



From The Newsroom

Rockbridge Reporter Student Edition

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Quill graphic drawn by Liz Cawley, Class of 2010

Rockbridge Debate: An Elective to be Reckoned With



by Peter Ramsey

Rockbridge Academy swept away the competition in a debate tournament at Summit Academy in Newport News, Virginia, on December 4, 2010, taking first and second place for varsity, and first, second, and third place for junior varsity. Reportedly called one of Rockbridge Academy's finest tournaments ever by debate coach, Mr. Brad Finkbeiner, the overwhelming success of the event was echoed by the debate students as well.

The debate topic was "Resolved: That it is in the public interest for the USFG to regulate the internal affairs of American mosques." In preparation for the tournament, the debaters took turns arguing for and against the resolution.

"I personally think it was an excellent topic because it was very controversial, and you could argue from either side," added sophomore debater Si Mitchell.

Coming in first place for the varsity team was Paul Vanik and Isaac Duarte and in second place there was a tie between David Nichols and Austin Baldrige and Jacob Cooley and Tim Burkhardt. The junior-varsity team won first, second, and third places. First place was Si Mitchell and Peter Allen, second was Allison Feeny and Nadia Northup, and third was Taylor Craig and Ben England. Notable also were Solveig Moe and Rachel Cooley – brand new debaters in eighth grade who were undefeated in all three rounds, coming in fourth place.

Debate began as a smaller elective at Rockbridge Academy; however, it has experienced somewhat of a boom in recent years, now sporting twenty-nine debaters total. "Certainly, debate has gotten a lot bigger, I think because of the fact that the school's matured...students are more comfortable debating, and I also think

that the idea of debating has become more attractive," said Mr. Finkbeiner.

This trend of the growing and balancing of interests in the different electives is school-wide. Concert Choir has split into dialectic and rhetoric choirs, the art elective added a new drawing class, and the yearbook elective added a photography section.

According to the students, debate helps teach them to do their research properly, express their informed conclusions eloquently, and think on their feet while defending themselves. Also, as freshman and new debate student Schuyler Kitchin noted, "Debate helps prepare me for the rhetoric stage, because it helps you analyze situations or topics with both sides of the view."

So what allowed Rockbridge to perform particularly well this time around? Mr. Finkbeiner pointed to his diverse group of debaters. "There were quite a lot of new debaters, and there was quite a lot of raw talent among them," he said. "I would say that student leadership was better. Cory Womack, Jacob Cooley, Meredith Caton – these were all people who'd been debating for four years – and they were able to bring more to the table."

Rockbridge is an environment very conducive to the important practice of debate. Debates are used as teaching and discussion tools in classes outside of debate class itself, and students are encouraged to discuss and politely argue over important or stimulating topics outside of the classroom.

"I think that in some schools, anyway, debate is something the geeky bookworms do – the cool people play football...there's a realization here that in addition to being important, it's also like a sport. There's something martial about it – it requires courage, and...a sort of prowess," said Mr. Finkbeiner.

Rockbridge's stunning victory at the tournament was an encouraging and exciting event. It points the way to new and brave prospects for the no-longer-fledgling debate team.

Luther on Trial



by Yoel Hill

The Rockbridge Academy ninth-grade history class reenacted Luther on Trial at the Diet of Worms, in the gymnasium on October 21. The cast included the ninth-graders as the Catholic inquisitors, upper-school Principal Ralph Janikowsky as the Holy Roman Emperor, and Pastor Tom Wenger of Annapolis Evangelical Presbyterian Church (Annapolis EP) as Martin Luther.

Pastor Wenger, wearing a brown robe of a monk, a cross necklace, and a monk's hat and holding his beer stein of Starbucks Coffee, strode into the "courtroom," ready to receive questions. The "Catholic students" fired many questions, but the "Lutheran Pastor" responded in a very characteristic way.

"He didn't even think twice about insulting us," said ninth-grader Schuyler Kitchin.

The questions ranged from indulgences to salvation to vows

of chastity; throughout all of his answers there was a pattern of Scripture alone.

Ninth-grade modern European history teacher, Mrs. Katie Kitchin, got the idea of reenacting "Luther on Trial" at the Association of Classical Christian Schools' convention last summer. As soon as she heard the idea, she became immediately enthusiastic. Mrs. Kitchin said, "As a dialectic class, it is preferable for us to recreate great moments of 'clashing' in history, and Luther's defense of Sola Scriptura and Sola Fide at the Diet of Worms offered us that opportunity."

The ninth grade was learning about the Reformation and specifically about Martin Luther. The students first analyzed his famous Ninety-Five Theses to get a grasp on Martin Luther's early mindset and then read his later writings to see how Luther's theology had changed over time. They also studied the problems facing the church at that time.

Pastor Wenger enjoyed himself greatly. "From my perspective I think that this was a very successful learning tool. It caused the students to dig in and read some excellent primary sources as

Luther On Trial (continued)

well as wrestle with the difficult issues that surrounded Luther and the Reformation. Additionally, it caused them to have to work within parameters that sharpened their rhetorical and critical thinking skills. And finally the scenario caused them to see the importance of understanding the background and context of historical events so that we seek to understand them in their proper light and seek to avoid the often ill-informed baggage that we bring to them."

