

The Messenger

Washington Christian Academy

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REFLECTIONS **Larry Danner, Headmaster**

Leaving a Legacy

Nehemiah is not one of those countless individuals who simply walk briefly across the pages of Scripture and then disappear, leaving behind only the memory that they committed no great wrong and performed no great deed. Rather, he is a devout worshipper of the God of Israel, a man of integrity, courage, and inner stability. He is a brilliant organizer, a powerful leader and, when his story is finished, he leaves not a memory, but a legacy in the service of the Lord God.

What is involved in leaving a legacy? Doubtless there are many things, but I want to focus on one. Leaving a legacy means telling a story, your story. In particular, it means telling your story to your children.

Think about what is recorded in the Bible. Why is so much of it narrative? Why the long genealogies and the lists of names? Why do the Psalms rehearse the past so often? This might all be tedious to us, but to the original readers it was family history. It was their story. In his great prayer in chapter 9 of his book, Nehemiah recounts creation, the call of Abraham, the Exodus, the giving of the Law, the rebellion in the desert, the provision in the wilderness, the conquest of the land, the time of the judges and the kings. Why? He is leaving a legacy for his children and his children's children.

Too often today, parents are hesitant to tell their story to their children. The result is a tragic loss to both parent and child. Telling our story means talking about what we remember, about what we have experienced. It means talking about our past. Telling our children the story of our past helps them understand how our past becomes a part of their present.

What should be included in the story we tell our children? Think about Nehemiah 9. We can talk about our creation or birth, our calling and redemption, times of deliverance, moments of temptation, of God's guidance and provision in our wilderness pilgrimage. We can talk about our struggles and victories, our successes and failures, our joys and laughter, our hurts and losses.

Why is it important to tell them our story? Because it gives them an identity. It gives them a sense of reality about life. It provides them with a true-life picture of the sovereign

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Peter Pan, Or The Boy Who Would Not Grow Up Performed by Students Who are Growing Up

The WCA King's Players reached their largest audience by far this year, performing *Peter Pan* to sold-out houses March 17 and 18 at the Olney Theatre's Historic Stage. Director Amanda Westly selected a version of the play developed by John Caird and Trevor Nunn for the Royal Shakespeare Company. A storyteller, ably played by Zachary Labutta, guides the audience through the meanderings of the whimsical plot and highlights Barrie's themes.

The first and fifth acts are set in the London home of Mr. and Mrs. Darling and their children, where rather gentle squabbles are apt to disturb the peace. From his first appearance at the nursery window, Todd Lees leapt, strutted, cried, and charmed us all as a perfectly cast Peter. The winsome Kayte Dzime-Assison brought all her talent and professional experience to the complex role of Wendy, at once child, romantic girl, and mother.

The intervening acts play out in Neverland, where the three Darling children join the Lost Boys, Wendy

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Director Amanda Westly auditions lower school students for parts in *Peter Pan*. Because of her dedication and artistic vision, the WCA theatre program exerts a magnetic pull on the student body, with students of all ages eager to win a place in cast or crew.

functioning as mother. Cast with students in grades 3-8 and costumed in rags, furry vests, and snarled masses of hair, the Lost Boys strive to imagine who their mothers are and how to please them. These young actors executed their roles with remarkable discipline and drove home Barrie's theme about the value of every child born.

It is the wild variety of inhabitants of Neverland that makes *Peter Pan* a spectacle. The pirates, huge in comparison to the boys, swaggered onto the stage and rasped one funny line after another. They were quick to the sword and sparred with all comers, especially Peter Pan. The Indians Mrs. Westly rendered as dancers with swinging fringes and beads. Student Ahjah Prom's choreography aggressively dramatized the warring spirit of the Neverland tribe. In delicious contrast, the mermaids glided onto the stage glistening and sparkling with insidious beauty. Tinkerbell and the other fairies flitted about doing mischief or good, speaking only in "fairy language."

The daunting backstage challenges of *Peter Pan* were handled by the most efficient crew of students we have yet to assemble. Invisible and silent, they moved and transformed set pieces, rolled the curtains back and forth, and managed countless props from tiny thimbles to an enormous portable nest. The audience enjoyed the continual surprises delivered by the visual and audio aspects of the play. With a set enlivened by numerous lighting effects and in a professionally equipped theatre, Howard Bushouse gave full play to his extensive skills.

The King's Players pulled off their most ambitious production to date, by the grace of God, with a cast of 47, a crew of 26, and countless parent and alumni volunteers. What better way for the school to make itself known in the wider community than by sharing with them the artistic gifts of God to his people?

