

The Messenger

Washington Christian Academy

1820 Franwall Ave Silver Spring, MD 20902 Tel: 301 649-1070, FAX: 301 649-9863

WHY?

WCA is the parents' partner in the education of their children. Good communication is essential for effective partnership. *The Messenger* is an avenue of communication between parents and the school to help all of us become more aware of, and more involved in each other's contribution to our school, through specific prayers, words, and actions. It is not without reason that the Lord called the whole group of believers His Body. Just as parts within the human body, we too, must share our various activities, plans, joys, accomplishments, concerns, needs, etc.

The Messenger will also carry occasional articles by our leaders, as well as excerpts and book reviews to deepen our understanding how a biblical world view shapes the process of education. May our efforts serve the glory of Christ, our Lord.

ARTICLES ON REFORMED DISTINCTIVES AND EDUCATION

What Is The Difference? And What Difference Does It Make?

Sterling Mehring, President, Board of Directors

This is a series of seven articles on the distinctive emphases of the Reformed tradition and how they influence the educational project of Washington Christian Academy. We plan to look into the following convictions affirmed historically by the rich Reformed tradition:

- 1.Covenant. God's promise, His people's responsibilities.
- 2.Sola Scriptura, Scripture is our rule of faith and life.
- 3.Sovereignty of God, the God of all truth.
- 4.Creation Mandate. Man and his relation to Culture.
- 5.Depravity of Man. What it means to teach students in Adam
- 6.Man the Image of God. What it means to teach eternal beings.
- 7.Vocation. The call of all believers to a place of service.

We hope these articles will encourage a dialogue within our community about what unites us in our commitments

and how that should work its way out in Christian schooling.

We are not attempting to teach each other doctrine but to clearly lay out what the leadership of our school is trying to do and why. Look for the first article in the next issue of *The Messenger*. Sterling (at 301-585-2600) and all the board members will welcome your comments.

OUR TEACHERS AND STAFF

The love, dedication, and professional integrity of our teaching staff is one of our strengths. Training workshops and other opportunities ensure continued updating of skills.

The teachers have recently returned from a two-day teacher's retreat. On the first day Dr. Ron Grosch fired up our enthusiasm for excellence, in striving for our dreams of a wonderful, high-quality Christian Education for all students. The next day we worked on the Christian Philosophy of Education component of the ACSI accreditation procedure. Each faculty member will also read a number of thought-provoking books on Christian education to complete this requirement. Some of our teachers recently completed requirements for advanced degrees through classes and workshops offered in our area. We are blessed with this professionalism that translates into top notch education for our children.

James H. Koan, II, Headmaster.

The Headmaster is responsible for all areas of school life, overseeing the other administrators. October begins a new tradition at WCA: Coffee with the Headmaster. Each week invitations to meet with the Headmaster and another member of the administrative team are sent to 20 WCA families. During this 45-minute fellowship time, parents

will hear a testimonial from a WCA graduate or senior, will receive an update on the vision of WCA from the Headmaster, and will have an opportunity to ask questions and interact with other parents. Our expanded administrative team at WCA allows for greater attention to matters that are of concern to our parents and for a

team response to any inquiry, opportunity or challenge. I look forward to meeting with each of WCA's 400+ parents from now through January. Look for your invitation in the mail and make plans to attend.

Janice B. Adams, Associate Headmaster for Academics. The Associate Headmaster is responsible for every aspect of the academics at WCA, N-12. This includes curriculum, scheduling, technology, and academic enrichment. It is the goal of our current curriculum development efforts to create a smooth academic ramp from preschool to the level of SAT and National Merit achievement that has become common among our seniors. Currently our elementary teachers are comparing our curriculum with the Core Knowledge Sequence, a well-proven curriculum developed by Ed Hirsch, author of Cultural Literacy. We expect WCA students to work with rigor at their ability level through ability grouping at each grade level. Our goal is to produce Christian critical thinkers who are able to participate in the redemption of culture, able to "...demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God... [to] take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5).

Some specifics about our current school year:

Upper School: Math courses now range from pre-Algebra I, through Advanced Placement (AP) Calculus and Differential Equations, with a wide distribution of students from 5th-12th grades. For example, there are 5th graders in pre-Algebra 2, 8th graders in Algebra 2, etc. Language offerings now include French, Spanish, German, and Latin, and 8th graders now have the opportunity to start a modern language and continue that language study through the AP level.

