

# ROCKBRIDGE REPORTER

A Newsletter for Rockbridge Academy

April 2004

## BUT WAS IT WORTH IT? *by Leslie Collins & Michael J. McKenna*

Everything we do requires effort, but everything we do is not necessarily worth the effort we put into it. For example, a piano student may spend hours practicing a piece of music incorrectly, and learn, to his horror, that all of his effort has produced something Mozart never intended. A college student may write a paper for one of his professors padding all the way in an effort to hide his lack of preparation. When the professor returns the paper with the comment in the margin, *"This is not right; this is not even wrong; it does not rise to the level of an answer,"* that student may find that his time would have been better spent actually doing the hard work up front.

When I reflect on the numerous ways in which "Fiddler" impacted the school community, I don't think the question is uncalled for. For three months (part of December through mid-March), family schedules were turned on their heads, normal work habits were interrupted, Saturdays were co-opted, parents, students and teachers with precious little time under normal circumstances were asked to find more hours to devote to the endeavor, teachers' lesson plans and long-range plans had to be adjusted (and adjusted again), parents donated their time, money, and furniture in quantities I never would have dreamed possible, students (and directors!) were



---

EVERYTHING WE DO REQUIRES  
EFFORT, BUT EVERYTHING WE DO  
IS NOT NECESSARILY WORTH THE  
EFFORT WE PUT INTO IT.

---

subjected to sleep deprivation bordering on a level normally reserved for victims of Saddam Hussein's regime, and the list goes on. Following the tremendous effort so many of you put into our second foray into musical theatre, "Fiddler on the Roof," I was forced to ask the question: "But was it worth it?"

I asked many of you that very same question as I passed you in the hallway or the parking lot. I spent one of my classes with the seniors engaged in a discussion around that same question.

Admittedly it was less than a scientific survey, but the response was quite encouraging: Not one person answered in the negative. Everyone I spoke to said it was well worth the effort. In fact, I never had so many strange looks in my life as when I asked that question. It was as though people couldn't believe that I was serious. Certainly "Fiddler" caused a certain amount of disruption to the normal family and school routines. But even in light of those disruptions, the unanimous response was that "Fiddler" was a tremendous blessing to the school community, and that from those who were intimately involved at every level, to those who simply came to one performance.

Following is a summary of some of the reasons parents and students gave me in response to the question, "But was it worth it?"

### CHARACTER

From the moment the students enter school, character training begins. Students are taught how to conduct themselves in a manner worthy of the calling of Christ. They learn not to think of their needs only, but to consider the needs of others. Students are also taught to view authority as those whom God has placed over them. For example, our back stage crew had to view Ashley Dwyer in a different light. Normally, Ashley is a peer and not an

*continued on page 2*

## BUT WAS IT WORTH IT?...*continued*

authority over them. However, as the stage manager, Ashley had delegated authority from me, and the students were required to see her, and honor her, in that light. The students were also trained how to accept criticism from others, which is a difficult skill for most of us to learn. After almost every rehearsal, Kate Cusimano and I would gather together with the students and go over our notes from that day's rehearsal—essentially a long list of what they need to do better next time; difficult to listen to perhaps, but absolutely essential for a top-notch performance. The students took it all in with grace and careful attention.

### WORK ETHIC

The students at Rockbridge are taught to do everything to the glory of God. Whether it's forming a letter correctly, or practicing their math facts, students can choose to either give glory to Him, or to withhold His glory due to their lack of diligence, joy, or perseverance. As I told them before rehearsals ever got under way, "You'll work harder than you ever thought possible, but you'll have more fun than you ever thought possible also."

### DETAILS

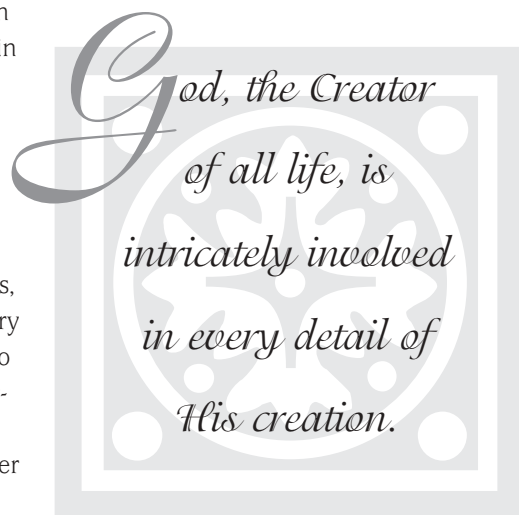
God, the Creator of all life, is intricately involved in every detail of His creation. Therefore, when imitating His creativity, we should be equally concerned with the details of our work. Rockbridge students have been trained that small details in handwriting, grammar, oral presentations, and spelling, to name just a few, are not to be taken lightly. They learn from the very beginning that careful attention to details makes one's work excellent. Many who watched the students dancing were amazed at the level of detail involved. In a conversation with Anne Foley, the production's accompanist, she mentioned that students at Rockbridge are taught

discipline, attention to detail, and perseverance, and that this kind of training makes such things possible.

