



Kindergarteners take on farm-style relay challenges for Charlotte's Web Day last Friday.



THE NEWSLETTER OF
NEW COVENANT SCHOOLS

QUID NOVI

OCTOBER 31, 2022
VOL. 25 NO. 10 MAJORIS

WHAT'S MOST IMPORTANT IN THE CLASSROOM? THE TEACHER

by John Heaton, Headmaster

Years ago in the early 2000s, an educational consultant I respected confidently asserted that I had better pay attention to remote learning. He suggested that the school would increasingly face difficulty attracting day students because families would eventually opt for online learning for a fraction of the cost. Technology, he said, was going to make “brick and mortar” schools nearly obsolete. He was charging me handsomely, so I always took his advice seriously; however, I remained skeptical. In my gut I knew that there was so much more to school than mere information transfer; that his scenario was unlikely to come to pass.

A few years later Lynchburg City Schools

boldly announced that every student at Perrymont Elementary School would be the recipient of a new Chromebook. I got the news from a full-page ad in the newspaper where it was celebrated as an unquestioned, obvious good. A new path to self-directed learning was on the way! I was working on an advanced degree at the time, and that was the moment my thesis was born. I researched many of the available studies and wrote about the use of technology in the classroom. I found that technology has failed to deliver higher test scores, and that much of the data show that over-reliance upon technology degrades learning. You can read the whole thing at the link at the end of this article.

continued on p.4

WHAT'S NEW?

Tours for Prospective Families

Do you have a friend interested in attending New Covenant Schools? Prospective families are invited to join **Headmaster Heaton** in the lobby to visit our classrooms and view our campus on Thursday mornings. Classes are filling for next year's term and early applications are encouraged, especially in grades rising to 2, 4, 6, and 10. Visitors may schedule a tour by visiting our website through this link <https://www.newcovenantschools.org/admissions/schedule-a-tour/>. The site allows guests to choose a day suitable to their schedule. Additionally, **Linda Simon** is happy to answer any questions and welcome our guests. For more information, contact her at lsimon@newcovenantschools.org.

THINK. LEARN. LOVE. LIVE.

H O N O R A R I A

THE BEST OF MS LATTE POETRY RECITALS



The winners from the MS poetry recital Friday night:

5TH GRADE: **Alexander Quaranta**,
"The Green Linnet" by William
Wordsworth.

6TH GRADE: **Bryce Hampton**,
"Ye Mariners of England" by Thomas
Campbell.

7TH GRADE: **Charis Durand**,
"A Mathematical Problem in Verse"
by Benjamin Banneker.

8TH GRADE: **Joseph Robert**,
"To a Louse, On Seeing One in a
Lady's Bonnet at Church" by Robert
Burns. **Joseph was also the Jefferson
Cup Winner.**

*Front: Joseph Robert, Joel Ng, Ruby Helm,
Charis Durand, Elle Vollmer, Britton Basten,
Lydia Williams. Back: Bryce Hampton, Judah
Durand, Ian Gill, Ada Dudley, Claire Reynolds,
Emilia Andrade, Alexander Quaranta, London
Smith, Tye Boettger.*

VARSITY BOYS SOCCER ENTERS TOURNAMENT PLAY WEDNESDAY

Varsity Boys Soccer
earned the 6th seed in the VISAA
State Division III tournament. They
will play Grace Christian at home
on **Wednesday, November 2 at
4:00pm**. Admission is required
from VISAA and will be \$5 per
person. Come out and support your
Gryphon's soccer team!



Will Kittrell

KITTRELL NOMINATED FOR JEFFERSON SCHOLAR

Senior **William Kittrell** is the recipient of the faculty and staff nomination for the Jefferson Scholar, the University of Virginia's highest distinction for applicants who best exemplify uncommon excellence in the Jeffersonian ideals of leadership, scholarship, and citizenship. This honor is accompanied by a scholarship competition with potential earnings which cover all expenses for four years of attendance at University of Virginia. Congratulations, Will!

ETCETERA

EVERYONE

PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES

There will be no school tomorrow **Tuesday, November 1**. Parent/teacher conferences will be held from **12:30-6:00pm**.

TUITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (TAP)

The tuition assistance program (TAP) for 2023-24 school year will be open to accept applications beginning tomorrow **Tuesday, November 1**. There is high demand for assistance, and it is awarded on a first-come, first-served basis, so apply early! Go to <https://online.factsmgmt.com/aid> to apply. See last week's TAP email from **Linda Hackenbracht** for more information.

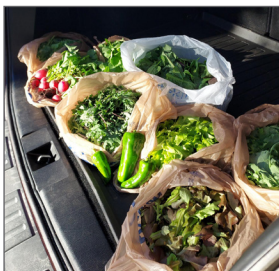
ATHLETIC AWARDS

Fall athletic awards for the School of Rhetoric will be awarded **Wednesday, November 2** from 12:40-1:30pm in the Workman Field House. Parents are welcome to attend.

SPIRIT STORE

The annual spirit store is open now through midnight **November 6**. Click the link to shop athletic apparel and support Gryphon athletics. Please be reminded this apparel is not uniform approved but can be worn to extracurricular activities and by parents and students outside of school. <https://ncsfall2022.itemorder.com/>

These greens were harvested from the Gryphon Garden. All were grown by the students.



