

THE SIGNET



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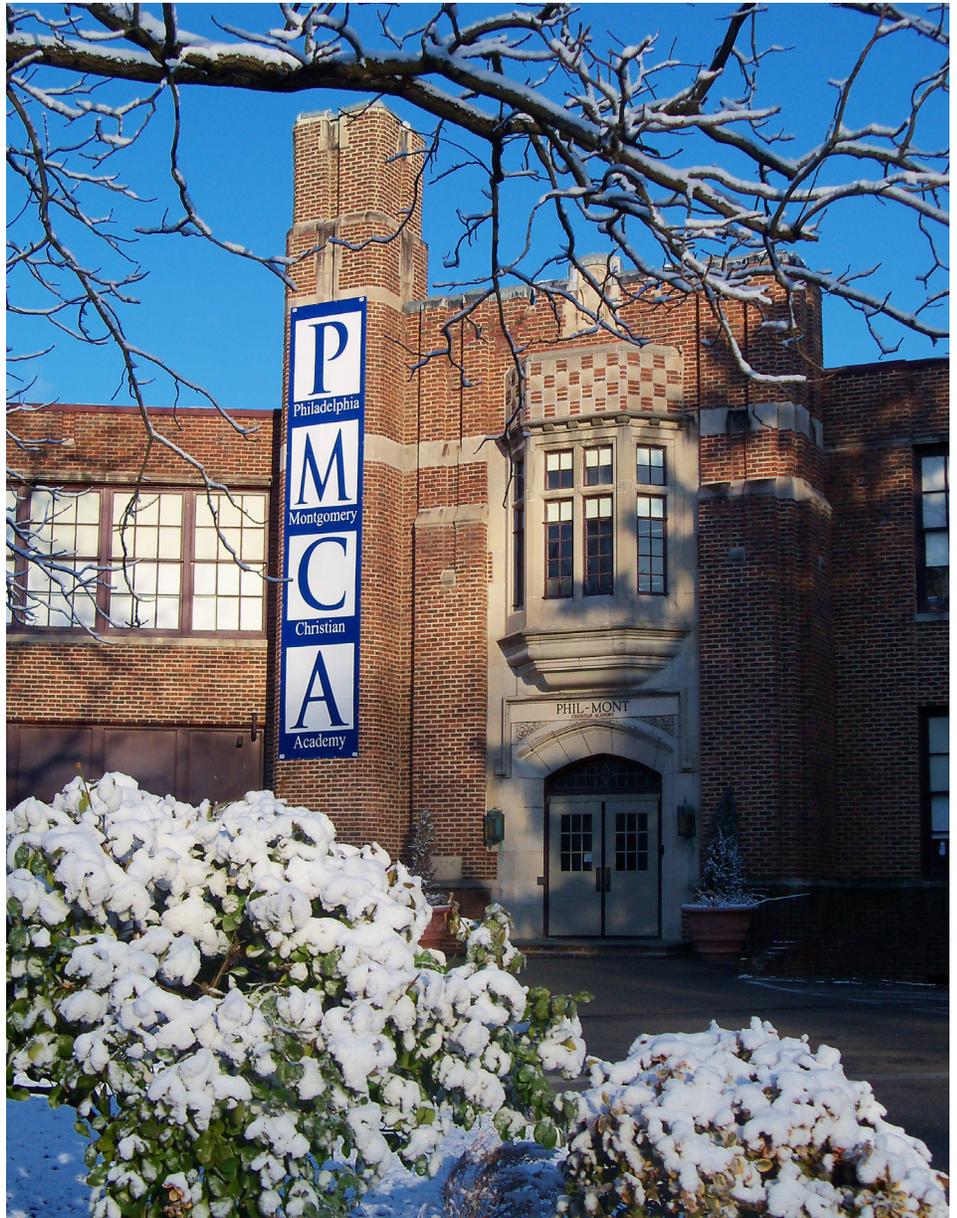
From the Head of School

The Three-Legged Stool: The School

In this year's editions of the Signet we have been using the theme of Christian education as a three-legged stool including the home, the church, and the school as a framework for communicating what we are doing through our efforts and energies. This edition concludes that theme as it addresses the role the school plays in the larger picture of Christian education which we all as parents are called to provide.

The role of the school is not to be the same as that of the home, yet it includes representing the parents in their responsibility to teach the things of the Lord to their children. The role of the school is not to be the same as that of the church, yet it includes opportunities to lead one another in the maturing of the faith. The role of the school is to educate young people in the pursuit of wisdom and understanding of both the Creator and His creation for the purpose of impacting the culture and community in ways that reflect His Lordship.

The Christian school, in order to perform that role, embraces Prov. 9:10 that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight." This involves assisting our students in seeing that the design of the world in which we live and the natural laws of creation demonstrate both planning and purpose. Understanding that planning and purpose pushes us to a continuing



From the President's Laptop

"You'll know you're really learning Arabic when you start dreaming in it." That was the advice I received when I attempted to master Arabic at age 33. Unfortunately, speaking Arabic was more of a nightmare than a dream for me!

A person who starts learning a difficult language as an adult usually doesn't become fluent. However, a child who grows up in a bilingual home can most often speak two languages with ease. What's the difference? The child is immersed in the language and the culture of that language; it is something he or she lives, thinks and speaks instinctively. But the person who receives some lessons later in life will generally fail to incorporate that language into his or her everyday life.

And so it is with the role that a Christ-centered school plays in fostering a genuine Christian view of life. Those who spend half their waking hours immersed in a Christ-centered school will more easily think and even dream in a Biblical framework, while those who only attend an hour of Sunday school and listen to a sermon once a week will have a harder time dreaming about a Christ-centered worldview.

Parents should realize that during the most impressionable years of their children's lives, the choice of a Christian school, such as PMCA, will often make the difference between Christianity being an add-on, and Christianity being the air which their children breathe. For no matter how good a public school education is, the reality is that it teaches children to think, believe, and live apart from God. But at Phil-Mont, the parent's goal and the teacher's goal are the same: to glorify God by enjoying Him in Christ forever!

