



SOR Panache Players brought the drama Little Women to the Moomaw stage for six performances over two weekends.



THE NEWSLETTER OF
NEW COVENANT SCHOOLS

QUID NOVI

MARCH 3, 2025
VOL. 27 NO. 22 MAJORIS

THE PEN IS MIGHTIER THAN THE ... KEYBOARD

by Bridges Spiva, Grammar School Principal

One of the earliest historical markers students whimsically chant throughout their early years at New Covenant underscores humanity's transition from cultural preservation through oral storytelling to the permanence of records made possible by the invention of writing in 3200 BC. Students learn early on that the symbols used by the Sumerians and Egyptians laid the foundation for the remarkable penmanship displayed throughout the Grammar School hallways which, not surprisingly, serves as one of first curricular distinctives to elicit recognition and

simultaneous jaw-dropping awe from prospective families and visitors during a tour.

Arguably, the development of the written word contributed positively to cultural preservation and the advancement of an educated society. However, as in the case of most technological innovations, there were unintended consequences. Did you know that Socrates called into question the impropriety of writing by insisting that it served to destroy the memory, weaken the mind, and create people who were hearers of many things but learners of

continued on p.4

WHAT'S NEW?

Watch for Your Hands & Hearts Packet Today

It's easy to be a consumer. Learning to be "other-oriented," empathetic, and willing to serve is a much harder quality and must be cultivated. Hands & Hearts day at New Covenant has as its mission to encourage community service and serving others. Our entire school will be leaving campus on **Wednesday, April 23** to work in various settings and complete volunteer work. It's an exciting day. We also take

this opportunity to raise funds to share with these groups and our school. Hands & Hearts sponsorship packets come home today with the youngest child in your family. We ask that each family determine 20 people to whom you can mail a letter explaining our project. **Follow the instructions in the packet for completing the letters and return it to your child's teacher no later than March 14.** Each returned letter

earns one ticket to place in a prize bucket to win various items. The list of items which can be won include a Stay Fit camp registration for up to 3 students, a portable ice bath, Nutribullet Pro, Kings Dominion tickets, and much more. Funds raised in this year's efforts will provide supplies needed to complete the tasks at each of the organizations we serve and benefit our school.

THINK. LEARN. LOVE. LIVE.

LITTLE WOMEN—BIG PRODUCTION

By John Heaton, Headmaster

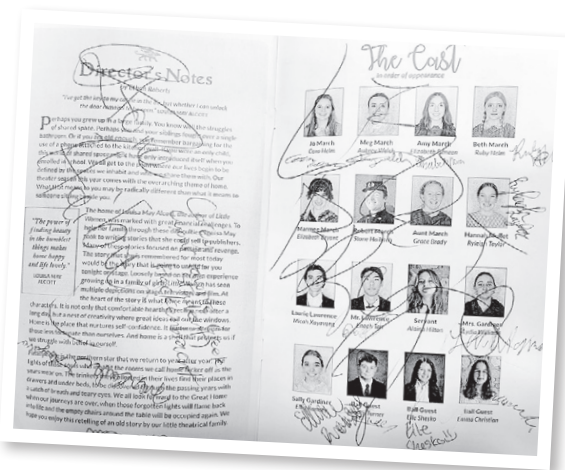
Last Friday it was late as I made my way down the reception line in the hallway outside the Moomaw Center after that night's show, *Little Women*. For 27 consecutive years I've made a habit of greeting and congratulating our student thespians after a performance, giving hugs and high-fives, and collecting their signatures on my playbill. Who knows? Their autographs might be valuable some day!

