



# MLCA NEWSLETTER

## CULTURAL EDITION

October 2021

# A JOURNEY OF THE INTELLECT



Above, the 2021 Columbus Day Lower School Assembly. The Kindergarten to Third Grade Students help Dr. Sigelman recite Joaquin Miller's poem, "Columbus."

**W**elcome back to school! It has been a very exciting first six weeks, here at Main Line Classical Academy. The students are learning great things every day from our amazing faculty, making new friendships, and having fun, all while remaining safe. In this first cultural edition of the 2021-22 school year, we explore the beginning-of-year events from August to October. Thank you for connecting with and supporting MLCA!

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Wilbur LaRue, Kindergarten, displaying a ship he created on Columbus Day.

# NOTES FROM THE BOARD

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## BACK TO SCHOOL NIGHT ADDRESS ON SEPTEMBER 13, 2021

BY ASYA SIGELMAN

As many of you know, the Jewish High Holidays are early this year, and so even as we are currently going through the first days of the school year, at home Matt and the kids and I are immersed in observance of these joyful yet also somber days.

In particular, one of the Biblical passages which we read at this time of year has been recently very much on my mind, and I cannot help but feel some important crossovers of theme between this passage and the beginning of the new school year here at MLCA:

Deuteronomy 30:19: *I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before thee life and death, the blessing and the curse; therefore choose life, that thou mayest live, thou and thy seed;*

At the Sigelman dinnertime table our kids have asked, "Why would anyone choose death? What is the Bible trying to say?"

I am sure there are many good answers to this question, but to me it seems like never in human history was the commandment to choose the path of life as relevant as to our day and age. It has a particularly deep significance for me in the context of MLCA:

In an age when great literature and poetry are all but forgotten – or, even worse, trampled and derided – our students have the chance to study, master, cherish, and love some of the best things even written in the English language.

In an age where even STEM subjects have been appropriated by feuding political agendas, our students relish the depth and objective beauty of Science and Mathematics.

In an age where historical memory is systematically erased from the public consciousness, our students have the opportunity to engage in exhilarating time-travel ranging far and wide from Antiquity to the Middle Ages, to the Renaissance, to the Founding Fathers, and beyond.

In an age where multiculturalism is an empty boast, our students explore the treasure-trove of other cultures through the proper medium of foreign languages.

Our students accomplish all this and more thanks to the choice you, their parents, have made: the choice to go against the current of popular dictum, to choose truth and beauty over the mantra of the mainstream.

This brings me to another remarkable aspect of the Deuteronomy passage which I just cited. Here is the opening of Moses' address to the people:

Deuteronomy 29:9: *Ye are standing this day all of you before the Lord your God: your heads, your tribes, your elders, and your officers, even all the men of Israel, your little ones, your wives, and thy stranger that is in the midst of thy camp, from the hewer of thy wood unto the drawer of thy water;*

Moses underscores that he is addressing the congregation in its entirety, as a unified whole: it is as a community that they are to make the choice between life and death.

This past year has put to test the very concept of human community – not just here in Philadelphia or here in the United States, but across the entire globe.

But miraculously, even as social relations all around us have crumbled – whether under the pressure of the epidemic, of divisive politics, or of social media – our community has persevered and flourished. It has persevered and flourished thanks to our students, our teachers, and, of course, thanks to you – our students' parents.

I say "miraculously", but in fact it is not surprising that a community which has chosen the constellation of the good, the beautiful, and the true as its loadstar has continued to soldier on, unperturbed by the endless challenges which this year has sent our way.

And so I would like to conclude my talk and open this evening by thanking all of you – our students' parents – for this choice you have made, for this responsibility you have taken on to partner with the school in taking your children on this journey – a journey that is not always easy, but always exhilarating and rewarding; *a journey of the intellect across epochs and centuries.*

# EXCITING NEWS

## MLCA IN THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER

Click [HERE](#) to read a feature the Philadelphia Inquirer ran on Matt Sigelman and MLCA on October 9, 2021.