A Christian school is not just a place to escape bad public schools, nor is it a way of shielding children from the growing immorality and violence of the public schools. Rather, as Calvin Cummings wrote, "The greatest contribution that the Christian school makes to the education of the child is the teaching

(and modeling) of a Christian world and life view. It is the integration of Biblical truth into all areas of learning and activities... They are taught to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and to think Christ's thoughts after Him. The light of Christ's Word is shed upon the study of Christ's world."

At a school such as PMCA, tremendous blessings can occur:

- Intellectually, life becomes meaningful. For in Christ, all things hold together, and we can answer life's basic questions, such as questions of origin, meaning, and destiny.
- Morally, children not only are given the perfect standard of right and wrong, but also are pointed to the One who can write those laws on our hearts, so we have the power and the desire to obey them and thus glorify God.
- Spiritually, the children are given models of teachers who love the Lord, who love the children, who pray for the children, and who counsel and disciple the children! The lasting impression of a godly and caring Christian teacher upon a child's heart and soul is priceless.

This is why all of us involved in Phil-Mont make a joyful sacrifice to send our children here and to keep PMCA vibrant for future generations. We want our children and our grandchildren to "dream" of all the great things that God has done for them in Christ, and to "dream" of all that the Lord will do through them, for His glory!

In Christ's mercy,
*Lou Prontnicki, President,
Board of Trustees*

(continued from page 1)

study of who the Creator is and what His purposes are so we might see and understand the role and function of created things. PMCA teaches students to critically examine the broader context of God's truth as manifest in the world and then discern their place within that context. It is about what God is doing in His world, not just about what we are doing in that world.

The Christian school, to perform its role, is also about "destroy[ing] arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and tak[ing] every thought captive to obey Christ" (2 Cor 10:5). This involves the teaching of a Christian world and life view. The Christian school seeks to communicate to students the mind of Christ. The light of Christ's word is shed upon the study of Christ's world. We believe that "from him and through him and to him are all things" (Rom. 11:36). Thus we want students to see the wisdom of God in the laws of mathematics; the wisdom, power, beauty and goodness of God in nature;

Accreditation: What's the Big Deal????

The year 2012 is a landmark year for PMCA. In March of this year, Phil-Mont received Accreditation status from the Middle States Association. "What's the big deal?" you may ask. Weren't we already accredited? Yes, since the early 1980's, PMCA has been accredited as a K-12 educational entity by this organization. Receiving and continuing that status may sound simple, but it is really quite complicated. RE-accreditation is by no means a rubber stamp formality.

What is accreditation?

Phil-Mont's mission is "to provide an excellent academic education from a Biblical world and life view for children in Christian families." Those of us with children at PMCA have chosen the school because of its Christian training and because of the excellent, academically-rigorous education provided here. How can we be sure that we are living up to our mission and serving our students well? The Middle States accreditation process allows an

and the purposes of God in the history and future of our world. The student in Christian education is not to be sheltered from the world so as not to engage it. Rather, students in Christian school are assisted in understanding truth and exposing falsehood. This is demonstrated by the writer of Chronicles when he describes the men “of Issachar, men who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do” (1 Chron 12:32).

The Christian school, to perform its role, seeks to teach students how to integrate and live out their faith in ways that bring glory to God. We want to remind our students that we are not our own “for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body” (1 Cor 6:20). Christian school education seeks to help students identify meaning and significance. “So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Cor 10:31). Young people are taught that in every area of endeavor they are to seek, reclaim and restore a creation marred and a humanity ruined by the

fall. Christians’ lives of glorifying God and enjoying Him forever are to be carried out in order that something of the original God-created excellence may again be seen in the work of their hands so that men may truly reflect the character and nature of their Creator.

At your reading of this we will have just completed our 69th year and graduated our 54th class of seniors. How have we been doing? The measure of how we have been doing is to take a look at those who have gone out from here. What do they believe? How are they living? Are they establishing new Christian homes and families? Are they committed to discipleship for themselves and for their families through the regular feeding, worship and community-building of their churches where Jesus is honored as Lord and the truth of God’s Word continues to be proclaimed? How are they living? Are they seeking to apply faith to the challenges and opportunities to glorify God and their enjoyment of Him? Are others seeing Jesus in them? Are their good works

being done and seen in ways that direct honor and glory to our God? The answers to these questions are why we do what we do. They are why we pray diligently and fervently for God’s blessing to be upon our efforts. They are why so many of you continue to assist us with your gracious support. Thank you for your partnership with us at Phil-Mont. We believe our stool remains strong because we believe that each leg, home, church, and school, is performing its role well.

Donald B. Beebe
Head of School



unbiased third party to come in and assess the school on many levels. Its job is to find out if we are who we say we are and whether we do what we say we do. We are also challenged to articulate and commit ourselves to three goals for improving PMCA during the next seven years. So it is a look back at our past and present operations as well as a look forward to what PMCA will, by God’s grace, continue to be and grow to become.

The accreditation process is a long and arduous one. It began about 18 months ago with Matt Kephart and me traveling to the Middle States Association headquarters in Philadelphia for training for our roles as co-coordinators of the process. A protocol or format was chosen and the task of gathering information was begun. Accreditation needs to take into account all parts of PMCA. Therefore parents, students, the Board and faculty and staff all were involved in taking a survey to determine perceived strengths and weaknesses in twelve different areas of the institution. Committees

were formed to gather information required to be supplied to the MSA on facilities and finance, student services and academics. Other teams were formed to write a description of what we want our students to know and to be after the benefit of a Phil-Mont education, and a Planning Team of stakeholders was formed to oversee the whole process and to check and approve each section as it was completed.

The Accreditation Team Visits

After all our information was gathered and organized, our goals for the next seven years were written and sent for technical review. As soon as we received approval for those, we wrote action plans, detailed lists of activities which would enable us to work toward our goals. Then from March 26-29, a team of educators came to visit. They came from Christian and public schools as far away as Harrisburg and as close as Philadelphia. They studied our document, researched our archives of supporting information and interviewed staff,

faculty, parents and students. In the end they gave a verbal report (which will be followed by a written report sometime in the summer) which gave their approval and recommendation for PMCA to be reaccredited for another seven years.

