

# ROCKBRIDGE REPORTER

A Newsletter for Rockbridge Academy

March 2004

## “ENGINE” OF ATHEISM *by A. A. Hodge*

The following is taken from A. A. Hodge's *Evangelical Theology* (first published in 1890). This particular excerpt comes from the lecture on "The Kingly Office of Christ." Dr. Hodge has just finished expounding the implication of Christ's kingship for the civil government stating that the State has the obligation to be Christian, acknowledging Christ's Lordship and following His Word. He now draws out this obligation further as it relates to State-controlled education (the public school system) showing that it is impossible for a system under a supposedly "neutral" State to be anything other than a vicious engine of atheism. This is precisely what we have lived to see the Public School system become in our day. Dr. Hodge saw it coming over 100 years ago.

—J. Steven Wilkins, Pastor of Auburn Avenue Presbyterian Church (PCA) in Monroe, Louisiana

The overwhelming importance of this principle and weight of this obligation appear in the clearest light the moment the nation claims to regulate the supreme function of education. It is insisted upon that the right of self-preservation is the highest law of States as well as of individuals; that if the suffrage is universal, all holders of that suffrage must be



### THE ATHEISTIC DOCTRINE IS GAINING CURRENCY, EVEN AMONG PROFESSED CHRISTIANS...

educated in order to secure the heterogeneous character of our population and the divisions of the Christian Church, there is no agency in existence competent to educate the whole body of the holders of the universal suffrage except the State herself.

The situation, therefore, stands thus:

**1st.** The tendency of the entire system, in which already vast progress has been made, is to centralization. Each State governs her own

system of common schools by a central agency, which brings them, for the sake of greater efficiency, into uniformity of method and rules. These schools are graded and supplemented by normal schools, high schools, and crowned by the State university. The tendency is to unite all these school systems of the several States in one uniform national system, providing with all the abundant resources of the nation for the entire education of its citizens in every department of human knowledge, and in doing this to establish a uniform curriculum of study, uniform standards for the selection of teachers, and a uniform school literary apparatus of textbooks, etc.

**2nd.** The tendency is to hold that this system must be altogether secular. The atheistic doctrine is gaining currency, even among professed Christians and even among some bewildered Christian ministers, that an education provided by the common government for the children of diverse religious parties should be entirely emptied of all religious character. The Protestants object to the government schools being used for the purpose of inculcating the doctrines of the Catholic Church, and Romanists object to the use of the Protestant version of the Bible and to

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the inculcation of the peculiar doctrines of the Protestant churches. The Jews protest against the schools being used to inculcate Christianity in any form, and the atheists and agnostics protest against any teaching that implies the existence and moral government of God. It is capable of exact demonstration that if every party in the State has the right of excluding from the public schools whatever he does not believe to be true, then he that believes most must give way to him that believes least, and then he that believes least must give way to him that believes absolutely nothing, no matter in how small a minority the atheists and the agnostics may be. It is self-evident that on this scheme, if it is consistently and persistently carried out in all parts of the country, the United States system of national popular education will be the most efficient and wide instrument for the propagation of atheism which the world has ever seen.

**3rd.** The claim of impartiality between positions as directly contradictory as that of Jews, Mohammedans, and Christians, and especially as that of theists and of atheists, is evidently absurd. And no less is the claim absurd and impossible that a system of education can be indifferent on these fundamental subjects. There is no possible branch of human knowledge which is not purely formal, like abstract logic or mathematics, which can be known or taught in a spirit of entire indifference between theism and atheism. Every department which deals with realities, either principles, objective things, or substances, or with events, must be in reality one or the other: if it be not positively and confessedly theistic, it must be really and in full effect atheistic. The

physical as well as the moral universe must be conceived either in a theistic or an atheistic light. It must originate in and develop through intelligent will—that is, in a person—or in atoms, force or chance. Teleology must be acknowledged everywhere or be denied everywhere. Philosophy, ethics, jurisprudence, political and social science, can be conceived of and treated only from a theistic or from an atheistic point of view. The proposal



to treat them from a neutral point of view is ignorant and absurd...

The prevalent superstition that men can be educated for good citizenship, or for any other use under heaven, without religion, is as unscientific and unphilosophical as it is irreligious. It deliberately leaves out of view the most essential and controlling elements of human character: that man is constitutionally as religious (that is, loyally or disloyally) as he is rational; that morals are impossible when dissociated from the religious basis out of which they grow; that, as a matter of fact, human liberty and stable republican institutions, and every practically successful scheme of universal education in all past history, have originated in the active ministries of the Christian religion,


and in these alone. This miserable superstition rests upon no facts of experience, and, on the contrary, is maintained on purely theoretical grounds in opposition to all the lessons which the past history of our race furnishes on the subject.

