



River Views

April 2011 ~ Volume 13 ~ Number 9

Looking Back: The Year So Far

April gives us a unique vantage point. It is the precipice of the year. We can look back and see that so much has transpired and that those experiences have created a certain level of unity on campus. And we can look forward to what is traditionally the busiest, most emotionally charged time of year.

to opening remarks from Head of School Margaret Broad and the Reverend Dr. Candine Johnson, school chaplain. The opening celebration is capped off with a community luncheon.

Once our parents have carried countless loads of students' belongings into their

The bonds they create on their River Day adventures often carry through to the day they make their final trip across the back lawn at graduation.

As autumn approaches, the breezes become cooler, academics become more challenging and students become



The school year starts with a procession along the river to St. John's Episcopal Church for the opening chapel service.

We begin the year together as a religious community with our opening chapel service. Students line up, decked out in their dressy school outfits in front of St. Margaret's Hall. Once the procession

rooms, said their good-byes and made their way home, our students take the first steps toward becoming a community during the Blue/Grey drawing. After new students are welcomed by their team, the first of many competitions begins.

increasingly more comfortable as members of the community.

Sophomore Halloween, a part of Spirit Week, provides a little levity. Pajama Day, Twins Day, Decades Day and Blue/Grey



During Opening Days, students participate in Blue/Gray competitions.

begins, our students are led by a bagpiper along the river lawn, down Water Lane, and eventually arrive at St. John's Episcopal Church. After they arrive parents, students and class sponsors listen

Classes begin on Labor Day and before we get too far into the first trimester, students participate in River Day. While many activities encourage different grade levels to mingle, River Day is a special time set aside for each class to form bonds.

Camping trips, boat rides, marsh mucking, exploring the Chesapeake Bay or Virginia Beach are all ways that students discover the many ways the river affects our lives. At the same time, students spend time building relationships with peers in their class.



Sophomore Nikki Dansby poses with a new friend during River Day.

Day provide ample opportunities for students to express themselves through their attire.

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Captain's Corner



April finds each of us with one foot in the present and one in the future. With all of our seniors considering their next steps beyond St. Margaret's and 90% of our younger students making plans to return to St. Margaret's for the 2011-2012 school year, girls at all grade levels are applying their decision making skills to important choices. This is definitely the month for big decisions – which colleges to attend and which scholarships

seniors put to such good use during their independent studies. No wonder so many of their site sponsors reported that they would love to have had our girls stay on! Appreciating the importance of hard work and sound organization are important outcomes of a St. Margaret's education for life.

This month, our Board of Governors will meet on campus right before Spring Family Weekend. They, too, will have one foot in the present and one in the future. During their meeting, they will hear from Britt Flanagan, the consultant who has guided the transition in our admission office. We are thrilled with the intense activity since January, and the faculty and board will hear the new initiatives and solid plans in place for our next student recruitment season. All of these include collaboration within and beyond the school, another life skill our students have learned!

Hearing from this year's peer leaders, approving next year's budget, nominating new board members, reviewing then approving the VAIS self-study prepared by the faculty and administration for our 10-year review next fall, assessing progress toward matching a grant for the construction of maintenance and team buildings at our athletic complex, and engaging with the outcomes of our comprehensive year-long marketing study will fill our 24 hours together. How fortunate we are to have such a talented and engaged board whose members represent every constituency and age group well! We look forward to sharing information with you as we move through this celebratory 90th anniversary year.

With appreciation,

Margaret R. Broad

to accept, which courses to take next year here and in college, which leadership positions to consider. Our co-curricular calendar has anticipated that students at different grade levels face very different challenges by building in time for class discussions and meetings to address these issues as well as the transition from high school to college, roommate and advisor selection, and summer enrichment opportunities.

At the same time, there is so much to enjoy right now – spring weather, the opportunity to be back on the river, sports successes, and the full array of school traditions celebrated in April and May. Our daily and weekly schedules are full to the brim! By this point in the year, all students at all grade levels have had plenty of experience in the fine art of planning ahead. Yes, some need gentle reminders occasionally, but most can anticipate what the next week will hold and plan accordingly. These are the skills our

Looking Back (continued)

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The fall also brings one of our most cherished and sacred traditions, the celebration of St. Margaret's Day. A procession, led by a bag-piper, travels



Freshmen Jana Serini and Campbell Tucker act as elves during Freshman Christmas

to St. John's Episcopal Church, where a church service in honor of our patron saint is held. A special Thanksgiving feast follows the chapel service.

