



## Independent Schools Masters of our Destiny

Norita Aplin, Ed.D.  
Executive Director



What does it really mean to be independent? This wonderful model of education is worthy of some reflection.

Being independent means that a school is not restrained by external regulations and is, therefore, free to make decisions based upon what is deemed best for that specific school. An independent school is free to

define its mission; to state why it exists and whom it will serve. It has the freedom to admit students specific to its mission. It is free hire those qualified to fulfill that mission, rather than being bound by governmental requirements. As an example, if a chemist were available to teach an advanced course, an independent school could hire her/him to teach that course. Finally, independent schools have the freedom to teach the truth as each defines it, not as developed by external sources, such as state adopted curricula, courses of study or texts.

To illustrate these concepts, allow me to give you specific examples regarding how this affects our experience at The Springer School. We have determined that our mission

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## NORITA APLIN TO RETIRE AS HEAD OF SPRINGER

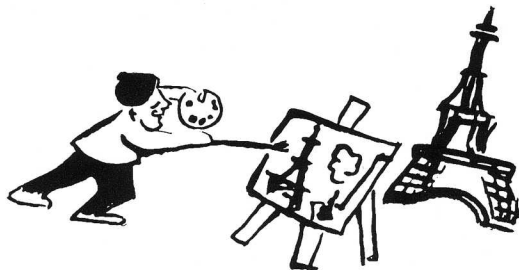
Early last April, after much serious deliberation, Norita Aplin, Springer's executive director for thirteen years, announced to the "family" that she would retire after the 1996-97 school year. It was an announcement that some knew was coming, but few were willing to think about. It was an announcement that was accepted with a sense of loss and grief, but also a sense of celebration and joy for a job well done.

Norita and her husband, Ken, a professor at U.C.'s College of Law, had decided some time ago to retire at the same time and Summer, 1997 was that time. Norita knew that the school was secure and stable and that she had fulfilled the goals she had set when she accepted the position of head of school in 1984. Those goals were: 1) to increase enrollment so that the Springer program was available to as many students as possible while preserving the quality of the program; 2) to become affiliated with other independent schools and to achieve accreditation; 3) to increase staff salaries in order to retain and attract skilled professionals; 4) to develop internal systems to maintain quality assurance.

Springer had moved to its current location in 1981, a facility that had been an all girls high school with capacity of 500+ students. Norita knew the building could accommodate more than the 108 students enrolled at that time. With a careful, systematic plan in place, the building renovation became a fun "challenge" for board

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## Magnolia Time Goes to Paris!!



**Magnolia Time**, The Springer School's annual dinner and auction, was held on Saturday, April 26. This year's event was a wonderful success, raising almost \$65,000 for Springer's Financial Aid Program.

This year's chairperson, **Pam Gardner**, chose "An Artful Evening in Paris" for the theme of the evening,

and created a little bit of France in the Springer School gym. Guests were treated to a gourmet dinner catered by Elegant Fare, while being surrounded by stained glass windows, thanks to the magic of lighting designed by **Glen Goodwin**. The lobby and hallway were transformed into a Parisian street,

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## Magnolia Time

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complete with flower carts. Channel 9 personalities were on hand to auction off some of the Live Auction Items, as well as provide entertainment. Julie O'Neill sang several French "torch songs" during dinner. Michael Flannery did a comedy routine and acted as emcee for the evening. Dennis Janson, Carol Williams, and Enquirer columnist Laura Pulfer also offered their talents as auctioneers.

The bidding on many of the live Auction items was fast and furious this year. Some highlights of the auction included: a golf ball signed by Tiger Woods, boxing trunks signed by Mohammed Ali, a trip to San Francisco, and a Yellow Lab puppy.

It takes a lot of volunteers and time to make the evening run smoothly, and all of Springer's constituencies were represented this year. Some current parents in leadership for Magnolia Time were Ellen White (art acquisitions), Susan Rush (class baskets), Nancy Cooper and Sara Morgan (flower pot & frame shop), Julie and Russell Wilson (Grand Raffle), Elizabeth Schar (hosts & hostesses), Kate Lawrence (reservations), Carl Pratt (set-up & tear-down), Dollie Eustis



Channel 9 personalities Julie O'Neill and Michael Flannery (left) share a laugh with Springer Executive Director Norita Aplin and Chairperson Pam Gardner during this year's Magnolia Time.