It is no answer to say that the deficiency of the national system of education in this regard will be adequately supplied by the activities of the Christian churches. No court would admit in excuse for the diffusion of poison the pleas that the poisoner knew of another agent actively employed in diffusing an antidote. Moreover, the churches, divided and without national recognition, would be able very inadequately to counteract the deadly evil done by the public schools of the State with all the resources and prestige of the government. But more than all, atheism taught in the school cannot be counteracted by theism taught in the Church. Theism and atheism cannot coalesce to make anything. All truth in all spheres is organically one and vitally inseparable. It is impossible for different agencies independently to discuss and inculcate the religious and the purely naturalistic sides of truth respectively. They cannot be separated. In some degree they must recognize each other, and be taught together, as they are experienced in their natural relations.

I am as sure as I am of the fact of Christ's reign that a comprehensive and centralized system of national education separated from religion, as is now commonly proposed, will prove the most appalling engine for the propagation of anti-Christian and atheistic unbelief, and of anti-social, nihilistic ethics, individual, social, and political, which this sin-rent world has ever seen.

# WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO COACH GIRLS' SPORTS AT ROCKBRIDGE ACADEMY?

by Amy Boswell

 In an environment conceived and designed to educate young women to be Christ-centered and classically trained, taking the field requires more than a whistle and a clipboard. Those of us charged with the responsibility of coaching a girls' team for Rockbridge must first concentrate on our roles as models of Christ to these young ladies. We will not simply drill our athletes in the fundamentals (the grammar of the sport undertaken) or guide them to work as a team (the logic of the sport)—we also have the responsibility to train our athletes to model their Christian character to one another (especially from the older girls to the younger) and to the teams and coaches they will encounter in competition.


This is no small undertaking. It requires the swallowing of pride, as the coach must put character development, if not above, at least equal to, the development of the player in the sport. At all times, it must be remembered that the young lady dribbling the ball or cradling the stick will one day likely be a wife and mother who was shaped, somewhat, by her experiences in practice and during competition. Therefore, we as coaches must see to it that we hold our girls to a standard of behavior befitting daughters of the King.

Each girl playing for Rockbridge will be afforded the same expectation: to achieve her best performance within the boundaries set by the level of talent endowed in her by her Creator. Rather than constraining our players within the worldly standard of the "level playing field," we will continually encourage our players to seek reach higher to glorify God in their training and performance. This past spring, expectations such as these produced not only strong individual lacrosse players, but also a team that was cohesive as the girls learned to compete in light of each other's strengths and weaknesses. The character of our players, character trained up at home and at Rockbridge, brought a level of honest, forthright communication that allowed the girls and their coaches to critique and train one another effectively. We had a veritable one-room schoolhouse of a program. Our more experienced players mentored those with less, and parents who were veterans of lacrosse brought their experience to the coaches.


A word here about the nature of women's sports. Several Rockbridge dads had experience playing the men's version of the sport. These dads were genuinely amazed at the difference between men's and women's lacrosse. Women's lacrosse requires a level of finesse and strategy that befits the unique nature with which God created women. If men's lacrosse can be compared to hand-to-hand combat on a battlefield, women's is more like a chessboard with feet. It is a joy to watch!

In summary, coaching young ladies at Rockbridge is an opportunity to extend their education beyond the hallowed halls of our Academy. It is an opportunity to ask these young ladies to bring their bodies under Godly discipline, to memorize the grammar of their sport, to find their highest skill level, and then to face their opponents with grace. As a coach, this is a daunting task, but one which is far more of a blessing to receive than to give.


## *Grandparent's Day*

 Rockbridge Academy grammar students invite grandparents or grand-friends to our annual Grandparents' Day celebration on Thursday, April 8, 2004. Pastries and coffee will be available at 9:30 a.m. The program will begin at 10:00 a.m. and end at approximately 11:30 a.m. This is a half-day for all students and staff.

## EUROPE TRIP 2004

 Rockbridge parents and grandparents are invited to take a trip to Europe with our rising seniors from May 31–June 15, 2004. First stop, Greece! We will be visiting Athens, Corinth, Sounion, and Delphi. Then, we'll be traveling to Italy, visiting Rome, Assisi, Siena, Florence, Ravenna, and Venice. Please contact the school office for further information (410-923-1171).

## *Lacrosse Coaches Needed*

 Rockbridge Academy has openings for qualified lacrosse coaches in the spring 2004 season. Interested applicants should contact Donna Griffith at 410-923-1171 or [dgriffith@rockbridge.org](mailto:dgriffith@rockbridge.org).

# THE ROCKBRIDGE DEBATE TEAM

*By Bradley Finkbeiner*

It is our hope that this year will go down as the first in a long history of competitive debates between Rockbridge and schools throughout Maryland and the U.S. After months of preparation, our teams successfully engaged in their first policy debate tournament. What is policy debate? Every year a new resolution is established for schools around the nation to debate. This year's resolution—"That the United States government should substantially increase protection of natural marine resources"—was particularly challenging, as none of us were familiar with the issues related to the topic. Each team of two students had to argue for and against the resolution by researching the evidence and then crafting their own specific "affirmative" and "negative" cases.

