



The Messenger

Washington Christian Academy
 1820 Franwall Ave., Silver Spring, MD 20902
 Tel: 301-649-1070, FAX: 301-649-9863, www.wca1.org

FROM THE HEADMASTER'S DESK

Over the past years, I have enjoyed sharing with folks here in Annapolis that the roots of the Annapolis Area Christian School go back to Washington Christian School. A family living in Silver Spring became aware of Christ-centered education through their church, which sponsored WCS. They realized they had a responsibility to educate their covenant children with a Biblical point of view. When this father moved to Annapolis with his family to teach at the Naval Academy, he and his wife became part of the founding committee that God used to launch the Annapolis Area Christian School. Over the years, I have also enjoyed the fellowship of the headmasters of WCA as friends and fellow educators. Little did I expect that God would give me the privilege of becoming a part of the WCA community. But our God often leads in some very creative ways.

A year ago, I submitted my resignation to the AACCS Board with the intention of moving into other types of education such as consulting and accreditation, after completing forty-four years in Christian schools. As the year progressed, it became apparent that those opportunities would not be ready until a year from now. It was at this time the WCA Board invited me to consider the position of Interim Headmaster for this next year as they continue their search for the Head to commence in the fall of 2001. After prayerful consideration, I accepted the invitation and am looking forward to joining the great team of students, parents, Board, administrators, and faculty already in place.

May I share just a brief personal history? I was born in Paris of missionary parents on their way to serve in the Far East. I have the fondest memories of growing up in Vietnam and Laos. Much of my time spent there was before the major conflict we now know as the Vietnam War. I finished out high school at Hampden DuBose Academy, a Christian residential school in Florida. After a short time away, I returned to work at the same school, even as

I was earning my degrees at nearby Stetson University. My wife, Mary Jean, a missionary kid from West Africa, was also a graduate of that school. During our sixteen years of service there, I taught math and history, served as a coach and Athletic Director, supervised a dorm of boys, and eventually became the Assistant to the Headmaster, while Mary Jean taught music, was very active in the Fine Arts program, and supervised a number of programs associated with a residential school, e.g. domestic duties assigned to each student. We spent the next fifteen years at another Christian residential school, Ben Lippen School in Asheville, NC, and two years at Augusta Christian Schools (Georgia). Then, the Lord called us to a newly formed position of Superintendent of the Annapolis Area Christian School, where we have served for the past eleven years. God has blessed our family with two wonderful daughters, and now two great sons-in-laws. Jeannie has taught in a Christian school in Knoxville, TN, for the past seven years, but will be joining her husband in his new position in the Coast Guard. Cindy and her husband live in Lynchburg, VA, where she works in the local hospital as a nurse. They are planning a trip to Russia with their church group this summer.

These are exciting days for WCA, with great challenges and wonderful opportunities as we move ahead into the future that God has in store for us as His ministry. Please do not be misled by the term of interim for my title. No sitting back here. Too much to do for that. I welcome your making yourself known to me once I get on campus in July, and look forward to hearing from you your ideas and input. God is at work at WCA, and I want to be a part of that experience. Let's trust Him together.

Ron Whipple
 Headmaster

Is it on your heart to share in the Matching Opportunities for the Roof Replacement?

--see page 7

OUR STUDENTS

College Application Process. On the recent college trip with WCA sophomores, we heard about a student with perfect SAT scores and 4.0 GPA who was denied admission because he wrote a single sentence for his “essay.” Similar horror stories were related at each school we visited. My heart was filed with thankfulness knowing that it was nearly impossible for that to happen to a WCA student. Through a carefully designed procedure, Mrs. Adams, Mrs. Dullnig, and other faculty advisors coach each high school senior through the completion of the various parts of the application. Many simple but common mistakes are caught and corrected. This personal attention during the college application process is surely one of many factors that enable WCA students to regularly gain admittance to prestigious colleges and universities of their choice.

