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A Letter from the Community of

# ST. TIMOTHY'S

Leading Students to Reverence Truth, Desire Goodness, and Rejoice in Beauty

Spring 2010

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Director, Grades 5-8

**Christine Edmonds & Alison  
Nanda**, Kindergarten

**Naomi King**, Grades 1&2

**Rachel Bloomquist**, Grades 3&4

**Stephanie Gauthier**, Music  
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Elias Antiochian Orthodox Church

## Contact Information

St. Timothy's Classical Academy  
c/o 350 Avondale Avenue  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K2A 0R5  
Telephone: 613-794-1750  
[www.st-timothys.ca](http://www.st-timothys.ca)

## Teaching Writing to My Young Charges

By Rachel Bloomquist

I don't teach creative writing. I don't ask my students to write weekly journals. I certainly don't put on a piece of music and ask my young charges to write whatever comes into their thoughts. I rarely ask them to write a story. This is not because my students lack for interesting ideas and insights. No, when they tell a story or recall events from history or literature they are articulate, animated and often well organized in their thoughts. When students enter Grade Three, they have, for the most part, already been nurtured in families committed to the reading and telling of worthy stories and poetry, to rich conversation and imaginative play. They just don't know how to write. Not yet.

Learning to write freely is hard work for a young student, especially for those with a penchant for perfection! Often the head sprints far ahead of

the hands. The struggle to land on a correctly spelled word or even to point letters like b and d in the right direction can paralyze even the most well-intentioned writer. For the Grade Three student, run-on sentences live up to their name. Just as a budding pianist must practise scales, and an apprentice cabinet maker must learn how to craft a perfect right angle, the writer-in-training is awkward until he gains some skills.

The classical tools of the young writer are homely instruments such as vocabulary and grammar exercises. The student learns how to take notes to research a topic and the craft of paragraph-writing complete with topic sentences, supporting sentences, and concluding sentences. The writer learns how to describe using the senses, and how to apply the vocabulary of comparison and contrast. A classical skill perfected by accomplished writers through

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## **Our Director Becomes a Doctor**

This has been a momentous year for Michael Klaassen, the director of our school, Latin teacher and classroom teacher for Grade 5-8. In April, he successfully defended his doctoral thesis and was awarded his Ph.D in Classics from the University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Klaassen's work was a detailed study of a Latin text by Cassiodorus, a sixth century historian, statesman and founder of a monastery. The St. Timothy's community joins in saluting Dr. Michael Klaassen's fine scholarship, discipline and determination in completing his doctoral work all the while doing justice to his commitments to his family, and to our school. Congratulations, Michael.

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*"How can we live in harmony? First we need to know we are all madly in love with the same God."*

*Thomas Aquinas*

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## **Writing...Continued from page 1**

the ages is the art of imitation writing. Grade Threes and Fours at St. Timothy's are assigned to read a fable or fairy tale by a renowned author. Students must look up and define challenging vocabulary, and then proceed to make a key word outline from which they re-create the original piece, absorbing thereby, the syntax and vocabulary of a master writer. Already in Grade Four, students learn the rudiments of essay-writing; how to create a thesis statement and how to formulate arguments. One developing writer enriches his work with similes and metaphors. Another falls in love with the thesaurus in her quest for the most delectable synonym. In my Grade Three/Four class, I joke with my students that the number one rule of writing is, "Do not bore Mrs. Bloomquist!" They are to banish words like, "nice", "went", and "got", instead enlivening their writing with colourful adjectives, strong verbs and varied sentences.

As I said at the beginning of this article, I do not teach creative writing. But as students become grounded in the grammar of writing, their writing begins to lift off. Like the ungainly puffins off the coast of Newfoundland, that

flap wildly and run along the surface of the waves until they take off, there is great triumph and occasional flashes of colour when young writers begin to soar.

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*Rachel Bloomquist is our Grade Three/Four teacher and has been with us since year two of operation. She is much loved for her patient endurance as we go through the growing pains of a new school.*

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## **Memory Work Sample from Our Grade Two Class**

### **The Echoing Green by William Blake, 1789**

The sun does arise,  
And make happy the skies.  
The merry bells ring  
To welcome the spring.  
The skylark and thrush,  
The birds of the bush,  
Sing louder around,  
To the bells' cheerful sound,  
While our sports shall be seen  
On the echoing green.

