



NCS Big Dig: Over 50 moms, dads, and students helped dig out the campus on Sunday.

THE NEWSLETTER OF
NEW COVENANT SCHOOLS

QUID NOVI

FEBRUARY 2, 2026
VOL. 28 NO. 18 MAJORIS

TWO KEYS TO LEARNING: MEMORY AND REPETITION

by John Heaton, Headmaster

The year 1969 was one for the record books. While riots over Vietnam and other social issues raged, it was also the year of Apollo 11 and the first moon landing. It was the year that etched the storied names of Buzz Aldrin, Neil Armstrong, and Michael Collins in the social imagination. Additionally, it was the same year I completed first grade.

My grade-school education was notable in many respects. It was presided over by Esteleen Froelich (pronounced FROI lick), a tall, slight woman with tight curls around her head in three rows and very small round glasses. She was unbelievably strict to the point of being rigid, and if I were to stereotype her, I would classify her as the oldest relic of a 19th century “old school” approach to education. Which is to say that in many ways she was “classical” before our movement was reinvented. In one sense she was behind the times, and strangely in another, way ahead of her time. In all respects, eccentric.

One of the outstanding pedagogies she exploited was that of memory and repetition. We memorized everything from poetry to presidents (with dates of office), to states and capitals (with state flowers and animals). We also memorized the Bible.

Starting in the first grade, students were given a typewritten list of Scripture references on one page and by Thanksgiving were memorizing eight verses

a week. This increased to ten in second grade going forward. Memorization for nonreaders required parental cooperation, which of course, Mrs. Froelich insisted upon and enforced. Once up and reading, children were on their own.

The regimen proceeded this way. Each Wednesday after Assembly, students were assigned ten new verses for the week. Each was expected to recite those verses *individually* to the teacher, quietly standing at her desk at the back of the room. Thursdays and Fridays were used as memorization days in which we were given time each morning to study. We were also required to copy the verses from the text in our best penmanship, turning that assignment in by each Friday afternoon. Mondays and Tuesdays were practice days in which we orally rehearsed our passages in unison in our classrooms. Each Wednesday was recitation day at Assembly. Students were grouped into sections—first grade by itself, then second and third, fourth through sixth, seventh through ninth, and finally tenth through twelfth.

We proceeded by section in a carefully choreographed cohort, with almost military precision, filing in a line to our places before the student body. It wasn't just a line; it was always two lines in which the tallest students were in the

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H O N O R A R I A

HONORS FOR 2ND QUARTER 2025-2026

SCHOOLS OF RHETORIC AND DIALECTIC

THE HEADMASTER'S LIST

Summa cum laude

Ashe Smith, 12	Rusty Hooks, 12	Andre Frenchik, 12	Ian Gill, 11
Emma Haupricht, 11	Ruby Helm, 11	Charlotte Libbey, 11	Charlotte McCarty, 11
Joel Ng, 11	Joseph Robert, 11	Elena Andrade, 10	Xander Arbaugh-Turner, 10
Ava Boettger, 10	Peter Brophy, 10	Charis Durand, 10	Claire Hansen, 10
Christian Henson, 10	Leila Kenny, 10	Lucy Kirshberger, 10	Sol Knapton, 10
Lizzie Miller, 10	Kendall Morrell, 10	Mindy Morse, 10	Naomi Rigg, 10
Elle Vollmer, 10	Mac McRaven, 9	Idella Olmsted, 9	Eleanore Seckman, 9

THE DEAN'S LIST

Magna cum laude

Enoch Tan, 12	Ryleigh Taylor, 12	Eva Andrade, 12	Ella Dudley, 12
Luke Cordes, 12	Grace Brady, 12	Ellia Ramsey, 11	Embry Carlton, 11
Avery Harrison, 11	Caden Smith, 11	Elora Williams, 11	Emma Compton, 11
Journey Lancaster, 11	Hannah Edwards, 11	Britton Basten, 10	Addie Ruhl, 10
Reese Mahle, 10	Elle Shesko, 10	Emma Christian, 10	Alaina Hilton, 10
Gabriel Leitner, 10	Morgan Eggleston, 9	Gwen Kesler, 9	Micah Harrison, 9
Judah Durand, 9			