Nancy Keegan
Parent, Librarian

8th and 9th Graders Visit University of VA

*After visiting UVA, I really understood the importance of taking as many AP and Honors courses during high school as possible. All universities, not just UVA, want to see that you really care about being educated and are willing to push yourself to your highest potential. (Leah Harford) * I learned that it is important for me to work really hard these next four years at WCA. Academic achievement and committed involvement in outside activities are critical to being accepted to a college like UVA. (Jacob DiPiazza) * The trip to UVA really made me think hard and serious about what steps I need to take if I want to go to a good college. I need to be serious about my work and take the most challenging courses possible. It is also necessary to take part in extracurricular activities. The trip gave me a good idea on the kinds of things that a college looks for and the things I can do to prepare. (Erin Watley)*

Learning Latin. Latin is now required by all our 7th graders, to support their understanding of English grammar and vocabulary, to help them better connect to their Christian heritage, and to prepare them for the study of modern languages, German, French, and Spanish, offered starting in 8th grade. What do the students think of its value? *It helps you understand English better. * It helps to understand words you would not know. * It helps in your science studies. * When you hear a Latin expression you know what it means. * It helps to*

*understand movies better. * It helps to prepare for the SAT, and for college. * It will help me with my job. * It is fun to learn a new language. * I enjoyed the ability to say something and my younger brothers have no idea what I'm saying.*

Athletics. As this school year comes to a close, we want to thank our Athletic Director, Jay Van Dyken for all of his hard work towards a successful athletic year. Coach Van Dyken started late in the school year but has already made a definite impression on our athletic program. I never imagined that WCA would start an exhibition season, in baseball no less, thanks to the persistence and commitment of Coach Van Dyken. Thank you to all our coaches for being so dedicated. Have you noticed the posted schedule for the fall sports? I can't wait until next year!

This year's varsity tennis team included: BJ Henley, Joel Powers, Matt Sinkiat, Nigel Henley, Patrick de los Reyes, Ed de los Reyes, Elisa Mayes Tinisha McMillian, Megan Rosetta, Shanelle Martin, Lauren Minite, Tatiana Claridad, Brianne Tallman, Emily Gaskins and Elizabeth Kenyon. Congratulations to all of you, and our special thanks to our tennis coaches: Dan Francia, Noel Sinkiat, and Macie Gaskin.

God has blessed us so richly, beyond our imagination. Praise be to His name!

Yvonne Hollis
Parent

WCA Class of 2012. Miss Shoemaker asked her Kindergarteners to “fill in the blank” about their future plans. Here are some answers: *When I grow up, I want to be a president. Then I can serve God by telling people on the phone about God. (Jamie Warren) * I want to be a police officer. Then I can serve God by taking care of people. (Kendrick Sanker) * I want to be an army officer. Then I can serve God by protecting our country. (Riley Bean) * I want to be a basketball player. Then I can serve God by not pushing people around. (Khalif Smith)*

If You Were an Explorer. Miss DeYoung's second graders were learning about explorers. They were asked to think what difference it would make for an explorer to be a Christian. Here are some of their thoughts: *They could ask God for reassurance and strength * God could help me through difficulties * God would lead your way ~ I would have someone to look up to * If I would die, I would go to heaven * You would not be selfish and keep what you discovered to yourself * If you found new*

*people you could preach to them about God * He could tell people about Jesus to help them do what is right * He would not be proud * They might bring back stuff that was worth a lot and give it to the poor.*

Visit to Rose Hill Manor. The 2nd graders visited the Children’s Museum and Historic Park in Frederick to learn about the life of the pioneers. It surprised them that the children had to work, and only the rich had toys or time to play with them. How did it impress them? *I thought it was unfair that at dinnertime only the father could sit down and the kids had to stand. But it was interesting that this is where the word “chairman” began.* (Emily Musy) ** I liked learning about where the saying “Sleep tight and don’t let the bedbugs bite” came from. (They had to keep the ropes tight under the bed which held the mattress. Since the mattress was filled with straw, there were many bugs in it which could bite!) It was also interesting to learn where the word “toaster” started (pushing with their toes the homemade iron rack that held the bread, closer to the fire to brown it!) I also like the ice house where they kept cool big chunks of ice for their icebox. It was 20 feet deep!* (Eric Schweiger) ** The playroom had very old toys. I liked the piggy bank and the marble toy, because they were fun. My favorite thing was the ice house because I had never seen one before.* (Michael Visy) ** I really liked the old toys and the doll house. Another favorite thing was the Carriage House because the carriages were very big and some had four seats! They put leather from old shoes between the break and the wheel rim to soften the noise of the breaks. They called them “break shoes.”* (Molly Branson) ** My favorite room was the kitchen because I liked trying the minty juice (mint tea) and eating “hard tack.” We saw the mint plants outside in the garden that they make the tea from.* (Stephanie Lutz)

Cooperation In the Computer Lab. First and second graders played Treasure Hunt in their library time. They had to find foods in the books of children’s author/illustrator Jan Brett, which were listed on her website. They worked individually, then in groups, and finally, each child had to submit their Treasure Hunt Findings on the web. WCA Upper School students served as their typists and helpers to enter the responses. You should have seen the heart-touching interaction between the little ones and their highly esteemed “elders.” Just a week later, 10th graders in their History/Literature class assisted 5th grade students in finding websites

to supplement the research they were doing for a report on one decade of the 20th century.