Grand Raffle winner Bill McKenna and his nephew, Springer student Michael McKenna, are congratulated by Norita Aplin. Michael won the \$1,000 Seller's Prize.

and Jody Lazarow (silent auction), Amy Duffy, Jacqui Phlipot and Nancy Johannigman (decorations). Springer Trustees who contributed to the leadership were Eileen Barrett and Paul Wenker. Alumni parents who helped out were Jan Hunke and Kathy LeFevre. Springer staff members also contributed time working as bartenders, raffle tickets sellers, silent auction helpers, and countless other jobs that are critical to Magnolia Time. Thank you one and all!!

In addition to Live and Silent auction items, this year's Grand Raffle were a great success. The winners of the Early Bird drawings were Harry Adler of Indian Hill and Springer Upper School teacher Steve Ploetz. This year's \$10,000 Grand Prize winners were Bill & Carole McKenna. Their nephew, Springer Upper School student Michael McKenna won the \$1,000 Seller's Prize. Thank you to everyone who supported Springer with the purchase of a ticket.

As for the past 14 years, the proceeds from Magnolia Time will benefit the Financial Aid program. This program provides assistance with tuition to families who would otherwise be unable to provide the specialized education Springer offers.

Thank you to everyone who generously volunteered their talents and efforts to make Magnolia Time the wonderful party it is!

## NEW PROGRAM NAMED IN HONOR OF RETIRING HEAD

Shortly after Norita Aplin announced her retirement last spring (please see article on front page), questions were raised about how to honor and thank her for her tireless and successful leadership. Typically, donations are accepted and a gift is presented during some celebratory occasion. However, that scenario didn't hold a lot of appeal for Mrs. Aplin. But after considerable thought and with some reluctance, she did share a dream that she has had for the school. Music has long been one of her passions. (She thought for a while about majoring in music and becoming a concert pianist.) She has also been most impressed with the success of Springer's Artist-in Residence program (see story about this year's program elsewhere in this newsletter). Why not a Musician-in Residence?

The **Norita Aplin Musician-in-Residence Fund** was established to allow Springer's students to benefit from working with a music professional who would be "in residency" and available to provide an in-depth experience around some aspect of music — whether it be performing, composing, or conducting; instrumental or vocal; classical, jazz or pop.

If you would like to honor and thank Norita with your support of this new program, please send your contribution, payable to The Springer School, to the Norita Aplin Musician-in-Residence Fund. All gifts will be acknowledged and are tax deductible.

# Artist in Residence Program Continues to Inspire Students

This year Springer was pleased to welcome Joe Goeldner as the Wenker Artist in Residence. All of the 22 self-nominated participants spent an hour and a half a day for two weeks working with Mr. Goeldner. This year's topic was cartooning and it focused on the techniques that go into creating a super hero and other comic book characters.

Beyond learning about color and figure, "the most important part of a program like this is that the children have fun!" said Goeldner.

Terri Moorhead, Upper School Director, feels strongly about the importance of the Program. "This program changes their lives. For many students with learning disabilities, art can be a strength. It gives them the opportunity to see their own success."

Besides working with Springer students and other children in Greater Cincinnati, Mr. Goeldner is the recreation specialist and art director for the Cincinnati Recreation Department. His recent work includes a 120 x 60 foot mural of the city's first waterpark.



Artist in Residence, Mr. Joe Goeldner (bottom, left) and Mr. Paul Wenker pose with Springer students in front of a mural created from their cartoons. Mr. Wenker is the husband of the late Maureen Wenker, for whom the Fund is named.

As part of the program, the artist in residence leaves behind a piece that he or she created during their time at Springer. This year, Mr. Goeldner left the school a photo-like painting of Andy Warhol.

At the end of their two weeks together, the student artists and Mr. Goeldner created a gallery where they could show off their cartoons. T-shirts were made featuring each child's original comic book hero. Many students said

their experiences with the Artist in Residence Program will be carried with them forever.

The Artist in Residence Program is funded annually through donations made to the Maureen Wenker Artist in Residence Fund. The mother of three Springer graduates, Mrs. Wenker died in an automobile accident in 1991. She was a tireless volunteer at Springer, as well as the Contemporary Art Center. It was through her love of art that this special fund was created.



## ANNUAL FUND NEARS GOAL



Annual Fund Drive chairman Rick Blum was pleased to announce at the May Trustees' meeting that the school's 1996-97 fund drive was close to achieving its goal of \$175,000. Funds raised by the Drive are used for financial aid for families unable to pay the full cost of the school's program. This year, more than \$290,000 has been awarded to 50 students. The Annual Fund Drive is the largest source of support for the financial aid program. Magnolia Time and other fundraising efforts make up the difference. Unlike other private schools where a portion of tuition may be used for financial aid, Springer raises all funds that are granted.

