Rearing the freeborn

By Cindy Rollins

I don’t know about you but the latest political news has been rather distressing to me. Not only do we seem to have a government with a socialist agenda, we seem to have a populace following in lock step. Just ask the average evangelical church-goer in conservative Knoxville what he thinks about the current health care bill and you are likely to be shocked. As a part of a movement, homeschooling, which has preached against the dangers of public education for at least 30 years, perhaps we should be less shocked. Ideas have consequences and seeds bear fruit. 30 years is plenty of time for the bad apple tree to infect society. The public schools educated for slavery and produced slaves. But home educators are hopefully educating the freeborn. That probably means that what we are doing in our homes should look significantly different than what goes on in institutional schools. Are you educating your children for freedom or slavery? I would like to offer 20 ideas for educating freeborn, Christian men and women.

1. Read to your children (begin in utero), including daily Bible reading.
2. Read around your children. Let them see you reading.
3. Learn to recognize the best books.
4. Talk to your children....when you rise up... (Deut 6:7)
5. Listen to your children. Might be the hardest thing on the list.
6. Continue to educate yourself. Learn Latin, grammar etc. If you do this then you can teach your children as you walk along the way. I cannot begin to tell you how much more they will learn this way. For instance, you can teach grammar by using workbooks and you will notice that for many children, in spite of years of grammar exercises, they retain very little grammar, or you can get an old grammar textbook like The Mother Tongue I or II (OOP) and work through it orally over many years. If the whole family does this together, the whole family can discuss grammar when it arises in real life.
7. Find out what is really important to you and then tune out all the voices that try to get you to do something else. You will never successfully home educate if you don’t learn how to tune out the masses and masses of good (not great) ideas.
8. Don’t be too impressed when your children perform parlor tricks. Cute, yes, but not what free men are looking for. We are educating for the long haul and the fruit cannot be rushed.
9. Resist the temptation to think that more is better. Less is almost always better in education. What you need is more time to read and think. Do whatever it takes to make more time.
10. Memorize Scripture.
11. Sing songs, hymns and spiritual songs.
12. Learn the names of the trees, flowers, birds etc
13. Memorize and read poetry daily. You cannot read too much poetry. From David and Homer until today the best men know poetry. The freeborn man is a warrior poet.
14. Consider using Ambleside Online. You can’t go wrong with years 1 and 2. But remember Charlotte Mason left the afternoons free for handicrafts, nature study and play. Ambleside is not that hard and should not take that long in a day. You can read everything you need to read in a one-

Cindy Rollins, who resides in Chattanooga, with her husband and children, is a homeschooling mom of nine. Visit her blog at www.dominionfamily.blogspot.com. E-mail Cindy at dominionfamily@gmail.com.
Forgive me if I get a little maudlin in the next few months. My oldest is graduating in May, Lord willing, and it is just hitting me that she will be leaving.

It is a double blow for me as she is also my only daughter and my best friend. She and I often hide out from her three brothers. We have had lots of girl time, leaving the boys to their noisy, rambunctious, pugilistic selves.

My daughter just got back from an unexpectedly extended visit to New York. She had planned to stay just a day and a half but the snowstorm changed all that and she was “stuck” in Manhattan for nearly a week! And yes I am using that term very loosely as she had such a delightful time visiting art museums and sketching to her heart’s content.

She also HAD to do some shopping — such a hardship! As a serious aside, let me say how much the body of Christ meant to me when my daughter found out she could not get home. Through the kindness of friends, some of whom I have not met, I found several places for her to stay. God’s care for his own is so evident.

Yesterday the word came that she has been accepted at the classical figure sculpting program at the atelier school in Manhattan to which she had applied. Lord willing, she will be leaving.

What really strikes me at this time is that my daughter has always been so close to me, not just because she is a girl, but because we have so much in common. We like the same movies, books and people for the most part. Her taste in fashion is not identical to mine but it is not identical to anyone’s! We have always loved art together and watching her grow into her own as a young artist has been deeply satisfying to me. So here is a child about to fly the nest and I know that I will miss her more than I can say.

I also have a son with whom I am not as close, yet most likely he too will be leaving home sometime. I know I have a lot of relationship building to do. It will take much work on my part. I am not even sure what that work will look like. I am trusting that God will show me how to make heart ties with this son. My goal is to have such a good relationship with this young man that when he leaves home, I will feel just as bereft. Perhaps in a different way, but I am determined to figure out how I can develop a closeness with this son who has many admirable qualities. There is a paradox here that does not escape me. As homeschoolers, our ties with our children are apt to be close; we know our children well; we are with them all day, every day for the most part. Are we just setting ourselves up for heartbreak when they leave? Yes we are!