Lower School: Expanded use of Wordly Wise is helping us to begin a consistent approach to learning vocabulary from 3rd-6th grade. We are identifying those elementary students who are capable of reading beyond the curriculum in science, social studies, and literature, and developing a plan for interdisciplinary reading & writing. Groupings for math are more refined with classes at grade level and above grade level for each grade.

Carol Parent, Director of Teacher/Student Development. Mrs. Parent has a number of different roles. One of her main goals is to assist classroom teachers finding ways to individualize their programs to meet the needs of all students, according to the mission statement of our school. This may take the form of instructing small groups in the classroom, offering various types of testing, making referrals for special services, conferring with parents, providing materials

and research assistance, etc.

The Director of Teacher/Student Development also provides services to parents. Join us on Friday, November 6, at 8:45 AM in the school library for a workshop by Mrs. Parent: "How to get the most out of the parent-teacher conferences".

Robin U. Gropp, Director of Advancement.

The Director of Advancement communicates our mission to prospective families and to all friends of the school. She tells our various constituencies (parents, grand-parents, alumni, contributors, churches) what we are about and where we are headed, and encourages their involvement in and support of the life of the school. Her work is a joy, because of the great loyalty shown to the school by so many people from the 1950s to the present. Currently, she is working on the Friends of the School Banquet (tickets available in the office), and on this year's Academy Fund Drive. She encourages every family to participate, whether in a large or small way, to further the work of Christ in our school.

Other administrative staff. You may hear from them from time to time: Margaret Arnoult (Business Manager), Jenny Myer (Secretary and Registrar), Brian Vander Haak (Director of Facilities), Irene Ritsema (Director of Media Resources), Marvin Cofield (Athletic Director), Linda Olthoff (Director of Food Services), Sandra Huntzinger (Receptionist).

CLASSROOM NEWS

Early Childhood Classes. Mrs. Wybenga's and Mrs. Groves's kindergartners have discovered a lot about God's creation in the past few weeks. They have visited two nature centers already, and have become more familiar with ponds, meadows, and forests. They have also learned about the life and types of squirrels.

Lower Elementary Classes. Miss Kuik's first graders are excited to welcome Anne Pelissier, a student teacher from Washington Bible College, who will do her internship at our school. She will be with us till Christmas.

Mrs. Nola's first graders had a wonderful Mother's Tea. The children took orders and then served the mothers with breakfast.

The second graders have the joys and benefits of team teaching as they study science from Miss DeYoung and the world of maps from Mrs. Blackwell. Just ask a second grader what is an echinoderm!

The third graders welcomed several new students and two new teachers. God so graciously provided! Both teachers and students feel quite at home in our school by

now. We are glad they are with us.

Upper Elementary Classes. You may pray for special grace for our new 4th grade teacher, Mrs. Robinson, who injured her knee and is in much pain.

Two fourth graders in Mrs. Brown's class are especially concerned about their grandparents: Evan Kuester's grandfather is recovering from surgery, and Emily Bean's grandmother just underwent chemotherapy. Jessica Baldwin (6th grade) just lost her grandmother. Pray for the Lord's comfort for these families.

Joy over God's gift: Sara Low (in Mrs. Bratt's 6th grade) is getting a new adopted baby sister. Sara's parents are going to China to pick her up, on October 26. We pray for God's blessing on the trip and on the whole family.

Upper School. The Junior High (7th and 8 grades) went on an overnight retreat to Skycroft, a Christian camp, near Hagerstown. Their time was spent talking about personal relationships and about being a Christian and what that means in everyday life. Between sessions, the kids enjoyed playing games in the gym and "messaging around."

SCHOOL LIFE ACTIVITIES

Moms in Touch. A group of two or more moms (or any parent, grandparent, etc.) who meet each Friday morning in the kitchen at 8:45 through approximately 10:00 AM to pray for WCA, the teachers, administrators, and of course, the children, because we are commended to take all our concerns to our Lord in prayer with thanksgiving, and we believe that prayer makes a difference. We have a "cubby" mailbox in the teachers' workroom where we encourage anyone to place prayer requests. These are kept strictly confidential. In future newsletters we wish to publish answers to prayer and/or personal testimonies, as encouragement to God's people here at WCA. So let us hear from you! Currently we pray for the Baldwin family in the loss of a dear grandmother, for preparations for the portable classrooms, roof repairs, Friends of the School Banquet, the Coffees with the Headmaster, etc.