Nancy Keegan
Librarian

Mrs. Brown’s Class Solves a Crime. In our Language Arts class we were studying mysteries so we used science to solve a murder mystery. We used some tests that real forensic scientists use. We had been reading about four people who are at a party at Felix’s apartment. One of the four people kills Felix. We set up a crime scene in our classroom, which looked like this: It had yellow police caution line tape marking a boundary all around the center of the room. Black marker outlined where the body had been. We had to wear rubber inspection gloves before we could touch anything. Our desks had to remain outside of the police line. We were only allowed inside the police line if we had our gloves on and we had to crawl on our knees so as not to leave footprints. We used pH test strips to test the different drinks that the guests and Felix had had to drink. We used the test strips to see if Felix’s cup had cola in it or not. It had a pH of 8, which refers to a base chemical. So he did not drink cola. Alfredo had a pH of 3, which is an acid, so he had cola in his cup. We also tested the pH of the ice in their drinks. We did a test of smelling perfume that was on a cloth next to a letter. It was the same as Jean’s perfume. We used some super glue to make the fingerprints on the cups show so that we could figure out who touched the cups. Alfredo’s fingerprint was on his cup but not on Felix’s cup. We used iodine to do a powder study on the different guests’ shoes. By doing these tests we were able to figure out who killed Felix. We learned how scientists help at crime scenes and how fun it is.

Michael Luongo
4th grade

Dante’s Inferno. Dante’s Inferno is raging in the library this week. Honors Ancient History students completed their projects on this 13th century poet’s vision of hell.

Inspired by this epic, the students created accurate depictions of the many levels in Dante’s poem. Students learned the medieval meaning of the term *contrapasso*, which means “the punishment fits the crime.” Dante graphically describes every human vice and its punishment in hell: gluttons are forced to eat muck and lie in a cold rain, violent men are boiled in blood forever, and seers have their heads on backwards and tear at their flesh. The worst sinners locked in a frozen

lake at the very bottom of hell, have betrayed kindred, country, guests, and the Lord. All of the projects of the students show a unique way of looking at the Inferno. Please come to the library to see them! Every year the Dante assignment shows the great ingenuity and insight of WCA students. Congratulations, scholars!

Kate Dullnig
Teacher

Future Scientists and Mathematicians.

Two of our 7th graders, Meghan Musy and Erica Gropp, have been admitted to a competitive NASA summer program at the Goddard Space Flight Center. Congratulations!

ALUMNI

The Wardrick Legacy. How strong is your vision of Christian Education? Strong enough to raise six children in Christian schools, plus raise three of their cousins and send them as well? Such was the vision of former WCA (or should I say WCS) parent Joyce Wardrick, who first enrolled her children into WCA in 1967, when the tiny school was in a little white house on Arcola Avenue.

We asked her youngest daughter, Marion Wardrick, who has showered her loving care on WCA students in before-care and after-care for 5 years, to fill in the details of her family's history at our school.

Amazingly, Mrs. Joyce Wardrick not only managed to send her own six children -Taylor, Joyce, John, Kenny, James, and Marion- to WCA, but also her two nieces, Mary and Melissa, and one nephew, Billy Carpenter, whom she was raising as well. She was also instrumental in the WCA attendance of another cousin, Eric Davis. She achieved this remarkable feat while working various jobs, including that of being an assistant to a physician at Children's Hospital.

Marion reports that her mother constantly communicated her commitment to Christian education, often saying that there was "nothing in life more important whatsoever, than the knowledge of God and the personal relationship with Him." She also emphasized that the purpose of Christian school was not to take the children out of the world, but rather to train them properly in the ways of the Lord, instead of the vain philosophies of the world. She saw that the Christian development of the mind is the hallmark of Christian education. So, it is not surprising that this legacy did not end with the education of the Wardrick children and cousins. Five of Mrs. Wardrick's grandchildren, Choya,

Zachary, Billy, Christina, and Paul Buttrey also attended WCA. Mrs. Joyce Wardrick directly contributed to the success of WCA as well, by providing daycare, helping with the SCRIP program, running our summer camp for several years, and offering an extracurricular drama program for grades 4-8.