Still I want to encourage you to pursue making those ties with your children, especially those with whom you may have less of a natural affinity. Not that you love them any less but it just seems harder to have that relationship with them. He or she may be the quiet one, the sullen one, the one who is more independent. Perhaps they have interests that you have never had or know nothing about. In our technological age, it seems to me that it is even easier for a child to isolate himself from parents and family. Your children have social networking that is always available. One no longer needs to be tethered to a cord in the wall to talk to friends from your home as I did growing up. All of which means that we parents need to work at building those relationships that elude us because of competing “relationships” in the electronic netherworld.

I must admit that in the past years I have made the mistake of substituting talking at my child for building a relationship. Sure, I have made dates with him, taking him out to lunch at a favorite restaurant — just the two of us. But I always have had an agenda. Sometimes it is all too obvious when I have a small stack of relationship books or spiritual growth books tucked away in my purse complete with a list of questions I need to ask. No wonder he is not excited anymore when I offer to take him out to eat! “Just drop me off, Mom; I’d rather eat by myself.” I guess my son is tired of me trying to fix him instead of just accepting him and loving him. Even though my motives are good, I have gone about it the wrong way.

So now I have a few years left to really communicate in a way that he understands, to show truly that I love and care for him. Are there three quick steps? A failsafe program? Perhaps a book with all the answers? I wish there were, I know there are not.

I know that God in His providence gave me each of our children to keep me humble, to keep me looking to Him, to keep me on my knees. I have made

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mistakes aplenty. I could fill a book with all that I have done wrong. I cannot tell you how many days I have woken up to new resolve, new commitments to say only positive words — only to crash and burn in the first few hours of the day when I cannot help but offer that tidbit of helpful criticism or that testy reminder of what chores need to be done. A wise friend of mine said even if I say all the right things to “fix” this son, he would not hear me, given our present strained relationship.

Each day is a new one. I have yet to find the solution for my stubborn insistence on correction being the primary way I communicate my care. I just got back from another C.S. Lewis lecture on the Space Trilogy. This month we discussed the second book Perelandra. This is a story of temptation, of heart struggles, of persevering. The book moves along at a glacial pace most of the time. The temptations the character faces seem endless, one barrage seemingly melting into another. The reader gets the impression that the battle is being lost and that the evil one is winning by accomplishing the sheer exhaustion of the one fighting the temptation. In fact, the hero is winning just by staying in the battle, no matter how exhausting it is.

Let me encourage you all to stay in the battle for the hearts of your children. It is infinitely worth it and God is on our side. — JMT

Freeborn: Simple ideas

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to two-hour period. If it takes longer than that or if you are tempted to add workbooks, you don’t get it. Go back and read Susan Schaeffer MacCaulay’s For the Children’s Sake or Charlotte Mason’s Original Series.

The hardest thing about the liberal (free) arts or a Charlotte Mason education is: not adding the superfluous in order to make your mom feel better.

15. I would say that a child should be reading at least two hours a day, at any age, but three is better.

16. Ask your children questions and let them think. Don’t rush to give answers. It is OK to have an environment where children can disagree with each other and with you.

17. Be a strong authority in your home but wear your authority lightly. I know this is a big one because for some reason today’s young parents are even more squeamish about discipline than the last generation. It is more damaging to your child’s psyche to be left to himself than to be disciplined. Discipline is an art and therefore it cannot be learned as if it were scheme or system. The more true authority you have over your children the less you will have to use it. But that comes later. Toddlers need a strong arm. If your children are driving you crazy, stop everything for however long it takes and gain the upper hand. You should be enjoying your children. If you are not, it is your fault.

This is not an easy row to hoe but free men must learn self-government and parents are the bosses.

18. Go outside a lot. Get dirty! Get wet! Get hot and tired!

19. Write every day. Keep it simple. My 8-year-old writes five complete sentences on the same subject daily. Everyone else writes a decent narration on something they are reading. If they are reading a lot this will not be a problem. Sometime or other add in a writing program but no matter what: write every day. For the record, my children have not had any trouble writing in college.

20. Err on the side of ideas over skills. Ideas will birth skills but it doesn’t work the other way around. Ideas are for the freeborn. The skills the freeborn have will enhance their freedom. Without ideas, skills are just slave labor.

Calendar

Check website for details

* Mar. 23, Rally Day in Nashville
* May 22, Used curriculum sale
* May 29, Graduation
* June 25, 26, Curriculum fair

Belz, DeMar, Eidsmoe address student event

Rising 10th graders through college age students are invited to meet at Milligan College near Elizabethton, Tenn., May 31-June 5 for a week of training in intellectual warfare. Students come from around the U.S. and from Canada for the Biblical Student Worldview Conference (www.Westminsterkpt.org/bWSC).