How we praise God for blessing our efforts to that end! But we also are thankful for this opportunity to take a good hard look at ourselves and to honestly assess our needy areas and commit ourselves to work to improve and strengthen the program at PMCA. So while we celebrated with gourmet cupcakes and punch, we began, in April, to follow our action plans and continue to work to glorify God here at Phil-Mont, through realizing our improvement goals.

Next time: How PMCA will, by God’s grace and our efforts, continue to grow during the next seven years.

Suzy Liegel
Principal

Congratulations Class of 2012!

BRITTANY SIMONE **ADAMS**



INDIANA UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA
WEST PHILADELPHIA BAPTIST
CONGRESS OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
SCHOLARSHIP AWARD
SECOND ANTIOCH BAPTIST DEBRADY
SCHOLARSHIP

TERESA M. N. **AVELLINO**



ARCADIA UNIVERSITY
GRADUATED WITH HONORS**

JEREMY RONALD **BIEREMA**



THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA
VALEDICTORIAN, PMCA CLASS OF 2012
PMCA DRAMA AWARD
PMCA GERMAN AWARD
PMCA MATHEMATICS AWARD
VALEDICTORIAN AWARD – ROTARY CLUB
OF SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP
WPVI CHANNEL 6 BEST OF THE CLASS
NATIONAL MERIT FINALIST
NATIONAL MERIT SCHOLAR
NATIONAL MERIT SCHOLARSHIP
NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY
NATIONAL GERMAN HONOR SOCIETY
PHEAA CERTIFICATE OF MERIT RECIPIENT
COMPETITIVE AWARD
THE JANE H. AND ROBERT M. VERBURG
SCHOLARSHIP
PENN GRANT SCHOLARSHIP
TREASURER, PMCA CLASS OF 2012
GRADUATED WITH HIGH HONORS*
ATTENDED PMCA GRADES 1-12

KORINN IVETTE **CENTENO**



LIBERTY UNIVERSITY
PMCA PRINCIPAL'S AWARD
PMCA MUSIC EXCELLENCE AWARD
OPTIMIST CLUB YOUTH IN ACTION AWARD

CLAYTON TAFT **COOPER, JR.**



CLAFLIN UNIVERSITY
THE CANAAN BAPTIST CHURCH
SCHOLARSHIP
THE POLICE ATHLETIC LEAGUE (PAL)
SCHOLARSHIP
THE DOCTOR MARY WRIGHT,
BAPTIST MINISTERS WIVES AND WIDOWS
SCHOLARSHIP

REBECCA ANN **CRONIN**



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COMMUNITY
COLLEGE
NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY
NATIONAL GERMAN HONOR SOCIETY

BRIAN SCOTT **DANIHEL**



BUCKS COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE
NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY
CO-EDITOR OF PHILOTHEON
GRADUATED WITH HIGH HONORS*
ATTENDED PMCA GRADES 1-12

KEVIN MARK **DANIHEL**



BUCK COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE
TREASURER, PMCA NATIONAL HONOR
SOCIETY
GRADUATED WITH HONORS**
ATTENDED PMCA GRADES 1-12

*HIGH HONORS DENOTES A GPA OF 3.90 OR ABOVE

**HONORS DENOTES A GPA OF 3.50 - 3.89

ELEXUS CORDINE **FREEMAN-FILMORE**



HAMPTON UNIVERSITY
EDITOR, VANGUARD LITERARY ART JOURNAL

XIUHONG (ARIES) **GUAN**



PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY,
UNIVERSITY PARK
PMCA GENESIS 1:1 AWARD
VICE PRESIDENT, PMCA NATIONAL
HONOR SOCIETY
GRADUATED WITH HIGH HONORS*

RUT **HORMANN**



DECISION DEFERRED

STEPHEN RANDOLPH **DYSON**



TEMPLE UNIVERSITY

RAMÓN PAUL **GADEA**



WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY
PMCA MUSIC EXCELLENCE AWARD
NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY
GRADUATED WITH HIGH HONORS*
ATTENDED PMCA GRADES 1-12

AMANDA MICHELLE **HAAGE**



WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY
ATTENDED PMCA GRADES 1-12

SARAH ELAINE **ECKEL**



MILLERSVILLE UNIVERSITY
VICE PRESIDENT, PMCA INTERACT
ATTENDED PMCA GRADES 1-12

JONATHAN DAVID **GARNETT**



TEMPLE UNIVERSITY
PMCA ROMANS 8:37 AWARD,
MORE THAN CONQUERORS

MORGAN MARY **HAWKINS**



EASTERN UNIVERSITY
PHIL-MONT CITIZENSHIP AWARD
EASTERN UNIVERSITY TRUSTEES
SCHOLARSHIP
NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY
PMCA REPRESENTATIVE TO
KYW NEWSTUDIES PROGRAM
GRADUATED WITH HIGH HONORS*
ATTENDED PMCA GRADES 1-12

NICHOLAS GOLDSBOROUGH **HUNTER**



TEMPLE UNIVERSITY
TEMPLE SCHOLAR AWARD

MICHAEL ANTHONY **HUTSON, JR.**



HOLY FAMILY UNIVERSITY
ATTENDED PMCA GRADES 1-12

SHELBY TAYLOR **JACKSON**



ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY
CO-EDITOR OF *PHILOTHEON*

ELIJAH DARNELL **JOHNSON**



HOWARD UNIVERSITY
PHIL-MONT CITIZENSHIP AWARD
HOWARD UNIVERSITY LEGACY SCHOLARSHIP
PRESIDENT, PMCA CLASS OF 2012
ATTENDED PMCA GRADES 1-12

