



MLCA NEWSLETTER

SUMMER EDITION

July 2021

THE END OF A SPECIAL SCHOOL YEAR



Above, the 2021 MLCA Olympics victors from Corinth. Newsa Butterworth, Corinth's poet laureate, recites "The Cloud" by Percy Bysshe Shelley.

What a year we've had! It is hard to believe the 2020-2021 school year has come to an end. As we reflect on the past year, we remember the unique challenges of dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet we also remember the resilience of our students, faculty, parents, and community to preserve the joy of learning and maintain a safe environment each and every day. In this summer edition of the MLCA Newsletter, we explore the exciting end-of-year events from May and June. May your summer be restful and full of curiosity, exploration, and beauty, as well as anticipation for a new school year. Thank you for connecting with and supporting MLCA!

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NOTES FROM THE BOARD

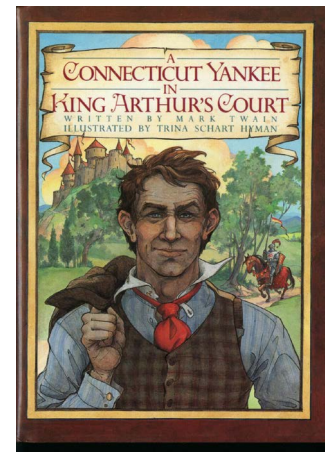
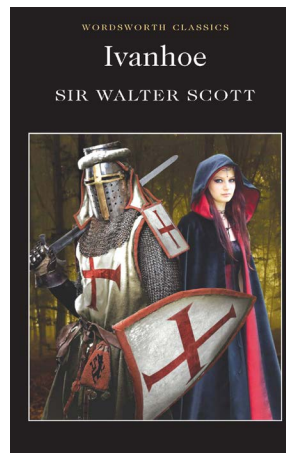
LESSONS LEARNED FROM CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

As you know, at MLCA we believe that children should learn to love serious literature and to perceive engagement with good books as the best kind of pastime. This past year, we launched the Lower School Book Club, where children work their way through approximately one classical book a month. We have also rearranged the summer reading assignments to provide more structure and to make sure that students are continuing to read at least one "classical" book/month during the summer months as well.

One little-known historical secret is that some of the best books nowadays designated as "children's literature" were in fact originally written with an adult audience in mind. Jules Verne, Mark Twain, even Hans Christian Andersen wrote some of their best-known works for adults. This means that, when children engage with these works nowadays, they have the opportunity to glean ideas which, instead of "meeting kids on their own level" (as modern popular young adult literature does all too often) instead drive a child's mind to aspire to higher levels; levels which a child may understand fully at a first reading; or which perhaps may gain new meaning later on when he returns to a favorite book again and again.

I would like to share here one such lesson, taught, as though in dialogue, by two of the books our older students engaged with over the past few months.

This past spring, the older grades read Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe* for Book Club. In one of the novel's key scenes, a knight Templar, taken by the charms of a Jewish maiden, kidnaps the unfortunate girl, locks her all alone in a cell high up in the turret of a castle, and tries to force himself on her. The knight is wealthy, intelligent, physically powerful, and enormously influential. The maiden is even more vulnerable than an ordinary woman would be in such circumstances—like any Jew in medieval Europe, she is wholly disenfranchised, powerless, and persecuted; no one will stand up for her honor and dignity. It seems like she does not stand a chance against the knight's will. And yet, against all odds, Scott's heroine comes out of the encounter victorious: when the knight



approaches her, she leaps onto the parapet of the turret window "with not the slightest screen between her and the tremendous depth below," crying "Remain where thou art, proud Templar, or at thy choice advance!—one foot nearer, and I plunge myself from the precipice; my body shall be crushed out of the very form of humanity upon the stones of that court-yard, ere it become the victim of thy brutality!" The knight, himself a bold and proud man, is awed by the maiden's daring and draws back. Later, another character in the novel spells out the moral: "Well hast thou said, all is possible for those who dare to die!"

One of the books our older students read this summer has been Mark Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*. Twain wrote this famous work as a retort to Sir Walter Scott's romantic glorification of the Middle Ages. But while Twain mocks the very things which Scott so relishes (chivalry, jousts, troubadours, knights errant, and so forth), the two books have more in common than may appear at first sight: both champion the strength of human spirit against all odds. Twain's hero, Hank Morgan, wakes up to find himself a millennium and a continent away from his life in late-19th century Connecticut. Putting aside all hope of ever seeing his home and loved ones again, he takes upon himself the formidable task of singlehandedly advancing medieval society on the road of technological, economic, and social progress, successfully progressing humanity in fast-forward motion across one thousand years.

