-old middle-school students from four states participated. Teams had nine weeks to design, build, and program their robots. The robots had to complete nine different "missions," or tasks, in less than two and a half minutes. Our first-time team of three fifth graders, three sixth graders, and one seventh grader worked several hours every weekend and several weeknights leading up to the competition. They learned about teamwork, problem solving, mechanical design, as well as programming. The team also picked a research question "Is there water on Mars, and if there is, where is it and how can robots help to get it?" The team enacted a skit to pose and answer this question.

Their hard work paid off: the team placed 7th out of 65 teams in both the programming and design categories, and 25th overall. Scores and other information is available at <http://www.rec.ri.cmu.edu/education/>.

Congratulations to the students: Gautam Nayar, Helen Kim, Matthew Laurie, Olivia McCann, Sean Davis, Sunoo Park, and Taylor Lawson.

## Talent Show Thanks!

Thank you to all who helped make the annual Falk Talent Show a success. It's always wonderful to see the talent our Falk families possess. Although not intended to be a fundraiser, the show raised over \$300.00 for the Sunstein Scholarship. Special thanks go to Dr. Lee Ann Conover, Ms. Laura Hunt, Ms. Deb Laurie, Ms. Karen Cain, Ms. Roberta Poziviak, Ms. Laurie Williams, and of course, Dr. William McDonald.

Anyone interested in helping out for next year's show, please contact me. Next year will be my last opportunity to coordinate this project, and I am anxious to infuse new blood and new ideas into the production.

Thanks, and see you next fall!!

– Charlene Barnett (412) 247-5351

## A Call for Ideas – General PTA Meeting

The second General PTA Meeting of the 2003-04 school year is scheduled for February 12, 2004. So that the PTA may continue to present useful information and provide meaningful topics for discussion about our childrens' educational and life experiences, I am requesting ideas for a relevant topic for the February meeting.

In the past several years, General Meeting subjects have included healthy nutrition, bullying, respect and gifted education issues. We have been fortunate to have as presenters knowledgeable outside speakers, as well as Falk's own expert faculty and parents.

Please take a moment to think about an issue or topic that you'd like to learn more about. If you, or someone you know, might be interested in presenting a meeting, let me know – I will pursue any opportunity for some good discussion! Your input is critical to a relevant and responsive parent-teacher organization – please help us to make the General PTA meetings useful to you. I can be reached at (412)255-2705 (w), (412)661-4856 (h) or at [laura.zaspel@city.pittsburgh.pa.us](mailto:laura.zaspel@city.pittsburgh.pa.us).

Thank you!

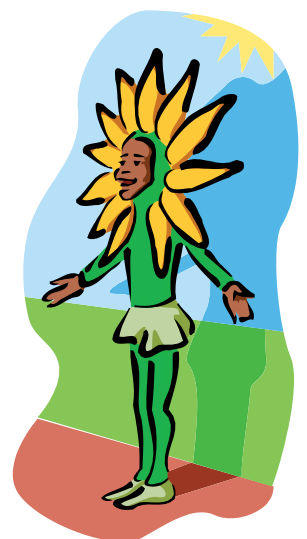
– Laura Zaspel Lawson

## What's New in the Primary

The Primary team would like to thank the PTA for supporting our annual Holiday Breakfast, which was held the day before the winter break. The Intermediate chorus also contributed to the festivities by singing holiday songs to all of us. Their voices are always so uplifting.

November was a very busy month for Room 116 as they prepared and presented their class play called The Rainbow People. Bravo Room 116! Also new in the 1st/2nd grade rooms is the completion of the Social Studies unit on Our World. Recently, they have begun a Science unit on The Environments. The kindergarten will complete their unit on Families and then start a unit on Communities. Many exciting and enriching activities are planned for all of these units.

– Jessica Meile



## Save the Date

General  
PTA Meeting

**February 12,  
2004**

## Computer/Technology

The Computer/Technology area is ready for the holidays. The Primary Students (1 and 2) have explored three holiday web sites: Chanukah Fun: [www.torahtots.com/holidays/chanuka/chanuk.htm](http://www.torahtots.com/holidays/chanuka/chanuk.htm); Christmas Fun: <http://www.kidsdomain.com/holiday/xmas/index.html>; Kwanzaa Fun: <http://www.kidsdomain.com/holiday/kwanzaa/index.html>.