And now, as Marion Wardrick, our well-loved aftercare provider and chess instructor, moves on to begin her own business, we bid an affectionate farewell to her, and to over three decades of school history with the Wardrick family. We thank them for their heartfelt labors, their love, and their legacy. May God's blessing be on them, as God is glorified through their work and example, and may we all sacrifice as fully to the education of our own children, and of others. Amen!

Marilyn Hoobler
Parent

Gabrielle Bonhomme, M.D. Gabrielle is the first graduate of SSCA/WCA to receive a doctorate degree. She graduated from UPenn Medical School on May 18, and plans to specialize in ophthalmology. Congratulations to Gabrielle and to her family, and may God be glorified!

BOARD AND SOCIETY

Spring Meeting of WCA Society. The Society met on May 15. Sterling Mehring, on behalf of the Board of Directors, announced to the Society that the Board has reached an agreement with Mr. Ron Whipple to be our interim Headmaster at WCA for the 2000-1 academic year. Ron and his wife Mary Jean were at the meeting and were introduced to the Society. Ron is retiring this year after completing 11 years as Headmaster of the Annapolis Area Christian School, and has over 40 years of experience working in Christian schooling. He introduces himself in more detail on the first page of this issue.

The Leadership Search Committee, and our consultant, Mr. Bruce Lockerbie of Paideia, Inc., will continue working this coming summer and fall to seek out and interview candidates to permanently fill the Headmaster position.

Another almost-new face introduced at the meeting was the school's new Facility Director, Mr. Frank Phillips. Frank spoke to the Society and shared his vision for a building that is not only pleasing to our eyes, but that also glorifies God through our efforts. Frank also noted that the tremendous efforts of Brian VanderHaak over the past few years will be a tough act to follow,

drawing a standing ovation for Brian from the Society.

Robin Gropp, Director of Development, gave the Society an update on donations and other development efforts for this school year. She announced the great opportunity for matching contributions for the roof replacement (see page 7).

The final matter of business at the meeting was the election of new Board members. It was necessary to fill at least two positions, with a maximum of five available to be filled. The Board brought four nominees and another two people were nominated from the floor. The subsequent vote resulted in the following five people being elected to the Board: Rev. Doug Bratt, Howard Bushouse, Yvonne Hollis, Tammy Prestipino, and Pernelope Whitby. We thank all those who were willing to stand for election, and look forward to the contributions of those elected.

Have a blessed summer.

Howard Bushouse
Society Membership Committee Chair

Long Range Planning. The facility needs of the school, along with the leadership search, are the top priorities of the Board this year. The long range planning committee has recently determined that the evolving policies of the Montgomery County government are making it progressively less likely we will be able to meet our space needs at the present location. After we met with county officials on May 25th, certain steps forward became clear.

We will be negotiating a new lease on our current building this summer. It appears reasonable to expect that we will be able to obtain favorable terms for a long-term lease. Anticipated terms will enable our community to significantly upgrade the existing facility on a shared basis with the county. We do not, however, expect to be able add much more usable floor space. So the current site will not house the total program of Washington Christian Academy on a long-term basis.

What about short-, and medium-term needs? A second step was to invigorate our search of other or supplemental sites. This search has been constant in the past 4 years but was on a low burner due to the attractive terms for on-site enhancement we were led to expect would be available to us. Earlier efforts have provided us with some options that may become short-, medium-, and even long-term solutions. But for now we will be meeting regularly through the summer to thoroughly investigate available properties. We are emphasizing the short-term space needs of our school. But the “off-site” search is opportunity driven; the right property or

opportunity will have more to do with our timing than the priority or effort we give this.

The third step will be to begin the process of a new strategic plan. These facility efforts and decisions need to be guided by a considered plan for the future of our school. The old working assumption of “two sections per grade” is not thorough or detailed enough to make clear what the ideal school property would look like, even if it were available. Robin Gropp, our development director, has requested a current strategic plan to aid her as she challenges major donors who want to know the shape of our vision for WCA.

The long term planning committee requests your prayers for these specific concerns:

- The Montgomery County council will shortly be considering formal guidelines for leases for properties such as ours. We will continue to engage this process to ensure that our interests are protected. Please pray for their favorable decision on issues affecting our lease negotiations.
- We desire God’s directions and His provision of purchase or lease opportunities for supplemental educational and athletic space.
- We desire God’s guidance in the whole strategic planning process.

