



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Sept. 17 Back-to-School Night @ 7:30pm; Grades 4-12; Main Campus
- Sept. 24 Back-to-School Night @ 7:30pm; Grades K-3; GIBC Campus
- Sept. 30 Grand Tour Presentations to Grades 7-12 @ 1:55pm; Fellowship Hall; *parents & guests are welcome to attend!*
- Oct. 1 5th Grade Sultana Field Trip
1st grade "Cakes & Cakes"; GIBC Campus
- Oct. 2,9,16,23 Youth Soccer Clinics
- Oct. 5 Kindergarten Pumpkin Patch Field Trip
- Oct. 6 6th Grade Civil War Museum Field Trip
- Oct. 7 Individual Picture Day for Grades K-3; GIBC Campus
Grand Tour Presentations to Grades 4-6 @ 1:55pm; Fellowship Hall; *parents and guests are welcome to attend!*
- Oct. 8 Individual Picture Day for Grades 4-11; Main Campus
- Oct. 15 Grandparents Association Reception @ 3:30-5:30pm; Manor House

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

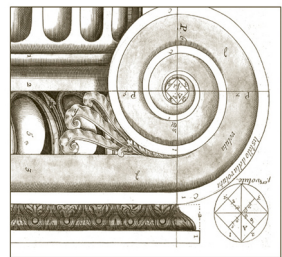
There is often a reason for not being on time - but it is never a good one.

- KARLE ERICKSON

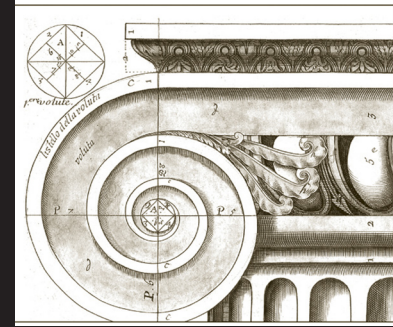
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ROCKBRIDGE ACADEMY



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ROCKBRIDGE REPORTER

A Newsletter for Rockbridge Academy

September 2010

THOSE LAZY, HAZY, CRAZY DAYS OF SUMMER

by Michael J. McKenna, Headmaster



Okay, so the title of this article is not in the least bit original... granted. Nat King Cole made the song famous back in 1963, it climbed to Billboard's #6 position, and the expression has been a piece of Americana ever since. I won't win any awards for originality.

Being a Christian school principal, people frequently ask me what I did with my summer, usually assuming that people in the teaching profession have a good deal of time on their hands during the summer months to catch up on some reading, take a few classes, travel, rekindle relationships with the fam...you know, do all those things that you can't really do when you're working.

If you've ever lived under that -- I won't call it a "delusion." That would be unkind -- misconception, allow me to set things aright.

First, let's start with a question: Does your children's education at Rockbridge Academy seem to be carefully thought out, well-planned, and generally organized? If you answered "Yes" to that question, then let me tell you: It doesn't happen by accident. It takes a great deal of effort, planning, and carefully



Photo by Rachel Wallen, class of 2012, taken during *The Art of Digital Photography* Summer Seminar at Belvoir.

laid out plans to get a school year off to a successful beginning, and bring it nine months later to a successful conclusion.

Having said that, let me share with you a brief tour through Rockbridge Academy's summer, so you can have an idea of what goes into bringing about a successful school year.

First, we begin in early June with closing out the prior school year. After the students leave for the summer, teachers

generally have to stay on for a few days up to a week or more in order to pack up their rooms, grade final papers and exams, enter grades into report cards, and write all those wonderful report cards comments we parents so enjoy reading.