### SELF-ESTEEM

Rockbridge Academy has never been a school caught up in the modern self-esteem fad. The Bible knows nothing of "self-esteem" (or as I prefer to call it, "selfish steam"), but Paul does command us to have a sober estimation of ourselves (Rom. 12:3).

Therefore, we focus on training the students to do their best to the glory of



God, and then encourage them to enjoy the fruits of their labor which God has given them to do. We believe that this is what gives children something to be proud of. Parents who work with their child to persevere through a difficult assignment, rise to the challenge, and press on to the finish line, understand that this task is a daunting one. In this culture of immediate gratification, microwavable meals, and instant everything, we often fail to grasp the full meaning of hard work. It behooves us to press on toward the goal of their education much in the same way as the Apostle Paul admonished the church of Philippi (Php. 3:14). We do well when we forsake the whining attitudes of our culture and show our children how to do all things without complaining (Php. 2:14-15). The rewards of the hard work

of the students were written all over their faces each night as the curtain closed. The training of parents and teachers paid off, and the students were honored to be part of such a production. Their participation in "Fiddler on the Roof" gave them a more sober estimation of themselves than any formalized program in self-esteem could have done. But now that "Fiddler" is a pleasant memory, these students don't dwell on how hard it was to learn to sing, act, and dance all at the same time. (After many of the six-hour Saturday rehearsals and late nights, they were so tired you would have thought they spent the day breaking rocks.) When you ask them about their experience now, they'll just tell you that they had a ton of fun. As our children look back on their education at Rockbridge, may their memories be equally selective.

### COMMUNITY BUILDER

Taking on a tremendous project like this, which requires the concerted efforts of so many people, builds community like nothing else can. In Ephesians we read that, "...*the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love as each part does its work*" (Eph. 4:16). Working with parents, students, and even grandparents on "Fiddler" was a beautiful expression of the truth of this principle. It never could have happened unless every part of the body did its work. We certainly were built up by the sense of community it created. And for all of us involved, it truly was a labor of love.

I must admit, during the thick of it, there were times that I thought, "I just can't do this anymore. It's too much." But now as I look back, I wouldn't have traded the experience for anything. So, all in all, I think it was worth it. I hope you do, too.

## GRADUATION INVITATION

---

**R**ockbridge Academy graduates its first class this year! We are very excited to celebrate this historic occasion and would like to share it with all of you. Graduation will be held at the Sherwood Forest Clubhouse on Friday, May 28, 2004, at 7:30 p.m. Please mark your calendars, formal invitations will be sent out at the end of April.

## *Lacrosse Coaches Needed*

---

**R**ockbridge 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).

## CELEBRATION DINNER

---

**P**lease plan to join us at the Newton White Mansion on Thursday, May 13, 2004 at 6:30 p.m. This evening is set aside to celebrate!

We will be recognizing the Rockbridge Academy teachers and staff and giving praise and thanksgiving to God for His kindness to the school.

The celebration will begin with hors d'oeuvres and drinks, followed by a sit-down dinner and a memorable presentation. You are sure to enjoy the fellowship of the Rockbridge family, while celebrating another wonderful year of accomplishments. God has been good to us indeed!

Ticket information will be forthcoming.

## DR. GEORGE GRANT TO SPEAK TO ROCKBRIDGE ACADEMY

---

**D**r. George Grant will be the commencement speaker for Rockbridge Academy's first commencement exercises this coming May 28, 2004. In addition, Dr. Grant has kindly agreed to come one day early and conduct an evening seminar for parents interested in the education of their children (and who isn't?). Dr. Grant will be speaking on Thursday, May 27, 2004 (the last day of school), at Severn Run E.P. Church at 7:00 p.m. The title of his lecture is "Education as Repentance." Believe me, as one whose life was changed by hearing Dr. Grant speak, you won't want to miss this opportunity.

George Grant is the director of the King's Meadow Study Center, coordinator of the Gileskirk Curriculum Project, and instructor at Franklin Classical School. He is the author of dozens of books in the areas of history, biography, politics, literature, and social criticism and he has written hundreds of essays, articles, and columns. His work has been profiled in such varied media outlets as the Wall Street Journal, the Washington Post, Focus on the Family, The 700 Club, the Coral Ridge Hour, Point of View, Crossfire, World Magazine, and Christianity Today. He has studied Political Science at the University of Houston (B.A.), Philosophy at Whitefield Theological Seminary (M.A., D.Litt., Ph.D.), and Theology at Knox Theological Seminary (D.Min. Candidate).

He makes his home in Middle, Tennessee near the historic town of Franklin with his wife and co-author Karen. Together they have three grown children.

## *Talent/Service Auction*

---

**R**ockbridge Academy announces its second annual Talent/Service Auction to be held on Saturday, April 24th in the school auditorium at 6:00 p.m. This spring Rockbridge Academy's auction has a threefold mission:

1. The Rockbridge Academy Tuition Assistance Program.
2. The Rockbridge Academy Building Fund.
3. Fun and Fellowship.

Want to be involved?