St. Margaret's Day also kickstarts the holiday season on campus. Though students have a long break during the month of December, Freshman Christmas is always a campus favorite.

After that long break, the return to campus can be a bit challenging.

Coupled with the fact that the river can get a bit dreary, the academic demands of the second trimester begin to increase.

The first weekend does bring a bright spot—Snow Ball, our winter formal. The crowning of the Snow Queen and Snow Princesses are always a highlight.

The grey of winter is brightened each year by the colors of the International Festival. While much of the education our international students gain is through experiencing American culture, the International Festival is a way of recognizing that our international students contribute to the diverse culture of our community. This event allows them to share a little bit of home with their fellow students and teachers.

January also brings about a much loved tradition—Junior Variety. The junior class hosts the talent show and performs skits that poke fun at their Big Lanterns. The event is filled with talented performers and light-hearted impersonations. What typically begins with laughter, ends in tears. As the show ends, the juniors share heart-felt messages with their Big Lanterns. For many seniors, Junior Variety is the

first realization that graduation is just around the corner.

Our campus community scatters to the four winds during the month of March.



Eighth graders prepare for their Junior Variety skit

For two weeks, students use Minimester to benefit from a different type of learning. After these experiences, they are rewarded with Spring Break.

After Spring Break, the procession toward the end of the year begins. It's bittersweet. One class is filled with anticipation, sent on their way rejoicing. Another takes their place as the leaders of the school. And, before too long, the cycle begins anew and we are looking back again.

Looking Forward

Spring traditionally bestows a feeling of promise on campus. The flowers are blooming, the river warms, the osprey return. Everything about this place beams with the promise of new birth. For seniors, this time of year is particularly significant.



Students participate in Leadership Chapel

It is a time when all of the traditions that they have been waiting to celebrate as seniors come about. President and Vice President of the School, as well as Senior Class President are elected. Peer Leaders and Prefects are selected. During the Leadership Chapel, members of the senior class symbolically pass the torch of leadership onto those who will follow in their footsteps.

It is also the celebration of Spring Family Weekend. Athletic competitions, family dinners, the Parent Council Silent Auction, the Rubber Ducky Derby are all events that bring together all members of our community. For juniors and seniors, however, Spring Family Weekend is a time of transition. Seniors begin to say goodbye. Juniors begin to assume the role of leadership. The Lantern Ceremony is the symbolic reflection of these transitions. Having selected their Little Lanterns earlier in the year, seniors now present them with their class rings. The next evening, the emotional



History Department Head Louise Velletri shares a moment with members of last year's graduating class.

Spring Family Weekend Highlights

Friday, May 13

Parent Council	11:30 a.m.
Athletic Competitions	3:00 p.m.
Silent Auction	4:00- 7:00 p.m.
Family Buffet Dinner	6:00 p.m.
Senior Art Show	6:00 p.m.
Musical Review	7:30 p.m.
Lantern Ceremony	9:00 p.m.
Ice Cream Social	9:20 p.m.

Saturday, May 14

Continental Breakfast	9:00 -10:00 a.m.
Silent Auction	9:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.
Crew Race	9:30 a.m.
Rubber Duck Derby	10:00 a.m.
All School Meeting	10:45 a.m.
Luncheon on the Lawn	Noon
Announcement of May Queen	Noon
Senior Class Picture	7:30 p.m.
May Ball	7:30 – 11:00 p.m.
Presentation of Seniors	8:00 p.m.

Sunday, May 15

Brunch	10:00 -11:30 a.m.
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Phoebe Temple participates in one of Spring Family Weekend's many sporting events.

nature of the Lantern Ceremony is replaced with the merriment of May Ball. The May Queen is crowned; seniors share the first dance with their escorts, usually their father or a family member. And the entire community pauses to celebrate.