The students enjoyed using the Internet in a safe controlled manner. Student objectives included: becoming familiar with the Internet, safety on the Internet, manipulation of Internet tools ( the address bar, back, forward, scroll, etc.), practice with the mouse, printing, following directions, and cooperation.

Kindergarten recently completed two projects using the webbing software, Kidspiration. The first project was a "Family Tree" using pictures related to their unit on "Families." The second project involved electronically dressing the bodies of four children with appropriate clothes ( like the old-fashioned game "Colorforms" where we used vinyl cut-out shapes that stuck to a shiny cardboard surface) , which related to their academic unit on " Our Bodies." Both projects allowed the students to experience dragging, deleting, choosing, cooperation, manipulation of program specific tools, and printing.

Intermediate students attend computer classes once per week for approx. 25 minutes. I choose their projects with many factors in mind: National Standards, Age appropriateness, Academic content, the season, individual and group needs, time constraints, etc. Their current project is Keyboarding! We are using a software program that is fun and instructional called, " Learn To Type 3." The Intermediate team and I agree that this is an excellent time to begin the life skill of Keyboarding. Students need to practice for approx. ten minutes every other evening at home until they have mastered this skill. We will allot approx. 5-8 classes for Keyboarding. Students should continue to practice their keyboarding skills at home even when we are no longer practicing in the classroom. Students should also try to use their new Keyboarding skills when completing other class assignments. Thank-you to all the parents who have so graciously bought keyboarding software programs. As of this writing, "Learn To Type 3" is available through Scholastic Software for a very reasonable price of \$14.95. I would be glad to order this software for anyone interested.

We are currently in the middle of Cycle 2 for Middle School. It's my hope to expose each student to software and technology tools that offer valuable use in their future academic areas and life. To that end, I am introducing this cycle of middle school students to the fun and creative software " Adobe Photoshop 7." Have you ever wondered how photographers airbrush those facial wrinkles away? This software allows us to manipulate photographs. Students use digital cameras to photograph meaningful subjects.

Students learn how to transfer the photographs to the computer, open the photos within Adobe Photoshop, and create seemingly new images. The special effects cause the photos to look like modern art paintings. Students learn to delete certain images (like the heads of people) and replace that space with whimsical images from the Internet. There is a current display of manipulated photos opposite the stairway near the gym. Come and see!

- Remember to check that our school is the recipient of your Apples for the Student Purchases! ( Can you talk a friend into registering for our school?)
- Register at [www.gianteagle.com](http://www.gianteagle.com) or 1-800-474-4777
- Enter the Falk School ID # 0335.
- Shop with your Giant Eagle Advantage Card.

Lastly, Congratulations to Falk School's Robotics team, " The Red Machine" who participated in this years FLL (First Lego League) tournament. They worked hard and played hard!

Special thanks to the participating members: Olivia McCann, Taylor Lawson, Matt Laurie, Sean Davis, Helen Kim , and Sunoo Park. Also, Kevin McCann for his mentor role, Jim Silver for his company's donation of their team t-shirts and especially Darryl Davis (and Noopur) for his awesome coaching skills, for his patience, for giving up his time and for opening up their home for countless hours of practice (and fun!) over the past two months.

I am always available at 412-648-8459 or [bbianco@pitt.edu](mailto:bbianco@pitt.edu).



– Mrs. Barbara Bianco



*Remember to check that our school is the recipient of your Apples for the Student Purchases!*

## Music Notes

A big "Thank you" goes to all the members of our Falk family who performed for the Fall banquet at the Katz School of Business. Everyone did a great job and we received many compliments and expressions of gratitude.

December featured three big musical events. On Dec. 8th, the fourth grade students went to Heinz Hall where they enjoyed "Musical Inspirations"—a concert performed by the Pittsburgh Symphony.

