

MN River Views

features School President Heather Chastain

As summer winds down, and school is starting, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome our returning students, our new students, and our faculty and staff.



Heather celebrates the softball team's championship win against Collegiate

Through my experiences at St. Margaret's, I have realized that orientation was always a big event to kick off the new school year. Three years ago, when I was a freshman, I met one of my life-long friends, became a member of the blue team, and experienced high school on a whole new level.

While adjusting to our first few weeks of school, we look forward to River Days.

During these days, every class takes an adventure along the Rappahannock River and spends time getting to know ourselves and each other. As you grow each year as a class, you move further down the river. Being seniors, our class has the luxury of making it all the way to Virginia Beach. Since St. Margaret's is on the river, we learn about its importance in our daily lives. I hope that our new students enjoy these activities as much as I did.

This will be an exceptionally great year, especially for those of us in the class of 2011. Why? Because we have a strong class of leaders.

Perhaps, my greatest achievement at St. Margaret's is being elected student body president for the 2010-2011 school year. It is a great honor to represent my peers. As president, I look forward to working with the entire St. Margaret's community and striving to strengthening our sisterhood.

Seniors have many traditions to look forward to this year. In particular, I look forward to having the privilege of asking a junior to be my little lantern.

In the spring, I will finish my four years at St. Margaret's with May Ball and will graduate in a white dress on the river lawn. This spring, I also hope to add another championship banner to the gym wall.



Heather with Head of School Margaret Broad at the Leadership Luncheon

As I finally leave the banks of the river on graduation day, I know that I will take the experiences and education that I acquired at St. Margaret's and bring them with me as I become a college student.

Heather is president of the student body, a four-year, day student, and a member of the volleyball, basketball and softball teams.



River Views

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St. Margaret's Ramps Up for Students' Return

Soon the sounds of lapping water and the call of our beloved ospreys will give way to the chatter and merriment of students and faculty, as our campus community returns to the river for the start of the 2010-2011 school year.



Each year, the return to campus sets the tone for the upcoming school year. One by one, different groups return to campus, laying the foundation for the next group's arrival.

The first to arrive are faculty and staff. After summer trips across the country and around the world, our faculty and staff are often eager to return to campus, the classroom and, in many cases, the dorm. New faculty and staff attend seminars and group meetings that prepare them for the challenges of the new year and give them insight into St. Margaret's community. The dorm staff is busy decorating corridors and familiarizing themselves with the students who will be left in their care.

Student leaders arrive next and meet with faculty and dorm staff. Last spring, student leaders participated in an off-campus retreat where they set goals and expectations for this year. When they return to campus this fall, student leaders begin putting those goals and expectations to work, discussing how they can act as role models for fellow students and provide a warm welcome for students returning from summer break.

Shortly after student leaders arrive, student athletes descend on the campus, warming up for the fall sports season.

Next, international students join our campus. Their early arrival is intended to give them a chance to overcome jet lag and pick up any items they may need to begin the school year. Later in the evening, international students and their families are greeted at a reception. At this time, parents learn more about St. Margaret's international program and can meet the faculty members who will care for their daughters during the academic year.

Day students and their families are the next to venture back to campus. At the Day Student Dinner and Orientation, new and returning day students complete registration and have dinner with their parents and advisors. The day student dinner is also a time for new day students to consult with returning day students about the expectations and benefits of belonging to St. Margaret's community.



While new and returning day students are getting acquainted, parents often take the opportunity to connect with their daughters' advisors, a relationship that will continue throughout the school year, and many times, extends through a students' entire academic career at St. Margaret's.

The last and largest group to return is new and returning boarding students. It all starts on Saturday morning, when pairs of student leaders eagerly greet new



students and guide them through the steps of orientation and registration. For these students, this is the day they will meet their new roommate and discover where they will be living. While their parents attend an orientation program, new students work with leaders to get to know one another and learn about St. Margaret's community. That afternoon, returning students make their way back to campus.