Upper school principal Ralph Janikowsky and I, however, have a different responsibility in early June. We leave on the Grand Tour the Sunday after graduation and are there until mid-June. When we return, we typically have to turn around with about 10 of our colleagues and attend the Association of Classical Christian Schools (ACCS) Conference. This year, both Mr. and Mrs. Janikowsky were guest speakers at the conference, as was Denise Hollidge and myself. Anna Kitchin was also invited to speak as this year's winner of the ACCS Chrysostom Speech Competition. Preparing for the conference

THOSE LAZY, CRAZY, HAZY DAYS OF SUMMER ... *continued*

also takes a good deal of preparation, as you can imagine.

Once we return from the conference by the end of June, we need to finalize report cards, ensure that grades are in place and comments are as they should be, so we can mail them home to you.

Now, before school actually recessed for the summer, Mrs. Boswell, our Admissions Director, and Mrs. Tucker, our Director of Instruction, are busy ensuring that all newly applying students are on a good trajectory for the fall. It behooves both us and our newly applying families if students transferring in from other schools are set up for success, and this generally requires a good deal of work over the summer, which these two ladies supervise. This year we have 25 students transferring in from other schools or homeschooling, so this was quite a large job this summer.

Mr. Griffith, our fifth grade teacher, was busy overseeing Rockbridge Academy's growing summer programs, which includes over twenty different classes for students and parents, ranging from Rocketry and Rhetoric Readings to Shakespeare and Speed Camp. Those summer programs involved over 20 different Rockbridge teachers and countless hours of preparation and teaching.

Once report cards were sent out in June, early July was spent preparing for Rockbridge Academy's Teacher Training, which was held the week of July 26. Initially conceived as training for new teachers to Rockbridge Academy, the scope of our summer teacher training has grown to include classical Christian school teachers from all over the world -- really! This year, there were over 80 teachers in attendance from as far as away as Arizona and Indonesia. (Perhaps you've been following Heidi Stevens' Postcards from Jakarta on Rockbridge Academy's Facebook page.) In the past we've had teachers from Hawaii and even Seoul, South Korea. In order to assist our parents in growing their vision and understanding of classical Christian education, we even open up our teacher training to our own parents for free! It was good to see some of you there.

This year's teacher training sessions were conducted by 16 Rockbridge Academy teachers and administrators, and sessions included topics ranging from the basic foundations of classical and Christian education to teaching the sexes at school, from the first two weeks of grammar school to assessing math and science work in the upper school. Based on feedback from the 80+ teachers in attendance, our staff does a wonderful job with this training, and as you can imagine, preparing for these workshops takes a great deal of forethought. Debbie Cavallaro organized the teacher training, and she did a wonderful job seeing to its seamless execution.

By the time Teacher Training comes to an end, August is upon us, and that means only one thing...the school year isn't

far behind! Teacher training for all Rockbridge Academy staff began on August 23rd this year, and continues apace even as I write. So, what do we do during this second round of teacher training? I'm glad you asked!

Now that I have only the staff of Rockbridge Academy on hand (and not those from all over the country and the world), the focus is on what we need to do and to know in order to bring the upcoming school year to pass successfully. Frankly, until you experience it first-hand, you can't imagine the level of detail that goes into planning the school year. Here's just a small sample: Dress-code, policy manuals and guidelines all need to

be refreshed; teachers have to get their books, supplies, materials and bulletin board displays unpacked and put in order; grade books have to be established and principles of grading have to be reviewed with all staff so that "differing weights and measures" are no part of what goes on during the course of the year; Back-

to-School Night is planned; educational philosophy is reviewed both from a Christian and a classical perspective so that all staff have a clear understanding of what sets teaching and learning at Rockbridge Academy apart from the norm; classroom policies are reviewed, classlists are posted and seating charts are arranged, new parent desserts are planned and executed, study skills seminars are worked out in great detail; if there are new happenings at school, the staff have to be familiarized with those aspects (this year I'm requiring the staff to migrate to Google calendar, and we're new to Facebook, so we need to familiarize ourselves with those); teachers will meet with their colleagues one grade above them to review the classlists and make sure they have a good understanding of the students they're about to inherit; Rockbridge Academy is up for the five-year renewal of its accreditation from ACCS, so preparation for that has to take place; meetings with individual teachers are going on all the time, and also with small groups of teachers to cover things like integration across subject lines and within subject disciplines; teachers take their course curricula and break it down into what we call Long Range Plans (which map out how the curricula will be accomplished beginning in September and completed by the end of May), and then more detailed lesson plans are written, which explain exactly what will go on each day in each individual class; and finally (not "finally" as in "that's all we do," but "finally" as in, "that's all I want to say about that"), we pray for our students and their families and one another each day before we begin. Ora et labora.