Dr. Seuss is scheduled to come to Falk on Dec. 18th, when 13 Middle School students will present "Oh, the Thinks you can Think"; a program of music and readings to the Primary classes. The next day, Dec. 19th, the Primary students will be treated to a concert by the Intermediate Chorus as a part of their Holiday Breakfast.



– Lee Ann Conover

## Carnegie Science Center Overnighter

**When:** January 23, 2004

**Who:** All Falk School Students and their chaperones

**What:** The overnighter will include an Omnimax movie, hands on science workshops, exhibits, a light snack in the evening, and a continental breakfast in the morning.

### More information:

- \* Registration starts at 7 PM on January 23, 2004 in the main lobby of the first floor of the science center.
- \* Overnight activities conclude at 10 AM the following morning.
- \* All children must be chaperoned. No more than eight children per chaperone allowed.
- \* Visit the science center overnighter website for more information. <http://www.carnegiesciencecenter.org/activities/overnighters.asp>
- \* The science center is located at One Allegheny Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15212  
412.237.3400
- \* See the attached survivor guides for more information for campers as well as chaperones.

### How much:

The fee per person is \$30, due by Friday, December 19. Please put your payment in an envelope with your name on it, your chaperone's name on it, and take it to Mrs. Sheila Talley-Armstead in the front office at Falk school. Please note that each student as well as each chaperone must pay the fee.

## East End Lacrosse Registration

Now is the time for players to sign up for the Spring 2004 season of East End Lacrosse, which fields both boys' teams and girls' teams. Students from grades 4 through 8 are eligible. The season runs from March through May, with optional Friday night sessions in January and February.

Interested prospects should go to [www.eastendathletics.org](http://www.eastendathletics.org) for the registration form and more information, or you are welcome to call Doug Campbell at 412-877-9690 with any questions.

### East End Athletic Association of Pittsburgh

1700 Grant Building  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15219-2399  
(412) 877-9690

### 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. A bookplate commemorating the gift 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).



Visit the  
Library Website:  
<http://tc.education.pitt.edu/library>

### Library Gifts

Thank you to the students and families who recently donated books to the library: Deb Brandon, Mary Ellen Watt-Morse, Jacob Watt-Morse, Colin S. Wilson, Sarah Finegold, Daniel Finegold, Nico Kass, Mrs. Minnie Avery, Jakob Wells. More complete information concerning these gifts is published on the library web site, <http://tc.education.pitt.edu/library>. In keeping with the school's internet policy, only first names and last initials are used to identify the children.

The school is receiving five copies of the daily (M-F) Pittsburgh Post-Gazette as a gift from Mrs. Minnie Avery, a former Falk School parent in memory of her husband, Dr. Robert W. Avery. Dr. Avery was a professor in the Sociology Department. The papers are in the library, outside the school mail office, and in the primary, intermediate, and middle school areas.

### Visit the Library Website

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

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. The newest middle school curriculum web pages support Ms. Brem's Spanish Speaking Countries Project.

The winter holidays are 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](http://www.pitt.edu/~fls)) includes a link to the library website.

To easily locate the library web site, do a Google search for Falk School Library. The library web site usually comes up first on the results list.

### Ms. Herward on Leave

Ms. Herward is having surgery over the winter break. She will be on temporary leave for recuperation during January. A full recovery is expected. Ms. Williams (116) will take over in the library during this time. Ms. Williams has a Master of Library Science degree and has been working with Ms. Herward to familiarize herself with the library operations. Ms. Williams will appreciate your support. Ms. O'Brien (112) will take over for Ms. Williams in room 116 working with Mr. Pihlblad.

### Library Subscribes to Britannica Online

Thanks to a generous donation from the Rao family, a former Falk family, all of the Falk community will have access to the Britannica Online School Edition. This outstanding online resource is accessible from all school computers (those connected to the university network and the dial-up computers) and home computers. The Britannica Online School Edition gives users access to Encyclopedia Britannica (most advanced), Britannica Student Encyclopedia (middle school), Britannica Elementary Encyclopedia (intermediate), Britannica Concise Encyclopedia, Britannica Internet Guide, and Video & Media. You can limit your search to include any or all of these. The Internet Guide can be especially helpful in locating quality web sites. The Video & Media section shows short videos related to your search topic.

