Fred Rogers once said, “During these troubled times we'd like to offer some thoughts that may be of help to you and the children in your care. Talking about our fears can often help make them less frightening.” Of course he was talking about how children and adults deal with war and their fears.

We at Falk believe that the words of Mr. Rogers still are valuable today. Hedda Sharrapan, the associate producer of his award-winning children's TV show has edited his remarks from an article he wrote during the last conflict in the Persian Gulf. Rogers’ advice to parents and teachers should guide us in our attempts to talk to children about the current situation in our world.

- Let your children know adults are taking care of them.
- Turn off the TV when images of war are shown, particularly tight shots of people in anguish.
- Limit your own TV viewing.
- Talk with your children about war and peace.
- Be a good listener.
- Monitor your children's war play and redirect it to themes of nurturing and caring.
- Help children to learn to handle anger constructively.

The advice is so sound. Our children, especially the youngest of our community, need to feel that their world is safe. They need to feel that the adults they know are in charge. Even with our older children, we should take care to assess developmental readiness before exploring these topics in great depth.

For the past few weeks, I've been comforted by a quote that my father used to say to me, “You can't get up the smooth side of a mountain.” He would listen to the pangs of whatever I was toiling through, smile and say, “Progress is in the maneuvering of the hills and valleys of a situation.” How true that is, especially as we face what the world offers us in these difficult times. A new war has begun in our lifetime, but for many of our children, it is their first exposure to this experience. I'm sure we are all going through new kinds of conversations with our children, in an effort to ease their concerns, and our own. And yes, I've passed on the quote I inherited from my Dad, as I speak to my children on this topic.

One of the valleys we experienced was our concern for Dr. McDonald, who was unavailable to us for a bit, as he recovered from a health setback. In his time out, we realized how much we rely on him, and how much he does for Falk. We're all glad to see his warm smile, and swift step back in place.

We regained our footing and quickly rose to the top of the hill, remembering that time and time again, Falk parents keep the “best interest of their children” in the foreground of their support. I commend their continued efforts on behalf of Falk, in all the positive and tireless ways they find to lend their aid. Some of the ways are to support and participate in the PTA. In that light, we announce a new slate of officers for the 2003-2004 school year listed in this issue, and we hope you will join us for our election and last General Membership meeting for this school year on Tuesday April 22, 7:30 in the cafetorium. We are excited about the new faces you will be seeing next year on the PTA.

- continued

Calendar of Events

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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>April 17-21</td>
<td>Falk School Holiday Break</td>
<td>May 16</td>
<td>Spring Carnival 5-9pm</td>
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<td>April 22</td>
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<td>May 19-22</td>
<td>Middle School Musical Into the Woods</td>
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**From the PTA President** (continued)

The evening will continue with guest speaker, nutritionist Leslie Bonsi, and her fun and intriguing ways of helping us get our children to eat properly.

Our fund raising endeavors have reached a nice plateau. The annual Falk Bingo on Saturday February 22 was a big success with new games and auctions for all of us to enjoy. Many Thanks to Sheila Talley-Armstead and her tireless crew of volunteers for a great family event. I'd like to thank everyone who attended and/or donated to the annual Excellence in Teaching Scholarship Event. We had loads of fun at Romp N’ Roll Skating Rink on Saturday March 22, enjoying the tunes spun by our favorite D.J., Charlie Apple. Thank you to the volunteers who helped get things “rolling”, and for the support of so many Excellence in Teaching and PTA Executive Board members, who helped us raise over $3,500 for the fund. We’ve “cooked up” a new fund raiser, “The Pampered Chef” kitchenware products, brought to us through the generous efforts of Dorothy Falk. Look for information at the parent teacher conferences, and in months to come! We hope this will inspire you to contribute recipes to our cookbook that we so desperately need to collect soon, if our publishing date is to be met. And we look forward to Falk’s annual Book Fair being held April 3-8, in our gymnasium. Our Librarian, Linda Herward, always does a wonderful job in organizing this important event. Be sure to support this event benefiting the Falk School Library.