As you can see, there's nothing lazy about a Rockbridge summer. It all goes by so quickly, things are a bit hazy. And as for crazy, well, I'll let you decide. So, now that you have a better idea of what goes into getting each school year wrapped up and planned anew, let me ask you...What did you do this summer?

*Ora et Labora
Pray and Work*



Have you visited our new facebook page?
For another great way to stay in touch go to www.facebook.com/rockbridgeacademy

ROCKBRIDGE ACADEMY BACK-TO-SCHOOL NIGHTS!

- ⇒ Friday, September 17, 7:30PM, at the Big House, grades 4-12
- ⇒ Friday, September 24, 7:30PM, at the Rock, grades K-3

Come and meet your child's teachers, hear from the administration and board chairman, and renew your vision for classical and Christian education.

CALLING ALL PHOTOGRAPHERS!

It is with great excitement that we introduce the new Rockbridge Academy "shutterfly" site!



In lieu of Photo Sales this year, "shutterfly" will be our internet photo management site on which you can upload your own photos and enjoy the photographs of other parents and students. Please know that the general public will not be able to access this website. Invited members, only school families, may download photos from this site to their own computer. The photos may be used by the school in the Vanguard yearbook or in other Rockbridge Academy publications. Any and all new members must be approved and granted access by the site administrator.

If you already use a photo management site such as picasa, snapfish, or flickr, please consider sharing your Rockbridge Academy photographs with the yearbook staff by inviting me to your site. We would greatly appreciate it. Please do not hesitate to contact Therese Cooley at tcooley@rockbridge.org if you have any questions or concerns about this site or how to use it. I hope it will be a blessing to your family and to the Rockbridge Academy community.

Thank you for your help in sharing the JOY that is Rockbridge Academy!



IT'S TIME FOR ROCKBRIDGE ACADEMY YOUTH SOCCER!

Boys and girls in grades K-5 are encouraged to join our soccer coaches for some soccer fun! The purpose of the camp is to teach our younger athletes the basics of soccer and to develop the skills they may already have, including proper kicking mechanics, passing, throw-ins, basic rules and strategies involved in the world's most popular sport. The camp will be taught by experienced youth coaches who are part of the Rockbridge family. They will be assisted by several current Rockbridge Academy athletes. Please take advantage of this great opportunity to have your aspiring soccer stars develop their skills! The camp will be held Saturdays, 10/2, 10/9, 10/16, and 10/23 from 9:00-10:30am at GIBC, 1485 Waterbury Road, Crownsville, MD 21032. No makeup date is available; if more than 2 Saturdays are rained out, 25% of registration cost will be refunded to families. The camp will cost \$50 per player.



ANNOUNCING THE ROCKBRIDGE ACADEMY CROSS COUNTRY CLUB!

The Rockbridge Cross Country Club for young men and women in grades 5-8 will be meeting Tuesdays and Thursdays throughout the school year from 3:00-4:00pm. The club will be coached by experienced runners, Mrs. Ball and Miss Becker, with the help of senior, Isaac Duarte, and sophomore, Nathan Griffith. There will be opportunities to run in two middle school cross country meets (2 mile distance), Oct. 11 at Severn School and October 21 at AACS at 4:00. The club will meet in front of the school building and run north on Indian Landing Road for training runs. Come hit the road with the Cross Country Club!