DAVID HAROLD **KELLEY**



TEMPLE UNIVERSITY
SECRETARY, PMCA NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY
GRADUATED WITH HONORS**

MARIA ELIZABETH **LOZOWSKI**



TEMPLE UNIVERSITY
NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY

AIAH KAIMACHEDEH **SONGU-MBRIWA**



HOLY FAMILY UNIVERSITY
HOLY FAMILY ATHLETIC SCHOLARSHIP
HOLY FAMILY PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLARSHIP AWARD
VICE PRESIDENT, PMCA CLASS OF 2012
TREASURER, PMCA INTERACT
GRADUATED WITH HONORS**

SUSAN KAILANI **McKAY**



DECISION DEFERRED
NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY
GRADUATED WITH HONORS**

CAMPBELL DAVIS **MEYERS**



PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY,
UNIVERSITY PARK
2012 "SERVICE ABOVE SELF" AWARD,
ROTARY CLUB OF SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP
PRESIDENT, PMCA INTERACT
VICE PRESIDENT, PMCA STUDENT COUNCIL
NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY
GRADUATED WITH HONORS**

RACHEL MARGARET **NEIKIRK**



GORDON COLLEGE
SALUTATORIAN, PMCA CLASS OF 2012
PMCA ART AWARD
PMCA ENGLISH AWARD
PMCA SPANISH AWARD
NATIONAL MERIT FINALIST
PHEAA CERTIFICATE OF MERIT RECIPIENT
COMPETITIVE AWARD
AJ GORDON SCHOLAR
GORDON COLLEGE ART SCHOLARSHIP
NATIONAL MERIT GORDON COLLEGE
SCHOLARSHIP
2012 COMMUNITY SPIRIT AWARD,
ROTARY CLUB OF SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP
OPTIMIST CLUB YOUTH IN ACTION AWARD
GRADUATED WITH HIGH HONORS*
ATTENDED PMCA GRADES 1-12

LISA LYNETTE **RODGERS**



PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY,
ABINGTON
NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY
SECRETARY, PMCA INTERACT

*HIGH HONORS DENOTES A GPA OF 3.90 OR ABOVE

**HONORS DENOTES A GPA OF 3.50 - 3.89

EMMA K. SHOPE



COVENANT COLLEGE
PMCA SAMUEL AND ETHEL S. PARKER
MEMORIAL AWARD
PMCA DRAMA AWARD
COVENANT COLLEGE PRESIDENTIAL
SCHOLARSHIP
COVENANT COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP
COVENANT COLLEGE MUSIC SCHOLARSHIP
PRESIDENT, PMCA NATIONAL HONOR
SOCIETY
WILLIAM PENN CHARTER
NATIONAL SOCIETY OF THE DAUGHTERS
OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION 2011
AWARD

JAKOB STEPHEN SORKNESS



UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH
UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH HONORS
PROGRAM
PMCA LISL GAFFIN TYSON MEMORIAL AWARD
PMCA COACHES' CUP AWARD
PMCA HISTORY AWARD
NATIONAL MERIT COMMENDED STUDENT
PHEAA CERTIFICATE OF MERIT RECIPIENT
COMPETITIVE AWARD
PRESIDENT, PMCA STUDENT COUNCIL
PMCA REPRESENTATIVE TO CAMP NEIDIG,
ROTARY CLUB INTERNATIONAL
OPTIMIST CLUB YOUTH IN ACTION AWARD
GRADUATED WITH HIGH HONORS*
ATTENDED PMCA GRADES 1-12

BRADLEY RYAN STEIGER



LIBERTY UNIVERSITY
PMCA PRINCIPAL'S AWARD
PMCA NOT TO US AWARD
NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY
SECRETARY, PMCA CLASS OF 2012
GRADUATED WITH HONORS**
ATTENDED PMCA GRADES 1-12

BRETT ROBERT STEIGER



TEMPLE UNIVERSITY
TEMPLE SCHOLAR AWARD
THE BEST BUY SCHOLARSHIP FOR
ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND COMMUNITY
INVOLVEMENT
ATTENDED PMCA GRADES 1-12

ZACHARY THOMAS STONE



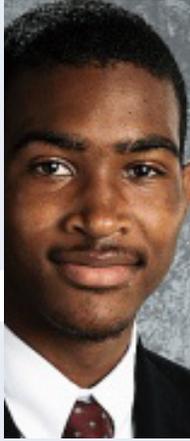
WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY

ADAM F. STRAPP



GENEVA COLLEGE
PMCA BARNABAS AWARD
GENEVA COLLEGE NORTHWOOD AWARD

JARED THUMON PAUL WHACK



CHESTNUT HILL COLLEGE

JULIA CATHERINE WHITBECK



TEMPLE UNIVERSITY
PMCA COACHES' CUP AWARD
ATTENDED PMCA GRADES 1-12

JONATHAN THOMAS WOJCIK



PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY,
ABINGTON
ATTENDED PMCA GRADES 1-12

Welcome to the Other Side

A Conversation with Stemler and Suggs Our Accomplished Artist and Teacher Duo

Will Liegel

In our last issue, our *Signet* readers were able to enjoy a conversation with our beloved Bible teacher Dan Kunkle. Mr. Kunkle was the first brave instructor to sit down to discuss his classroom activities and educational goals at Phil-Mont. As a Christian institution, what better place to start than the Bible department and the foundation it provides for our entire upper school—and it seems like most folks agreed. Over 450 people have logged on to the complete video interview from which the article was drawn. (No doubt this group was enlarged by the recommendation of former PMCA Dean of Students Anthony Bradley. Now a Research Fellow of the Acton Institute, an Assistant Professor of Theology and Ethics at King's College, a prolific author, and a speaker in forums like NPR, CNN, and Fox News, Dr. Bradley read the *Signet* piece, watched the live discourse, and then recommended it to others through his popular blog. You can check him out at <http://bradley.chat-tablogs.com>. Thanks, Dr. Bradley!)

With an initial success such as that, we are eager to move forward in our goal of creating a Phil-Mont faculty video library. This time we have a two-fer—a pair of accomplished educators from one department, willing to parry live and unrehearsed with a curious host on their ministries here at the Academy. Prepare to come to know Mrs. Rebecca Suggs, our new elementary/middle school art teacher and her comrade, PMCA alumnus and artist, Mr. Matthew Stemler.