In comedy, Twain's hero accomplishes what Scott's heroine accomplishes in tragedy: both triumph in safeguarding and championing that which is most precious

NOTES FROM THE BOARD, CONT. _____

for them (personal honor and dignity; the honor and dignity of human civilization) in circumstances where such triumph seems utterly impossible, thus proving that “all is possible” for those who are not afraid.

We have grown accustomed to the cliché “it takes a village,” but classical children’s literature suggests the opposite—*it takes a lonely hero*, with nothing to support him but his own will and courage.

Two thousand years before Scott and Twain, the Roman poet Vergil had his hero, Aeneas, wake up to discover his city, Troy, engulfed in flames and all but overtaken by hostile Greek forces. Aeneas dons his armor and rushes against the Greeks, exclaiming “*una*

salus victis nullam sperare salutem” (“the one hope of the doomed is not to hope for safety!” *Aeneid* 2.354). Aeneas does not succeed in saving Troy, but, much like Twain’s hero, he eventually succeeds in *bringing his civilization with him*, laying the foundations of a “new Troy” (eventually, Rome) on the Italian shore. Vergil’s original audience was the Emperor Augustus and his court, but, appropriately enough, the *Aeneid* became the main educational text for children and young people for the next two millennia—a text which I look forward to reading in the original Latin with MLCA Upper School students in the coming years.

Yours,
Asya.

TEACHER APPRECIATION _____



Thank you to Mrs. Rice for organizing the Teacher Appreciation Breakfast on Thursday, April 29th! We are very grateful for the adaptable, tireless, knowledgeable, dedicated, and creative faculty and staff at MLCA!

POETRY NIGHT

Our second Poetry Night of 2021 was on Monday, May 10. Each student was recorded reciting a poem from memory and these recitations were compiled for community viewing. Thank you to all our English teachers, parents, administration, and those who “attended” the performance. Students, thank you for sharing the gift of poetry with us!! The program can be found [here](#) and the video is available [here](#).



Sample list of poems recited:

- “Sweet and Low” by Alfred, Lord Tennyson
- “The Seasons of the Year” by Isaac Watts
- “Looking for a Sunset Bird in Winter” by Robert Frost
- “Mr. Mistoffelees” by T. S. Eliot
- “Echo” by Christina Rossetti
- “Autumn Chant” by Edna St. Vincent Millay
- “Hiawatha” by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
- Selections/monologues from Shakespeare’s plays



Top, Matt and Asya Sigelman give opening remarks. Above, left, and right, stills from students’ recitations. Clockwise from above right: Malcolm Weinstein, Covi Hungerford, Agnes Sigelman, Antonella Tarr, and Evie Silio.



MUSICAL EVENING

Our Spring Musical Evening was held virtually on Monday, June 7. The two videos can be found [here](#) and [here](#). The two corresponding programs are attached [here](#) and [here](#). Thank you to all our piano teachers, parents, administration, and those who “attended” the performance. And a big congratulations to all of our pianists and violinists! We look forward hearing you all perform live again.



Clockwise from right: Vivian Farwell, Daniel Fedorov, Asha Ponnuru, Benjamin Vuernick, Kai and Rio Singh, Alana Hegde, the Fifth Grade Violin Ensemble, Sasha Weiner.



BOOK CLUB

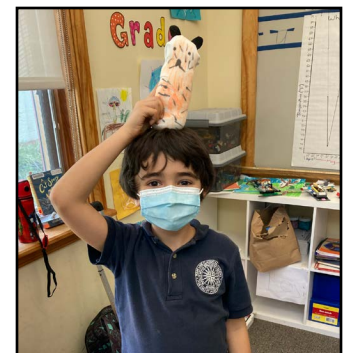
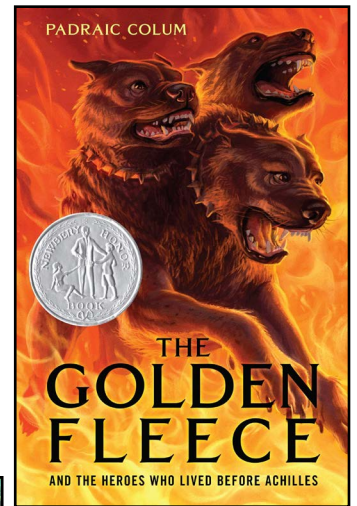
This year, the students enjoyed the privilege of joining the MLCA Book Club, a new initiative introduced by Dr. Sigelman to encourage our students to read and enjoy high-quality literature. Each grade was assigned one book per month and each book club session concluded with a grade-level party at school, a game or project, edible treat, and prize.