Cum laude

Walt Gill, 12	Alicia Kenny, 12	Micah Xayavong, 12	Emma Kate Lovell, 12
Ayla Gezen, 12	Rosa East, 12	John-Paul Gauger, 11	Judah Weber, 11
Emme Sue Foster, 11	Alex Fuhr, 11	Michael Seckman, 11	Josiah Thornhill, 10
Kate Cordes, 10	Wyatt Copenhaver, 10	Alina Gieszczykiewicz, 10	Alex Pemberton, 10
Wyatt Cole, 10	Wyatt Gill, 9	Bella Nickel, 9	Meg Maslow, 9
Henry Duncan, 9	Jack Gauger, 9	Mitchell Rogers, 9	Max Fuhr, 9

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Summa cum laude

Chloe Brophy, 8	Tinley Tucker, 8	Eleanor Bebko Lane, 8	Emilia Andrade, 8
Lina Bengds, 8	Landis Hoskins, 8	Charley Weber, 7	Tessa McRaven, 7
Penny Miller, 7	Eden Olenik, 7	Ella Dunaway, 7	Kale Anderson, 7

Magna cum laude

Elise Williams, 8	Nora Misiano, 8	Brielle Heap, 7	Simeon Durand, 7
Molly Lovell, 7	Macy Vollmer, 7		

Cum laude

Isaiah Tan, 8	Tye Boettger, 8	Callen Carlton, 8	Olivia Steed, 7
Eve Hilton, 7	Avery Hinson, 7	William Marotta, 7	Sterling Moody, 7

E T C E T E R A

EVERYONE

VALENTINE'S DRESS DAY

Although St. Valentine's Day falls during Winter Break, students and faculty/staff are invited to celebrate by wearing a red, white and/or pink shirt with jeans or regular uniform bottoms **Wednesday, February 11**. As always, shoes must be closed-toe shoes and jeans must be free of rips and tears.

PROGRESS REPORTS

Second quarter progress reports will not be sent due to the snow days; please check FACTS for current grades and reach out to teachers with any questions or concerns.

WINTER BREAK

School will be closed for Winter Break from **Thursday, February 12** through **Monday, February 16**. Students return on **Tuesday, February 17**.

BREAKFAST WITH THE HEADMASTER

You are cordially invited to join Headmaster **John Heaton** for breakfast along with other parents from New Covenant Schools. Breakfasts will be offered at the home of **Jennifer**

and **Clifton Griffin** on **Wednesday, February 11** and at the home of **Jessica** and **Tim Lee** on **Thursday, April 9**. Headmaster Heaton looks forward to visiting with each of you, answering questions, and sharing ways to support your child and participate in our school community. Join us as we strengthen the friendships within our school. Please RSVP [here](#) to reserve your spot.

SAVE THE DATE FOR HANDS & HEARTS

Our schoolwide service day will be **Wednesday, April 22**. Parents are welcome to work alongside students completing tasks for area nonprofit groups. Watch for more information in the next few weeks.

GENERATIONS DAY

Generations Day will be held on **Friday, March 13**. Grandparents and other special guests are invited to join students in class for the morning. **There will be an 11:00am dismissal on this day.**

MIDDLE SCHOOL

MS FOOD DRIVE

For the week of **February 2-6**, all Middle School students are invited to participate

in a "Soup-er Bowl" food drive to benefit the Blue Ridge Food Bank. Students are encouraged to donate nonperishable food items.

MS FOOTBALL DRESS DAY

All Middle Schoolers may participate in a football-themed dress day on **Friday, February 6**. Students may wear loose athletic pants or jeans, a football jersey or team shirt or the colors of your favorite NFL team (if you don't have a jersey), and tennis shoes.

MS ASSESSMENTS

Please check the Lesson Plan section in FACTS to see your students' updated quizzes/tests schedule.

SCHOOL OF RHETORIC

SOR COTILLION

SOR Cotillion will be held at the University of Lynchburg Ballroom on **Saturday, February 7** from 7-10pm. Refer to the email sent by **Brandi Marchant** on **December 4** for more information including a map of the location, guest guidelines, and dress expectations.

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middle with the shortest ones at the ends, creating a "bell curve" look to the arrangement. It took more than a little practice during the month of September to arrange the order and memorize our places. Once that was accomplished however, we could file forward, find our places no matter the order in which we were sitting—all in a matter of seconds. It was impressive indeed, and parents who witnessed the dance often gasped audibly at the array. After Wednesday chapel, we would receive the next ten verses, and the system repeated itself.