Becky, a native of New Jersey who holds a sculpture/art education degree from Calvin College, was enlisted to teach here last Fall. Married to Jeremy, an engineer, she is mom to three PMCA elementary students: Kindergarten Andre, second grader Kayla, and fourth grader Jay. Already we're happy to report that a number of her students this

year took top awards at the annual ACSI Arts Festival in April. Meanwhile, Matt has been at Phil-Mont in various rolls since age five: student, 1989 alumnus, and 13-year teacher. Married to fellow graduate Claudia (Furcola) Stemler '92, co-owner of Cups 'n' Cakes in Colledgeville, Matt is also dad to sixth grader Elijah and ninth grader Isaac (who perhaps not surprisingly was the Best in Show winner at the aforementioned ACSI festival with a 3-D sculpture piece!).

It was June 7. School ended at noon, then Becky and Matt each enjoyed a quick celebratory lunch with their kids. A final dash took them to the high school art room and they were ready to discuss art in a Christian context. These excellent teachers are fully committed to taking their young charges to new heights and, in turn, their students think oh-so-highly of their mentors. I got to serve as host and videographer, a treat since I am their next door neighbor on our basement Avenue of the Arts. What follows are excerpts from our thirty minutes of filming. When you finish, you'll definitely want to see the entire interview and its broad and far-ranging topics. A lot of wisdom and insight flowed in that room that afternoon... Enjoy!

Will: So Matt, tell us a little bit about yourself and how you came to be at Phil-Mont in art.

Matt: I've been here for a very long time - from K to 12! I graduated in 1989 and from here I went to design school, a place where I could grow and learn skills and really communicate. From there I decided to pursue fine art and enrolled at Tyler School of Art. Later I became a substitute and then I had the opportunity to take a position here.

Will: You went from 12 years at Phil-Mont to Tyler; was there a big difference?

Matt: A huge difference! Art school has its own particular challenges. I think that I was prepared in art and I think I understood the Christian worldview because of my years at Phil-Mont, but there really wasn't a "crossover." When I went to Tyler, I felt those challenges on a daily basis. I felt that I had a double major all the time. It wasn't just that I was an artist, I was also a Christian. So, those things were constantly mixing up. God was a real blessing in my life in that



Examples of ceramic sculptures by Becky Suggs.

every class that I went to I had another Christian artist there. I look back on that now and I see how God used that as a way of continually strengthening my faith.

Will: Becky, now it's your turn. You're brand new to Phil-Mont, so tell us a little bit about your background and your training.

Becky: Different than Matt, I went to public school K through 12 and at the end of my senior year, I wanted to find a Christian college to go to. I wanted a Christian environment and didn't even consider a secular art school. I felt I wasn't ready at that time so I chose to go to Calvin College where I majored in art and art education with a sculpture degree. After graduation I moved to Pittsburgh and taught there in some museum after school programs. I moved to Boston, met my husband, and a year after that we decided to both go to school. At that point I had our oldest child and I thought, "No problem!" However, by the end I had all three of our children and I carried the youngest in a sling when I crossed the stage to get my masters degree in art education from the Massachusetts College of Art and Design. Everyone knew I was the lady with all the children!

Will: How did you come to Phil-Mont?

Becky: My husband graduated from his program the same year and we came to Philadelphia where I did a lot of volunteer work, some camps, some library programs. I was kind of waiting on the Lord to have the right opportunity for me to go back to teaching. I had actually been told about a different Christian school position but it wasn't a good match for my family. I looked on the Phil-Mont website and we had been encountering alumni who just raved about the school and the community. It was the desire of our hearts to be connected and, well, there happened to be an opening. God had His way from there.

Will: It's interesting how different your journeys have been, but both of you



The Stemler family, from left: Isaac, Claudia, Matt and Elijah Job.

have worked out there in the world, Becky at museums and Matt, you've had a number of art shows throughout the Philadelphia area. With how you've been trained, how has it been interacting out there with professionals in the art world?

Matt: Well, I want to look at it two ways. One being a practicing artist and the other being a teacher. There are challenges out there as far as being a Christian artist, but the culture of art in Philadelphia is really interesting. It's a small community and I've been blessed to be in a few major shows, one an installation at Eastern State Penitentiary. I've felt very welcomed and although I had my own spiritual end to it, they as a community really accepted the piece and called it their own little "sanctuary." ...I'm encountering a lot of people with a lot of questions and being open about the artwork and its intention, I'm finding that it creates a conversation... So, to use art to create a conversation around it—I find that I view being an artist as being missional.

Will: How about you, Becky? Was museum work difficult to do based on your Calvin work?

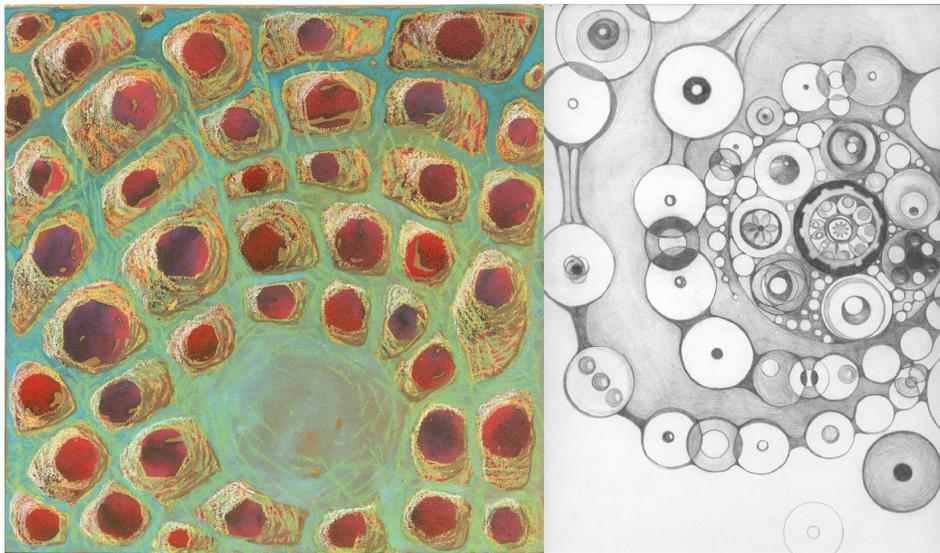
Becky: It was an awesome opportunity. You could go right behind the scenes, take your students right up to the artwork, create things right there in the museum. It was an ideal situation... As to my worldview, while I don't think I was set apart, there were a few awkward times when there was an interna-