““We ask our students to memorize poetry,” Sigelman said. “The key idea of this school is that if you want to train students to be leaders, in any field or career, they need to be not reacting to what we believe to be the future; they need to be shaping it.””

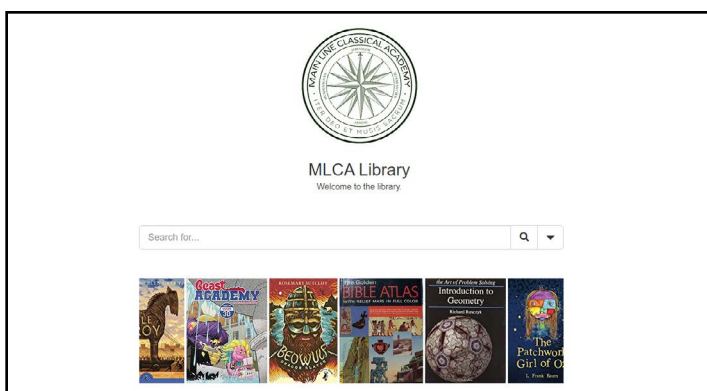


## MLCA LIBRARY

The school has a brand-new library catalogue, which can be found online here:

<https://www.librarycat.org/lib/MLCA>

Students are free to check out books from our library at any time. Our Library FAQ sheet and Book Donation Wish List can be found on the parent portal. Please email Ms. Woo ([ewoo@mainlineclassical.org](mailto:ewoo@mainlineclassical.org)) with any questions about our library.



## NEW AND IMPROVED WEBSITE

A dedicated team of Zach Winfield, Chloë Le Pichon, Emily Woo, and Rabbi Sinensky worked hard to improve the website over the summer. Please browse the new/updated content and photos at:

[www.mainlineclassical.org](http://www.mainlineclassical.org)

Note: The button for the parent portal is now at the bottom of the webpage.



SUPPORT CONTACT US

SCHEDULE A TOUR

PARENT PORTAL

FACULTY PORTAL

(610) 525-2300 • 455 SOUTH ROBERTS RD. BRYN MAWR, PA 19010 • [INFO@MAINLINECLASSICAL.ORG](mailto:INFO@MAINLINECLASSICAL.ORG)



# NEW FACULTY

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We are pleased to welcome the following members to our stellar faculty. You can read more about each faculty member on the MLCA website.



**Ms. Sharon Anmuth,**  
4th-6th Programming



**Ms. Rachel Hilburn,**  
Assistant Teacher



**Mr. John Murdoch,**  
3rd-8/9th Art Studio



**Ms. Sofia Na,**  
Office Assistant & Assistant  
Teacher



**Mme. Clotilde Phelan,**  
French Tutor



**Mr. Shlomo Shtuhl,**  
1st-4th Hebrew



**Dr. Blaise Tassone,**  
4th-7th English



**Ms. Erika Woo,**  
5th-8/9th Christian Studies

Not pictured: Mr. Tim O'Brien, 8/9th programming

# GETTING READY

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From August 30th to September 3rd, our faculty came together to prepare for the upcoming school year. They learned about academic, safety, and COVID procedures. They also helped to organize the school and make sure everything was ready for students on the first day of school!



Meanwhile, students, parents, and faculty gathered to welcome our new families to the MLCA community. Many thanks to the HSA and the MLCA Admin for organizing these get-togethers.



# FIRST WEEK OF SCHOOL

The first day of school was Thursday, September 9, 2021. The day started with school-wide assemblies, in which the principals welcomed the students, introduced the grade mentors, and laid the foundation for character building habits the students would be asked to practice this year. Then, the students jumped straight into their classes!

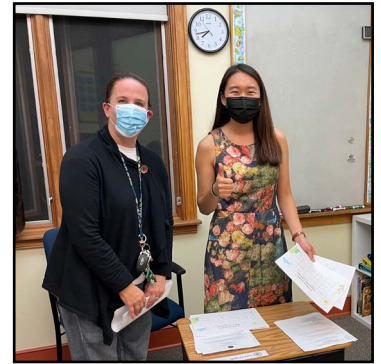


Clockwise from top right: Rabbi Sinensky meets with the 7-9th graders on the first day of school; the sixth grade; the kindergartners in English; the third grade in French class; Covi Hungerford, first grade; Wilbur LaRue, kindergarten; the Zafiriou, Posner, Mencin, Winfield, and Krellner-Oathes families; the fifth grade in Latin class.