—Robin Gropp
Parent

History night at WCA

The evening's program began shortly after the Egyptians arrived from downstairs. Thereafter, the audience was treated to Native American songs, ancient Greek folk melodies, a medieval pilgrimage play, and early American settlers playing "Yankee Doodle Dandy" on their recorders. When the program ended, the audience left to tour a Native American village, view Egyptian sarcophagi, examine the Trojan Horse, feast at a medieval castle, and handle early American artifacts in the log cabin outside the sanctuary. A number enjoyed a performance of Shakespeare's Roman tragedy, *Julius Caesar*. What brought these disparate time periods together under one roof? Washington Christian Academy's second annual History Night.

The evening was an opportunity for our students in grades Kindergarten through 5th to show the fruit of their study in the school's history curriculum. At each grade level, students do extensive units on various eras of American and world history, with each grade building on the knowledge gained in the earlier grades. Through a combination of hands-on projects, class trips, textbooks, videos, and historical fiction, the students are immersed in another time period, and bring back an impressive body of information about it. Native American foods, relief maps of the Nile delta region, Greek pottery and shields, medieval cosmological diagrams—all were on display last Friday.

As I toured the classrooms, a Kindergartner told me why totem poles were made, a first grader challenged me to decipher a message in hieroglyphics, a second grader revealed how the Greeks captured the city of Troy, while fourth graders shared their knowledge of falconry and medieval weaponry. The third graders' production of *Julius Caesar* spoke for itself. The students' fascination with these historical periods, combined with their teachers' seemingly endless creativity, produced an evening that was fun, informative, and thoroughly enjoyable.

Why do we stress the study of history for our students at Washington Christian Academy? For several reasons. The study of history broadens our horizons and extends our acquaintance of people and places. It allows us to travel through time to meet the heroes and heroines of past eras and revel in their stories. Traditionally, the study of history has provided *exempla*, moral lessons learned by observing the results of good and bad choices. And as we view the great achievements of past cultures, we correct what C. S. Lewis called our "chronological snobbery," the belief that any time before our own has nothing to teach us today.

However, the most important reason we study

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Kindergarten students Josiah Polk and Victoria Hoyt on History Night surrounded by "artifacts" highlighting the life of Sioux Indians.

The voice of WCA alumni

When you think back on the school you went to as a child, what do you remember? Do you remember your favorite teachers, your best friends? Was there a memorable sports event or school play that you look back on fondly?

I remember my last day of Kindergarten, when my classmates and I learned we would no longer have Mrs. O'Brien as our teacher because we were moving up to first grade. We cried and cried because we thought Mrs. O'Brien would be our teacher forever. I once told my sixth grade teacher Mrs. Schultze that I had "writer's block," and she let me eat lunch with her in the teacher's lounge while we discussed possible stories I could write. I remember she shared her Diet Rite with me, and I felt so grown up sipping soda while we discussed writing together.

Four graduates, Lizzie Keegan ('05), Lainey Holiday ('01), Laszlo Korossy ('04), and James Hoobler ('05) took the time to comment on their experience at Washington Christian Academy, and what they took away from their time at the school.

Lizzie Keegan, a freshman at James Madison University, appreciates the academic standard that WCA instilled in her. "Things like the Senior Thesis and internship were hard and stressful in the moment, but in retrospect I am better equipped for rigorous work" in college. Laszlo Korossy, a sophomore at Catholic University of America, agrees: "The most important assignment I ever completed at WCA was unquestionably the Senior Thesis." He appreciated that he could "choose any topic that could be critiqued or related to the Christian worldview." Laszlo also appreciated Mrs. Adams AP Comparative Government course. "It was perhaps the single most important experience of my pre-college school career, as it ended up deciding what my future major would be."

Lainey Holiday is a senior at the University of Maryland, double majoring in Family Studies and Criminal Justice because of the AP classes she took at WCA. Looking back on her education, she enjoyed Mr. VanderHaak's literature classes because she "had to contribute real ideas to the classroom discussion. The interaction was challenging but very helpful."

James Hoobler, a freshman at University of St. Andrews, said his favorite classes were Mr. VanderHaak's "Hislitery," and Mr. Sanker and Mr. Piotrowski's Theology classes. He also said "Mr. VanderHaak's Civil War Camping Trip was some of the best fun I've had in my whole life."