The opening day celebration culminates in the afternoon as the entire community gathers by the river for the opening day processional. Students, clad in their uniforms, line up in front of St. Margaret's Hall and follow a bag-piper to St. John's Episcopal Church. When they arrive at St. John's, students, faculty and staff participate in the school's opening chapel, the symbolic beginning of the new school year. After the service, the entire community, finally united after a week of adding members, celebrates the new beginning with a picnic on the lawn.

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.

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St. Margaret's School



Captain's Corner



Dear St. Margaret's friends and families,

Welcome to this new school year, and what a special one this is for our school! In 2011, we will turn 90! If you've passed one of those milestone birthdays yourself, you may have been given one of the encouraging books designed to

help you reframe your assumptions about the next decade. I remember reading *On Turning Fifty* and marveling at the blossoming of creativity in the lives of the women profiled.

We'll be using this celebratory year in a very similar way – adding a special element to each of our traditional events during the calendar year 2011, reflecting on where we've been, and looking ahead to decide how to use what we've learned and are continuing to learn in areas that impact how we structure our days, prepare our students for college, careers, and service to others, and interact with and connect our alumnae throughout their lives.

Neuroscience is charting new territory in its discoveries about adolescent and adult development. We now know that the prefrontal cortex, often referred to as the 'executive suite' handling time management, risk and reward, problem-solving, prioritizing, thinking ahead, self-evaluation, long-term planning, and regulation of emotion, is not fully developed until we reach our mid-twenties. How can we support this development within the close community of St. Margaret's School?

On the other end of the spectrum, we know that neural plasticity, the ability to learn new information and make new connections, can remain with us throughout our lives. Just as we've long known about keeping our bodies in good shape, *use it or lose it*, we know that the same maxim applies to our brains!

And, so, in our 90th year, we plan to keep on learning! While we'll pause to honor the people and accomplishments these years have held, we'll also look ahead, evaluating and questioning what we need to consider in keeping our mission central and our program dynamic. We'll begin this month with discussions of our faculty summer reading book, *NurtureShock*, by Po Bronson and Ashley Merryman, which synthesizes the latest educational and scientific research on child and adolescent development and poses some provocative questions. We'll also spend a morning with an invited speaker considering practical ways to strengthen our girls' executive functioning skills while their brains are still developing.

Each of you has a unique relationship with us and we look forward to learning from you, too. I invite you to share your observations and ideas with us, either in person or by email. We cherish the mission that has guided our decisions over these last nine decades and look forward to what the future holds.

With sincere appreciation,

Margaret R. Broad

Margaret Robinson Broad
Head of School
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River Day Plans Emphasize Fun and Education

This year, St. Margaret's students will learn from experience and establish bonds that will carry them through the next academic year as they set out to learn about the river and the many ways water flows through our lives. On September 12-14, each grade will experience the river in a different way.

Eighth grade students begin their river journey at the headwaters



in Shenandoah National Park. They spend the night at the Big Meadows Campground. On Monday, September 13th, the class will hike to Dark Hollow Falls and have a picnic on the trail. They will round out the day with a stop in Fredericksburg for ice cream and arrive on

campus for dinner.

Ninth graders will move further down river to explore just above the fall line north of Fredericksburg. On Sunday, they will camp at Richardsville at the Rappahannock Campground. The next day they will go tubing on the river at Kelly's Ford.

The sophomore class' exploration will begin with a cruise on the Captain Thomas that will take them to Wheatland Plantation. After setting up camp, students will have free time to enjoy the river before they sit by a campfire. Before they return to campus on Monday afternoon, they will take time to do some "marsh-mucking."

For the junior class, River Day will participate in the Chesapeake Bay Foundation education program, where they will spend two days in the Chesapeake Bay at Port Isabel near Tangier Island. They will participate in a variety of activities including

trawling, marsh mucking, canoeing, planting trees, dredging for oysters, and learn about environmental restoration in the Chesapeake Bay.



Seniors will spend their River Days in Virginia Beach, where the river and bay meet

the ocean. After camping in First Landing State Park on Sunday night, they will take a boat tour, which includes a dolphin watch and visit the Virginia Marine Science Center.

