



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- JAN 6Open House @ 7:00 p.m.
- JAN 9-13Rhetoric Oral Exams
- JAN 13Class Pictures
- JAN 205th Grade Colonial Ball
New Student Application Deadline
Open House @ 7:00 p.m.
- FEB 36th Grade Cowboy Feast
- FEB 103rd Grade Greek/Roman Feast
- FEB 15 Re-Enrollment Deposits Due (no tuition payment this month)
- FEB 172nd Grade Seder
- FEB 23-24SCHOOL CLOSED - End of 2nd Trimester
- FEB 23-25“The Sound of Music” @ Chesapeake Arts Center

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

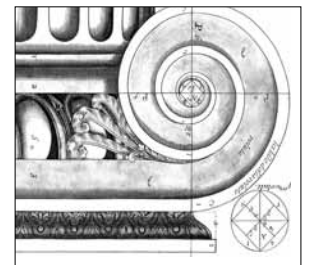
“*You see at once that education is essentially for freemen and vocational training for slaves...If education is beaten by training, civilization dies. That is a thing very likely to happen.*”

— C.S. Lewis

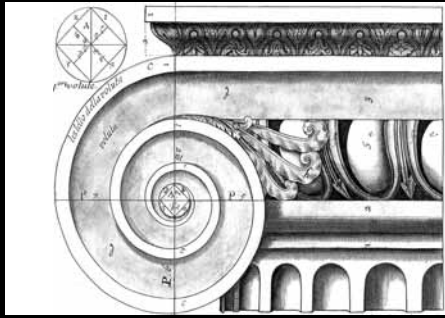
ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Internet: www.rockbridge.org
E-mail: learning@rockbridge.org
FAX (410) 923-6588
(410) 923-1171

ROCKBRIDGE ACADEMY



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



ROCKBRIDGE REPORTER

A Newsletter for Rockbridge Academy

January 2006

CLASSICAL EDUCATION AND THE IMPORTANCE OF FATHERS

by Wesley J. Callihan, ed. By Michael J McKenna



When the great Victorian poet Robert Browning was only five, he saw his father sitting in his reading chair one day absorbed in a large volume. Little Robert asked him what it was, and his father replied, "The siege of Troy." The boy asked, "What's a siege and what's Troy?" His father stood up, put a chair on the table, plopped the little boy into it and said, "You are Priam, King of Troy," and proceeded to describe the Trojan War for the amusement of his son. The cat became Helen, the dogs Agamemnon and Menelaos, the stable boy Hector, and so forth. Young Robert was enchanted. A year or two later, seeing his son playing "Siege of Troy" with his friends, his father suggested reading the whole story in a translation of Homer, which the boy did with delight. Then his father suggested studying Greek so that he could read the story in the words of Homer himself, and by the time the boy was twelve he had read all of Homer in the original.

There are not many fathers like Browning's anymore. Classical education emphasizes the great literature of the past, and Christians above all should understand the necessity of knowing the past, for history is a record of God's work and man's response. But twentieth-century man came to believe that the past is irrelevant and that only the practical has value, and we—men especially—are taught to feel the tyranny of the prac-



tical. Consequently, men often have more difficulty appreciating classical Christian education than their wives do. But if fathers do not learn to love the old books of literature and history and the study of Theology—in other words, the essential subjects of true education—then their sons, who will be the next generation of family heads, will not learn to value them either, and we fathers will be guilty of perpetuating into the next generation the present unbiblical hatred of the past.

In a recent article in the Washington Post, Michael Gurian

highlights the disappearance of men from modern university campuses, lamenting the fact that, "Where men once dominated, they now make up no more than 43 percent of students at American institutions of higher learning." Clearly, if men are rejecting knowledge, wisdom, and understanding as manly virtues, perhaps their fathers' training has had at least something to do with the trend.