When commenting on their spiritual growth at WCA, all four graduates mentioned teachers who mentored them and helped them find their identity through Christ. Lizzie Keegan writes, "the theology

Graduation

Saturday, June 3rd, at 7:00 pm
Cedar Ridge Community Church
Spencerville, Maryland

Speaker: Michael Cromartie

*Vice President at the Ethics and Public Policy Center,
Chairman of the U.S. Commission on International
Religious Freedom
(appointed by President George W. Bush)*

For more details, visit

<http://www.eppc.org/scholars/scholarID.10/scholar.asp>

classes taught me a lot and led me to look deeper into what I believe about specific doctrines." Lainey Holiday is thankful for the teachers at WCA who helped her see "that identity, contentment, and joy come through Christ alone." Once she found that, she "was able to express [herself] in SGA, journalism, Model UN, and other things [she] enjoyed."

Laszlo Korossy writes that "theology classes at WCA were exceptional. I've gotten into many a late-night theological debate here, and it's mostly the material I learned at WCA that forms the bedrock of my arguments." James Hoobler also found that the theology classes prepared him for life in college.

As a fellow teacher at WCA, it's easy to look back on my lessons and see how I can improve. However, taking the time to learn what this sampling of graduates took away from their schooling teaches me that God is with us—both teachers and students—while we struggle to teach and learn. Whether they're learning to write their name for the first time, memorize Psalm 23, reading *To Kill A Mockingbird*, or get ready for Spruce Lake, WCA's students are learning about God's world, and their special place in it.

—Callie Feyen, Teacher
Messenger Liaison



**Renaissance portrait
in colored pencil
and oil pastel
by Erica Prestipino,
5th grade.**

The Long View

Pretend you are in a hot air balloon that takes you up and out past the years of raising your children. Many of you reading this are already there! You look down on those years and realize that God *does* bestow His grace upon parents, (and children!), but also that hindsight is 20-20! Although I am somewhere in the middle years of raising my children, I have needed, at times, to travel mentally to that perspective, and ask the Lord: Are we doing the best in Your eyes for our children? Are we doing what you want us to do? There are clouds in the way—can you remove them, Lord?

It takes time to see God's divine and eternal providence, but when we know eventually we will see it, our faith is strengthened...and we persevere.

Almost 18 years ago, my husband and I moved to the DC area with three little children. We wanted to enroll our oldest in preschool and, after looking, we found a school five minutes from our home—a Christian school.

The first year I recall thinking, these teachers were hand-picked! And indeed, to this day, they still are. It took a while for our family to find a church home, but already the school community was a source of spiritual connection and fellowship. The Lord knew I needed that support, as we had a son who was to have a serious operation in the near future, we had no family in the area, and soon we were to have another child.

As the years went by and we registered each child at Washington Christian, we increasingly appreciated the value the teachers and faculty placed on each student. We discussed the spiritual, physical, and emotional needs of our children with their teachers. We began to anticipate traditional events like the school bazaar and the picnic. We also found great worth and peace in the emphasis placed on praise, worship, and prayer.

As our perspective lengthened with the years, we saw a further benefit: our older children were *also* gaining a perspective—beginning to see the worth of what they had learned in their elementary years—and to use these Christian values to guide them in more complex settings. This was tremendously affirming. The fact that my children studied God's word every day at school wasn't a replacement for church, but an important supplement.

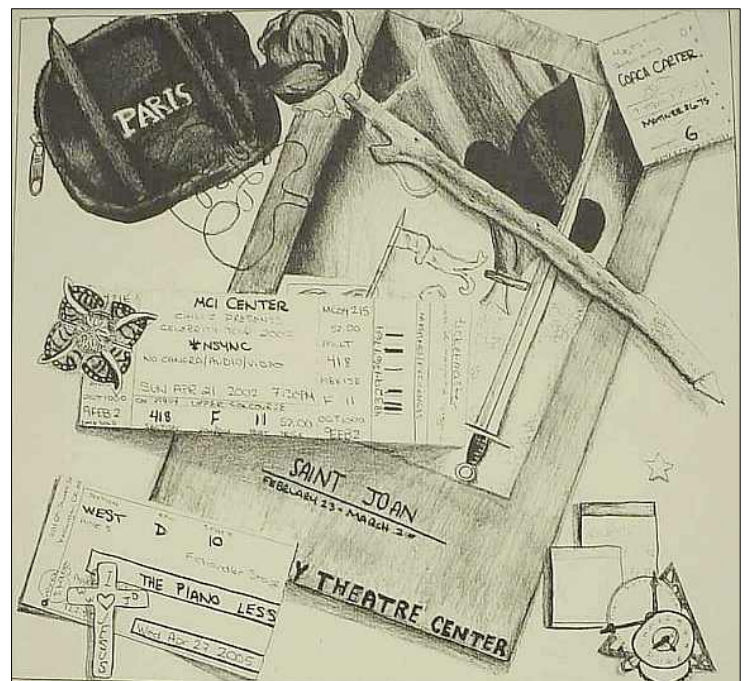
Each year as it was time to re-enroll, my husband and I would discuss the plusses and minuses of the curriculum and overall program at Washington Christian. There were some things we wanted to see

offered that weren't because of constraints of budget, facility, and the somewhat early stage the school was still in. We would talk about important concerns regarding our family budget and eye the public grade school two blocks from our house where some of the neighbor friends attended. We would pray. Then, we would re-enroll our children at Washington Christian.

