

ROCKBRIDGE REPORTER

A Newsletter for Rockbridge Academy

March 2005

A MARK, A YEN, A BUCK OR A POUND

By Michael J. McKenna

This article has nothing to do with international monetary policy, exchange rates, or the value of the Dollar against the Euro. But I wanted to get your attention, and “Money,” or “Fundraising” didn’t seem catchy enough.

So, now that I’ve got your attention...

This morning I was handed a letter from one of our parents. In it she said that, although sometimes she and other moms might discuss the cost of education when they’re talking about school, they are adamant that it’s worth every penny. She concluded by saying that she’s grateful for the privilege of having the responsibility to pay for her children’s education.

What a refreshing perspective.

Since we at Rockbridge Academy realize what a significant cost it is to educate your children in this way, and what an awesome responsibility it is to train your children to bring every thought captive to Christ, I thought it would be good to give you some insight into our philosophy of fundraising.

First of all, we believe that it is the parents’ responsibility to educate their children—not the state, not the church—but the parents. Logically, then, it follows that it is the parents’ responsibility to pay for that education. Sometimes we might get lulled into thinking that education should be “free,” like it would be if we just sent



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our kids to the public schools. (Never mind that it’s not free, and that the costs are greater there than what we incur.) This idea that education should be free is a relatively new one on the scene of human history, and would have come as a noxious notion to our forebears. Nothing else in the world is free, so why should education be?

Alongside that idea (that parents are responsible to pay for their children’s education), we also believe that the children are not responsible to pay for it. As a result, you don’t see Rockbridge conducting fundraisers in which the children themselves have to go out and raise money for this or that. No candy sales to raise money for concert choir tuxedos. No wrapping paper sales to raise funds for Williamsburg. No bike-a-thons to raise money for sporting equipment. You get the idea.

Our callings are very clear. Parents are responsible to provide for the education of their children to the glory of God, and the children are responsible to learn, also to the glory of God.

In addition, since parents are responsible to educate their children, and that means to pay for that education, we also believe that it means that parents are responsible to pay for all of it. Unlike many schools, tuition at Rockbridge Academy is set so that tuition covers the operating costs of the school. We will never conduct fundraisers to raise money for general operating purposes. Many schools, in order to keep tuition low, intentionally set tuition to cover, say, 85% of general operating expenses. Then they go about raising funds to cover the other 15%. We do not agree with that

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A MARK, A YEN, A BUCK, OR A POUND...*continued*

approach. We believe that tuition should cover the costs of running school, with funds being raised above that to go toward other purposes.

So, you might ask, what are those other purposes? I'm glad you asked.

Historically, Rockbridge has conducted one annual fundraiser (we also don't believe in fundraising our parents to death), the proceeds of which have gone toward tuition assistance and a building fund. In the past, this annual fundraiser has been a golf marathon or, as in the last two years, an auction. (One year, no fundraiser was conducted. But through the generosity of God's people, more gifts were received that year than in the previous year when we did hold a golf marathon!)

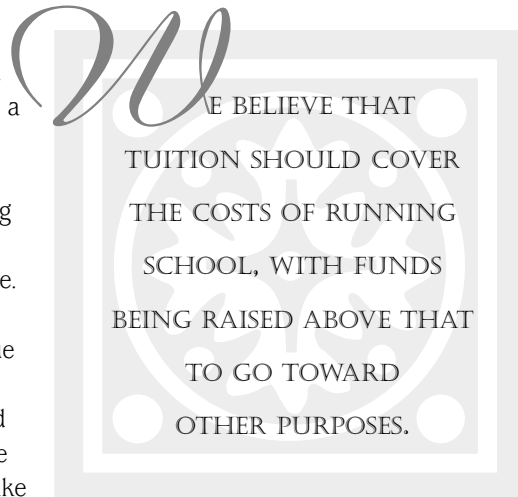
The reason we target these two areas (tuition assistance and building fund) are simple. We realize that it's expensive to send your children here. While I personally believe that a Rockbridge education is a good value for the money, I think that a 1964 Rolls Royce Silver Cloud III is a good value for the money, too. But they're both pretty pricey. Now, we could take money from the general fund and set aside a portion of that to help families in need. But that wouldn't be fair to those of you who are bearing the full weight of that cost yourselves. Nor would it be consistent with our philosophy that parents are responsible to educate their own children (i.e., you are not responsible to pay for your neighbor's tuition). So, in an effort to make this education more available to more people, we raise money for tuition assistance, and tell you up front that that's where your money's going.

We also raise money for a building fund for equally obvious reasons...we want a building of our own.

Now, I can hear the rejoinder already. *But Mike...if the school conducts one fundraiser a year, and the proceeds are split between building fund and tuition assistance, you're never going to raise enough money to buy property and build a building in this market!*

You know what? You're absolutely right! Let me shed some insight on different fundraising philosophies regarding this particular topic.

Suppose School X wants to raise \$2 million to buy a piece of property. Before they find the property, they



conduct the Capital Campaign, and the Annual Campaign, and they ask folks to give money to the as-yet-unfound piece of property. School Y, on the other hand, wants to buy a piece of property, but, instead of asking people to contribute to the as-yet-unfound parcel, they determine to find the property first, use their resources to buy it, perhaps borrowing the difference, and then ask their constituency to give to a *real piece of land which they can see and touch*.