And the lists! Mrs. Froelich had crafted her own selections and grouped them into lists to which she assigned names. There was the "Promises" list. Think: Hebrews 13:5; John 14:1-6, etc. (Do you need to look them up?) There was the "Jewels" list; think Proverbs 15:1-3; James 4:7-8. There was the "Psalms" list, which you can guess included nothing but Psalms, beginning with Psalm 1 and proceeding through most of the Psalter. This repeated each week for thirty-six weeks of school—for twelve years. The highlight, of course, was the memorization

of Psalm 119—all 176 verses—including the Hebrew alphabetic divisions. A \$100 cash prize was offered to the 8th grader who could memorize it, stand in front of the entire student body by oneself, and recite the whole thing word-perfect. I tried, but Janet Engler beat me to it; it took her a mere twenty minutes to recite it.

By ninth grade we ran out of her lists, so Mrs. Froelich just moved us into whole books: Jonah, 1 Peter, James, 1 John, and so on. It wasn't really that hard. By the time I reached the fifth grade, I could

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memorize the ten assigned verses in under fifteen minutes, recite them to Mrs. Sanders at the back of the room, and get on with the copying. And did I mention that all of this was done in the King James Version? It is arguably the most beautiful translation in the English language.

By the time I graduated, the math indicates that we each memorized more than 4,000 verses of holy writ, although we weren't counting, and we didn't think it strange. It's just what we did. Looking back, it was exceptional in an odd way, but it demonstrated Mrs. Froelich's educational values, and it demonstrated the capability of the average student's mental powers. It profoundly formed the leaf mold of my mind.

You've probably noticed by now that a similar regimen exists at New Covenant. That is to say, we utilize repetition and memorization, both of which have fallen

into disuse by modern educators. Here we continue to capitalize on the young child's strong ability to absorb vast amounts of information, the degree to which is often underestimated by educators and unknown to parents. With a short poem, the periodic table, or the history timeline, "I can't" is not an acceptable response from children. Yes, they can; and yes, they do.

As easily as young children can learn "Eney-meene-miney-moe" they can learn "amo, amas, amat," a standard Latin verb conjugation. They can do it effortlessly and in class together. We don't need to send it home for homework—it's one of the tools of education that drives how school is done during the day. Repetition and memorization are a classic addition to our toolbox, and essential to a full pedagogy.

QUID NOVI

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

CLASS OF 2026 • John Gauger,
Nancy Hall, Chris Misiano, Sam Mizener,
Tom Rogers, Anne Umbarger
CLASS OF 2027 • Dusty Miller, Court Shipman
CLASS OF 2028 • Neil Bohnert, Scott
McCurley, Leann Perault, Leland Seckman