Student Council. WCA's Upper School students are represented this year by Alex Bender and Bekah Sebastian (7th), Leah Harford and Lamara Toro (8th), Mercy Erhiawarien (9th), Ashley Zupan (10th), Christina Mason (11th, Vice President), and Agur Adams (12th, President). Advised by Mr. Sanker and Mr. Vander Haak, the Student Council is enthusiastically planning for the upcoming school year. With the help of parent volunteers, the Council plans to organize several student-body social activities, such as bowling, laser tag, movie night, etc., as well as banquets, and trips. To

reduce the costs of these activities, we intend to raise funds from car washes, the Student Store, bake sales, etc. The Council is also planning several projects through which the students will have opportunities to earn their required Christian service hours. Parents and students, please support your Student Council!

The Booster Club. The Booster Club is a parent-run support group for the WCA athletic programs. This support takes the form of (1) advocacy for sports as an integral part of the WCA experience, and (2) financial support to supplement existing resources. No membership is required and participation is strictly voluntary. We assist with the transportation of the various teams and help acquiring some equipment. We are also prepared to assist in purchasing uniforms and renting facilities for practices and games. One of our goals is to solicit additional support and participation from other parents. For more information, contact Julio Barreto at 301-431-0235 or Yvonne Hollis at 301-490-9169.

Cheerleaders. Basketball season is coming upon us fast, and our teams will keep the season lively. This year, we have three basketball teams: varsity boys, junior varsity (JV) boys and JV girls. With so many players to encourage, the need for two cheerleading squads seemed obvious. So, for the 1998-99 season, WCA will have a varsity cheerleading squad and a JV cheerleading squad. The varsity squad is made up of high school students, and the JV squad of students in grades six through eight. Cheerleading is considered a ministry of encouragement and leadership. The squad members covet your prayers as they strive to set Christ-like examples at games, practices, and throughout the school day. We invite everyone to come out and join us to cheer on our teams.

Children's Choir. Miss Kuik and Miss DeYoung will start up the second year of our Washington Christian Choir on October 20th. Interested second through sixth graders will meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays 3:30-4:30 PM. Enrollment is still open. Their purpose is to spread God's word through songs. Last year they took their repertoire of hymns and other spiritual songs to several churches, our chapel, and to a nursing home.

SOCIETY AND BOARD

Society and Membership Committee. Chaired by Howard Bushouse (301-931-3287) this committee makes recommendations to the Board concerning the eligibility of persons for membership in the Society, maintains the membership records of the Society, and

has the responsibility for notifying members of the Society's regular meetings (Fall, Winter, and late Spring), and disseminating the results of those meetings. The membership committee also concerns itself with matters of fellowship between the Society, related organizations, and school families, and works to promote the cause of Reformed Christian education within the school community.

Advancement Committee. This committee concerns itself with issues of student recruitment and retention, fund development and school community life. See more about these in the next Messenger.

The Washington Christian Academy Friends of the School Banquet will be held on November 7, 1998, 5:30 PM at the Silver Spring Christian Reformed Church. Our featured speaker is noted journalist and author Terry Eastland. All are invited to attend this celebration. Reservations are required and space is limited. Please contact the school office for tickets (301-649-1070). For advancement issues, contact Paul DiPiazza at 301-587-3736.

Building and Grounds Committee. The Building and Grounds Committee is responsible for the maintenance and upgrade of our school building and property. This could include anything from patching the roof, to fixing the boiler, upgrading the playground equipment. Considering the age of our building, this is not always an easy task. But the Lord has been good to us and enabled us to keep ahead, much through the dedicated work of Brian Vander Haak and many parent volunteers. It is an excellent way for you to volunteer some of your time, especially on designated workdays. If you wish to contribute some skills or have suggestions, please contact Mr. Vander Haak at school or the chairman of this committee, Sid Menkis at 301-924-6689.