While the reasons were plenty, I now see that all the while God was raising us, as if in the imagined hot air balloon, to a height from which we could see a larger panorama that included all the years of raising our family, but much more. It also included the raising of other children, long ago before ours were born, and children younger than ours, on into the future. In this way, God put a desire in our hearts to be a part of something bigger than ourselves. In our early years at WCA, I didn't see it, and couldn't name it. Now, with our two youngest still here, God is revealing more of His plan to us. He has allowed us to see His purpose for the school in this place and time in history.

There are many who have a longer perspective on WCA than I, and others who are newcomers to our community. Each plays a role in furthering God's purpose for the future. And now, He asks us to take a big step, to trust Him with His best, to trust *His* "bigger picture." Perhaps in looking back someday from a clear, lofty view, we will see that this next step—a giant one for our school community—was only a baby step for our almighty, powerful, and faithful Father.

—Claire McGoff
Parent



Personal Still Life, pencil drawing
by Kayte Dzime-Assison, 11th grade.

Promise Tree auction

WCA held its annual Promise Tree Auction on March 25 at Faith Presbyterian Church in Olney. About 110 parents, faculty, grandparents, and friends of the school attended. We had a western theme, and many enjoyed wearing casual jeans, boots, hats, and bandanas.

We added a chili cook-off this year, and had 13 entries. Winners were: The McGoffs for Best Traditional (tomato based) Chili, Maureen Rosetta for Best White Chili, and the Gordons for Most Original Recipe. Dave and Laurie Calkins provided delicious cornbread, chips, queso, and fabulous assorted dessert bars.

The event was generously sponsored by ALKS & Associates; All Seasons Plumbing, Heating & A/C, Inc.; Menkis Real Estate; RGM Graphics, Inc.; and Z-Tech Corporation. Former parent Steve Lynott, and current parents Wendi Gordon and Joe Visy, served as our auctioneers.

During the silent auction, we enjoyed delightful piano music by Erin, Casey, and James McGoff, Kristin Phillips, Elizabeth Bushouse, Ryan Gordon, Tracey Cleveland, and John Hoobler.

Our heartfelt thanks to our coordinator, eight-year veteran Jean Visy, and to the many parents and teachers whose hard work God has blessed to make the evening a success. The 200 live and silent auction items generated \$24,744 in proceeds. We praise our faithful God for His bountiful provision.



Each grade donated a basket with themes ranging from “Summer Camp” to “Chronicles of Narnia.” These class creations are always a highlight of the Auction.

LEAVING A LEGACY

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purposes of God. It gives them an understanding of the grace of God.

How do we tell the story? There is no magic formula, but here are some suggestions. Make time for extended and planned conversations. Take time to answer the spontaneous and curious questions. Be appropriate—there is a time for everything under the sun...Be honest—tell the truth. Be genuine—share your feelings. Do not try to spiritualize your story; recognize the spiritual in your story.

It is easy to avoid telling our story by hiding behind some statement like, “I don’t like talking about myself.” But Jesus said, “Let your light shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” We can’t leave a legacy if we don’t tell the story, and if we don’t tell the story, then He does not get the glory.

The Bible is the story of God’s grace in print. You are the story of God’s grace in flesh. Leave your children a legacy of grace—tell them your story.



WCA Sport News

As the weather takes turn toward spring, so does the athletic department at WCA. Teams are already practicing and competing.

The softball teams and baseball team are well underway with training, and there is even the possibility of MS baseball beginning this year. The tennis and track programs will be starting up soon as well, though we are still searching for a tennis coach.

The tennis team has seen almost every player from last year return and is looking to move up after two consecutive third place finishes. We are hoping to expand our track team this year, adding more participants so we can enter more events.

The baseball team, again under Mr. Taney’s lead, will be looking to defend their league dominance, having won three titles in a row.

The varsity softball team is beginning their second full season, with Mr. Koutsandreas moving up from the MS school team to lead them. Mrs. Workman and Mrs. Critides are coaching the MS softball team.

We are looking forward to lots of great competition from our teams as they seek not only victories, but also to honor the Lord for blessing them with their abilities.