If you'd like to make a donation, financial or otherwise, please contact Jeff Antkowiak at 410-760-7544 (w) or 410-551-5851 (h) or e-mail at [jantkowiak@adgintegrated.com](mailto:jantkowiak@adgintegrated.com).

If you'd like to make a dessert to be served the night of the auction, please contact Christine McKenna at 410-729-7070 or e-mail at [Ccmck1@aol.com](mailto:Ccmck1@aol.com).

## *Grandparents' Day*

---

**R**ockbridge Academy grammar students invite grandparents or grandfriends 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.

# FIDDLER ON THE ROOF



Frumah-Sara (Amy Greenip) gives Tevye (David Sheir) a "wedding present"



Grandma Tzeitel (Jen Dwyer) and the Rabbi (Alex Dwyer)

## Fine Arts Night

Rockbridge Academy's annual event will be held at the Chesapeake Arts Center in Brooklyn Park, MD on Friday, May 7, 2004. The evening will begin at 7:00 p.m. with a delightful program directed by our music teachers, Mrs. Amy Ramsey and Mrs. Janet Horst. Following will be an art exhibit consisting of many masterpieces created by Rockbridge Academy students and displayed by our art teacher, Mrs. Heidi Stevens. Please join us for this special evening.



(L-R) Abby Harries, Colleen McKenna, Rebecca Duvall, Emily Cusimano, and Anna Kitchin sing "Matchmaker"



Golde (Janet Schonthaler) and the mama



The Rabbi (Alex Dwyer) blesses Motel's (Gavin Blair) sewing machine



# ROCKBRIDGE ATHLETICS

## *A Classical Victory*



Rockbridge Academy recently completed its middle school boys' and girls' basketball season. The teams took to the court with naïve enthusiasm. Their primary focus was improvement through practice. Regular participation in practice and games presented opportunities for the development of basic skills and strategy. Team members quickly became conversant with the rules of the game and applied them in the midst of game situations. Participation on

the middle school team provided students with the opportunity to grow in sportsmanship as well as Christian character. The student athletes were challenged not to let the scoreboard be the only factor to determine their success or failure but to also consider their attitudes before God. They are coached to ask the tough question, "Did I play in a way that was pleasing to God and brought Him glory?"

Rockbridge athletics is steadily growing. This year the school added a junior varsity boys' soccer team, a junior varsity girls' lacrosse team, a middle school girls' basketball team, a middle school girls' soccer team, and a middle school boys' lacrosse team. As the athletic program continues to expand, it has been important for the school to build on the foundation of the classical and Christian model. So what do athletics look like in the classical and Christ-centered school?

Physical education in the grammar stage (grades K-6) focuses on the development and mastery of stability, locomotor, and manipulative skills. When grammar students complete their program, they should be able to perform these skills at a mature level. During the secondary years (grades 7-12), which are the dialectic and rhetoric stages, physical education class is a culmination of the grammar school physical education program. Secondary students refine the skills they have previously learned and apply them to team and individual sports. Students at this stage are challenged to

analyze the offenses and defenses of sports and to identify strategies to enhance individual play. When students are trained in these areas, the introduction of athletic teams is a natural progression. The athletic teams at Rockbridge are to physical education as laboratory classes are to science. Although the laboratory is a gymnasium, field, or court, student-athletes are challenged to think and apply what they know in similar ways.

The next addition to Rockbridge athletics will be a Junior Varsity girls' soccer team in August '04. Schedules for spring sports can be found on the school's website at [www.rockbridge.org](http://www.rockbridge.org).





# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- MAR 29–APR 2 .....S.A.T. Testing for students in grades K–8
- APR 2 .....Grammar Spelling Bee 12:30 p.m.
- 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
- APR 15 ....Rose Uniform Fittings in Conference Room 3:00–4:00 p.m.
- APR 24 ....Talent/Service Auction at Rockbridge Academy 6:00 p.m.
- APR 29–30 .....5th Grade Williamsburg Trip
- MAY 5..Sports Awards Dessert at Bowie Reformed Church 7:00 p.m.
- MAY 7 .....Fine Arts Night at Chesapeake Arts Center 7:00 p.m.
- MAY 8.....Senior Soirée

## QUOTE OF THE MONTH

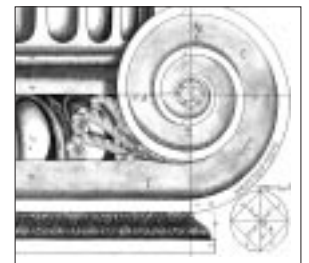
*People demand  
freedom of speech  
to make up for the  
freedom of thought  
which they avoid.*

—SÖREN KIERKEGAARD

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Internet: [www.rockbridge.org](http://www.rockbridge.org)  
E-mail: [learning@rockbridge.org](mailto:learning@rockbridge.org)  
FAX (410) 923-6588  
(410) 923-1171

ROCKBRIDGE  
ACADEMY



A CLASSICAL &  
CHRISTIAN SCHOOL  
911 Generals Highway  
Millersville, MD 21108