The Education Committee. The Education Committee is composed of Society members, our academic administrators, and faculty. Current members are Jan Adams, Dorry Kenyon (Chair, 301-871-0643), Jim Koan, Kati Korossy, Sterling Mehling (Board liaison), Carol Parent, Irene Ritsema, and Janice Watley. The Education Committee considers all matters relative to the school's academic program and educational policies. This task includes overseeing the development, review, and implementation of curriculum and of the overall educational program, the hiring of academic administrators and faculty, and the maintenance and improvement of the school's instruction. All matters are reviewed in light of the school's mission and educational philosophy and recommendations are forwarded to the

Board. The Education Committee often forms sub-committees composed of other members of the WCA community to get its work done. Some of the goals for the current year include revising school documents related to the Education Committee in preparation for the accreditation process, establishing a resource library for faculty and parents on the school's philosophy of education, and investigating the role of the Reformed catechisms in Bible instruction.

The Facility Planning Committee. This committee determines the need for and financing of any major improvements or additions to the existing school structure. Additionally, it will be studying the long term need for and location of another school property. With thanksgiving for God's provision, we soon will enjoy the new portable classroom on our grounds. Contact Al Minite (301-251-6264) if you have questions or input concerning this committee's subjects.

The Finance Committee. Our committee has begun work on the school budget for the next school year. The committee's primary objectives are to develop a budget that meets our needs for greater financial stability, more competitive faculty compensation, and improvements to our educational program and facility. If you are interested in contributing to the work of the committee, please contact Paul Di Piazza (301-587-3736).

Long Range Planning Committee. In the 1998-99 school year, the Long Range Planning Committee is focused on two exciting areas: the WCA technology integration plan, and our long range "model" school plan. The technology integration plan is nearing the network design phase, which will follow a complete inventory, and Y2K compliance assessment of all current hardware and software systems in use at the school. The current plan is being modeled after CSI's technology plan, and is heavily dependent on increasing the teachers' knowledge and expertise in the technology arena. The long range "model" school plan will actually be the product of several committees which will work to define the necessary components of WCA 3, 5 or even 10 years from now. If you have questions, or would like to share your talents in this area, contact Frank Zupan, at 301-572-9382.

SCHOOL FAMILY NEWS

Computers! We have a wonderful opportunity to be on the receiving end of several (more than three) 486 personal computers. The challenge is that they are in Washington--the state! And we're not quite sure how to safely bring them across the US. One idea is to fly Brian

Vander Haak up to Washington and have him truck the computers down here. If anyone can help, or has another feasible option, please get in touch with Brian as soon as possible.

If you have news to share that would promote the school community, contact Kati Korossy at 301-946-2414, Jackie Jones at 301-649-3842, or your homeroom parent.

Wouldn't it be helpful to have a bulletin board for personal services/items needed/offered within our school family? Could any of you help to make a plexiglass-covered bulletin board for this purpose?

Please, if you have suggestions that could make this newsletter better for our mutual good and for God's glory, contact Kati Korossy (301-946-2414, or e-mail <zoltan@pol.net>).

This first issue turned out lengthier than planned, due to the introduction of each "member of our body." As it contains much information, including the contact persons, you may want to keep it for future reference.

DID YOU KNOW?

Washington Christian School (WCS) opened its doors to students in September of 1960. In 1987 Silver Spring

Christian Academy started as parents of WCS graduates were seeking a high-school to provide the same academic and spiritual excellence. These two schools merged in 1996 and became Washington Christian Academy.

QUESTIONS? COMMENTS?

You may place your positive suggestions, questions, and upbuilding comments in a box so labeled in the entrance hallway, near the office.

TO PONDER

For almost 300 years, Christians have used Matthew Henry's Bible Commentary for better understanding of the Scriptures and their daily application. His comments on Leviticus 8:35 became the inspiration for one of Charles Wesley's hymn "A charge to keep I have." Matthew Henry wrote: "We [just like the priests] have every one of us a charge to keep, an eternal God to glorify, an immortal soul to provide for, needful duty to be done, our generation to serve; and it must be our daily care to keep this charge, for it is the charge of the Lord our Master, who will shortly call us to an account about it, and it is our utmost peril if we neglect it."

Coram Deo