Old John with white hair  
Does laugh away care,  
Sitting under the oak,  
Among the old folk.  
They laugh at our play,  
And soon they all say:  
'Such, such were the joys  
When we all, girls and boys,  
In our youth-time were seen  
On the echoing green.'

Till the little ones weary  
No more can be merry;  
The sun does descend,  
And our sports have an end.  
Round the laps of their mother  
Many sisters and brothers,  
Like birds in their nest,  
Are ready for rest;  
And sport no more seen  
On the darkening green.

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## The Math Mobile

Parents at St. Timothy's often find themselves drawn into working with the students and so become immersed in unusual diversions. One such parent, Mr. Musca, found himself teaching math to our Grade Five/Six class in February and is now unofficially running a daily after school Math Mobile for the entire school. From the back of his Honda, Mr. Musca pulls out a white board, some kid-sized chalk boards (self-made), a stack of cards with various grade math problems, and, most importantly, a trophy (also self-made). The challenge is to score the highest points by answering math problems correctly. The Math Mobile buzzes with activity as both boys and girls delight in the challenges set by Mr. Musca.

### Liam Torenvilet, Grade Four, adds:

Mr. Musca's math program is a fun way to experience math. Especially since you get a trophy if you win. Winning the trophy takes skill and luck. First, you have to get a math problem correct. Then, you pull a number out of a hat. Lastly, you write it down in a notebook with your name. The more big numbers you have the better. At the end of the week, Mr. Musca adds up all your numbers. The one with the highest score wins the trophy. My friend Justus won the trophy once, and I got second place. I like Mr. Musca's math program.

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## Skipping Competition and Skip-A-Thon By Matthew Kronberg, Grade Six

The National Skipping Competition was an invigorating experience. It took place on May 1 at a school in Orleans. Ten students from St. Timothy's participated in the event. It was interesting to be able to compete against some of the best skippers in Canada! Bill Chong, the leader of the Acro-ropers, emceed and skipped in the competition. I had the opportunity to practice some of my French because half of the participants were from Quebec. It was fun and nerve-racking to finally perform the routines we had been working on for some months.

The Skip-a-thon on April 30 was a community-building event. It was satisfying to be able to do something enjoyable and at the same time help kids in a Malawi orphanage by raising money for them and their needs. (We didn't do all that heaving and huffing and sweating for nothing!) During the skip-a-thon we did a variety of different activities such as races, double dutch, skipping on trampolines, and skipping rhymes. (We raised \$2900 this year!)

A special thanks to Mrs. Kennedy who was our skipping coach for the competition.

## In memory of Lily Emke Visser February 21st, 2010

"Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?"

"So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."

Matthew 6:25-29

*Our February break ended with the very sad news that Lily Emke, beloved seventh child of the Visser family, had died during the night in the process of childbirth. The Vissers gave us the privilege of entering into their grief as well as their strong faith and confidence that Lily's short life was beautiful and valued and that she is fully alive in the presence of Christ.*

*On February 25th, the community of St. Timothy's was invited to attend and participate in Lily's funeral. It was a very beautiful service and a deeply moving experience for all of us to join in thanking the Lord for the life of Lily and in committing her to Him.*

*For many of the students at St. Timothy's it was their first experience of a funeral. What a blessing for them to be surrounded by the love and faith of the Visser family and this St. Timothy's community.*

*Rachel Bloomquist*

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## The Reader's Nook

### Picture Books for Children

#### The King's Shadow

by Robert D. Larranaga

The little king seems unable to conquer his fear of his shadow until it helps him chase off a dragon. (Dara)

### For Our Older Readers

#### Shipwreck at the Bottom of the World: The Extraordinary True Story of Shackleton and the Endurance

by Jennifer Armstrong

"Armstrong brings all of these experiences vividly to life, frequently using quotes from members of the expedition. Excellent black-and-white photographs taken during the journey document the entire adventure story." (Deborah)