Mr. Blum attributed the success of the Drive to several factors. One, the school has a very loyal donor base made up of trustees, current and past parents, and friends from the Greater Cincinnati community who recognize that Springer is a unique resource that offers a program for students with learning disabilities that cannot be found anywhere else. Secondly, the school has very successfully used volunteers from various constituencies who play an active role in the solicitations. Also, the establishment of a giving club to recognize leadership donors has proven to be very productive. Charter Membership in the Reuben Springer Society, which was founded during the 1995-96

campaign, numbered more than 115 members after the first year with more than 85% of those renewing during this year's effort. The goal is to build a strong base of support which can attract others through example. This year, almost 60% of the total dollars raised have been at the Reuben Springer Society level. Thank you!

If you haven't made your contribution to the 1996-97 Annual Fund Drive yet, there's still time. Gifts received before June 30 will be credited to this year's campaign. Simply send your donation, payable to The Springer School, to the attention of the Development Office, 2121 Madison Road, Cincinnati, Ohio 45208.



## MEET SPRINGER'S NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Shelly Weisbacher, currently Springer's Curriculum Director, will become the school's new Executive Director on July 1.

Springer's Board is pleased to announce the appointment of Shelly Weisbacher as Executive Director effective July 1, 1997.

Ms. Weisbacher has been at Springer for 10 years and is currently Curriculum Director. In this position, she has been responsible for all curriculum development and implementation. Prior to Springer, Ms. Weisbacher taught in LD programs in Indiana and Ohio. She earned her bachelor's and master's degrees in learning disabilities from Northwestern University in Illinois. Ms. Weisbacher and her family live in Wyoming, Ohio.

For a more in-depth interview with Springer's new Executive Director, please read your Summer issue of *News and Views*, coming to a mailbox near you.

## Independent Schools (continued from page 1)

is to serve children with learning disabilities, as we define the term; not as others have defined it. We admit children who, in our judgment, need the program because of their learning disability. We diagnose the child's needs and build an instructional plan around them. We are free to establish how much time the student needs for each aspect of their plan, what sequence of instruction to follow, what materials to use, how to evaluate progress, or change the plan. In other words, the program is designed to meet each child's needs.

Beyond planning for individuals, we can reconfigure any part of the program we think could be better organized. We can

change staffing patterns, staff positions, instructional materials, curricula, school calendars and schedules, and any other aspect of the school, as long as we

operate with the basic standards established by the State of Ohio. Through these examples, I hope you can sense the remarkable professional freedom that exists in an independent school.

However, there are always attempts to limit these freedoms. Whether it be proficiency testing, mandates, vouchers with strings attached or some other regulation, it is my belief that we must be vigilant of these challenges and oppose them, no matter how innocent they may appear. The protection of the freedoms described here is worthy of our greatest effort. Let us hold firm the belief that we know best what is right for our school, and continue to be masters of our destiny.



## Norita Aplin To Retire (continued from page 1)

and staff. Norita can smile now as she remembers the "hard hat" phase of construction that ended only days before the start of the 1987-88 school year! And, enrollment did increase from 108 to 198 in seven years!

Norita saw the need to have Springer more tightly linked to other educational organizations than it was. To some there was a closer affiliation to the medical community than schools. Under her leadership, Springer became the first non college prep school to join the Ohio Association of Independent Schools

(OAIS) en route to accreditation by the ISACS (Independent Schools Association of the Central States).

Salaries became Norita's first priority as a means of ensuring staff stability. Salaries were woefully behind the norm and even the most dedicated staff had difficulty thinking

of spending a career at Springer. Parallel to increasing staff salaries was the need for increased financial aid as tuition increased to cover the salaries. Springer's board was and continues to be committed to maintaining socio-economic diversity among its enrollment and Norita has repeatedly found herself "in awe of the Board's efforts to raise whatever is necessary to meet the requests for financial aid."

Norita knew the quality of the program was high, but suspected that it rested on the quality of the teachers rather than any systems or curriculum to guide it. Again, under her capable leadership, there are systems in place that allow for consistency in decision making about the children's needs.

Feeling satisfied that these goals have been achieved, Norita leaves Springer with one last wish. And that wish is, that whatever obstacles that may exist in the community that

inhibit anyone from viewing Springer as a wonderful community resource, would be broken down so that any parent or any educational professional would feel comfortable exploring the program.

As for the future, Norita is looking forward to returning to the study of the piano and making music for recreation. She and her husband are developing a list of books they want to read and discuss together. She has a master plan for landscaping the yard so there are "flowers everywhere!" And, now with the time needed, they are planning to travel — big and small trips. On the agenda already are trips to Chicago for opera and to Stratford, Ontario for the Shakespeare Festival. Ultimately, they would like to take one big trip a year where they would stay four to six weeks in an area and really get a sense of the spot. The mountains of the Northwest? Tuscany? Britain? I hope they send postcards!