tional show at the Carnegie Museum in Pittsburgh and there were some subjects that were brought up that we had to engage with. So you have to ask, is there validity to what the artist is saying? There were some harsh issues such as racism that were very overt in the pieces and how do we engage and have a conversation? I had a group that was young and the parents were very concerned that it was not something they could visually understand or have the knowledge to appreciate. ...I find that I'm dealing with this now with my students in that on the Internet they are looking at images all day long. I'm trying to teach them discernment and wisdom about what they're seeing and bringing context to what was made.

Matt: Let me add to that. You're talking about form and how it's evolved especially in contemporary art. Just thinking about the spiritual end as artists out there, a lot of what they do they connect to their own spiritual viewpoint and we connect ours to our spiritual viewpoint; that's where that conversation comes into play. My form is really talking about my vision.

What we do as artists is part of the creation song.

Matt Stemler's colorful artwork at left bears similarities to Becky Suggs's pencil sketch at right.



Becky: I think if you articulate that well and you are solid in your craftsmanship, then most other artists respect that.

Will: Is art really necessary for them to dabble in here or to think about when they get out of here? With all the needs there are in the world, why is art something we should care about?

Matt: Let me share some thoughts that I've come across recently. When we think about the struggles that we face, when we think about what it means to be a human being, it's the arts that really search for the answers for that. Of course we aim to search through the Scriptures for our understanding of our relationship to God, but we do have to deal with our end of it. What are we in relation to God? What has he done for us? Why are we even worth saving? It comes down to the value in expression.

Although math and the sciences have, in a sense, defined our culture in a way where we can grow with technology and explore, we do learn a lot about ourselves, we do learn a lot about God's creation as we look at what it means to be made in the image of God. I was at an Art AP [Advanced Placement] training session and had lunch with a number of public school teachers. Soon it became "take your turn to complain" where they went from one teacher to the next talking about how their school

was cutting budget, was cutting personnel, was cutting supplies and time and such and it became my turn. I was quiet and then I said, "Our school believes that the arts are just as important as any other thing we teach because that all comes from God's creativity and we're made in God's image" and they just silenced. We are fully supported in the arts at Phil-Mont.

Will: Becky your kids are much younger, some just five years old. Are the same kind of dialogues going on there?

Becky: I think so. The premise is the same. We're reflecting God's creativity and there's something natural in that. There's not one civilization you can find that hasn't "created." So why is that? We look back and see that God was creative, is creative, and so that's just part of who we are. How do we use that then to give God glory and reflect God's glory? That's always a challenge. Kids come up with an idea and I say, "Is that going to be honoring and pleasing to the Lord?" That's kind of our "gold standard." ...It's not that you make challenging work that questions something that happened, that's a response to an experience, but at the end there needs to be a something edifying, something redemptive about it.

Matt: When you read the Psalms there are so many that are David's crying out to the Lord expressively. And yet it's

done in a poetic form. It's an additional step. It's not just the artist complaining. If you can switch over to it and say "Let's give this a form. Let's let this make sense." And even in that decision you are in a sense allowing people to join in with you.

Becky: We're also trying to teach our students discernment. I don't think that everything that's called "art" is worthy of your looking at or engaging with. Definitely with younger kids, there's certain times when you need to just say, "That's not the right time for you." And as you get older, there are certain artists who, when I've gone into a show, I've said, "This is not helping me in any way to continue to be evolved." You need to teach your students that sometimes that's an appropriate response.

Will: Are there things you find yourselves saying repeatedly to your students, a mantra that just keeps coming up that keeps your students going in the direction you want to them to be going? Any ideas?



A portion of *Flotsam*, part of Matt Stemler's exhibit at LGTripp Gallery last fall.



The Suggs family, from left, Jeremy, Andre, Kayla, Jay and Becky.



A view of *Juxatposition*, an installation at Eastern State Penitentiary by Matt Stemler and his brother Jon '88.

couraging students to take it to the next level... The students will finish a work, hand it to you and be like, "I'm done." And then you have to question them: "What about this? What about that? Did you think about this?" There's a dialogue and then they enter the next phase and have a chance to rework it. It's not a directive. It's saying, "I see where you're going, now take it all the way."

Matt: I have a couple mantras. "You may have the greatest idea in the world, but if you haven't composed it well, nobody cares." The other one is, "The craftsmanship convinces people of your intention."

Will: Great ideas!

Matt: On the topic of taking it to next level, sometimes older students will come into my classroom and a younger student will say, "I'm done, Mr. Stemler!" And the older student will say, "You shouldn't have said that!" [laughter] But if you want to talk a little bit about the Christian worldview, a sort of mantra that I give is related to how I'm always pushing the idea of fulfillment. Over-arching, it's "What we do as artists is part of the creation song." It started at creation and God's designed us in His image and we're now just picking up at

this point and we have a job to do. That is to continue to fill the earth, whether that means restoring things or making things that we've never seen before, we're part of this larger picture of fulfillment. God's earth is dynamic and we're creatively a part of that dynamic.

Will: It seems that you're giving all of our kids "art eyes."

Matt: I often think of one of my students who was not necessarily art-centered, more of a sports person. I had her for two or three years just working with her, giving her vocabulary and showing things and giving her vision. One day she came in to talk to me about buildings she'd seen downtown. She said, "No, no. I SAW a building today." She started talking to me about negative spaces, about angles, about colors and things. My calm reply was, "Welcome to the other side."

Now we invite you to watch the full video interview at www.phil-mont.com and hear some great thoughts on:

Must art for young children be just "crafts?"

What might an art lesson for elementary kids look like?