Overall the Trial succeeded not only in enlightening the students but also in showing them why it is important to understand history.

Mrs. Kitchin said, "I believe the students not only had head

knowledge about Luther's stand, but also a strong memory of a man who was bold about his faith in Christ and the Holy Scriptures and willing to die for it."

The trial was clearly a success for the students. Since it was done in such a well-carved original way, the ninth grade learned details that they could not learn through an ordinary lecture. Mrs. Kitchin said, "When asked if they thought European II should include this trial in next year's curriculum, the answer was a resounding 'Yes!'"

As Taylor Craig remarked, "It gave me insight into Luther's mind."

Shakespearean Preview: What's New at the Globe Theatre

(a.k.a. Reformed Presbyterian Church of Bowie and the Folger Theatre)



by Emily Diekemper

The students in the "Scenes and Monologues Workshop," directed by Mrs. Sally D'Angelo of the Annapolis Shakespeare Company, will be performing scenes from a variety of Shakespeare's works on Saturday, March 12, at the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Bowie at 7:00 p.m. Admission is free although the company will be accepting donations if anyone would like to support the work of the Annapolis Shakespeare Company. The evening will be topped off with a performance by the Hamlet cast of their twenty-five minute adaptation for the Folger Shakespeare Festival in March.

The twenty-seven scenes and monologues will be taken from such masterpieces as *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *As You Like*

It, *Two Gentlemen in Verona*, *A Winter's Tale*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Twelfth Night*, *Cymbeline*, and others. The eighteen actors will be performing one monologue each and will perform in pairs for the scenes.

Performing a play by Shakespeare is different from performing a play from the modern era. "Shakespeare did not write about mundane things; he wrote about life-changing experiences happening in a very short time," says Mrs. D'Angelo. These "life-changing experiences" will be shown in the selected scenes.

The Hamlet cast will be performing at the Folger Shakespeare Theatre in Washington, D.C., on Wednesday, March 16. The Folger performance is open to the public, and admission is free. Mrs. D'Angelo said, "Since this is spring break, some of the students or parents might like to attend to see what the Folger is all about!"

So ladies, put on your petticoats, and men, pull on your doublet and hose, and come and see what Shakespeare has in store!

Spanish Students Bring Sunshine to Rainbow Retirement Home



by Raphael Shim'on Hill

On December 14, Rockbridge Academy's Spanish classes caroled their way into a retirement home for Hispanic seniors the week before the Christmas holiday, bringing joy and company to a group that might not get to see their family this year.

Rockbridge Spanish teacher Mrs. Marianne Guevara instituted the Spanish caroling group two years ago. Looking for a way to stimulate her Spanish class's language and cross-cultural skills and share the love of Christ with those in the Latino community

thought that the visitation to a Hispanic retirement home seemed the best and most life-impacting opportunity.

"Giving my students the opportunity not only to learn the Christmas carols in Spanish but to share them with people that understand and appreciate hearing them is an invaluable experience," said Mrs. Guevara. "This real-life situation affords my students a platform to use their Spanish in a God-glorifying way and to reach out to a people they probably wouldn't otherwise encounter."

The members of Spanish I, II, and III left the school at around ten o'clock a.m. in order to arrive at the Rainbow Adult Care Center in Germantown, MD, around eleven fifteen, giving them plenty of time to practice and situate themselves for their eleven thirty "performance." After singing through several classic and Hispanic Christmas songs, the class was given about forty-five minutes of time to walk around and greet the elderly folk in their native tongue of Spanish.

"The Spanish field trip was meaningful to me in that I could reach out to the elderly and bring them joy," said Spanish I student Emily Hinz. "It was great to try something new and really experi-

ence Spanish culture."

The students were touched by the simple gratitude the elderly folk showed. Many offered juice with cheese and crackers as a token of thanks to the group of students. Overall, the conversation, although very basic at times, truly had an impact both on the seniors as well as the Spanish students.

After the forty-five minutes had reached its completion, the students packed up and departed from the retirement home; however, the Hispanic cultural immersion had not yet ended. Before returning to the school, the students were taken to the Mexican/Salvadoran restaurant "La Mexicana" to further their Spanish food ordering skills as well as their knowledge of Latino foods and dining customs.

"Our cross-cultural field trip involves not only speaking the language but also enjoying new foods and drinks including 'pupusas' (grilled corn tortillas stuffed with cheese) and 'horchata' (a milk nutmeg drink), both typical of Central America," Mrs. Guevara explained. "Our time spent conversing around the table after the meal is also reflective of a well-beloved Hispanic tradition known as 'sobremesa [literally, 'after table']. I enjoyed this time together with my students very much!"

The students ordered their food in Spanish and after several "on the house" appetizers of pupusas and other Mexican/Salvadoran treats, the students received what they ordered: good food and full stomachs!

The students ate and chatted for a good hour or so, but it soon came time to depart. The students left the restaurant with many "Gracias" as well as an "Hasta la vista" or two and began to pile back into the cars. The Spanish field trip had served its purpose: the students learned many things about Spanish culture as well as shared the love of Christ with a community foreign to Rockbridge.