The third book club session ran from May 3 until the last week of school. The Kindergarten and first grade read *The Velveteen Rabbit* by Margery Williams, grades two through four read *The Golden Fleece and the Heroes Who Lived Before Achilles* by Padraic Colum, and grades five through eight read *Ivanhoe* by Sir Walter Scott.

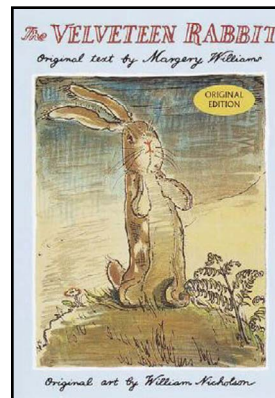


Golden Fleece Bingo

HERACLES	KING AETES	PERSEPHONE	THESEUS
PANDORA	PROMETHEUS	JASON	ATALANTA
KING PELIAS	MEDEA	ADMETUS	PELEUS
KING PHINEAS	ORPHEUS	HYPISPYLE	PERSEUS



Top right, the 5th to 8th graders gather after school to read and discuss *Ivanhoe*. Top left, Dr. Sigelman leads the 4th grade book club celebration. Grades 2 to 4 played *Golden Fleece* Bingo using characters from the book. The Kindergarten and 1st grade made their own stuffed animals in honor of *The Velveteen Rabbit*. Clockwise from bottom left: Eva Mencin, Élea Portier, Calvin Krellner-Oathes, Sasha Weiner, Ediz Goktas, and Rosie LaRue.



PARENT-FACULTY SOCIAL

After many months, parents and teachers were finally able to gather together at the Posner home for an intimate concert. We are grateful to have heard Samuel Walter perform the Bach Cello Suites for us in challenging humid conditions. The community then enjoyed fellowship and refreshments outside.



FIRST MLCA OLYMPICS

Welcome to the Opening Ceremonies of the MLCA Olympic Games 2020-2021! During the last week of school, we held the Inaugural MLCA Olympic Games. Each student became a competitor from one of four city states: Athens, Corinth, Argos, and Sparta.

During the opening ceremony on Monday morning, the students showed off the art they have been working on with Mrs. Rice. Poet Laureates from each polis recited a poem and all students swore a truce of peace and good sportsmanship between the competing city-states.

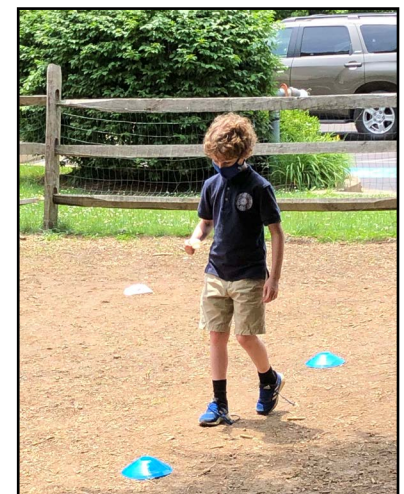
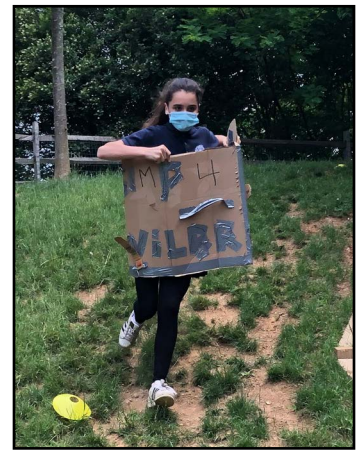
To see the whole opening ceremonies video click [here](#). Thank you to Mr. Chilbert for organizing the opening ceremony, an excellent start to the games and the last week of school.



LET THE GAMES BEGIN!

During the week, the students enjoyed some physical competitions during their recess periods. These competitions included kicking soccer goals, throwing javelins, running a chariot race, completing mazes, completing a spoon relay, and finding hidden pictures from all over campus. We also held academic competitions in our classes and competed in a multi-subject Jeopardy game! Thank you to Mr. Soto for organizing the games and Mr. Gabriel for tallying the points! Thank you also to all the teachers who helped run the games throughout the week. We had so much fun!