# SPRINGER STUDENTS KNIT BLANKET TO WARM UP AMERICA!

During the winter, students in Mary Thompson's Upper School class were involved in a program designed to provide blankets to families in need. The program is called Warm Up America! and consists of volunteers working to create afghans that will be donated to needy families through the American Red Cross.

Ms. Thompson presented her students with the knitting project as part of a "mini-lesson" that gave the students "an opportunity to use academic, communication and motor skills in real life situations, while teachers get to share interests outside their specific academic areas."

Some students in Ms. Thompson's class already knew how to knit, and she asked them to help in getting everyone else started. The students found the learning process to be the most



enjoyable, but also the most difficult. Once the class learned how to knit, they began to turn out the 49 squares that would eventually comprise the full blanket. The students also took their squares home and brought them in to school as they finished them. Ms. Thompson crocheted the squares before delivering the blanket to the Red Cross.

*Springer students show off their knitting skills by making a blanket for the Warm Up America! project.*



## All School Program is a Hit!!!

On March 26, Springer students presented an evening filled with music and fun for all generations with their All School Program. This year's theme was "Through the Decades," and featured songs, dances, movies, sports, and other highlights from the Fifties through the Nineties. Each department represented a different decade and took the audience on a trip through time.

The Primary Department hula-hooped their way through the Fifties to songs like "It's My Party" and the "Bunny Hop." They took us back to malt shops, *I Love Lucy* and Mickey Mantle, not to mention the first Barbie.

The Sixties were represented by the students in the Intermediate Blue Department. History-making figures such as Martin Luther King, Jr. and John F. Kennedy were featured, as were historical events like the Vietnam War. The Beatles and the

Beach Boys were the hottest names in music, and Wilt Chamberlain was the hottest name in sports.

The Upper School presented us with the Seventies. *Rocky* and *Star Wars* were the most popular movies of that decade. The Village People had everybody disco-ing straight to the "YMCA" while Led Zeppelin brought a new sound to music. Richard Nixon was forced to resign after declaring, "I am not a crook." Women began to prove that they were athletes too.

The Eighties were presented by the Intermediate Gold Department. Computers were the newest technological toys to master, and the first mechanical heart transplant took place. People all over the world threw away one of their white gloves and moonwalked to Michael Jackson's "Thriller." *Ghostbusters* was zapping its way to the top of the box office.

Finally, the choral group brought us up to date with the Nineties. They



*Primary student Sarah Madden poses in her poodle skirt with Springer Education Director Gail Conti. The Primary Department represented the 50's in the All School Program on March 26.*

sang and danced to a medley of "Everybody Dance Now" and Madonna's "Vogue."

Under the direction of The Unified Arts Teachers, the students worked and practiced hard to put together an entertaining evening. They had fun while learning about some interesting and important people in this country's history. They all worked as one school unit and had a great time being "stars."

# NEW BENGALS' STADIUMS BUILT AT SPRINGER

Fourteen Intermediate students tried their hands at architecture recently when they were assigned to build models of a new Bengals' stadium. The assignment was part of a geometry project in Eileen Schroeder's class designed to further the students' use of geometrical concepts in real-life situations.

Each student was required to design her or his own stadium using the concepts they were studying in class. For example, each stadium had to include four different solid figures,

quadrilaterals, and acute, obtuse and right angles. Additionally, the field had to be 6 x 12 inches. Many students felt the most difficult aspect of this assignment was making sure their creations fulfilled all the requirements.

The stadiums were then put on display, and the school had the opportunity to vote for their favorite. First prize was awarded to **Drew Farnham**, who hot-glued cylindrical plastic pieces in his model. **Robbie Kasee** won second prize for his bi-level

stadium that included a parking garage. Third prize was awarded to **Matthew Hicks**, who used 3,000 sugar cubes to create his model.

The students spent a lot of time and had fun building the stadium models. Most students were able to use items and materials found at home, and got family members to help out in the building process. They all agreed this project helped them better learn and understand geometry, and made it more interesting than simply learning from a textbook.

## Springer Grads!

*We want to know what you're doing now!! Please keep us updated!*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

School/Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Year/Major/Job: \_\_\_\_\_

Married?: \_\_\_\_\_ Children?: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Interests: \_\_\_\_\_

Would you be interested in sharing your successes (and challenges) with current Springer students?: \_\_\_\_\_



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