



# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- FEB 3 .....6th Grade Cowboy Feast
- FEB 4 .....Rockbridge Academy Debate @ Rockbridge
- FEB 10.....3rd Grade Greek/Roman Feast
- FEB 15 .....Re-Enrollment Deposits Due (*no tuition payment this month*)
- FEB 17 .....2nd Grade Seder
- FEB 23-24 .....SCHOOL CLOSED—End of 2nd Trimester
- FEB 23-25 .....“The Sound of Music” @ Chesapeake Arts Center
- MAR 8.....Latin Exam—grades 6-9
- MAR 10 .....2nd Grade Egyptian Feast
- MAR 13-17.....SCHOOL CLOSED—Spring Break

## QUOTE OF THE MONTH

OF HAPPINESS

IS ACTIVITY IN ACCORDANCE

WITH EXCELLENCE, IT IS

REASONABLE THAT IT SHOULD

BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH

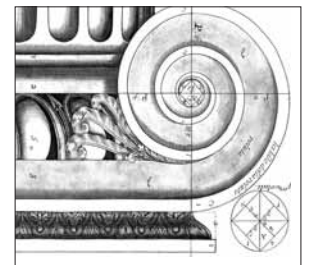
THE HIGHEST EXCELLENCE.

— *Aristotle*

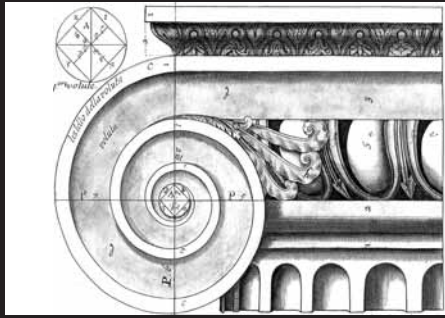
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ROCKBRIDGE ACADEMY



A CLASSICAL &  
CHRISTIAN SCHOOL  
911 Generals Highway  
Millersville, MD 21108



# ROCKBRIDGE REPORTER

A Newsletter for Rockbridge Academy

February 2006

## THE PLAN ROCKBRIDGE ACADEMY, 2006–2007

By Michael J McKenna



As we enter the season of re-enrollment, many parents ask me where we're going to put students next year, and what's the plan for accommodating our current enrollment of 28 eighth graders, should all or most of them choose Rockbridge for ninth grade.

Good questions! We haven't satisfactorily answered these inquiries up to this point, but not because we love a good secret. God has kept us on our knees, and answers were just not there to be announced....

Until now.

And for that, I thank you for your patience.

Following are the *where's* and *why fore's* of our space and faculty plans for next year.

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### *Space*

Our desire is to build a school building that will house all students, kindergarten right through grade 12. We don't believe in the Balkanized model of modern education, in which young students are kept separate from older students—in which older students have no opportunity to

model and serve the younger. This is not how our families work, and it's not how we desire our school to work either.

However, until the Lord provides the land, we have had to temporarily divide the campus.

Grace Independent Baptist Church has been very kind these past two years to provide us with classroom space for kindergarten and first grade. Next year we plan to send over the second grade as well, which will free up two more classroom spaces here at the main campus.

This will give us space for two separate ninth grade classrooms of approximately 14 students each.

We are very excited about this prospect, and I am grateful and humbled by the kind consideration of Pastor Jim Myles and the congregation of GIBC.

*continued on page 2*

## THE PLAN...*continued*

As far as long-range facility plans go, we are currently meeting weekly with architects from the firm of Waldon Studios to come up with an architectural “foot print” that will enable us to test-fit a campus to prospective parcels of land. This past week the architect interviewed many of our teachers and staff to get their input into classroom and school design. The faculty and staff were eager to share their ideas, and the architect was glad for the feedback.

In addition, we are looking into the possibility of leasing space at the old Crownsville Hospital site, which would give us room to continue to expand our high school classes into two sections of each, grades 9–12. We’re also talking to potential landowners, and I would ask you to continue to hold up our need for land in prayer.

### *Faculty*

Obviously, two sections of ninth grade will require additional faculty. Our plan is to hire an additional math/science teacher, and one additional literature/history teacher, which will enable us to continue to teach the same outstanding curriculum, without over-burdening our current faculty.