Math	Story Time	Music Theory	French	Science
100	100	100	100	100
200	200	200	200	200
300	300	300	300	300
400	400	400	400	400
500	500	500	500	500

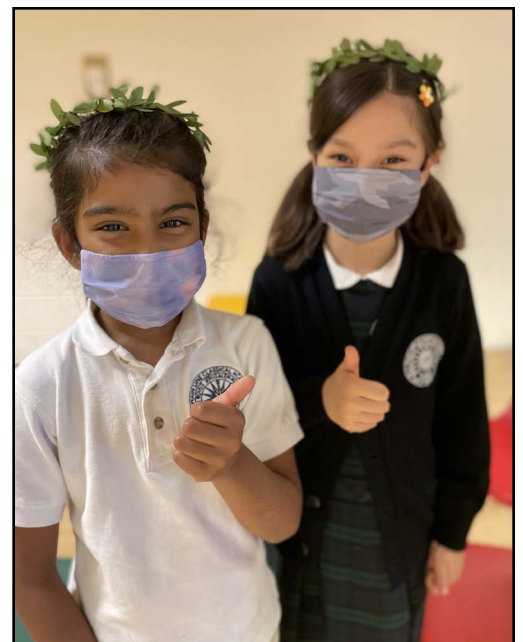


OLYMPICS CLOSING CEREMONY _____

On the last day of school, we held our Closing Ceremony where we crowned the winners, Corinth, with olive branches. The Corinthian Poet Laureate, Newsa Butterworth, recited "The Cloud" by Percy Bysshe Shelley. Finally, we counted down to the end of the school year. Happy summer!

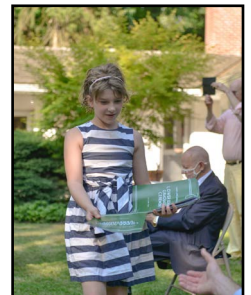
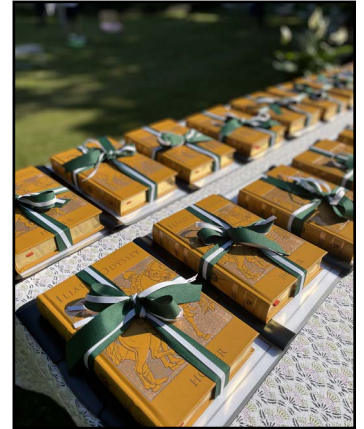


Clockwise from above, students anticipate hearing the winning team announced; Mr. Chilbert welcomes the school to the closing ceremony; Asha Ponnuru and Claire Farwell, second grade Corinthians; Sasha Weiner and Rosie LaRue, first grade; the third grade shows off their javelins; shock as Corinth is announced as the winning polis; Corinth is crowned.



GRADUATION _____

On June 6, 2021, MLCA conducted its first Lower School Graduation. MLCA graduates, their families, and school faculty all gathered together at the Martindale home to witness this ceremony and celebrate this milestone. All in attendance heard opening remarks from Mrs. Martindale, a poetry recitation from Mr. Chilbert, an address to the graduates by Mr. Sigelman, wonderful music from a violin and viola duet, and an address by Rabbi Sinensky. Then, Dr. Sigelman and Mr. Chilbert conducted the diploma ceremony. Each student was given a diploma and a beautiful copy of *The Iliad and Odyssey* by Homer. Click [here](#) to view the graduation program. Congratulations to our MLCA graduates and welcome to the Upper School!



JUDAIC STUDIES EVENTS

LAG BAOMER

Lag BaOmer commemorates the 2,000-year-old anniversary of the end of a devastating plague afflicting the students of the great Rabbi Akiva, and the day the great Rabbi Simeon revealed mystical secrets to his students, and thereby to the world. Because both commemorations celebrate the importance of being a student, this is a particularly exciting day for us at Gur Aryeh!

On Sunday, April 29, Gur Aryeh families celebrated with a special program featuring a mock archery competition, a beautiful bonfire, traditional songs and stories, and, of course, s'mores! A special thank you to all our parent volunteers, and to the Sigelman family for opening your home.