Speakers: • Joel Belz, founder of World magazine, on Christian journalism • John Eidsmoe, law professor, on the Constitution • Gary DeMar, president of American Vision and author, on developing a comprehensive biblical worldview • James Nickel, author and professor, on mathematics • Carl Robbins, pastor of Woodruff Road Presbyterian Church in Greenville, S.C., on the fruit of the spirit. I went last year and highly recommend it. —JEANNETTE TULIS
The study of the arts, especially music, encourages tremendous personal growth and development in many areas. Some of the positive effects typically include:

- Improved organizational skills
- Self-discipline
- Increased positive attitudes
- Improved understanding of teamwork
- Elevated social competencies
- Opportunities for community service
- Elevated SAT/ACT placement scores
- Higher levels of critical thinking skills

Enroll your child today in KCYB and experience the benefits that come with music study. Many students have graduated from KCYB and now hold prominent positions in our communities, including: Medical Research Scientists, Engineers, Attorneys at Law, Professors of Music, International Businessmen, Officers in the United States Marine Corps, graduates of the Citadel, music educators, and teachers. We have also graduated 3 Eagle Scouts. Nearly every former KCYB student is a college graduate or post-graduate. Our heritage continues.

www.kcyb.org
www.kcyb.blogspot.com
Rally Day ideal legislative field trip

Farris addresses gathered homeschoolers about parental rights

By Cory Bennett

A day of bracing encounters is a good way to describe our yearly ritual invasion of Nashville’s capitol hilltop.

March 23, a Tuesday, is the occasion again for us in Eastern Tennessee and around the state to honor top homeschool students, hear speakers tell about homeschooling liberties and meet with state senators and representatives to put a face on the home education movement.

The lead speaker will be Mike Farris of HSLDA. We will also hear from Uwe Romeike, head of the German family that received asylum from persecution as a homeschooler in his home country. Mr. Romeike and his wife and children have taken up residence in Morristown, Tenn.

We have full details at our website about this event. At www.smhea.org, you can download an article detailing Rally Day.

We hope in God’s providence to see you there.

This reminder is just to encourage you to plan that Tuesday as a field trip day. You’ll have to get everybody to bed early. You’ll hop into the van before daybreak to make the opening ceremonies which usually start at 8:45 a.m. Nashville time. The official event is over late in the morning, but you’ll want to visit our senator or representative, making an appointment the week before.

In the early afternoon are events at a nearby church — events for adults and for children. We have details on our website and urge you to take up the spirit of the enterprise and step out of your routines and flow your stream into the larger tributary.

Ask your husband to plan to take the day off, so he can do the driving and help out. Ask if he would be willing to make the appointment with at least one of your representatives.

It is probably good for our legislators to meet the men in the ranks of homeschoolers. It helps them to better picture homeschooling as an instrument of godly reformation led by Christian men whose heart is in the enterprise. If elected officials see men at the head, it will draw more respect than if they see home education as simply a labor of women and children.

Rally Day is a way men can suggest their love for their families and their expectation that civil magistrates will continue to respect their authority and their government of their families. Other highlights:

Student displays will show how broad homeschoolers’ interests are.

A debate tournament at 1 p.m. will offer a final round for families to witness. Attending might encourage your young speechmakers to witness some of the state’s best teen public speakers.
recently a homeschool dads group whose members meet regularly for early coffee received a visit from a Christian man whose dilemma is this: He has a teenage daughter whom he is thinking of putting into public school so that she will have options and can get credits, particularly in science and math. He wanted particulars on how to satisfy in the private sector such requirements for a junior or senior. His listeners, in their reply, focused instead on the general principles of home education which, if adhered to, might bring the particulars more plainly into view. Touching on such general points as the men offered are some lines below by Joyce Herzog, a Tennessee homeschool notable at joyceherzog.com whose words can keep all of us from waivering. — DJT

By Joyce Herzog

Identical desks. Identical books. Identical uniforms. Identical input leads to identical output…. Or so they think!

This paradigm is how traditional classrooms are set up, but it is easy to see that this system is failing many of our children. You may have chosen to homeschool to get away from this one-size-fits-all mentality. But even within the homeschooling community there is often pressure to conform to a pre-determined schedule of learning. How many times have you been asked if your child is working “on or above grade level” in a certain subject?

God did not create us using a cookie-cutter. Knowing that, how can we expect our children to learn in a cookie-cutter fashion? Within families, you can find several different learning styles, strengths, and weaknesses. As parents, even more as homeschooling parents, we should seek to know our children well enough to nurture their strengths and strengthen their weaknesses.

One of the more significant benefits to homeschooling is the ability to tailor an education to each child. If you have an auditory learner, audiobooks may become a daily part of your lessons. With a kinesthetic learner, hands-on activities are a must. Visual learners may enjoy drawing illustrations to solidify their lessons. You do not have to conform to one set way of teaching your children or of having them express that they have learned. Children are individuals and are meant to be treated and taught as such.

