



# From The Newsroom

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Quill graphic drawn by Liz Cawley, Class of 2010

## Donating to Haiti by Donning Denim



by Maddie Marmen

Right now, people around the world are coming together to help Haiti, which was recently struck by a devastating earthquake. Rockbridge Academy joined in the effort by allowing its students and faculty to wear casual jeans and shoes. On February 17-24, tickets were sold for the price of \$10 a day, or just \$25 a week, in order for the students to wear these casual clothes on the week of March 2-5. This money will go to Christian relief organization, Samaritan's

Purse, which is currently raising money to benefit Haiti.

This wonderful idea was brought about by Rockbridge Academy senior Tara Scarborough, along with seniors Carrie Bisciotti and Erica Lease. "I was actually telling my friend that I wished there was something I could do to help the relief effort in Haiti, and he told me about a school somewhere in the Midwest that did this, and I thought it would be a great thing to do at Rockbridge. I called Carrie [Bisciotti] to talk about it. When we got some details worked out, we got a couple friends and asked Mr. Janikowsky if we could do it," said Miss Scarborough.

It was not very hard to convince Principal Ralph Janikowsky to agree with the idea. "I think part of the reason is that he felt a calling towards helping out Haiti as well as we did; before presenting the idea, we had a Seminar in Ideas class, which Mr. Janikowsky leads, about Haiti and the hardships and trials they have to face," said Miss Bisciotti. Then, the idea was brought to Headmaster Mike McKenna. Mr. McKenna agreed with the idea because he knew Haiti needed help now, and he also knew

that the students and teachers needed something to help them get through the bleakness of a mid-winter school year.

Now that everyone was convinced, there was a presentation given during lunchtime on how badly Haiti had been affected and how our school could help. When the flyers were passed out and the jeans tickets sold, there was a very positive response from the student body. "I thought that this was a really good idea because I wanted to do something to benefit Haiti, and what a better opportunity than to wear jeans at Rockbridge!" said ninth-grader Madeleine Stevens.

On March 2, students and teachers showed their support and desire to help Haiti by filling the school with their most comfortable jeans and casual shoes. Between both the campuses (The Big House and The Rock), Rockbridge raised \$3,512. Now, there is the hope that this money will be used for a great purpose. "I hope that the organization focuses on spreading God's word along with basic essentials like food and water. What many don't realize is that Voodoo is a prominent religion. I hope that the organization we gave the money to will teach the Haitians that the gift of God is eternal life," said junior Gilbert Horst.

This fundraiser was extremely beneficial not only for Haiti, but also for Rockbridge Academy. It was a great learning experience for all involved. Mr. McKenna said, "First of all, I hope that the students don't learn that it's only good to help people if they [the students] get some benefit from it. However, what I do hope the students learn is that they have an ability to very easily do some good in this world - something so easy as contributing ten or twenty-five dollars. We can go to the mall and spend that amount of money without thinking anything of it, but that kind of money is what the people in Haiti may see in a year." ■

## Rockbridge Certamen Competition



by Ethan Wilmot

The Rockbridge Academy Certamen Club just became official this year. It is a student-founded Latin competition club that competes at various schools around the state. Certamen, pronounced ker-TAH-men, is the Latin word for contest, in which the club members compete to answer questions about the Latin language, Roman history, and Roman culture. Although a very young club at Rockbridge, the Certamen Club has won first place at both Certamen competitions

this school year.

Rockbridge started attending Certamen events because the organizers of the Maryland Junior Classical League (MDJCL) contacted Miss Katie Becker, Rockbridge Academy Latin teacher and now head of the Certamen Club. Last year, Miss Becker had

taken students to competitions starting in December 2008 and after that she told the students she would run an official club this year if they were interested. Several students signed up, some of whom had never attended a Certamen event before.

"My ultimate goal is for the students to enjoy themselves while increasing in classical knowledge. I hope that they are encouraged to be diligent in their studies and are stretched to their fullest potential by being challenged in a larger community of students," said Miss Becker.

The Certamen Club meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays at lunch to hold mini-competitions where they practice answering questions.

The club members have attended and won trophies at all levels at two Certamen events so far. The club members form into multiple teams based on their level of knowledge of Latin: Level I being the beginner level and Level IV being the most advanced level. ■

## Rockbridge Certamen Competition (cont.)

The first Certamen event was October 31 at Dulaney High School in Timonium, Maryland. Rockbridge Academy won first place at both Level I and Level III. Competing at Level I were seventh-graders Emily Diekemper and Zachary Taylor and eighth-graders Taylor Craig, Yoel Hill, and Hattie Taylor. Competing Level III were ninth-graders Noah Diekemper and Peter Ramsey.