What is the value of contextualization through studying art history?

How do PMCA students compare to students from large schools with big departments?

How do content, meaning, and goal drive the finished art product?

Do Phil-Mont kids embrace art at PMCA and do some actually pursue art careers?

What kinds of specific issues are you trying to prepare your kids for when they leave PMCA?

How do we encourage students to reveal "truth" in their artwork?

Why kinds of things "trip up" your kids and how do you deal with these?

How do you see students grow in their understanding and vision by their senior year?



Commencement

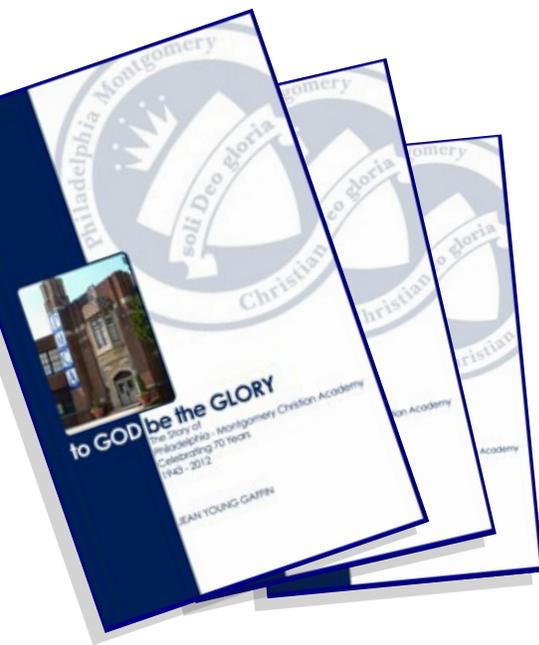
PMCA held its 54th Commencement Exercises on Saturday, June 9 at Calvary Presbyterian Church in Willow Grove. Rachel Neikirk was the Salutatorian and Jeremy Bierema was the Valedictorian and gave the Board of Trustees Award Address to the class. The Commencement Address, "To Fill Big Shoes You Don't Need Big Feet, Just a Big God," was given by parent Rev. Robert Adams, Minister at The Second Antioch Baptist Church in Philadelphia. **We congratulate the Class of 2012!**



Valedictorian Jeremy Bierema addresses his classmates as (from left) Head of School Don Beebe, Commencement Speaker Robert Adams and Board President Lou Pronnicki look on.



Members of the Philadelphia-Montgomery Christian Academy Class of 2012 toss their caps.



PMCA History Book

In celebration of PMCA's 70th Anniversary year, we are publishing the official history of the school, compiled by Jean Young Gaffin. The book is a 5 x 8" hard-cover with a dust jacket, approximately 150 pages, with over 100 vintage black and white and full color photos.

The cost is \$40 if you pick one up at the school, or have it shipped directly to you for a \$5 mailing fee. Visit www.phil-mont.com to download an order form.

A free book will be sent to everyone who clips this notice and mails it with at least a \$250 donation to PMCA. Donations should be made out to PMCA and mailed to Rhonda Currie, PMCA, 35 Hillcrest Avenue, Erdenheim, PA 19038. All donations are tax deductible.

For more information about PMCA please visit our website at: www.phil-mont.com

Pray for PMCA

For our students, faculty and staff that their summer break would be a time of both refreshment and growth.

For the Administration that they would be wise leaders and decision-makers.

For incoming families as they make the commitment a PMCA education.

For our recent graduates that they would be well-prepared for the transition to college in coming weeks.

For current school families that they would remain dedicated to the mission of PMCA.

For the Board of Trustees as they seek to guide the school according to godly principles.

For new faculty and staff and for those taking on new challenges, that they would be well-prepared for their responsibilities in September.

For the Lord's ongoing blessings and provision for the work at PMCA.



School parent Ken Sawyer caught this image of the younger elementary students as they performed, complete with ponchos and moustaches!

HISPANIC TIDES

PMCA's **Hispanic Tides Fine Arts Festival** took place on May 17 through 19. The event featured a three-day Art Show, Middle and High School Concerts on Thursday and Friday nights and performances of all kinds on multiple stages on Saturday. PMCA parent and 1988 alumna Nicole (Furcola) Baldini wrote the thank you note below. It gives a great flavor for the event.

I just wanted to say what a wonderful time our family had on Saturday. The girls so enjoyed performing and showing us their artwork. And because the schedule/timing worked so well, they were able to eat lunch and have time in the art room before heading back to the auditorium for the fabulous Blacklight show.

Seniors Brad Steiger and Emma Shope recreate a familiar pose in *Sunday Costs Five Pesos*.



It was just a buoyant and joyful experience all around, from the opening notes of the huge elementary band, to all of the singing, to the Mexican hat dancing, to the solos, to the drama performances, and all while surrounded by such amazing and colorful and diverse artwork everywhere you looked.

Thank you, teachers, for all of your hard work, extra hours, and being such an encouragement to the kids! I'm sure you were tired on Saturday, but you sure didn't show it! There is a lot of God-given talent at PMCA, both in the faculty and student body, and how wonderful that we can give Him the honor and glory during such a superb event.

The theme for 2013 is **Americana**, with an accent on Jazz, Blues, Broadway and the legends of our land. Plan now to join us next May!

The cast of *The Riddle of the Tambourine*, a One-Act play from Spain.



Fine Arts

Festival

Follow-Up

Shakespeare's work was represented at the festival as well. Here, a scene from *The Tempest* on the main stage.



Alumni News: Class Notes...

61

Jon Saboe died on January 16, 2012.

64

Paul Clowney died on April 6, 2012 after a two-year battle with cancer.

73

Daniel Strohecker died on May 19, 2012.

79

John and Alison (Clark '80) DeMoss live in Chattanooga, TN where John is a CPA and also teaches accounting and personal finance part time at Chattanooga Christian High School. Alison is a wedding photographer and home-schools two of their younger children. They have ten children (6 girls and 4 boys), ranging in age from 6 to 29 years old. Their four oldest are happily married and have given John and Alison four grandchildren with two more on the way.