To access the Britannica Online School Edition go to [www.school.eb.com](http://www.school.eb.com). The first time you will need to login. The user name is falk (all lower case) and the password is school (all lower case). After the first time your computer should "remember" you are a subscriber and not ask you to login. The Britannica is an excellent general information resource. For quick authentic information you can depend on the Britannica.

## Girls Basketball Schedule

### Falk School Middle School Girls Basketball Schedule 2003-2004

(revised, 12/05/03)

Date	School	Location	Team	Game Time	Leave Class	Leave School	Return Time
1/7/04	Comm. Day	Away	Girls A/B	4:00/5:00	--	3:15	6:30
1/8/04	Shadyside	Home	Girls B/A	3:30/4:30	--	--	--
1/9/04	Ellis	Home	Girls B/A	3:30/4:30	--	--	--
1/12/04	St. Edmunds	Away	Girls B/A	3:30/4:30	2:35	2:45	6:00
1/14/04	Valley	Away	Girls A/B	3:30/4:30	1:30	1:40	7:00
1/15/04	Shadyside	Away	Girls B/A	3:30/4:30	2:10	2:20	6:15
1/22/04	Sewickley	Away	Girls A/B	3:30/4:30	2:10	2:20	6:15
1/24/04	Falk Tournament	Home	Girls A	10:00-2:00	--	Parents Drive	Parents Drive
1/29/04	Ellis	Away	Girls A/B	4:00/5:00	--	3:15	6:30
2/2/04	Winchester	Away	Girls A/B	4:00/5:00	--	3:15	6:30
2/9/04	Sewickley	Home	Girls B/A	3:30/4:30	--	--	--

#### Coaches:

Athletic Director:  
Laura Hunt (412) 624-8017

Juliann Jaumotte-  
Girls A Team Head Coach

Donnie Wallace-  
Girls A Team Assistant  
Coach

Danae Clark-  
Girls B Team Head Coach

#### Important Note to Parents/ Guardians:

Please note the return time to Falk. You should be at Falk ready to pick-up your child prior to the arrival of the bus at Falk from the game. In addition, if your child **will not** be riding the bus back to Falk a written note signed by his or her parent/guardian must be given to the coach before boarding the bus to go to the game.

## Boys Basketball Schedule

### Falk School Middle School Boys Basketball Schedule 2003-2004

(revised 12/05/03)

Date	School	Location	Team	Game Time	Leave Class	Leave School	Return Time
1/7/04	Comm. Day	Home	Boys B/A	3:30/4:30	--	--	--
1/8/04	Shadyside	Away	Boys B/A	3:30/4:30	2:10	2:20	6:15
1/10/04	Falk Tournament	Home	Boys A	10:00-2:00	--	Parents Drive	Parents Pickup
1/12/04	St. Edmunds	Home	Boys B/A	3:30/4:30	--	--	--
1/14/03	Valley	Home	Boys B/A	3:30/4:30	--	--	--
1/15/04	Shadyside	Home	Boys B/A	3:30/4:30	--	--	--
1/26/04	Sewickley	Home	Boys B/A	3:30/4:30	--	--	--
2/2/04	Winchester	Home	Boys B/A	3:30/4:30	--	--	--
2/5/04	Sewickley	Away	Boys A/B	3:30/4:30	2:10	2:20	6:15
2/7/04	St. Edmunds Tournament	Away	Boys A	TBA	--	Parents Drive	Parents Pickup

#### Coaches:

Mark Rubenstein-  
Boys A Head Coach

John Nauhaus-  
Boys B Head Coach

Rob Hall-  
Boys B Assistant Coach

Athletic Director:  
Laura Hunt (412) 624-8017

#### Important Note to Parents/ Guardians:

Please note the return time to Falk. You should be at Falk ready to pick-up your child prior to the arrival of the bus at Falk from the game. In addition, if your child **will not** be riding the bus back to Falk a written note signed by his or her parent/guardian must be given to the coach before boarding the bus to go to the game.

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# FalkTalk

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