—Paul Tarry, Athletic Director

Greek temples with Doric, Corinthian, and Ionic columns, made by 2nd graders for History Night. In the background, the student-made pop-up books depicting Ancient Greek topics.

HISTORY NIGHT

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history is because we serve a God who is Lord over history. In the study of history, we discern his sovereignty over the events of the past—His care for His people and his judgment of sin. Historical events are fraught with meaning because they advance God's purposes for this world and bring closer the ultimate establishment of His kingdom. Indeed, so important is history that God Himself entered it in the person of Jesus Christ, allowing mankind to see God move in the midst of this world's events. And as our students proceed along their study of earlier periods, they can track in countless ways the footprints left by the Lord of history when He walked this earth two thousand years ago.

—Bill Zimmerman
Principal

From *Here* and *There*

1st graders had their traditional day-long celebration of the **100th day of the school year**, enriching their math studies with hats with 100 items on it, bags containing 100 identical items with 3 clues as to the contents, 100 helium balloons, and 100% excitement.

3rd graders have collected, counted, and grouped **55,518 pennies** toward their goal of 1,000,000 pennies to help build our (their) new school. All our friends are invited to help out with this noble effort.

The 4th and 5th grade **Recorder Band** and the Middle School **Concert Band** played their first concert under Mr. Robert Fogleman's direction in February before a packed house. Everyone was impressed at how quickly the band students had progressed and how well the recorder students played some challenging music. The Concert Band played a variety of selections from classical themes to hymns to rock. The Recorder Band played tunes out of the method book with a CD accompaniment. Their **next concert** will be on May 25th, a Thursday, at 7:00 pm.

7th graders hosted a **bake sale** to raise money for **relief in the Darfur region** of Sudan.

Scott Low, 8th grader at WCA, won a four-year scholarship to UMBC this past weekend by winning the **Sweet 16 Chess tournament** at UMBC. In early April, Scott will be representing Washington Christian Academy at the National Junior High Championship in Louisville, Kentucky.

Fifty-two of our 178 Middle and Upper School students earned a place on the **First Semester Honor Roll**. Many of these students achieved academic excellence while also pursuing excellence in the arts and athletics. Check out the list of our 22 Great Distinction (GPA 4.0 & above), 27 Distinction (GPA 3.75-3.99) and 23 Honors students (GPA 3.5-3.74) on our website.

In February, **Stuart and Cathy Showalter**, parents of Jesse, 8th grade, spoke to the 8th grade Bible class about their

missionary work in Africa, where they have been working for close to 20 years with Wycliffe Bible Translators and the Summer Institute of Linguistics in Burkina Faso, West Africa. They are here now on furlough. The 8th graders learned about the challenges of translating God's Word for people who had no written language when the Showalters arrived. They also learned about day-to-day life in a remote African village.

We keep building the **WCA website** to make better use of our electronic resources and to improve communication. Our newest addition is the posting of class assignments by time periods and teachers. Explore our site and visit us often!

On March 9, we held another **corporate prayer evening**, praying to our gracious God for our school's present and future. Keeping the example of our forefathers before us, "They all joined together constantly in prayer" (Acts 1:14), join us in daily prayers and in another evening of corporate prayer on April 25, 7:30-8:30 pm, in the Lower School library at Colesville Baptist Church.



Samurai on Bridge, pencil drawing from a model
by Kristin Philips, 10th grade.

To Ponder

The character that takes command in moments of crucial choices has already been determined by a thousand other choices made in seemingly unimportant moments. It has been determined by all the day-by-day decisions made when life seemed easy and crises seemed far away—the decisions that, piece by piece, bit by bit, developed habits of discipline or of laziness, habits of self-sacrifice or self-indulgence, habits of duty and honor and integrity or dishonor and shame..

—Ronald Reagan, on character

Coram Deo

What is your only comfort in life, and in death?

That I, with body and soul, both in life and death, am not my own, but belong unto my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ; who, with his precious blood, has fully satisfied for all my sins, and delivered me from all the power of the devil; and so preserves me that without the will of my heavenly Father, not a hair can fall from my head; yea, that all things must be subservient to my salvation, and therefore, by his Holy Spirit, He also assures me of eternal life, and makes me sincerely willing and ready, henceforth, to live unto him.

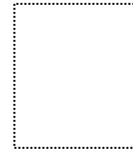
Heidelberg Catechism, First Question and Answer

The Messenger

Washington Christian Academy

PO Box 9847

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WASHINGTON

reverent, adventurous

CHRISTIAN

academically serious

ACADEMY

in the historic Reformed tradition