As I close I leave you with this thought, “Learn to live with what you can’t change, but live to learn from what you do change.” Okay, I made that one up, but I think it serves a hopeful purpose as we struggle through life’s hills and valleys. I know my Dad would have liked it – he was once a Falk parent too!

- Charlene Barnett

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**From the Director** (continued)

The Falk faculty is currently discussing the procedures we should follow when and if emergencies occur in or around our building. I have attended seminars on the subject, and I will be meeting with university police to coordinate our directives to the Falk community. You should be hearing from us soon.

- Dr. McDonald

**2003-2004 Board Slated**

**2003-2004 Falk PTA Executive Board Slate**

President Pam Greenhouse
Vice President Laura Zaspel Lawson
Secretary Sabina Rosenfeld
Treasurer Rod Permigiani

**General PTA Meeting**

**April 22, 2003**

7:30pm

Leslie Bonsi, M.P.H., R.D.

Tell me what they should eat and what I should say:
A parent’s guide to feeding kids and dealing with body issues.

**Carnival! Carnival! Carnival!**

Guess what’s coming Friday, May 16th, from 5-9PM? You’re right the first time, the Spring Carnival! An all new, fun packed, not to be missed, event for the whole Falk family 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.

We will have such favorites as the inflatables Millie, the Millipede and Mama Dragon. The money machine, dunking booth, obstacle course and games of skill will be returning, and new this year will be a cow milking contest (not a real cow). Nicholas Ridge and Nancy del Presto will be serving a fabulous dinner and in the bake goods department we have Sally Sleeper and Lori McDermott filling our sugar quotas. In the cafeteria we will have the middle school dance which lasts until 9:30.

Please join us and make this the greatest Carnival ever! See you there.

- Susan Marsee, Carnival Chair

- Bishop Charles H. Foggie

“You can’t get up the smooth side of a mountain”

- Bishop Charles H. Foggie
**SPRING READING INITIATIVE**

Special events are planned in April and May to celebrate "School Library Month." Detailed information about these events and the Spring Reading Initiative was mailed home in late March. These include:

1. **The Library Book Fair:** Thank you to the entire Falk community for support and cooperation during the recent Book Fair. Results are not available at this time.

2. **Reading Calendar:** Families are encouraged to set aside 15 minutes daily for recreational reading, together if possible. "Reading" includes individual reading, reading aloud, and listening to reading aloud. Use the Reading Calendar to record reading times for intermediate and primary level students. Students and/or parents record the number of minutes spent reading each day. Parents are asked to sign the calendar. More than one person may record times on the same calendar. Students who turn in their calendar with the requested information for one month or two will receive a certificate.

3. **Book Badges:** Students, parents, teachers, interns, staff, and family members are encouraged to fill out a Book Badge for each book they read or is read to them. Book Badges may be turned in to the homeroom teachers or sent to Ms. Herward by way of the school office. One sheet of Book Badges will be mailed home. Cut these apart. Additional badges will be available in the library and in intermediate and primary homerooms. Note unpaged books usually have 32 pages.

4. **Reading Chain:** Badges will be attached to a paper chain strung about the library. The chain will be moved to the school for the Read-In. A total pages read count will be tallied and displayed each day on the library bulletin board.

5. **Page Tally:** A running total of pages read will be recorded and posted in the library. Total number of books read and the total number of pages read will be announced at last week in May.

6. **Read-In:** A school wide SSR Read-In will be held at the end of May. The entire Falk School Community will be invited to join in Sustained Silent Reading in the gym for twenty minutes on a specified day at the end of May. Parents are invited to join in. Details will follow.

Please support these activities. Information concerning the activities is available on the Library Web Site at [http://tc.education.pitt.edu/library](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](http://tc.education.pitt.edu/library) or use the link on the Falk School web page 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 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 (624-8010), Bonnie Gorscak (412-243-3672), or Beatriz Kanterewicz (412-521-7168).