By the end of River Days, St. Margaret's students will have collectively explored all parts of the Rappahannock River, and created memories that will bond them as they enter a new school year. 🌿

Familiar Faces Return to SMS, Take on New Roles

The opening of school marks the return of a few familiar faces and one faculty member who is taking on a new role.



Dale and Tracy Harter have returned to campus after a four-year absence. Dale returns to campus as the school's librarian, a job he held from 2003 to 2006.

While here, Tracy acted as a tutor in the ESL program and taught ESL American Culture as well as geography and civics. Tracy will again teach ESL American Culture, as well as a course in the English Department.



In 2006, Dale was hired as college archivist and curator at Bridgewater College. Tracy went on to become the head of special collections at James Madison University. But they never truly left the community, returning for May Ball and other traditions throughout the year. When the opportunity arose to return to campus, the decision was easy.

"We missed our life here and we missed working with students," Dale says.

Dale and Tracy live on campus with their daughter, Lauren.

Another familiar face is Joanna Chopski Schilling, who is St. Margaret's new director of communications and marketing. From 2002-2004, Joanna acted as the dorm



head for Anderton House. After leaving St. Margaret's, Joanna received her master's in mass communication from VCU's AdCenter. Joanna lives in Latane Hall with her husband. They are expecting their first child in November.



Faculty member Tobey Taliaferro is also taking on a new challenge. Tobey will begin the 2010 school year as the new director of the international program. Tobey has been a St. Margaret's faculty member for more than a decade and has a total of 29 years of teaching experience. In her time at St. Margaret's, Tobey has used her experience to instruct students in American Literature and Advanced ESL courses. International students can look forward to cultural outings and seminars, organized by Tobey and the ESL faculty. She lives with her husband, David, on the shores of the Rappahannock River. 🌿

Parent Council President Extends a Warm Welcome

I always love the beginning of a new school year, especially at St. Margaret's. My husband, Bill and I were new to the school last year as our daughter, Elizabeth, began her junior year. We joined the Parent Council last year and it was a way for us to get involved and quickly become a part of the St. Margaret's family. This year will provide that same opportunity for every St. Margaret's parent.

This summer, we have been planning activities and events in which you all are invited to become involved. On Opening Day, the



President Betsy Tyson (far left) and the 2010-2011 Parent Council

Parent Council will have a Welcome Table where you will be able to meet members of the council and sign up to help with school events for the upcoming year. Please be sure to stop by and see how the Parent Council supports St. Margaret's.

Among the events you can become involved with this year are helping with exam care packages for our girls and the annual Auction and Duck Derby race, held during Spring Family Weekend. I look forward to seeing you at St. Margaret's and hope you will join the Parent Council for the fun activities we have planned throughout the year. 🌿

River Views Forecast

August

- 30.....Peer Leaders and Prefects return by 1:00 p.m.
- 31.....Opening Chapel/Meetings for Faculty & Staff

September

- 1.....New international students arrive by noon
- 2.....Day Family Dinner and Orientation 6:00 p.m.
- 4.....All Boarding Students arrive
- 5.....All student orientation
- 6.....First Day of Classes
- 10-12..Closed weekend
- 12-14..River Day Activities

October

- 7-8.....Board of Governor's Fall Meeting
- 8.....End of interim assessment period
- 9.....SATs
- 13.....PSATs grades 9-11
- 15-16..Fall Family Weekend

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

Did you know...

As teachers prepare for the start of another school year, the maintenance and housekeeping staffs are busy preparing the school grounds and buildings for our students' return. This summer alone they have:

- 🌿 Used 100 gallons of paint repairing classrooms, hallways and dormitories.
- 🌿 Refinished 18,000 square feet of floor tile.
- 🌿 Spent 550 man hours on grounds maintenance.
- 🌿 Used 3,000 pounds of fertilizer.
- 🌿 And collectively, they have served the St. Margaret's community for a combined total of over 60 years.