



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- OCT 12.....PSAT Testing for 10th & 11th Grades
- OCT 19.....High School Night at the Harries' for 7th-8th grade parents—7:30 to 9:00 p.m.
- OCT 21Daytime Open House—8:30 a.m.–2:00 p.m.
- OCT 28Pastors' Lunch @ 11:30 a.m./History Parade @ 1:15 p.m.
- NOV 3.....Musical Auditions in the Fellowship Hall—after school
- NOV 4.....College Night @ 7:30 p.m.
- NOV 5 ..Musical Auditions in the Fellowship Hall from 9 a.m.–noon
- NOV 10.....End of the First Trimester
- NOV 11.....SCHOOL CLOSED—Teacher Workday
- NOV 16–22Parent/Teacher Conferences
- NOV 23–25SCHOOL CLOSED—Thanksgiving Holiday

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

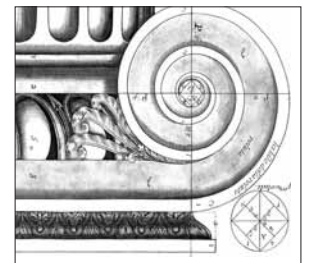
“*It is better to deserve honors and not have them than to have them and not deserve them.*”

—MARK TWAIN

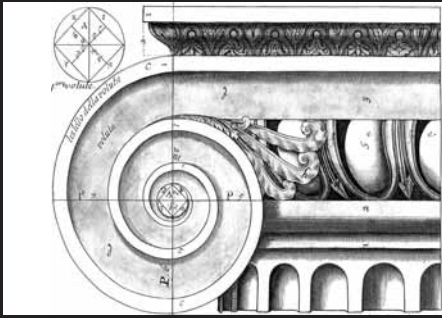
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ROCKBRIDGE ACADEMY



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 CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
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ROCKBRIDGE REPORTER

A Newsletter for Rockbridge Academy

October 2005

POP QUIZ *by Michael J. McKenna*

Your children take many tests and quizzes at school. They're part of the necessary warp and woof of academic life. But why should the kids have all the fun? I'd like you adults to take the following pop quiz regarding the nature of classical and Christian education.

With which of the following statements do you most agree?

- 1A. *Success in college and in the job market are the primary reasons I send my child to school.*
- 1B. *If my child's education builds wisdom and understanding, the natural and expected result will be success in life.*

Many people would side with A in this day and age. However, for the vast majority of human history, education's purpose was not to make us fit for a task or an income bracket, but rather to make us fit for life! So the correct answer is "B." In his seminal work, *The Closing of the American Mind*, Allan Bloom said, "Fathers and mothers have lost the idea that the highest aspiration they might have for their children is for them to be wise. Specialized competence and success are all that they can imagine." Far too often, people think that college is for job training. But



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this thinking then forces parents to consider the purpose of secondary education as well. If the purpose of college is to make our sons employable, then the purpose of high school can't be far behind. We see evidence of this trend all around us; students begin "majoring" even while they're in high school, some taking a math-science track, others tending toward the humanities. What ever happened

to the idea of a core curriculum? Something all educated people necessarily studied, while leaving job training for the employer. As a headmaster, I've spoken to many businessmen over the years in regards to the kind of people they like to employ. Almost without exception they'll say, "Give me someone who can think, write, speak well, solve problems, and I'll teach them how to do the job." How many of us actually stay in the business we majored in through college anyway? Wouldn't an education that prepared us to be wise, rather than one which taught us to make a widget, make more sense in the long run?

- 2A. *Education is a joy unto itself for the student who is taught to love learning.*
- 2B. *Education should be entertaining so that children can enjoy their childhood.*

Sesame Street went on the air in 1969. After 36 years of entertaining, educational television, I'm fairly certain that all we've done is teach children to like more television! (That's just an opinion, not the result of solid research on my part.) While we certainly want our children to enjoy the time they spend at school, what we as parents should really be

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instilling in our children is a love for learning. Like anything worthwhile, learning can be painful at times, and without a doubt it requires great effort. So does hiking up a mountain on a crisp fall day. But who doesn't enjoy the vista once the work has been accomplished? Like training our bodies, training our minds takes great effort, but the results are an enjoyment unto themselves. As Jacques Barzun so ably put it, "The test and the use of a man's education is that he finds pleasure in the exercise of his mind." Oh...the correct answer is "A."

3A. *Education trains children in the knowledge and skills that they will need.*

3B. *Education teaches children the art of learning; it trains the mind in how to think well.*

At one of our annual ACCS conferences, I was verbally accosted in a coffee line by a woman who wanted to know why we weren't teaching our students skills. "They have to know how to *dooo* something," she insisted. "Without skills they won't be able to *dooo* anything!" I tried to reason with her, and explain that by receiving an education the purpose of which was to teach students to learn for themselves, and to think well, that we were equipping them to do far more than just giving them a set of skills. I must confess, I don't think I got through to her. But she was a perfect example of the modern American mindset, which has embraced the notion contained in 3A above. Each year we require our teachers to read Dorothy Sayers' essay "The Lost Tools of Learning." In that work Miss Sayers wrote, "Is it not the great defect of our education today...that although we often succeed in teaching our pupils 'subjects,' we fail

lamentably on the whole in teaching them how to think: they learn everything, except the art of learning." An education that merely teaches a set of skills, or even teaches students what to think, rather than how to think, is in truth no education at all. If you chose 3B, you chose wisely.

