

Mission of John Scott Academy

John Scott Academy was founded to assist gifted and talented young people in their quest for the fullness of their intellectual, artistic, emotional, social, physical and spiritual growth. We believe that the most rewarding life is lived in the intense and joyful pursuit of goals – both individual and social – that fully engage one's gifts and talents.



"The point I'm making is..."

Calendar

May 28

Memorial Day – No School

June 1

Last Day of School Year

JSA Community Picnic

Date, place and time to be announced

John Scott Academy

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John Overbeck, Headmaster

Meet Our Faculty

Our March–April faculty biographic sketches are of Dr. Betty Lou Brett (biology) and Yinxia Lin (Chinese).

To read the complete biographic sketches, please go to www.JohnScottAcademy.org and click on "Faculty."

OH!

Caleb Beers, a John Scott Academy student, recently told me a story. He wasn't quite sure where the story came from, but it had a point he wanted to make. I googled the story and found a somewhat different version than Caleb had recited, but I suspect this is one of those stories told in several ways. I like Caleb's version, so here it is, embellished in my retelling.

It seems that a Zen master asked a student to move a boulder of considerable weight. The student put his shoulder to the task, but the boulder held its ground as though rooted.

When the student had exhausted himself, the master walked round the boulder meditatively, almost as though in communion with it. He then gave a gentle push. The boulder teetered for a moment, reached a tipping point, and rumbled down the hillside, coming to rest in a cold, swift-running mountain stream.

The point Caleb wanted to make was: Make yourself at one with a challenge; work with it, not against it. In my version of the story, the Zen master wanted the boulder in the stream because he wanted to partially block the water's flow and create a small reservoir. The point at which master and boulder became one created a different angle of roll than the master had originally thought correct, and the dam located itself slightly downstream from where he had envisioned it. But in time the master found that the boulder knew better than he the ideal point at which to block the stream.

So who am I, a teacher, to dictate an exact path to my students?

An example: Several years ago I gave an open-ended poetry writing assignment, and one of my students decided he wanted to write a Shakespearean sonnet. I feared he was reaching beyond his current ability. But the student knew – if only intuitively – where he needed to go and how he needed to get there. Having tapped into his energy, I fortunately did not attempt to redirect it, and the result was a perfectly formed Shakespearean sonnet that gave voice to a deep personal faith experience. It was a poem strong and mature beyond the young man's years. He had known better than I.

A teacher of gifted students needs knowledge – vast quantities of it. And a sense of how the land lies, and of the direction.

But in the end, teaching is an art form, and "Let's walk together for a while, you and I" is – and must remain – both an invitation and a "together."

John Overbeck

Next Issue: So when do "invitations" become "assignments"? You may be surprised.

Summer Workshops

John Scott Academy is offering two flexible-schedule summer writing workshops, one in creative writing and one in SAT/ACT essay preparation. For complete information, please go to www.JohnScottAcademy.org, click on "Site Index," and then on "Summer Workshops."