In *The Classical Tradition*, Gilbert Highet speaks of "a class of teacher that we tend to forget, although we should remember them with admiration and affection. These are the fathers who introduced their sons to the great books and the beautiful languages of Greece and Rome, who awakened their interest, and helped them over the dry sands and stubborn fences, and studied along with them, until often the sons became famous men whom we admire as though they had produced themselves out of

nothing. That is true fatherhood, not only to beget the body but to help in making the mind of your son." Many fathers of whom we have records in Scripture and history are very poor examples of this; many shirked the duty of helping to make a son's mind. On the other hand, many fathers have been wonderful examples of devotion, of willingness to forego their own pleasure and sometimes their welfare, for that of their sons, because they have a vision for generations rather than for their own lives alone.

continued on page 2

CLASSICAL EDUCATION AND THE IMPORTANCE OF FATHERS...*continued*

As a Christian school headmaster for nigh on twenty years, I've seen this principle carried out numerous times: faithful fathers blessing their children by their personal obedience to the gospel and their willingness to live out before their children that sacrificial living spoken of above, and faithless fathers cursing their sons and daughters through their unfaithfulness. Truly, the sins of the fathers will be visited upon the children unto the third and fourth generations. Fathers "misunderestimate" their importance to their sons' and daughters' well being at their own peril.

Isaac Casaubon, one of the great scholars of the Reformation, was learning Greek from his father at the age of nine when news of the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre of the French Protestants by the Catholics drove them to the hills; his father continued the Greek lessons in a cave, which is a striking testimony to what he thought of the value of the subject.

When the Renaissance essayist Montaigne was a child, his father hired a tutor who was fluent in Latin; he was required to speak only Latin to the boy, as was the rest of the family. Little Montaigne learned Latin as his native tongue, and for the rest of his life he read for pleasure in the ancient authors better than any scholar of the day. His father taught him Greek by making it a game, a private language they could use between them.

The English statesman William Pitt the Younger was trained by his father, whose method was to have William translate aloud at sight, from the Greek and Latin classics. He was doing this with skill by the time he was a teenager, and it is to this education that he later attributed his immense command of language and his fertile imagery in the famous and popular speeches he gave in Parliament.

The father of Edmund Gosse, the Victorian poet and essayist, was a biologist and took Edmund with him to the shores of the English coast

where they examined the creatures living there. While there, his father heard Edmund trying to recite his Latin declensions, with which he had been having difficulty, and taking down his own old Virgil he began to repeat the first of Virgil's bucolic poems by memory. The little boy could not understand a word, but was overcome by the music of the lines, and went about repeating them to himself in a kind of glory: "as I hung over the tidal pools at the edge of the sea," says Gosse, "all my inner being used to ring out with the sound of *formosam resonare doces Amaryllida silvas.*"

John Stuart Mill came from a large family which his father struggled to support by his writing. Mill's father began teaching him Greek when the boy was only three, and Latin when he was eight. Under his father's guidance, by the time Mill was twelve years old he had read, in the original languages, most of the Greek and Roman poets, philosophers, and historians. By his eighth year, Mill had read a dozen of the great English historians, including Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Mill's father walked an hour every morning for his health, and for ten years took John along, questioning him about his reading, explaining difficult points, and suggesting other reading for the boy to follow.

The key theme above is that all of these fathers were deeply involved with their son's mental growth, helping them in their studies or teaching the boys themselves. Equally important, all of these fathers were themselves devoted to life-long learning; they loved reading, conversation, and the company of other men who felt the same.

If we want our children to love learning, desire knowledge, and appreciate our intellectual inheritance, we must do what these fathers did: we must model it by loving, desiring, and appreciating those things ourselves. It is not enough for mother to believe in the value of books and to love them; it is not enough to send them to a good classical Christian school. If a father despises learning, by word or simple apathy, whom will the child imitate? Very few fathers would say, "Learning's a waste of time, boy"; but many say it very clearly by the ways in which they spend their time and talent or through their apathy. Few fathers would say to their children, "The gospel maybe true for you, but not for me"; likewise, far too many say it with their actions.

The most critical element in a child's education and training in righteousness is not the curriculum he follows, but his father's attitude toward learning and godliness. The best training is a father's selfless devotion to his God, his wife, and his children. The best curriculum is a father's choice of conversation at the dinner table, the questions he asks of his children, the books he reads to them, and especially the books he reads late at night when no one is watching to see if he turns on his laptop or the television.