4A. *Students need up-to-date training emphasizing technology and science to be prepared for the future.*

An education that merely teaches a set of skills, or even teaches students what to think, rather than how to think, is in truth no education at all.

4B. *Students need broad-based knowledge in the context of a Christian worldview to be prepared for an uncertain future.*

I know people in the field of computers who lament that the industry changes so rapidly, there's no way to keep up with it. As soon as one technology catches on, it becomes obsolete, and training on the new technology is required in order to keep their noses above water, so to speak. There's no escaping that in this ever-changing, technology driven world. If that's the case then, what use is an education that is devoted to training in specific types of technology, since we can be certain those technologies will be

considered antiquated almost overnight? Doesn't it make much more sense to educate our children in terms of the eternal questions which mankind has been asking from the beginning, so that they may be able to face the future, no matter what it brings? John Gardner put it this way: "We don't even know what skills may be needed in the years ahead... We must train our young people in the fundamental fields of knowledge, and equip them to understand and cope with change. We must give them the critical qualities of mind and durable qualities of character that will serve them in circumstances we cannot now even predict." The correct answer is 4B.

5A. *All education contains inherent value systems. Therefore, school should instill values consistent with your family's.*

5B. *Education at school can be value-neutral. We teach our family's values at home.*

The myth of neutrality is perhaps one of the most insidious lies that modern education has foisted upon American society. Since education at its heart is the transfer of one soul into another, the transfer of a way of life from one generation to another, there is no possibility that it can be neutral. In choosing to study *this* as opposed to *that*, saying that this book, culture, artwork, what have you, deserves our attention while these do not, is inherently a statement of values. As always, C.S. Lewis said it best: "Education without values, as useful as it is, seems rather to make man a more clever devil." Education is about training character, if it is about nothing else. And an education which claims to have nothing to say about what we value or why, is a farce. The correct answer is 5A.

NEW STAFF AT ROCKBRIDGE

Ralph Janikowsky joined the Rockbridge Academy staff as the Upper School (Grades 7-12) Principal this past summer following a 28-year career in the U.S. Navy. Ralph graduated with distinction from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1977 and started his career in the Navy's surface nuclear power program. He has served in a wide number of afloat and ashore assignments, including tours at sea as a Chief Engineer of the nuclear cruiser USS VIRGINIA (CGN 38), Commissioning Executive Officer of the cruiser USS VICKSBURG (CG 69), Commanding Officer of the destroyer USS HEWITT (DD 966) in Yokosuka Japan, and Commanding Officer of the cruiser USS PRINCETON (CG 59) during Operation Iraqi Freedom. His shore tours included serving as the Director of Classroom Instruction at the nuclear prototype in Idaho Falls, Idaho, Director of Surface Nuclear Power Officer Career Management and Placement at the Bureau of Naval Personal, the Chief of Naval Operations representative and Professor of Military Strategy at National Defense University, and the Director of Naval Analysis, Programming and Integration on the Navy Staff in the Pentagon. Additionally, Ralph earned a Master's Degree in Strategic Studies, with distinction, from the National War College in Washington, DC.



Ralph originally hails from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and now calls Bowie, Maryland home. He is an elder at the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Bowie (PCA) and previously served two years as an elected Board Member of Rockbridge Academy. (His hobbies include being an avid reader, bicycler, golfer, and cook.) His wife, Linda, teaches upper school math at Rockbridge, and they have two daughters at Rockbridge, Leslie in the 11th Grade and Kristen in the 4th Grade.

Ralph brings to Rockbridge a wealth of experience in leadership, management, education and training, and analysis, and we welcome him to the Rockbridge family.



Corrina McKenna graduated from Hillsdale College in 2004 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English and a minor in classics. Before coming to Rockbridge to teach rhetoric and literature, Miss McKenna substitute taught and tutored at her high school alma mater, Trinity Christian

School in Statesboro, Georgia, where she lived for five years before attending college in Hillsdale, Michigan.

Miss McKenna has three siblings: Eileen 22, John 20, and Jered, 18. Her mother, Donna McKenna, is a high school math and science teacher and her father works for Future Trees, Inc., of Statesboro, Georgia. In keeping with her Christian upbringing, she attended a small, liberal arts college with an emphasis on the Judeo-Christian, Greco-Roman tradition.

Motivated by a love of literature and learning, Miss McKenna looks forward to her first year of teaching, imparting enthusiasm and delving into the Western literary tradition with her tenth, eleventh and twelfth grade classes.

Board Update

Rockbridge Academy's board of directors voted to receive Stuart Caton as an appointed board member. The appointed board

members at this time are Rob Tucker, Jeff Antkowiak, Ken Trovato, and Stu Caton. The elected board members are Chris Boswell and Stephen Kaiss.