#### The Perilous Guard

by Elizabeth Marie Pope

"This is an imaginative retelling of the ballad of Tam Lin set in the latter days of Queen Mary I of England and the early days of Queen Elizabeth I, featuring a strong, independent, clever young heroine, Kate. (Deborah)

#### The Underneath

by Kathy Appelt

"A mysterious and magical story; poetic yet loaded with suspense." Louis Sachar, Newberry Medal Winning Author of Holes. It is a National Book Award Finalist and

Newberry Honor Book. I have only read a little so far but it's beautiful; a very good book to read aloud. (Flori)

#### The Various, Celandine, and The Winter Woods

by Stephen Augard

These are very well written fantasy stories. I loved all three books. The story is about the little people who live in a wood in England but who long ago came from another planet called Elisse. (Flori)

### For Adults

#### The Horatio Hornblower Series

by C.S. Forester

(11 books, packaged into three omnibuses)

"Forester's expert and exciting series about a young naval officer who rises rapidly through the ranks to become one of England's heroes in the battles against Napoleon's huge fleet of fast and formidably armed frigates." (Gerard)

The eight volume set of DVDs based on this series is also very good. (Ben)

#### A Return to Modesty & Girls Gone Mild

by Wendy Shalit

Both are very good books and especially Girls Gone Mild was an eye opener for me with respect to the societal and cultural expectations that are placed on young women on college campuses. (Flori)

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## For Those Lazy Summer Days....Favourite Board Games from Our Community

Our class visits to the St. Maurice Seniors have sparked an interest in board games at St. Tim's. A few of our favourites are included here for you to try this summer.

### Gobblet

Strategic four-in-a-row tic-tac-toe game.

### Blokus

Geometric shape placing game. Comes in two and four player versions.

### Crokinole

A shooting game that requires a large board. Watch out for it in garage sales or at Value Village as it is well worth owning.

### Bananagrams

Faster than scrabble and easy to take anywhere. Each player creates his own mini-scrabble game.

### Four Square

Not a board game but a great summer street game. And for all those boys who wish to quibble over the rules, here is a link to the official rules for this playground favourite:

[www.squarefour.org/rules](http://www.squarefour.org/rules)

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## Please Pray for Our School

✦ That Jesus Christ will always be the light for our school.

✦ Thank the Lord for His care for our school throughout this year. May He grant all our staff restful and joyful summers.

✦ Please continue to pray for new families to join our community as well as a new location for our growing school!

✦ Praise God for the generosity of Bromley Road Baptist Church over the past six years.

✦ Thank God that we have met our financial targets again this year.

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# Exploring Creation in Science Class

*He has made everything beautiful in its time. Ecclesiastes 13 : 11*

The St. Timothy's Grade 5 and 6 Science students have been learning about eggs and the hatching of eggs. In December we tried to hatch some quail eggs that were an unexpected gift from a quail farm owner. The eggs slowly baked under a heat lamp that was often too hot; there was also not enough humidity for this tropical species. Lesson learned! The students coped quite maturely with their disappointment as we realized how exact things must be for God's creatures. We tried chicken eggs next, in an incubator, with evenly maintained temperatures and humidity. Success! Nine out of twelve fertilized eggs hatched out baby chickens before the delighted eyes of the science students and most of the school. After a few days of observing the chicks at school, many of the children took one or two of the chicks home to look after them for a few days. The students drew their observations and recorded their experiences and growing knowledge in nature journals. Some their entries have been included for your enjoyment.

Deborah Torenvliet, Grade Five/Six Science Teacher

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## **From Egg to Chick by Hailey Randoy**

In our class we had twelve eggs in an incubator. It took 22 days [the hatching began on the 21<sup>st</sup> day]. It started with the germinal disk. The yolk is around the germinal disk. The rooster helps the chick start. The germinal disk becomes an embryo. There are holes in the eggs called pores. The pores let the air come in the egg and gases come out. The chalazae hold the yolk in place. The yolk has all the nutrients for the embryo. The albumen (egg white) is to keep the egg from drying out. It also has lots of protein. The membrane is attached to the shell and the inner shell membrane is a thin layer. The membranes keep protecting the embryo. When the eggs hatch the chicks peck themselves out from the air cell with the egg tooth. When the chicks hatch, they are wet and precocial. Precocial means that they are independent. They don't need their mother. They can see and walk by themselves. The chicks are now 3 days old and are yellow and fluffy. The breed is "Cambrian Rock and Red". I think they were very cute and adorable. When they hatched they were very wet and exhausted, but I still thought they were cute.