85

Abigail Sietske was born on June 11, 2012 to **Christopher Vonhof** and his wife Hillary.

88

Eric Hesse was married to Erin Michael on April 21, 2012 in San Francisco, CA.

93

Jonathan Tress was married to Jennifer Hejaily on June 30, 2012. They will be living in Denver, CO.

97

Matthew Foster was born on November 29, 2011 to **Kristy (Karpinski) Shimkus** and her husband, Michael.

99

Kieran Avery was born to **Aprille (Bennett) O'Kane** and her husband, Timothy, on December 13, 2011.

01

Sierra Joy was born to **Jason Todd** and his wife, Jodi, on April 17, 2012.

02

Journey Beth was born to **Scott Duperree** and his wife, Jessica, on April 25, 2012.

Meredith (McLain) Allen and her husband Jon-Michael recently relocated to Connecticut. Meredith serves as Commissioner of Planning & Development for the City of West Haven and Jon is furthering his studies as class president at Yale School of Medicine.

04

Liz French was married to Timothy Fuller on June 9, 2012.

Jesse Struck was married to Lindsey Snow on June 2, 2012. Jesse has recently accepted a position as College and Career Counselor at Eastern Christian High School in North Haledon, NJ.

08

Gerald Glover III graduated from Ursinus College in May with a B.A. in PreLaw. He will be attending Suffolk University in Boston in the fall on the Trustee Award Grant.

09

Timothy James Dean III was born to **Cecelia (Forshee) Dean** and her husband, Tim, on April 24, 2012.

Matthew Shimkus



PMCA CLASS OF 2002 10-YEAR REUNION COCKTAIL PARTY & POTLUCK

HOSTS: Meredith (McLain) Allen (703-229-2168) & Zach Oelschlegel (215-713-5031)

WHEN: Saturday, September 1 at 5 pm

WHERE: Zach's – 426 East Sedgwick Street, Philadelphia, PA 19119

FLASHBACK! PARTY AT ZACH'S PLACE!

Zach has graciously offered his home to host our 10 year reunion and we look forward to seeing you there!

For many of us, it has been a decade since we walked the halls of PMCA and rubbed shoulders with each other. It's finally time to reunite and celebrate all that life has brought us. We will be taking a class picture at 7 pm and will have various drawings and prizes. It's certain to be a stellar time!

Please feel free to bring guests and RSVP for your party in advance. Also, as a potluck, we ask that you bring two items to share: your favorite drink (wine, beer, liquor, cocktails, mixers or non-alcoholic) and an appetizer or dessert (feel free to note what you are bringing on your RSVP response). If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Meredith. Don't miss out on this event; it only comes around every 10 years! We'll see you there!

Lisa Askey (left) and Jennifer Noonan will work together for a smooth transition in the Library Media Center.

Milestones & Transitions

The following faculty and staff members were honored at a Recognition Luncheon in June. We praise God for the many years of faithful service to PMCA represented here.

20 Years: Renée Bennett (Recess Aide, Extended Care)

25 Years: Carlotta Carradice (HS German and English); Bill DeHeer '82 (Elementary/MS Phys Ed.)

30 Years: Ron Bierema (HS Math)

Our new school year will be marked by some departures of faculty and staff as well as one new addition. God continues to be faithful in leading to us individuals of great experience, education, and godly character for which we continue to be both humbled and grateful. Please be praying for these individuals as they begin new endeavors, enter new phases of life, or strive to find their fit within the team of teachers and staff at Phil-Mont.

Ms. Rosana Lu has been a part of the Admissions and Marketing team at PMCA for this past year. She has moved to California where she has accepted an opportunity to pursue a PhD in Hebrew with a goal of teaching on the mission field in China.

Mrs. Michelle Orr has been serving as an Administrative Assistant for the last four years, but reorganization of the administrative offices has led to a reduction in staffing. We will miss Michelle and are grateful for her service.

Ms. Heidi Oelschlegel has served this past year in a position of team teaching 5th grade alongside Jim Krug to assist with an unusually large class. She was considered half-time but applied herself in both clock hours and creative energy at the same levels as our most dedicated full time teachers. We are disappointed that a continuing opportunity doesn't exist for her to remain next year, but we are grateful for her commitment to PMCA and to Christian education. We truly believe she will be a significant blessing to the school to which God next leads her.



Mrs. Diana Granados has been involved with PMCA over the last couple of years as a substitute teacher and as Spanish teacher for the early education students. This past year she took on the work with the High School Spanish students at both levels 3 and 4. At this time, Diana is looking to find a full-time position. We are grateful for her contributions to the Phil-Mont community.

Mrs. Lisa Askey has served God at PMCA for 21 years. She began as a second grade teacher, returned as a preschool teacher after having 3 children and then moved into the position of elementary librarian. Over the years, she has nurtured our Van Til Library Media Center into a cutting edge resource for the instructional program at Phil-Mont. Lisa has been in an exit transition over the last 2 years while assisting in the search for a replacement who offers commitment and the promise of excellence similar to her own. She has championed the manifold roles the VTLMC and its services play in our overall commitment to program excellence. We are indeed grateful for her longstanding service among us.

Mrs. Jennifer Noonan will officially begin duties as PMCA's Library Media Specialist in the fall. She completed her M.Ed. in Library Science at Arcadia University in December 2011, and holds a B.S. in Elementary Education from Penn State University. She has been interning this semester at Abington Friends School. Jennifer is married and has 4 children. She currently attends Jarretstown United Methodist Church. Over this coming summer, she will work in the LMC with Lisa Askey so that the transition to her new position will be a smooth one. We welcome her to PMCA.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

September

- 5**
First Day of School
- 7**
Back to School Barbecue, 6 pm
- 28**
NO SCHOOL - Faculty In-Service

October

- 13**
Fall Classic
- 19**
Elementary Grandparents' Day
High School Trip Day

November

- 9**
Fall Sports Awards, 7 pm
- 15-17**
Fall Musical, *The Nifty Fifties*
- 19, 20**
NO SCHOOL - Parent-Teacher Conferences

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Christian Academy**
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