In addition, we continue looking for an Athletic Director to oversee our growing athletic department, and keep that program moving in a positive, forward direction. Amy Boswell has been doing a fabulous job as acting AD, but it is our desire (and Amy’s as well) to fill this position with someone who has the experience to take our athletic program to the next level.

As I write, interviews are taking place with several outstanding candidates (two Ph. D.’s and two MA’s) to fill these positions, and I am confident that God will provide quality teachers, of godly character, as He has always done.

On a final note of sweet sorrow, Laurie Van Gilder, our first grade teacher for seven years now, will be getting married this summer (that’s

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the sweet). And so, she will not be returning to Rockbridge in the fall (the sorrow). Please be sure to wish Laurie Godspeed as she enters into this new and exciting chapter of her life. As a result of Laurie’s departure, we are also looking for a first grade teacher to replace her.

Many exciting things are afoot at Rockbridge Academy. We are working very hard to solve the issues of land, space, and faculty, and we covet your prayers as we do so.



## *“The Sound of Music”*

Rockbridge Academy students will perform “The Sound of Music” at the Chesapeake Arts Center located at 194 Hammonds Lane, Brooklyn Park, MD 21225.

### **Show Dates & Times:**

Thursday, February 23 @ 7:30 p.m.

Friday, February 24 @ 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, February 25 @ 2:00 p.m.

Saturday, February 25 @ 7:00 p.m.

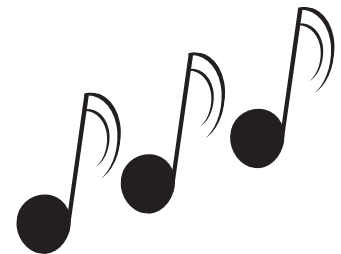
### **Ticket Cost:**

General Admission .....\$12

Children (12 and under) ....\$10

Senior Citizens .....\$10

Tickets are currently on sale before and after school at Rockbridge Academy’s main campus. You may also purchase tickets at the Chesapeake Arts Center during their hours of operation and at the door prior to each performance.



## NEW STAFF AT ROCKBRIDGE



NATHAN NORTHUP

Nathan Northup comes to us happily married to his childhood pal, Merry (yes, as in cheerful or Christmas) with their four children, Samuel (12), Nadia (11), Josiah (6), and Luke (2). He hails from the north, in particular, from that miniscule state of Rhode Island. During his

time in RI, he functioned as an ordained minister of the First Baptist Church of Narragansett, serving as the Family-Life Youth Pastor for the past four years. While in this ministry, Nathan had the privilege to not only equip families with the tools for growing in their faith and the display of such in the home and community, but also was blessed by a ministry that was able to open the doors of student's faith to a wide world of harvest from the streets of Providence, RI, to the shores of Ugljan, Croatia. Having served his time at the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, IL, Nathan received his B.A. in Youth Ministry with a Minor in Bible.

Nathan's interests, and a good dose of helpmate nudging, took his studies across the pond to participate in graduate work at the University of St. Andrews, Scotland. He is currently finishing his dissertation for an Mlitt in Divinity, focused on the Bible and Contemporary Culture, a degree that captures both Nathan's interests of the very Word of God and how such wisdom can and should manifest itself in our world today and into the future for the glory of God and the joy of His people.



JONATHAN HEAD

Mr. Head, the oldest of three sons, is originally from snowy upstate New York. His father is a pastor of a small rural church near Elmira; his mother works as a librarian for a Christian school. He has two brothers, Jason and James. Mr. Head's early life

was sedate, interrupted only twice each year by the Redskins-Cowboys rivalry, which splits his family; Mr. Head and James favor the Cowboys, while Pastor Head and Jason favor the Skins. His mother stays out of the matter altogether.

J.D. waited 28 years for the right woman. Then Miss Shannon Snow, a fellow colleague at Riverdale Baptist School, came into his life. Certain that only God's providence could explain her attraction to him, he wasted no time in making their relationship permanent and he proposed. They were married on October 11, 2003. She hails from Meadville, PA, and has one brother.

Mr. Head majored in English at Cedarville College in Cedarville, Ohio; he graduated in 1999. He has taught high school literature and philosophy courses at Riverdale Baptist School in Largo and at Woodstream Christian Academy in Mitchellville. He has also served as an adjunct instructor at Washington Bible College. He and his wife are part of the Trinity Community Church in Bowie, MD. He spends his free time (or imagines that he would spend his free time) just as he spends his school time: reading books and writing. His current favorite author is Neal Stephenson, and his favorite philosopher is Kierkegaard.