## **From Egg to Chick by Auke Visser**

Our class did an experiment in hatching "Columbian Rock and Red" chickens. It started as a tiny germinal disk in the middle of the yolk. The chalazae, a stringy, white substance, held the yolk in place. The albumen (egg white), which surrounded the egg, provided a shock absorber for the yolk. It also

provided moisture and proteins to the germinal disk. Slowly the germinal disk grew to become the embryo. The holes in the shell, or "pores", let in air and got rid of gasses. The shell has an inner membrane and outer membrane for protection. Nearing the end of the 21 days, the yolk and albumen got smaller with the chick's growth. The chick has an "egg tooth" to get out of the egg. The "air cell" is an air pocket in the egg. It is the weakest spot on the egg to get out of. The air cell can sometimes move, though. It moved in some of the eggs. The inner membrane stretches on top of the air cell, so the chick uses his egg tooth to break through the inner membrane and then through the outer membrane. The hole spread around the air pocket until the chick broke out. The chick was wet and really exhausted and it took about 10 minutes before it could walk. After that it took 24 hours until it was dry and fluffy.

May 10th, 2010, evening, cold, home: Chicks are funny little creatures. They are interested in the weirdest things ever. A Windex bottle, for example, or a pencil, your feet, a sock. I think it's so funny how to them my bedroom is huge. It's like the whole world to them. . . .Two of them fly at each other with their wings out and they hit each other with their wings and run at each other so that their stomachs and chests hit each other. They also stand on their tiptoes. It's really funny. . . . They absolutely hate the fan. Whenever it's on they jump, half run half fly away in the opposite direction.

**Maia Alexander**

*Continued on back...*

May 13th, inside: Maia and I put our chicks together because they were lonely. When I walk past the chicks' cage while they are eating, my chick always looks up to see who I am, while Maia's chick continues eating. I think my chick is the boss over Fifi, Maia's chick. The 2 chicks were napping one day, and Fifi was lying on the ground, with my chick sleeping over her. It is simply amazing how fast chicks grow. Maia would have them for two days, and I the next two, but even after two days when you see them they have grown. You pick them up and you think, wow they grow a lot in two days!! And God started everything with a tiny germinal disk in an egg, and twenty days afterwards, a chick hatches! I think it has been three weeks since they were born, and their feathers are growing in. God's creation is a wonder, everything has beauty in itself. Even chicks that are messy, and not so clean. This is a verse from "My Side of the Mountain", by Jean Craighead. Though the chick is a falcon they resemble each other a lot. "The food put the bird to sleep. I watched her eyelids close from the bottom up, and her head quiver. The fuzzy body rocked, the tail spread to steady it, and the little duck hawk almost sighed as she sank into the leaves, sleeping." I noticed that chicks close their eyelids upwards.

**Beatrice Boutilier**

May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2010: When I returned my chick to Mrs. Torenvliet it could jump/fly out of our box (3 ft). When I let my chick into the Torenvliets' garage, I saw how much it changed: its wings were turning brown, on the bottom of its wings were black feathers. On the crown the flap of skin that roosters have was growing a lot bigger. The chick followed me everywhere even if he had to jump over my dad's briefcase (good thing my dad wasn't watching :-)). I miss my chick but he has to move on.

**Michael Leblanc**

May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2010, cold, windy, home: Once as I watched my chick running back and forth up and down, up and down my lawn attempting (and failing) to fly, a cold wind came up and my chick began running towards me. As I sat down I expected it to hop up onto my leg and cuddle up next to me. Instead it just kept running then stuck his head into my pant leg and began burrowing in.

**Isla Edmonds-Mutcher**

May 14, home: It's pretty amazing how in just 21 days, an egg can transform into a chick. It is made so it has an egg tooth to get out of its shell when it's a hatchling., It shows how when God made the world, he spared no details, he made sure everything was made to work like a well oiled machine.

**Matthew Kronberg**