The New Covenant Community enjoyed this year's Panache Players' staging of *Little Women*, which played for the last two weekends with six performances. It was a large cast of twenty students in the School of Rhetoric, directed by **Ethan Roberts** and supported by **Dillon Rumsey**, **Samantha Turner**, **Hattie Eshleman**, **Lauren Helm**, and **Mark Hernandez**. In addition to the cast, there were backstage and technical supporters from the student body including **Emma Fritz**, **Kendall Morrell**, **Mary Place**, **Ellie Jacobs**, **Xander Turner**, **Peter Brophy**, **Christian Henson**, **Sam Miller**, **Rosa East**, **Ashe Smith**, and **Joel Ng**. Joel and his sister **Jenna Ng** provided live musical accompaniment on piano and violin—not an insignificant feat! We thank not only all the folks above, but **Lauren Helm** and **April Andrade**, who made possible the "*Little Women Tea*," which many of our younger students attended prior to selected shows.

The Panache Players began our troupe in the mid-90's under the direction of **Nancy Sattler**, a founding faculty member of the school and beloved Latin instructor, whose Latin chants are still recited vigorously by our Grammar School students each day (think: "What do I do in schoooooo!?!"). You can get a look at all the playbills from each production, now displayed over the lockers in the 200 hallway by the art and music rooms. After thirty years of productions, the school has now employed Mr. Roberts as the first full-time Drama Director. He stages not one, but two productions each year—one for the SOR and one for the Middle

School's Dialectic students. In addition, he teaches Drama Appreciation and Drama Performance in the SOR. Moreover, he offers a J-Term course in drama and drama camps each summer (look for this year's details soon). With the support of friends who have donated generously to our program, he has achieved amazing outcomes with our talented students.

Little Women was a long play—over two and half hours—following closely the text of the book upon which it is based. **Cora Helm** mastered hundreds of lines in the lead role as "Jo," and to our great delight, actually cut her own hair in



Mr. Heaton's playbill signed by the cast.

the final, climactic performance! (All previous cuts involved wigs). She wasn't the only one going above and beyond, though. With so much dialogue, the cast couldn't afford to lose one member to sickness. To guarantee that the show could go on during flu season, the cast was "flipped" such that most members were understudies for a longer part—all memorizing hundreds of lines. Thus, last Thursday the production was staged as an "Understudy" performance, giving opportunity for everyone



SPORTS SCORES

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 25

VARSITY MEN'S BASKETBALL

Christ Chapel.....	41
New Covenant.....	65

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26

VARSITY MEN'S BASKETBALL

New Covenant.....	45
Carmel School.....	59

VARSITY WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Greenbrier.....	25
New Covenant.....	39

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 28

VARSITY WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

New Covenant.....	33
St. Margarets.....	52

WINTER SPORTS AWARDS

The award ceremonies for our JV/Varsity winter sports teams and athletes will be held on **Wednesday, March 5 at 12:40pm.**

to show just how much effort they actually put into making this an extraordinary work of art.

With improved sound equipment, new lighting, and ingenious staging, *Little Women* was virtually glitch-free, and will be remembered as one of our best productions. Cheers to our students and the faculty, staff, and parent volunteers who made these performances so memorable. And cheers to our school community who supported their efforts by attending each night!

FUNDRAISING REPORT

	GOAL	RECEIVED
Annual Fund	\$120,000	\$146,659
General Scholarship	\$10,000	\$55,008
Scholarship Foundation	\$300,000	Pledged \$480,300 Received \$411,989
Hands and Hearts	\$50,000	\$25

Thank you for your gifts to New Covenant Schools. Donations continue to be accepted throughout the year and may be given through cash, check, stock transfers, or IRA distributions. All gifts are tax-deductible to the extent that the law provides. Contact Dayna Renalds in the Development Office for more information.

E T C E T E R A

EVERYONE

ONLINE ENROLLMENT PACKET REVIEW

This week be looking for an email from **Linda Simon** with instructions to review students' Online Enrollment Information Review Packet, which can be found on FACTS under Apply/Enroll or on the app under Online Enrollment Information Review. This review packet is required to be completed for all students. Please reach out to Linda at Lsimon@newcovenantschools.org with any questions.