Sterling Mehring
Board of Directors President

Echoes from the 2000 Parent Survey.

What makes Washington Christian Academy such a special place? Let’s hear from our parents. The 2000 Parent Survey ended with several open-ended questions, the first of which was “What do you think are the greatest strengths of WCA?”

Ninety WCA families responded to this question. While there was a wide diversity of expression as parents thought through this question and wrote their answers, six clear, though interrelated, themes emerged in an analysis of the free responses. The first theme related to the spiritual emphases of the school, in particular, the integration of faith and learning. This was mentioned in some way by over half of the families. Some parents mentioned the school’s “Christ-focus”; others “how Christ is the center of all activities”; another parent referred to “the unapologetic commitment to teach academics with the Bible as the ultimate base to and authority of all knowledge.” Perhaps one parent summed this recurring theme up best, writing:

“The greatest strength that sets WCA apart is its emphasis on integrating God into every subject.

This is critical and backs up a key point I try to instill in my children—God can't be bound just to religion. He is the God of science, math, English, social studies, and everything."

The second predominate theme was the quality of our faculty and administration. Again, this was mentioned by over half of our school families. As one of the greatest strengths of WCA, parents mentioned "the caring and nurture of staff"; "the outstanding faculty"; "compassionate, caring teachers"; "committed Christian staff who love to learn and love to teach and love their students"; "wonderful principal," and "cheerful, qualified teachers and administrators." The following response, from a parent with three children and with three years experience in the school, perhaps best reflects this theme:

"All the teachers, without exception, so far, seem to make a great effort to take a personal interest in each child. They really care about their students. Also, I feel the teacher-to-parent communication is very good and the teachers seem to really try to work with parents."

As a third theme, there was great appreciation for WCA's academic program. Typical comments included: "a strong academic program based on biblical principles"; "the core curriculum strives to challenge children"; "strong academic focus"; "great academic curriculum"; "commitment to academic excellence incorporated in a Christian atmosphere"; "the strong spiritual focus combined with a strong emphasis on academic excellence"; and "high academic standards and expectations." Many aspects of this theme, which is interrelated to the first so strongly, are summed up in this response:

"The academic rigor which incorporates a Christian worldview prepares our children to be what God calls them to be."

Although the above three themes were touched on by more than half the parents, there was much consistency about three other recurring themes. Parents really appreciate the sense of school community, the way that parents, teachers, and administrators work together in an atmosphere of collaboration, and the ability for parents to be involved. This strength of WCA is seen in responses such as, "the school is a friendly, welcoming place. Staff members, students and parents are friendly and there is a sense of camaraderie"; "Christian faculty and staff who are dedicated, with parents, in raising children in the Lord"; "Integration of family, church and school in teaching and training Bible principles;" "the

community feeling—parents and teachers care about each other"; and "a good body of believers to share the job of bringing up these 'covenant children'." Several parents just wrote the word "community" in response to the question.

The small size of the classes was a recurring theme mentioned as one of the greatest strengths of WCA. Finally, many parents mentioned the school's diversity, as reflected in responses such as "its diversity of students and committed faculty and small classes"; "many churches and ethnic groups represented"; "the diverse community"; "Christian unity for all races"; and "racial harmony/integration."

These six themes sum up the vast majority of the responses to the question of what parents think are the greatest strengths of WCA. Let's thank God for these blessings we enjoy, show our appreciation for the dedication and hard work of those who make the school such a special place through their faithful and skillful service, and commit ourselves to do our part in maintaining and strengthening these special qualities of our school.

Dorothy M. Kenyon
Education Committee Chair

TO PONDER

C.S. Lewis, contemplating the eternal destiny of all human beings, be it in Heaven or in Hell, writes, "It is a serious thing to live in a society of possible gods and goddesses, to remember that the dullest and most uninteresting person you can talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship, or else a horror and a corruption such as you now meet, if at all, only in a nightmare. All day long we are, in some degree, helping each other to one or other of these destinations. It is in the light of these overwhelming possibilities, it is with the awe and the circumspection proper to them, that we should conduct all our dealings with one another, all friendships, all loves, all play, all politics. There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal."

CS Lewis, *The Weight of Glory*, p.39
Available in our WCA Heritage Library

CORAM DEO