# THE “VISION THING”

by Ralph Janikowski

*“Where there is no vision, the people perish;  
but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.” Proverbs 29:18*

Rockbridge has been blessed by the service of a group of 6 diligent and committed Christians on the School Board. They have provided vision and wisdom in growing Rockbridge Academy and ensuring that consistent, fair, and enforceable policies are implemented and adhered to by the school. God has richly blessed their efforts, as Rockbridge Academy has grown from 23 students to 305 in just 11 years! With God’s many blessings, come a grateful response, and much more work! The Board took time off from their everyday jobs and families to meet for a two-day retreat for prayer, reflection and planning. Among the many issues they labored upon were:

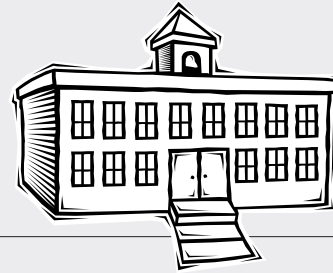
- Based upon our current growth rate, map out a 5-year plan that will sustain Rockbridge’s growth, while maintaining academic excellence.
- Articulate why our vision of Rockbridge’s future requires property (10–18 acres minimum) and a building (~ 40 thousand square feet).



- Understand Biblical fundraising and how to prepare for purchasing land and a building, without letting tuition get out of control or teacher salaries and benefits suffer.
- Search for a Development Director to head up fundraising and public relations.
- Hire and work with a respected local public building architectural firm, Waldon Studio Architects, to begin initial concept development of a future Rockbridge Academy building. The goal is to develop a site plan that will enable us to quickly test-fit potential land opportunities to determine if they meet our building needs.

As you can see, it was an ambitious series of meetings where much was accomplished. All of the above projects continue to gain momentum and meet milestones. For instance, Mike and I have been visiting many area private and Christian schools with the architect to see how their buildings have helped, and at times interfered with, their educational objectives. We have recorded many lessons learned and incorporated and blended them in with our philosophy of classical Christian education. In other words, we are working to build the Trivium into our school.

It is important to note that we are not rushing this process, but prayerfully and purposefully preparing to grow the school to God’s glory. Physical growth will not come quickly or at the expense of our current educational standards. As we continue to grow the enrollment of the upper school and hire teachers to staff two sections of 9th Grade, it is important to consider the following note I sent to one of our parents (next page):



## *The letter:*

I hope that as part of your decision process for high school you seriously consider Rockbridge Academy—come and spend a day in our classes. I believe that your son will thrive in our Rhetoric environment.

*Visit our 10th–12th Grade classrooms and compare them with other schools. What I think is important is that Rockbridge’s enthusiastic teaching, high level of discussion, individual student attention, and comprehensive integrated curriculums are superb. Our students participate in education everyday, not just receive and repeat lessons. True learning is accomplished in our high school classrooms, which prepares students not only for the next level of schooling, but also life. Perhaps more importantly, our entire high school faculty is concerned about character and leadership, in an integrated Christian context. This comes across clearly in our Rhetoric classes and I hope it will weigh heavily in the ranking and comparison of your educational choices.*

*I think it is also important to consider another question; what do you remember of your high school experience?*

*For me it is the teachers who really cared, loved their subjects, and spent time with me.*

*I also remember the close circle of friends I had that shared common values and beliefs with me, and spent time with me during and after school. I remember very little about bricks, mortar, or new educational equipment, most of which has been replaced by now. However, I still communicate with—and care for—my teachers and friends.*

*It is often hard to measure or quantify the essential characteristics of a quality education. That is why, unfortunately, the discussion so quickly and inexorably devolves to facilities—brick, mortar, equipment, etc. Mike and I are ensuring that classical Christian educational distinctives are what Rockbridge focuses upon for our high school students, and that our facilities do not detract from them.*

*I hope and pray that your son enjoys a terrific high school experience. I also hope that your son remains a part of Rockbridge for the very important high school years.*

As we look toward the future, Mike and I very much welcome the ideas and suggestions of the entire Rockbridge Association, as we build a lasting vision for our unique school together. A school, which by God’s grace, he has richly blessed.