END OF QUARTER

The third quarter will end on **Friday, March 14** for Grammar and Middle School and **Tuesday, March 25** for the School of Rhetoric. Report cards will be emailed to parents on **Wednesday, April 2**.

LOST AND FOUND

The Lost and Found bins are purged at the end of each quarter. Be sure to check for any lost items before **Friday, March 14**.

HANDS & HEARTS

Hands & Hearts is scheduled for **Wednesday, April 23**. Sponsorship packets were sent home with the youngest student in each family today. Please return them to the office by **Friday, March 14**.

NATIONAL LATIN EXAM

The National Latin Exam will be proctored during the school day to all Latin classes in grades 7-12 this **Wednesday, March 5**. The NLE is given on six different levels to match the Latin experience at each grade level. We will receive notice of honors earned by students later in the spring and awards will be presented at end-of-year assemblies.

LUNCH ORDERING

Lunch ordering for April is now open. In addition to the regular menu, some of the entrées include creamy chicken and noodles, soft chicken tacos, baked pasta, southern-style chicken nuggets, loaded baked potatoes and chili, and breakfast burritos. On the Tuesday before Easter Break, ham with mashed potatoes and green beans will be available. There will be a break during the ordering period, so place your orders early.

CHILDCARE TAX DOCUMENTS

Need payment details for Pre-K or Aftercare for tax purposes? Access them easily through your FACTS Family Portal (District Code: NCS-VA):

- Go to **Financial > Financial Home**
- Under **Payment Plans & Billing**, select **View Details**
- Click **View Payment Summary** and choose the tax year

Your payment summary and New Covenant's Federal Tax ID will be displayed. For assistance, contact **April Andrade** at aandrade@newcovenantschools.org.

ART & SCIENCE FAIR

Plan to join us **Monday, March 10** for the Art & Science Fair. Come out and view the artistic endeavors of our students and enjoy watching them compete in various science challenges. Art viewing will begin at 5:30pm, and science challenges will start around 6:00pm. Hotdog combo meals will be available to purchase. This is an enjoyable event for the whole family and one not to miss.

GENERATIONS DAY

Generations Day will be held on **Friday, March 14**. Grandparents and other

ASH WEDNESDAY

This **Wednesday, March 5** is Ash Wednesday. Our daily routine of Faculty Matins will be expanded beyond our staff to include our whole community with an early service beginning at 7:00am (sharp!). The service is offered jointly with our affiliate parish, All Saints Church, and Headmaster Heaton will be assisting with the **Rev'd Davidson Morse**. You are cordially invited to begin the Lenten season as we journey together toward Easter. The service will conclude promptly at 7:40am so that you may continue with your day.

special guests are invited to join students in class for the morning. **There will be an 11:00am dismissal on this day.**

WORKOUT AND TRAINING PROGRAM

New Covenant alum **Janna Renalds** ('21) is offering a workout & training program for NCS moms at New Covenant on Wednesday evenings and Saturday mornings. Sessions include strength training, cardio, and flexibility. Childcare is not available. For details and pricing, contact Janna at renaldj828@lynchburg.edu.

SPRING BREAK

Spring Break will begin on **Monday, March 17** and continue through **Friday, March 21**. Students will return to school on **Monday, March 24**.