# BACK TO SCHOOL NIGHT

On Monday, September 13, parents and faculty gathered for an in-person Back to School Night. Parents heard from Dr. Sigelman (see page 2) and Rabbi Sinsky before meeting each of their children's teachers in classrooms around the building. Many thanks to the HSA for welcoming parents and to the MLCA administration for organizing the event.



## HSA MEETING

MLCA's HSA held our first meeting of the school-year on October 6. A record 19 parents joined us for the open-air meeting graciously hosted by Wight and Rebekah Martindale. We are thrilled with the tremendous turnout and the enthusiasm of MLCA parents to contribute to our community. Meeting minutes will be available on the Parent Portal. The primary discussions centered around planning for HSA-supported school events and organizing class parent coverage.

Please mark your calendars for exciting upcoming events:

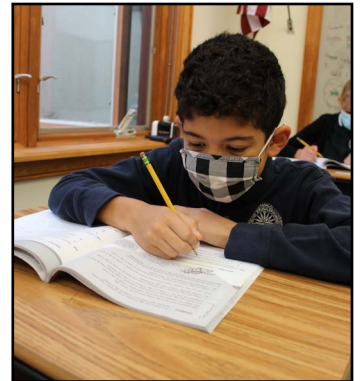
- Saturday, November 6th: Parent and Faculty Social
- Wednesday, November 3rd at 8 PM: HSA Meeting (virtual)
- Saturday, December 11th at 6 PM: Musical Evening and Nativity Play



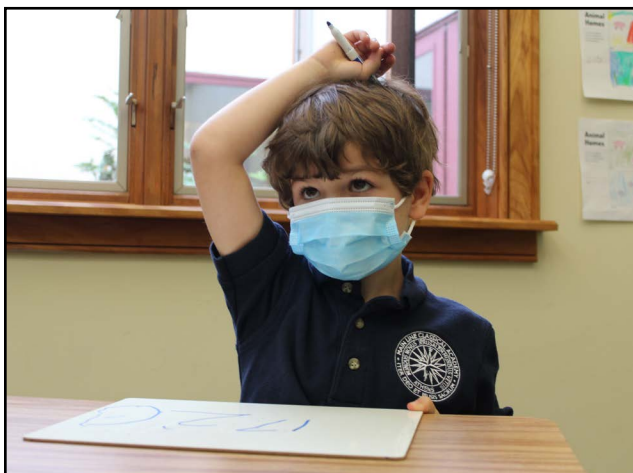
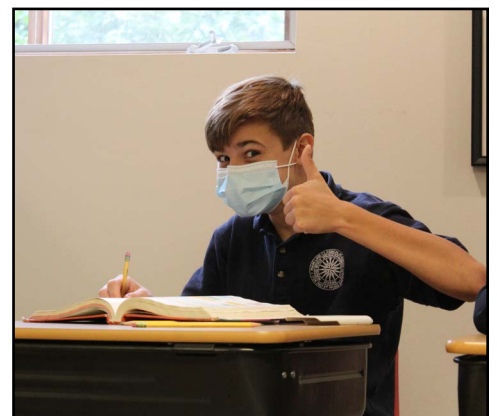
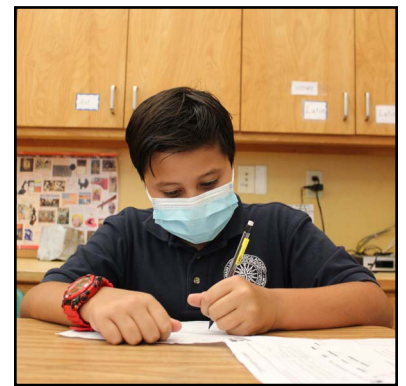
2021-22 Class Parents:

- Kindergarten: Becky Winfield
- 1st: Peter Martinson & Anna Shavin
- 2nd: Canan Goktas
- 3rd: Soojin Kwon
- 4th: Nina Poliak Sommer
- 5th: Ella Vuernick
- 6th: Deanne Ferreira
- 7th: Yulia Shpilman
- 8th/9th: Chloe Le Pichon (Posner)

# IN-SCHOOL CULTURE



Our students have been having fun and working hard at school over the past month. We are delighted to have such curious and diligent students in our classrooms. We also want to thank our teachers for inspiring our students each and every day. What a privilege it is to be immersed in a culture of learning!

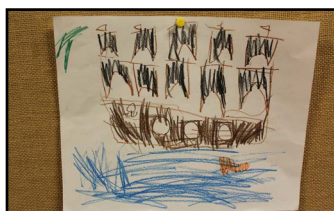
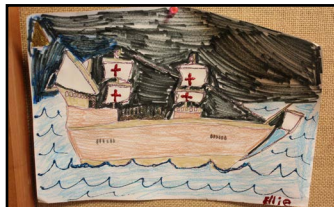
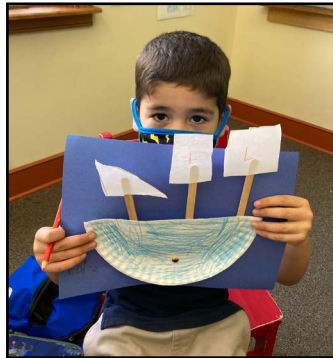
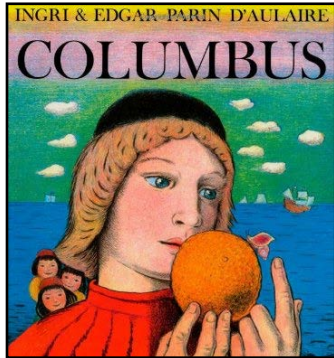


Clockwise from top right: Emilio Chissell, sixth grade; Rio Singh, third grade; Daniel Fedorov, eighth grade; Asha Pon-nuru,, third grade; Luca Grigoli, kindergarten; second graders make swords and shields after reading *Beowulf*; Thea Bris-son, fifth grade; Mr. Gormley teaches second grade; Abraham Lincoln's log cabin by Bahar Kemiktarak, first grade; Elea Portier, first grade.



# COLUMBUS DAY

The students loved celebrating Columbus Day on Monday, October 11. We had 2 Lower School Assemblies in which Dr. Sigelman read "Columbus" by Joaquin Miller. She reminded us about perseverance, bravery, and "sailing on" in the face of uncertainty. We received many beautiful submissions for the art contest based on the poem, which are now displayed in the school hall. In Story Time, we read "Columbus" by Ingri and Edgar Parin D'Aulaire and made our own ships.



## "Columbus" by Joaquin Miller

Behind him lay the gray Azores,  
Behind the Gates of Hercules;  
Before him not the ghost of shores,  
Before him only shoreless seas.  
The good mate said: "Now must we pray,  
For lo! the very stars are gone.  
Brave Adm'r'l, speak; what shall I say?"  
"Why, say: 'Sail on! sail on! and on!'"

"My men grow mutinous day by day;  
My men grow ghastly wan and weak."  
The stout mate thought of home; a spray  
Of salt wave washed his swarthy cheek,  
"What shall I say, brave Adm'r'l, say,  
If we sight naught but seas at dawn?"  
"Why, you shall say at break of day:  
'Sail on! sail on! sail on! and on!'"

They sailed and sailed, as winds might blow,  
Until at last the blanched mate said:  
"Why, now not even God would know  
Should I and all my men fall dead.  
These very winds forget their way,  
For God from these dread seas is gone.  
Now speak, brave Adm'r'l, speak and say?"  
He said: "Sail on! Sail on! and on!"