EX OFFICIO

John Heaton—Headmaster
Davidson Morse—School Warden

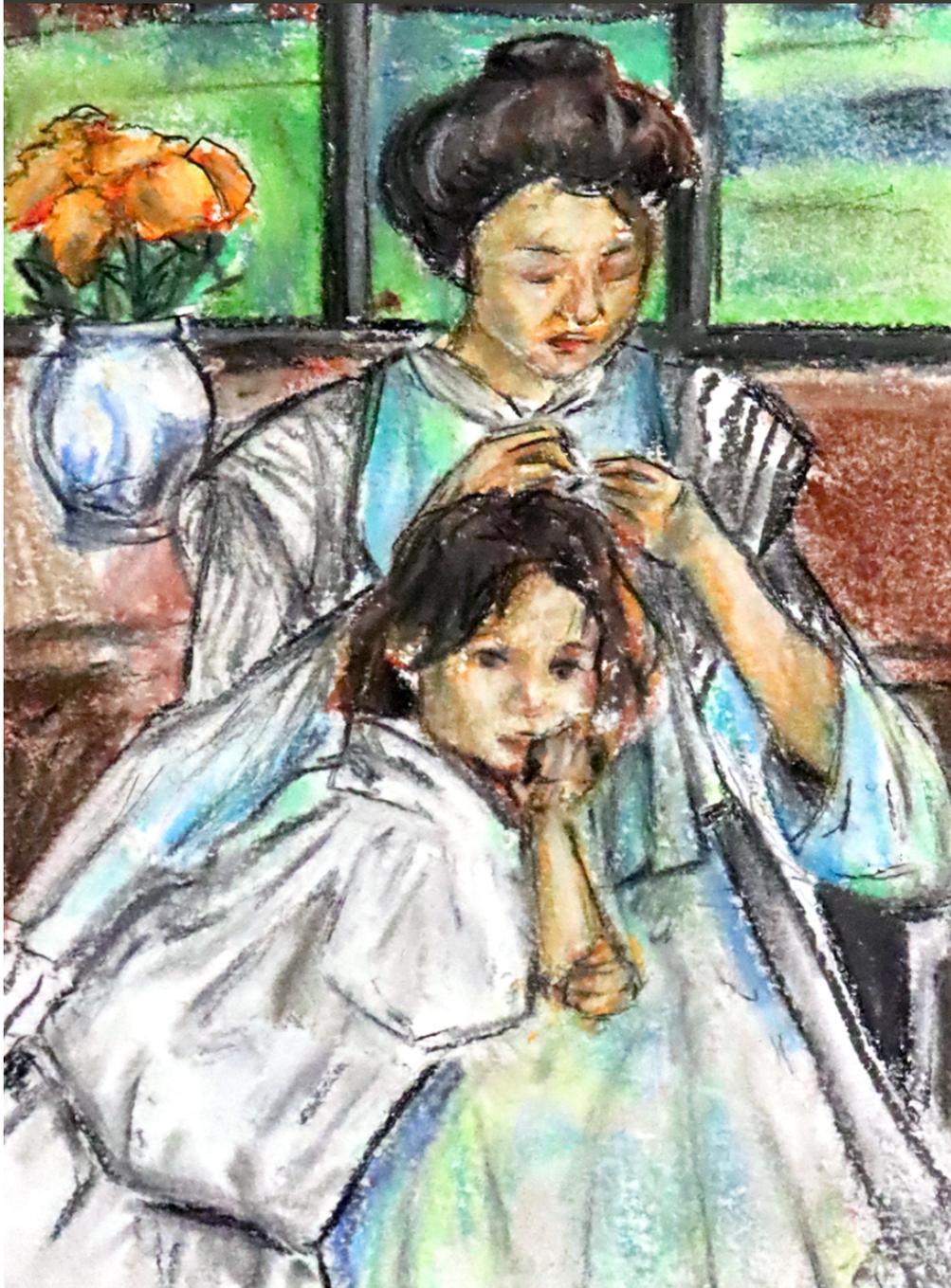
OUR MISSION

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

ART FAIR

PAINTING | MIXED MEDIA | SCULPTURE | PHOTOGRAPHY | FILM



Ruby Helm (2025 Submission, 10th Grade)

**ALL submissions due
Wednesday, February 11th**

Monday, March 9

IMPORTANT TIPS FOR ART FAIR SUBMISSIONS:

- Students in K-12th grade may submit **TWO PIECES** of art in each of the five named categories.
- Student work grades 4-12 will be in the **JUDGED** art show.
- All submissions should be given directly to Miss Eshleman or Mr. Dunaway.
- Flat (2D) submissions should **NOT** be folded or on lined paper.
- Submissions **MUST** be unframed.
- All photography should be printed on photo quality paper (preferably 8 ½ x 11 or larger).
- Sculpture (3D) submissions should stand upright **OR** student should provide a base on which to stand the piece.
- Lego submissions will **NOT** be accepted.
- **ALL** pieces should be the **CREATION** of the student(s).
- Multiple students may collaborate on a single submission.

Parents who would like to volunteer to mat/hang work, please contact:

Hattie Eshleman at
heshleman@
newcovenantschools.org
or
Michael Dunaway at
mdunaway@
newcovenantschools.org.

TICKETS GO ON SALE FEB. 9



FEB 26 — 5:30pm
 FEB 27 — 6:00pm
 FEB 28 — 1:00pm
 FEB 28 — 6:00pm
 MAR 5 — 5:30pm
 MAR 6 — 6:00pm
 MAR 7 — 1:00pm
 MAR 7 — 6:00pm

Cinderella



FUNDRAISING REPORT			
	GOAL	RECEIVED	
Annual Fund	\$300,000	\$311,150	
General Scholarship	\$10,000	\$3,070	
Scholarship Foundation	\$300,000	<i>Pledged</i>	\$463,700
		<i>Received</i>	\$433,193

Please consider New Covenant Schools in your giving. All gifts are tax-deductible to the extent that the law provides. Donations may be given through cash, check, stock transfers, or IRA distributions. Contact **Dayna Renalds** in the Development Office for more information.