The second scenario is the route this school has chosen to pursue.

Now, agreed, there are benefits and drawbacks to each, and you might

think that School X's approach makes more sense. But, we all are called to be Trumplings at some fundamental level. (Re-read your Narnia books. Trumpling was a loyal subject of the King, even though he was not quite convinced of Aslan's existence, or of the efficacy of the trumpet. Despite his level of doubt, he understood when it was time for giving opinions, and when it was time for following orders.) So, even though we may have a variety of opinions as to how to go about fundraising, at the end of the day we are called to glad submission to the authorities God has placed in our lives whether that be at work, home, or even at school.

One thing I know for certain: Great is His faithfulness, for morning by morning new mercies I see. God will bring about property, building, and the funds sufficient for the day as He sees fit. He always has.

It shouldn't come as a surprise to anyone that, over the course of the school's history, the founders and the administration have made poor decisions on occasion. Who hasn't? But God has never forsaken us to our own folly. If the progress of this school were up to mere men, even men deeply committed to its goals and vision, Rockbridge Academy would be a memory at this point, with a few students in other schools somewhere saying, "Oh, yeah. I used to go there, until it folded." Instead, we find ourselves working in a unique Christian school that continues to reap the fruit of God's good and perfect blessings, for which we should be very thankful.

I hope you'll join us in praying, and rolling up your sleeves to work with us to accomplish the work He's given us to do, and that with a glad heart.

Opportunities for Parents

Have you ever asked yourself, "How can I learn more about the classical Christian training my child is receiving?" Well, we have some opportunities for you to do just that!

First, ACCS, the Association of Classical and Christian Schools will hold its annual conference in Memphis, Tennessee from June 23-25, 2005. Brochures are available in the school office.

Second, Rockbridge Academy has been approved by the Association of Classical and Christian Schools to conduct Teacher Training for new teachers each summer. We would like to offer this training to our parents as well. Please consider joining us August 9-12, 2005. This training is absolutely FREE to our parents. Look for more details and brochures in April.

LACROSSE COACHES NEEDED

Rockbridge Academy has openings for qualified lacrosse coaches in the spring 2005 season.

Interested applicants should contact:

Donna Griffith

410-923-1171

410-533-5464

dgriffith@rockbridge.org

Alumni News!

2004 graduates Gavin Blair and Josh Davis both made the Dean's List for the first semester at Georgia Tech and the University of Maryland respectively. Congratulations, Gavin and Josh!

10TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION!

This year marks Rockbridge Academy's tenth year! Please plan on celebrating with us at the Year-End Celebration Dinner. Mark your calendar for **Wednesday, May 11, 2005**. We will begin the festivities at 6:30 p.m. at the Newton White Mansion. Formal invitations will be sent out in April.

College Acceptances

Congratulations to Emily Cusimano and Janet Schonthaler! Emily has been accepted to the University of Maryland and Kings College in New York. Janet has been accepted to the University of Maryland. We'd also like to congratulate Janet for receiving a perfect 800 score in the verbal section of her most recent SAT test. Way to go Janet!

Congratulations!

YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO A
ROCKBRIDGE ACADEMY

Variety Show and Silent Auction

APRIL 9, 2005

6:30 P.M. HORS D'OEUVRES AND SILENT AUCTION

7:30 VARIETY SHOW

8:15 INTERMISSION WITH COFFEE AND DESSERTS

8:45 VARIETY SHOW

9:30 ANNOUNCEMENT OF SILENT AUCTION RESULTS

Ticket Prices: \$12 Adults \$8 Children (12 years and under)

The proceeds of our Silent Auction and Variety Show will be used toward Tuition Assistance and the Rockbridge Academy building fund.

LOCATION:

New Covenant Church
365 Jones Station Road
Arnold, MD 21012



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- MAR 8Latin Exam—Grades 6–9
- MAR 18.....SCHOOL CLOSED—Teacher Workday
- MAR 21–23*Optional* Parent/Teacher Conferences —
before & after school
- MAR 25.....Grandparents' Day for Grammar Grades—
ALL students & staff dismissed at 11:30 a.m.
- MAR 28–APR 1SCHOOL CLOSED—Resurrection Holiday
- APR 8Grammar Spelling Bee at 12:30 p.m
- APR 9Silent Auction and Variety Show at New Covenant Church
- APR 11–15.....SAT Testing Week

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

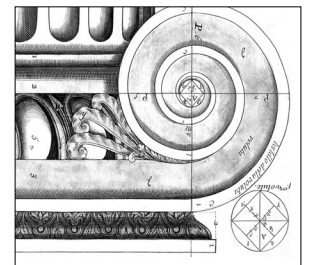
*Only for a little
of the first fruits of
wisdom—only a few
fragments of the
boundless heights,
breadths, and depths
of truth—does the world
yearn for from our
table of grace.*

—MARTIN LUTHER

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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ROCKBRIDGE
ACADEMY



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