Spring Family Weekend begins the swift march toward baccalaureate, the academic awards banquet and our senior's being sent on their way rejoicing at graduation.

River Views Forecast

May

April 29- 1	Closed weekend
1-2	Admission Overnight
7	SATs
13-15	Spring Family Weekend
14	May Ball
21-22	Leadership Retreat
27-29	Closed weekend/ Exam review
30-June 3	Exams

June

3	2011 Baccalaureate/ Academic Awards Banquet
4	2011 Commencement
6-8	Faculty Professional Days
10-12	Alumnae Weekend
18	Rivahfest

Check the online calendar for latest school and sports events:
www.sms.org/calendar

Spring Family Weekend



Don't forget to make plans to attend this year's Spring Family Weekend, May 13th-15th.

For more information, go to www.sms.org/sfw or contact Cookie Evans at cevans@sms.org

The last leg of the school year is here! It brings both excitement and sadness. Excitement that so many positive things have occurred and sadness that it has to come to an end.

The girls began the year by creating new friendships with the introduction of new students and faculty at orientation and built strong bonds with River Day activities in September. As we move through the fall, we feel the excitement the juniors and seniors share when little lanterns are selected. I remember the anticipation that built up as my daughter waited to find out who would be her big lantern last year. It's an amazing relationship that lasts a lifetime.

Our family had the opportunity to host Rachel Stephens, the foreign exchange student from New Zealand during the Christmas holidays. It was a wonderful opportunity to learn about a new culture and share our traditions. Rachel even helped us appreciate our own culture. It made us realize the little things we do that we take for granted such as snowy weather, playing basketball, and deviled eggs.

The new year began with Snow Ball and Junior Variety. Snow Ball is the first formal dance of the year and the girls have the opportunity to meet other people from the different school communities. Junior Variety provides fun and laughter for the entire

school community. I know from experience the seniors, even though they are roasted, enjoy the spotlight.



As a four-year day student, my daughter always looked forward to Minimester in February. Students always have so many great experiences. The Next Steps program helps to prepare juniors for their college selection and acceptance, while the Independent Study Program gives the seniors the opportunity to determine if the career they have in mind is the one they will enjoy.

Now we are into April, looking ahead to Spring Family weekend that includes May Ball and the traditional Lantern Ceremony. Our juniors are the highlight of the Lantern Ceremony as they receive their class ring from their big lanterns, representing their induction into the senior class. I remember

observing the ceremony with my daughter her freshman year. We were in awe as we watched the marching in and the exchange. The excitement was contagious. May Ball is one of the biggest highlights, second to graduation, for seniors. Each year they have enjoyed the formal dance waiting for the opportunity to be the honorees in white formal dresses on the arms of their fathers and crowning of May Queen.

Now I turn attention to graduation. It is the ultimate accomplishment for each senior. It's tough to see them go out to tackle the next phase in their life; however, we can let them go with the confidence that they are well-prepared from the experiences they have encountered through their years at St. Margaret's

Our desire to have Heather attend St. Margaret's was to provide a strong education that would prepare her for college. We've watched her grow into so much more. Today, she is a confident young woman with strong leadership, teamwork, and communication skills. All this was accomplished through the dedication and commitment of St. Margaret's staff and community to educate young women for life.

Barbara Chastain is school president Heather Chastain's mother and coach of the varsity softball team .



St. Margaret's campus was featured during the 78th Annual Historic Garden Week in Virginia. Participants were treated to tours of both Brockenbrough House and St. Margaret's Hall. Building decorations and tours were provided by the Garden Club of the Middle Peninsula. Here a bedroom in B-House is decorated with actual St. Margaret's graduation gowns and a dozen roses as a tribute to St. Margaret's graduation traditions.



St. Margaret's School

P. O. Box 158
Tappahannock, VA 22560
www.sms.org

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Editor | Joanna Schilling jschilli@sms.org

Photos | David Broad , Joanna Schilling, Alex Campbell and Sarah Fritz

Phone | 804-443-3357

Fax | 804-443-1832

Web | www.sms.org

Educating Young Women for Life.

St. Margaret's School actively seeks and admits qualified students of any race, color, religious affiliation, national or ethnic origin.