Wesley Callihan is a secondary teacher at Veritas Academy, Leola, PA. He is the founder and instructor of Schola Classical Tutorials which offers group tutorials over the internet in the subjects of a classical liberal arts curriculum: classical languages, the great books of literature as well as history, rhetoric, and logic. Mr. Callihan and his family are members of Christ Church in Moscow, Idaho. Mr. Callihan has instructed at Logos School in Moscow for eight years, contributed articles to Credenda/Agenda, and contributed to the book Classical Education and the Home School. More about Schola may be found at www.schola-tutorials.com

NEW STAFF AT ROCKBRIDGE



THELMA JAMES

Thelma James joined the Rockbridge Academy grammar school faculty this fall as a 5th grade teacher. She graduated from the University of Ilorin, Nigeria, with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Education, with minors in History and English. Before she was married, Thelma taught 5th and 6th grade, and tutored high school

English. In 1990, she earned a Masters degree in Educational Guidance and Counseling from the University of Lagos, Nigeria. She worked as a school counselor at the Federal Government Girls' College, Shagamu, Ogun State, Nigeria for several months before leaving Nigeria for the United States.

Thelma taught preschool and kindergarten for several years in Maryland before coming to work at Rockbridge Academy. Between 1993 and 1996 she taught at Hope Christian Academy, College Park, Maryland. She took a break from the classroom for seven years to homeschool her children, after which she returned to the classroom in 2003 to teach preschool at Celebration Christian Academy, Columbia. She worked there until last summer.

Thelma's husband, Henry, works at Geico as a programmer. They have three children at Rockbridge, Elizabeth in 8th grade, Bassey in 6th grade, and Michael in 1st grade. They are members of Hope Bible Church, Fulton, where Henry serves in the choir and Thelma in the children's ministry. Thelma enjoys working with children and believes her work to be a ministry. Her hobbies include spending time with family, reading, gardening, and watching good movies.



BROOKE VOELP

In 1992, God blessed Brooke with a husband named Bill. In 1995, they found a Bible believing church and began their walk with the Lord. Brooke's husband, Bill, has a deep passion for the Lord and for evangelism. They have two beautiful children: Corrine is ten and in Mr. Griffith's fifth grade class, and Jacob is

five and in Mrs. Hinz's kindergarten class. They both thoroughly love their teachers and their new friends at Rockbridge.

Brooke came to Rockbridge with seven years of public school experience and four years of home schooling experience. She taught first grade in Howard County for five years and a gifted and talented program for two years. Brooke home schooled her daughter, Corrine, from first grade through fourth.

Brooke feels blessed to be a part of the Rockbridge family. As she put it, "Everyday I am learning just by watching the other teachers in action. Their Godly habits and spoken wisdom inspire me to draw closer to my Lord and Savior. What a wonderful place to invest my life. Thank you for giving me this opportunity."

Thank you, Brooke.

ROCKBRIDGE ACADEMY SCHOOL BOARD RETREAT

Rockbridge has been blessed by the service of a group of 6 diligent and committed Christians on the School Board. They have provided vision and wisdom in growing Rockbridge Academy and ensuring that consistent, fair and enforceable policies are implemented and adhered to by the school. God has richly blessed their efforts as Rockbridge Academy has grown from 23 students to 310 in just 11 years! With God's many blessings, come a grateful response, and much more work! The board took time off from their everyday jobs and families to meet for a two-day retreat for prayer, reflection and planning. Among the many issues they discussed and planned for were:

- Based upon our current growth rate, map out a 5-year plan that will sustain Rockbridge's growth, while maintaining academic excellence.
- Why our vision of Rockbridge's future needs property (10-18 acres minimum) and a building (30-40 thousand sq.ft.).

- Biblical fundraising and how to prepare for purchasing land and a building, without letting tuition get out of control or teacher salaries and benefits to suffer.
- Decision to begin the search for a Development Director to head up fundraising and public relations.
- Working with a respected local public building architectural firm, Waldon Scott, to begin initial concept development so that a site plan can be developed that will enable us to quickly test-fit potential land opportunities to see if they meet our building needs.

As you can see, it was an ambitious meeting where much was accomplished. As these projects continue to gain momentum and meet milestones, we will update you in the Rockbridge Reporter. Please continue to pray for the School Board and their efforts, and that God will prosper our efforts at Rockbridge for the students, the faculty, and our future physical school needs.