END-OF-YEAR CELEBRATION OF STUDIES

On Sunday morning, June 6, our students celebrated an extraordinary year of learning with a special end-of-year celebration of studies at the school. As part of the program, students performed songs prepared especially for the occasion, and shared Hebrew-language skits and remarks summarizing each class's impressive accomplishments in both Judaic Studies and Hebrew. In turn, students were presented with personalized Hebrew or Judaic books for summer reading, and Rabbi Sinensky, Cantor Portnoy, and Mora Crammer Bar-Tuv shared personal remarks about each student.

From kindergarten through sixth grade, we could not be more proud of our students' remarkable achievements in prayer and Bible study, as well as modern Hebrew grammar and conversational Hebrew.

We can't wait to see them build on all their accomplishments and continue to thrive next year!



MATH COMPETITION NEWS



PURPLE COMET

We would like to congratulate the MLCA Purple Comet team, "Radiant Ravens," for placing 1st in Pennsylvania among small middle schools (up to 400 students). The team consisted of Katie Fradkin, Connor McManus, Ronan Myers, Ari Shpilman, Marshall Zafriou, and Nicholas Zafriou.

Purple Comet is an international, team-based math contest, geared towards very strong students. The problems often require putting together several concepts in a clever way. This was the first year that MLCA participated in the competition.



MATH KANGAROO

The Math Kangaroo results are in and we would like to congratulate Nicole Fedorov for receiving 1st place nationally in level 4 and Raphael Sommer for receiving 3rd place nationally in level 3!

Further congratulations go to Ben Shpilman and Zoe Fradkin for also being among the national winners.

The Math Kangaroo is an international math competition that is known for its logic-type and spatial reasoning problems.

Right, students gather for a final Math club celebration. Congratulations for a successful year. Thank you for working so hard!



MATH OLYMPIADS

This was the third year that MLCA students participated in the MOEMS (Mathematical Olympiads for Elementary and Middle Schools) competition. There are two levels of this competition, E for grades 4 to 6 and M for grades 6 to 8.

MLCA received a High Achievement Certificate in level E for placing in the top 20% of all participating schools in the nation.

All students in grades 4 through 6 participated in the level E competition. Out of the 26 participants, 17 received a Patch for placing in the top 50% of all participants nationwide, with 9 of them placing in the top 20%.

Special congratulations go to Ari Shpilman for receiving a Gold Pin, placing him in the top 2% of all participants. We further congratulate Avery Zhang and Connor McManus for receiving a Silver Pin, awarded to the top 10% of all participants.

The level M competition was taken by all the students in grades 6 through 8. Out of the 18 participants, 14 placed in the top 50% of all participants nationwide and received a Patch. Katie Fradkin, Ronan Myers, and Ari Shpilman received a Silver Pin for placing in the top 10% of all participants nationwide.



BIRTHDAYS

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO OUR MAY, JUNE, AND JULY BIRTHDAYS!!

May

- Emilio Chissell 5/3
- Agnes Sigelman 5/8
- Rosie LaRue 5/13
- Mrs. Todd Harper 5/15
- Covi Hungerford 5/16
- Calvin Krellner-Oathes 5/18
- Connor McManus 5/22
- Nicole Fedorov 5/25
- Ms. Woo 5/27



July

- Mr. Soto 7/1
- Elise Sigelman 7/8
- Hugh Nicholson 7/13
- Rachel Sommer 7/15
- Mr. Cialini 7/17
- Cylena Witoslawski 7/18
- Bahar Kemiktarak 7/19
- Caleb Sigelman 7/22

June

- Everett Yu 6/4
- Mme. Le Pichon 6/9
- Mme. Nselel 6/18
- Asha Ponnuru 6/22

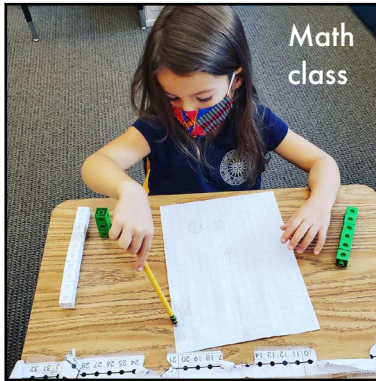
POOL PARTIES

On a drizzly last day of school, students and parents gathered at the Posners and the Shpilman's for an end-of-the-year pool party. Hurrah!



THANK YOU, MLCA!

Thank you for a wonderful school year! We will remember the 2020-2021 school year fondly despite the challenges. Thank you to the entire MLCA community for your love and support of our students and this institution. We look forward to reconnecting with you in the fall!



Last day of school countdown!
Click [HERE](#) to play the video.