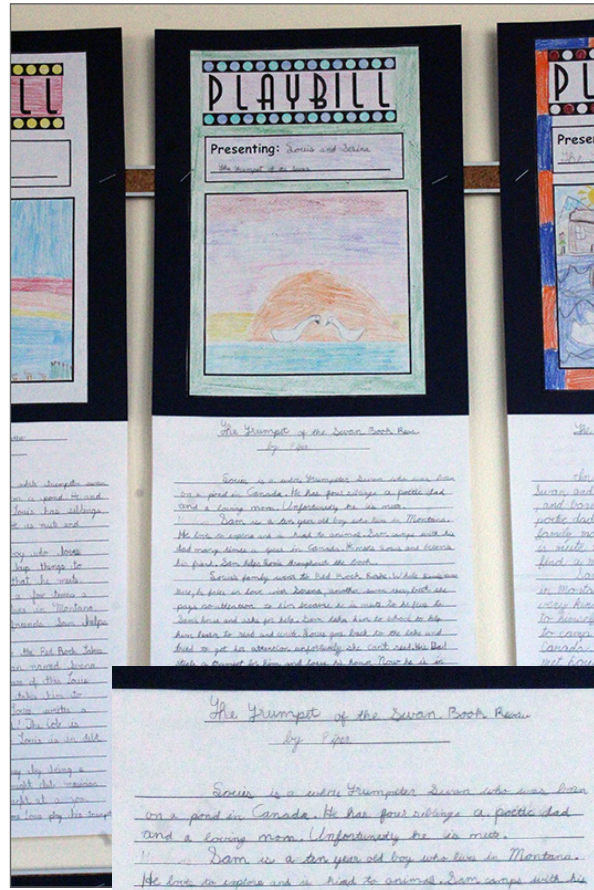
continued from p. 1

nothing? Likewise, as impressive as our students' penmanship may be, in an increasingly keyboard- and touchscreen-driven society, we must ask: Is the direct instruction of pencil grip, writing posture, and basic strokes of manuscript and cursive writing an academic necessity, or is it merely an antiquated holdover that provides convenient evidence of classical instruction?

While many public and private schools have eliminated cursive instruction in favor of typing or swiping, New Covenant and other classical schools recognize handwriting as not merely a functional skill but an essential component of intellectual and virtue formation.

INTELLECTUAL FORMATION

Handwriting plays a foundational role in facilitating reading acquisition in young children. Students learn to read through repetition of detailed handwriting techniques combined with the precise articulation and writing of phonograms and high-frequency words. However, a lesser-known benefit of handwriting activity is its ability to establish neuronal connectivity patterns in the brain that are crucial for memory formation and encoding new information. Neurological studies suggest that coordinating complex hand movements with carefully shaping each letter improves spelling recall and facilitates letter recognition and understanding, while the act of forming letters by hand activates higher cognitive areas of the mind and increases neural network connectivity patterns in the brain. Such enhanced brain development was not evidenced when pressing keys on a keyboard. Furthermore, students who take handwritten notes retain information more effectively than those



Fourth grade handwriting projects presently on display.

who type. The slower pace required to write notes by hand promotes deeper processing by encouraging students to distinguish essential from irrelevant information as opposed to the mindless activity employed when transcribing every word.

VIRTUE FORMATION

Just as wind and water shape and transform nature, the things you do shape and transform your mind. – Janice Campbell

The discipline required to generate harmony between the mind and hand cultivates patience, attention to detail, and perseverance. Handwriting requires students to slow down, pay attention, and think. Taking the time to produce quality penmanship shows appreciation and care for the task at hand and encourages the habit of self-reflection. Carefully crafted

handwritten letters communicate intentionality and connect us to each other on a deep human level.

CLASSICAL FORMATION

The aim of a classical education is to promote human flourishing through exposure to the true, good, and beautiful. Hence quality penmanship is a worthwhile endeavor simply because it is beautiful. Throughout the ages, beautiful handwriting has been a symbol of literary sophistication adorning the pages of enduring literary and historical documents. More importantly, the beauty of handwriting represents the order, splendor, and majesty of God's world.

At New Covenant, we continue to teach handwriting not out of mere tradition, but because it forms both the mind and the soul, connecting us to the beauty and wisdom of the classical tradition.

QUID NOVI

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

CLASS OF 2025 — Neil Bohnert, Leslie Moeller, Bob Price, Leland Seckman, Dan Vollmer
CLASS OF 2026 — John Gauger, Nancy Hall, Chris Misiano, Sam Mizener, Tom Rogers, Anne Umbarger | CLASS OF 2027 — Dusty Miller, Court Shipman, Davidson Morse, Warden

EX OFFICIO

John Heaton—Headmaster

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