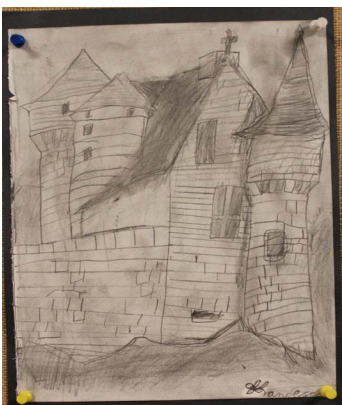
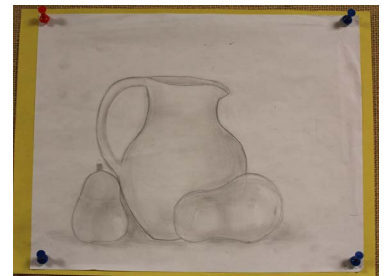
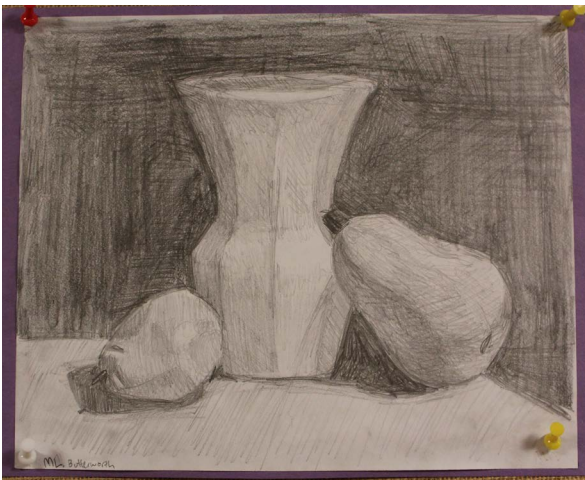
They sailed. They sailed. Then spake the mate:  
"This mad sea shows his teeth tonight.  
He curls his lips, he lies in wait  
With lifted teeth, as if to bite!  
Brave Adm'r'l, say but one good word:  
What shall we do when hope is gone?  
The words leapt like a leaping sword;  
"Sail on! sail on! sail on! and on!"

Then, pale and worn, he kept his deck,  
And peered through darkness. Ah, that night  
Of all dark nights! And then a speck?  
A light! a light! a light! a light!  
It grew, a starlit flag unfurled!  
It grew to be Time's burst of dawn.  
He gained a world; he gave that world  
Its grandest lesson; "On! sail on!"

# FUN AT GYM AND RECESS \_\_\_\_\_



# STUDENT ARTWORK



# JUDAIC STUDIES EVENTS

## SUKKOT

On Sukkot, Gur Aryeh students and families joined together for a holiday celebration at the home of Ellie Fox (3rd grade). We enjoyed eating in the Fox family Sukkah, decorating cupcakes, and getting a special tour of the beehive, led by a professional beekeeper! This was an incredible cap to the holiday season, when our students studied all about the practices of the Jewish high holiday period.



# BIRTHDAYS \_\_\_\_\_

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO OUR AUGUST, SEPTEMBER, AND OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS!!

### August

Rio and Kai Singh 8/8  
Benjamin Weber 8/14  
Ediz Kemiktarak 8/17  
Ariel Yu 8/17  
Anne Martindale 8/22  
Mrs. Ter-Saakov 8/23  
Sasha Weiner 8/25  
Elisabeth Smith 8/29

### September

Lilly Sigelman 9/3  
June Winfield 9/4  
Alexander Bull 9/12  
Eva Mencin 9/17  
Kiran Ponnuru 9/22  
Tiago Ferreira 9/24  
Francesco Grigoli 9/28  
Maria Butterworth 9/29



### October

Ari Shpilman 10/2  
Katie Fradkin 10/2  
Mr. Garfinkle 10/4  
Henry Winfield 10/11  
Julius Gormley 10/14  
Mr. Darer 10/16  
Ms. Erika Woo 10/16  
Elea Portier 10/20  
Viktor Berta 10/24  
Claire Farwell 10/25  
Mr. Chilbert 10/30

Any submissions (pictures/videos/stories) for the next MLCA Newsletter can be sent to ewoo@mainlineclassical.org. Thanks!