God created us with our own particular strengths and weaknesses that are suited for His perfect plan for our lives. While our strengths are usually seen as our biggest asset, sometimes our weaknesses can bring even more glory to God. In our weaknesses, we can more readily see His hand at work.

While we help our children improve in their areas of struggle, we cannot forget to utilize their strengths as well. Do not let those gifts from God grow stagnant in the wake of hours spent trying to bring their struggles up to an average level. Set them up for success as often as possible. Go deeper in the areas where they excel. Allow them to dig as far into a topic of interest as they want to go. They may surprise you with their tenacity when given a task they enjoy.

You may have a child who has so many struggles you are beginning to think that they don’t have any strengths at all. Take heart and give him some time and space to discover his God given passions. He may be so worn down from his difficulties that he doesn’t know what would be a pleasure to him. She may have a schedule so full of athletics, arts, church events, and social activities that she doesn’t have an opportunity to entertain herself and discover what she enjoys. Each child has passions from God deep within them. We have to help them find those passions and it takes both time and space. Be thinking about that when you sit down to plan your “school.”

We did not design our children. God did. We must look to Him as the ultimate guide as we facilitate our children’s education. He holds the plans in His hands. He knows what they need and He cares for them even more than we do. Let us not forget our ultimate goal is not necessarily to have the most intensely educated children, but to have children brought up to fulfill the goals that God has for each one of them individually. Start with God, work with God, lean on His wisdom.
Throughout American history, how did sixteen-year-olds successfully teach multiple grades and multiple subjects, while we struggle at home with three students? Learn the secrets to effectively implementing the classical model of education through Classical Conversations. We exist to know God and to make Him known by assisting parents and students through modeling, tutoring, and support on a weekly basis.

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- Knoxville in May with Mary Alphs, CC National Director
- Chattanooga, July 5-7 with Leigh Bortins, the Founder of Classical Conversations

More practicum information will be available in March.

### SMHEA RESOURCE FAIR

Classical Conversations’ Seminars
June 25-26, 2010
- What is Classical Education?
- Homeschooling Classically through High School

### 3-Day Enrolled Parent Equipping Sessions

July 22-24, 2010
- English Grammar (Day 1) 9 a.m.—4 p.m.
- Latin (Day 2) 9 a.m.—4 p.m.
- Writing (Day 3) 9 a.m.—4 p.m.

Facilitator: Daronda Eakle, daronda@charter.net, 288-3304

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The evidence is clear and unmistakable: simply listening to music may temporarily affect the human memory and emotions, but learning to actually produce music can yield wonderful long-term benefits.

Researchers at the University of California, Irvine, studied 237 second-graders and concluded that those who received consistent music instruction scored 27% higher on a fractions test than those who lacked instruction.

When the Princeton, N.J.-based College Entrance Examination Board looked at the SAT scores of college-bound high school seniors, they discovered that musicians scored an average of 57 points higher on the test’s verbal section and 41 points higher in math.

Many homeschool parents can be intimidated by what is necessary to start their child on the path of a solid music education. Here are some suggestions:

• If your child is in grades K-4, take them to quality musical performances. You can attend concerts on any college campuses that have a band program, orchestra or jazz band. These high quality performances are often free. As part of the school day, provide your children with a variety of quality music for their listening enjoyment. Music composed by Mozart is an excellent choice. (University of Tennessee School of Music Calendar link: www.music.utexas.edu/calendar/Default.aspx)

• You may want to allow your child to take lessons on the recorder or piano. Most children are ready to start playing a band instrument by 5th or 6th grade.

• If there is interest in a wind instrument, have a degreed professional educator or performer fit an instrument to your child. Don’t leave the decision of what to play solely up to your child.

• Students who would like to play a percussion instrument are encouraged to begin their study on rudimental snare drumming before venturing to the drum set.

• You can rent an instrument from a local music store. Rental costs are typically between $25-$45 per month. Observe how your child grows musically for a full year before making the decision to continue.

• Taking private lessons on a musical instrument from a qualified instructor is a huge advantage to your child. Widely recognized as the most effective way to learn a musical instrument, private lessons are absolutely worth the expense.

For the homeschool family, an important consideration when choosing a musical instrument is performance opportunities. For example, it can be enjoyable to perform a solo for family and church members; however, performing in an ensemble with other musicians has proven to be a much more complete learning experience — and so much fun!

Sure, we as parents like the idea that consistent music study will increase our children’s SAT/ACT scores. But, if we ask the kids why they like being in an organized music ensemble, they’ll say that it’s so much fun. What a great combination!