Kenny Trovato, 9th grade, and Melissa Caton, 8th grade, argued that the government should limit over fishing; Leslie Janikowsky (9th) and Robert Sicheilstiel (8th) argued that the government should limit the potential harms of shipping radioactive material; and two teams—Chris Janvier (8th) and Michael Davis (9th), and Andy Morsberger (9th) and Stephen Orazem (9th)—argued that the government should protect the seas from shipping related oil spills.

To better appreciate just how well our teams did, you should first understand that the deck was most definitely stacked against them. To begin with, it was their very first tournament. The complex format, rules, and technical jargon that govern each of the three rounds, which take about an hour each, are quite intimidating. Teams with previous experience had a considerable advantage over us. Moreover, our teams did not have sufficient time and resources to nail down all the elements of their cases; it was as if they went into battle with only one good arm. Furthermore, our teams were made to debate Junior Varsity teams instead of other novices. And as if that were not bad enough, some of those opposing teams consisted of 11th and 12th graders with anywhere from 1 to 2 years of experience. Need I say more?

Even so, I am happy to report that Kenny Trovato acquired a personal performance medal, while Leslie

Janikowsky and Robert Sicheilstiel earned a team medal. And all of our teams did more than just stand their ground. Contradictions were pointed out, poor definitions were spotted, assumptions taken for granted were exposed, and weak evidence was shown for what it was. All of our teams went in with both guns blazing.

Why did they do so well? In addition to their own unique talents and personal efforts, there is no question in my mind that the general education these students are getting at Rockbridge made all the difference. It was evident to me that our teams have acquired logical and rhetorical skills which most of the other teams lacked. There was also a considerable contrast of character between our teams and some of the others we encountered. In spite of negative attitudes, rude comments, and other inconsiderate forms of behavior exemplified by some of the other competitors, our students displayed patience, courtesy, and respect for their opponents.

If you get the chance, please congratulate our debaters when you see them around school. Also, for those of you aspiring debaters in the lower grades, we would love to have you join next year's team. We will enter our first tournament in October and, Lord willing, end the year at either the state champs in March or in the nationals in May. Come be a part of the endeavor!



## HONORS

**C**ongratulations go to Josh Davis! He has been accepted to the University of Maryland, College Park, in the University Honors Program. Way to go, Josh!

## *Inclement Weather?*

**W**hat should you do in case of snow or severe weather? Turn your radio dial to either WRBS (FM 95.1) or WBAL (AM1090). Rockbridge Academy announces all early dismissals or school closings on both of these radio stations. You may also check our website at [www.rockbridge.org](http://www.rockbridge.org) or call the school office. We will leave a message on our answering machine to indicate whether or not we will close.

As always, we respect your decision to do whatever you feel is necessary for your family.

## FIDDLER ON THE ROOF

**Performance dates:**

Thursday, Friday, and Saturday,  
March 11-13, 2004.

**Times:** 7:30 p.m. (March 11 & 12);  
2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. (March 13)

**Location:** Chesapeake Arts Center,  
Brooklyn Park.

***Ticket Sales begin February 11, 2004.***

**Cost:** \$12 Adults  
\$10 Students & Seniors

Call the school office for information  
(410-923-1171).

## ROCKBRIDGE BASKETBALL



*Josh Davis goes in for a lay-up.*



*Ben Heemstra enjoys the game.*



*Coach Hollidge gives the team some last-minute pointers.*



# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- MAR 11 & 12....."Fiddler on the Roof" Performance at the Chesapeake Arts Center (CAC) at 7:30 p.m.
- MAR 13....."Fiddler on the Roof" Performance at the CAC Matinee begins at 2 p.m./Evening performance at 7:00 p.m.
- MAR 19.....Class Pictures Taken
- MAR 29.....SCHOOL CLOSED—*Teacher Planning Day*
- MAR 29–APR 2 .....S.A.T. Testing for students in grades K–8
- APR 2 .....Grammar Spelling Bee
- APR 5–7 *Optional Parent/Teacher Conferences*—before/after school
- APR 8 .....Grandparents' Day—1/2 Day for Students & Staff
- APR 9–12 .....SCHOOL CLOSED—Resurrection Break

## QUOTE OF THE MONTH

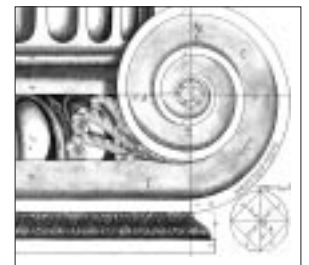
WHAT CAN WE KNOW? THAT IS, WHAT CAN WE BE SURE WE KNOW, OR SURE THAT WE KNOW WE KNEW IT, IF INDEED IT IS AT ALL KNOWABLE. OR HAVE WE SIMPLY FORGOTTEN IT AND ARE TOO EMBARRASSED TO SAY ANYTHING?

—*Woody Allen*

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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