TRACK & FIELD FUNDRAISER

The Track and Field Team will be offering yard work crews on **Saturday, November 5** to serve our school community. The work crews will clear leaves and sticks from your yard and are accepting donations for their efforts. Please contact **Julie Neiderer** at jneiderer@newcovenantschools.org if you would like to schedule a crew.

LUNCH

You may order student lunches for December beginning this Friday. Mark your calendars for the due date of **Friday, November 18**.

CUSTODIAL POSITION

The school has a custodial position immediately available for 3-4 hours in the evening Monday through Friday. If you or someone you know would be interested, please contact **Darren Johnson** at djohnson@newcovenantschools.org or 434-665-9574.

SPORTS SCORES



Tuesday, October 25

VARSITY SOCCER

Covenant	3
New Covenant.....	0

VARSITY VOLLEYBALL

Chatham Hall	0
New Covenant.....	3

Thursday, October 27

JV VOLLEYBALL

VES	0
New Covenant.....	2

VARSITY VOLLEYBALL

VES	0
New Covenant.....	3

Saturday, October 29

JV VOLLEYBALL

Covenant	2
New Covenant.....	0

VARSITY VOLLEYBALL

Covenant	3
New Covenant.....	1

ATTENTION: ALL NEW COVENANT DADS!

You are invited to join John Heaton at Bold Branch Farm in Bedford County on Friday and Saturday, November 4 & 5 for a Men's Advance.

- Plenty of food from the grill
- Corn Hole
- Fishing in the pond
- Bonfire
- Skeet shooting (bring your own firearms)
- Pitch a tent or bring a camper
- Cost \$20 per person charged to your FACTS account

It all begins at 5:00pm on Friday evening and wraps up by noon on Saturday. Reserve your spot through this link—https://bit.ly/mens_retreat

You will not want to miss out on this weekend!

Confirmation and directions will be emailed to you.

continued from p. 1

Little did we know that the pandemic would provide us with the perfect laboratory to test my findings and the claims of my consultant, as well as the policies of school districts here and across the country. With the explosion of student software since the 2010s, surely it would be relatively easy to pivot to online learning and students would not miss a beat. That is not what happened. Across the board the results were disastrous, and even private schools such as New Covenant were negatively affected.

To be fair the challenges were steep. First, school districts were bound to provide equal access to all virtual learners, which proved to be difficult. In many cases this led to enforced deprivation of content to students who did have access to the internet, meaning that if one group didn't have access, then no group would be given access, lest they be advantaged unfairly. Second, the roll-out was abrupt and unplanned, with little time to overcome huge challenges or field test systems, even with massive amounts of government spending thrown at the problem. Schools simply didn't have time to send millions of children home with an effective plan for the extent of time they would be kept out of the classroom. These and many other factors contributed to failure, but setting aside all of those challenges, one thing still became clear: the overwhelming majority of K-12 students are not well-served by online learning, even with support at home. Not surprisingly, the younger the child, the worse the outcome. There may be benefits to be had from using technology to deliver learning, but it is clear that media do not cause learning. Grocery trucks have little impact on our nutrition. They merely deliver food. That is how technology works.



We should be careful not to infer too much from such a catastrophe with so many variables. It is fair, however, to probe more deeply and continue to call into question the centrality of technology in classrooms and how it is deployed. What students were subjected to at home is not very different from what many are subjected to in public school classrooms and many private school classrooms every day. Computers are increasingly marginalizing students away from live instructors. With Chromebooks in hand, the students take their seats, boot up and turn in their work online after reading the day's lesson from the screen. In far too many cases, teachers sit at their desks as a supervisor or facilitator with few demands for actual instruction. Deep reading is not encouraged, and handwriting is now a lost art. Not surprisingly, this has driven many teachers not only out of city schools, but out of the profession altogether. The trend is so strong that the Virginia Department of Education is now considering "teaching" certificates for non-degreed, non-certified instructors, since teaching is no longer the central task.

That brings us to the main point: the teacher is the *most* important thing. There is no textbook, software program or internet resource that can replace a gifted, loving teacher. We are social creatures, designed to live and learn in community. Learning to read, write, add and subtract, while important, are only

part of the larger work of communicating faith, values, culture, history and habits to the young, all of which are communicated in a context of life-to-life investment. Computer technology has achieved near-miraculous access to information, connected social groups that

would otherwise remain ignorant of one another, and opened up avenues of exploration not previously accessible. However beneficial these outcomes may be, they should be subordinated to the single, strongest driver of student success, the teacher.

See *Education in Context of Student-Accessed, Digital and Applied Technology*.

<https://www.newcovenantschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/2015-Thesis.pdf>



QUID NOVI

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Class of 2023 • Nancy Hall • Kristin Hampton • Sam Mizener • Tom Rogers
Anne Umbarger • Darryl Whitesell • Class of 2024 • Mike Lovell • Class of 2025 • Neil Bohnert • Leslie Moeller • Bob Price
Leland Seckman • Dan Vollmer

EX OFFICIO

John Heaton—Headmaster
Eric Parker—School Warden

OUR MISSION

New Covenant Schools is an educational community serving families of Central Virginia, providing an exceptional education in a classical curriculum within the framework of historic Christianity, furnishing the student with the tools of education and the inspiration to be a lifelong learner.

NEW COVENANT SCHOOLS