The second Certamen event was December 12 at Linganore High School in Frederick, Maryland. This time Rockbridge entered contestants at the higher Level IV and won first place. They also placed first at Level I and second place at Level III. Competing at Level I were seventh-graders Emily Diekemper and Jed Fowler and eighth-graders Taylor Craig and Yoel Hill. Competing at Level III were ninth-graders Michele Alade, Noah Fowler, Jonathan Nichols, and Peter Ramsey. Competing at Level IV was ninth-grader Noah Diekemper and tenth-graders Josh Bradley and David Nichols.

The competition is a little like the game show “Jeopardy,” except the players are organized into teams. A team will win based

on their average score in all the rounds. During one of these rounds a team will compete against another two teams. The teams race to answer the questions; when a team member knows the answer, he slaps the desk, called “slapping in.” When the team successfully answers a question, they get a chance to answer a bonus question. These bonus questions come in different categories.

“My favorite category is the Cinema Romana Questions. The questioners will translate a [modern] movie title into Latin or describe the plot in Latin, and you have to translate it into English, identifying the movie,” said ninth-grader Noah Diekemper. For example: What movie due out in a couple weeks would have been called in ancient Rome, *Involutum est?* Answer: It’s Complicated.

Spectators are welcome to come and support the team.

Tenth-grader Liesl McClintock said, “It was another opportunity to explore Latin and learn more about history and culture that I didn’t know. It is also just a good time to get to know my classmates and to work together in the competition.” ■

## Debate Team Embodies Rockbridge Academic Touchstone



by Peter Ramsey

The Rockbridge Academy debate team, an elective course begun in 2005, is an opportunity for students in the eighth through twelfth grade to practice the skills acquired in both the dialectic and rhetoric periods of Rockbridge Academy’s classical Christian method: the logic and quick deduction learned in dialectic, and the eloquence of presenting that logic learned in the rhetoric.

At the most recent tournament, hosted by Rockbridge Academy on February 17th, Rockbridge took all places in all categories (first, second, and third at novice, junior varsity, and varsity levels) with the exception of junior varsity first place, including a surprise first-place win at the varsity level by two new debaters, ninth-graders Josh Bradley and Bryanna Womack.

For its first two years, the debate team joined and competed in an already existing debate league. Unfortunately, however, according to debate coach and Great Ideas teacher Mr. Bradley Finkbeiner, this league “was not concerned about logic and rhetoric, or how to persuade the average man. For example, they used ‘spreading’ – a type of speed-reading – to present cases! The idea was to cram tons of info into one’s opening so that an opponent could not address it all.”

And so, in 2007, Rockbridge created their own debate league, the Mid-Atlantic Christian Debate League (MACDL), with various schools in the mid-Atlantic area, some even in Virginia and Pennsylvania.

The debate team has a total of three tournaments a year: a fall tournament at Summit Christian Academy in Newport News, Virginia; a winter tournament at home here at Rockbridge Academy, and a spring tournament.

Now that MACDL is into its third year, certain schools have gained reputations for greatness and the added competition has made the league even more challenging and enjoyable. “Summit Christian Academy has been in the league with us since the beginning, and they field the biggest team after ours, although both Tall Oaks and Oak Hill have recently fielded varsity teams that have given our students a run for their money,” said debate coach and

history teacher Mr. Ben Carnahan.

Before they get to deduction or presentation, students must begin by researching on the given statement, or resolution, making sure to document information, and opinions, from both sides of the argument. Debaters and coaches have described this as one of debating’s greatest challenges: debaters have to look through many sources to find good ones for their case, and they have to watch for and work around the biases of their sources, to find solid information backing any given claim.

Logic, of course, plays a key role in the preparation and during the debate itself. In addition to employing it in constructing their case, debaters have to analyze and refute an opponent’s using it. There are also cross-examination questions that require quick thinking in order to avoid traps set by opponents.

“I’ve definitely been able to practice thinking on my feet,” said debater and tenth-grader Josiah Mitchell. During debate class, “bull riding” sessions, where a student must defend a randomly chosen hypothesis while being cross-examined by the rest of the class, is a student-favorite for practicing this skill.

Rhetoric, the art of speaking persuasively, is the third and final component in any debate. In addition to earning points from the judges, rhetoric helps to get the audience on one’s side, and to attract them towards the issue in the first place. Students in the dialectic stage get some extra, early preparation for the rhetoric stage in debate class, while rhetoric students can sharpen and practice the skills they are currently learning.

Ninth-grader Michele Alade appreciates the way debate encourages her communication skills. “I joined debate because it’s better to be someone who talks purposefully, rather than without reason...in a way that communicates with people effectively.”

Mr. Carnahan appreciates the self-motivation and the interactions that occur across the grade levels that the class encourages. “The team is the largest it has ever been, with a wide range of eighth through twelfth graders, and the discussion-oriented class dynamic provides a unique opportunity for older students to mentor the younger.”

By reinforcing the Trivium and developing leadership, the debate team is an academic touchstone of the Rockbridge Academy curriculum. ■