THANK YOU to those who recently made donations to the library: Lucas D. Johnson, Deborah Brandon, Patrick Weeks, Brittany Jones, Patrick Ryan, and Greg Wilson

**Heartwood Curriculum Books**

Honesty is the attribute for April.

**Main Books:** *The Empty Pot* by Demi; *Osa’s Pride* by A. Grifalconi; *Our King Has Horns!* by R. Pevear; *Roses Sing on New Snow* by P. Yee; *The King’s Fountain* by L. Alexander; and *The Gold Coin* by A. F. Ada.

**Supplementary Books:** *The Dragon’s Robe* by D. Lattimore; *A Pair of Red Clogs* by M. Matsuma, A *Penny’s Worth of Character* by J. Stuart; *Sam, Bangs and Moonshine* by E. Ness; *Striding Slippers* by M. Ginsburg; *Summer Wheels* by E. Bunting; *The Talking Eggs* by R. San Souci; *Taro and the Tofu* by M. Matsun; *The Treasure* by U. Shulevitz;
It's getting to be about that time of year again. Spring Cleaning, Spring Training, and the annual Spring Musical performed by our talented middle school students. This year's offering is the 1988 Tony Award winning musical Into the Woods by Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine.

Into the Woods is a magical, imaginative adventure told through Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm's classic fairy tales of Cinderella, Little Red Ridinghood, Jack and the Beanstalk, and Rapunzel. As the intricate plot unfolds, the childless Baker and his Wife, cursed by the Witch, go off into the woods in hopes of ridding themselves of the Witch's evil influence. There, in the woods, they meet many of the Grimm fairy tale characters in an intricate and witty maze of twisting and turning encounters.

Don't miss the chance to enjoy a wonderful night at the theater. The evening performances are scheduled for May 20, 21, & 22 (Tuesday, Wednesday, & Thursday) at 7:00 PM. The students will also perform 3 matinees on May 19, 20, & 21.

If you would like to volunteer (lights, sound, costumes, concessions, etc.) please call me at (412) 624-8274 and I will direct you to the appropriate coordinator.

- James Critchfield
My hyacinths have broken through — can spring be far behind?! While we are hoping that the bulk of colds, viruses, and flu are behind us, germs will continue to circulate and spring allergies will blossom, as well.

With this mixed news comes a reminder about our policies regarding sick children and medication use at school.

PLEASE DO NOT SEND your child to school if he/she has any of the following symptoms within 12 hours of the start of school: vomiting, diarrhea, a temperature of 100 degrees or greater, continuous coughing and/or sneezing, unexplained and/or contagious rash, yellow-green drainage from the nose, or inflamed or bloodshot eye(s) with yellow drainage (pink eye). Regardless of symptoms and temperature, a child who is too ill to participate and learn should be kept home.

Has your child been sent home this year due to illness? If not, consider yourself lucky. While there is no inconvenience like having a child get sick in the middle of the day, it happens to every parent from time to time. Please consider BEFORE this happens how you will manage it. Due to staff and space limitations, children must be picked up with one hour of notification. Now is the time to line up neighbors, relatives, or a babysitter to help out in those unanticipated times. There is a child care center in Pittsburgh that caters to ill children but you must contact them before you need them. Let me know if you would like more information.

The Medication Policy is mailed to every family every summer. It pertains to ALL medication, over-the-counter and prescription. In short, medications MUST be sent to the Health Room in the original container with a signed medication administration form or similar note. Children are NOT permitted to carry their own medications unless prior arrangements have been made with me. Please contact me for an additional copy of the policy or if you have any questions.

Many thanks to our parent volunteers, Diane Lambrou, Ann Kelton, Nancy DelPresto, and Janice Anderson, who generously offer their time to ensure Health Room coverage in my absence. If you have a medical background and might occasionally be available to assist in my absence, particularly during the 12 noon to 1 p.m. “medication hour,” please call me. Even if you don’t have this type of background but would be available to help in the office one or two days a year during health screenings, I would love to hear from you!

- Susan Sholtis RN
School Nurse
412-624-8023