

bracken

notes

BRACKEN

Christian School will assist

**CHRISTIAN
FAMILIES**

by providing a

**QUALITY
EDUCATION**

within the context of a

**BIBLICAL
WORLDVIEW,**

equipping students to

IMPACT

their culture for

CHRIST.

Christian Faith... A Battle Worth Fighting

If you would like to receive Mr. Walker's weekly e-letter *The Light* please make sure the office has your email address

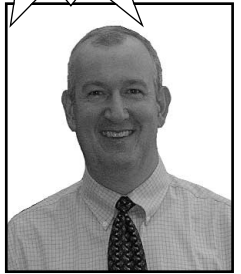
We are just about through the first semester of school. By the time you read this, Thanksgiving will be over and Christmas break just a couple of weeks away. My heart is overflowing from the outpouring of thankfulness that so many have expressed concerning our school. It is such a joy and encouragement to be meeting needs in so many of your lives. I remind you that our school can do nothing by itself. It is the consistent, loving service of so many of God's servants that makes this ministry thrive. Also, like in any family, there are times of stress and discord. There is plenty of instruction in His Word for how to handle these times. The Lord has prepared a home called heaven that will be a refuge and place of perfect peace for us someday. In the meantime, we live here and need to stay committed to carrying out the Lord's will as we see it laid out in Scripture.

We began this year faced with a variety of challenges. Spiritually, we are making some great advances with the SALT ministry, and the overall attitude of our student body is growing in Christ likeness. Academically, we continue to hold up a strong standard for the students to focus on. The administration is always interested in your feedback on academic load and ways to improve. The Harvest celebration helped strengthen the family atmosphere and our desire to serve the community. We donated 95 bags of food to the Bulverde/Spring Branch Community Service Center. Thank you for your faithfulness. The lady at the center was extremely grateful and said this was the largest donation from any single group they have ever received.

We are being tested to the core in the area of finances and budgeting. The Board held small group meetings just a few weeks after school started to update you on the challenges and opportunities we are facing this year. I want to share where we are with this challenge. We explained the need of \$136,000.00 and, to date, have had combined giving from families and teachers totaling

\$61,830.00. This represents about a 40% response from our school families. As I write this article we are looking forward to the Gala this weekend and are trusting in God to use his people to provide a generous gift. I don't believe God has brought us this far to take us back again, but I must confess that debt management is becoming quite weary. This is not a place we can stay without some drastic measures being taken, and so I beseech the Lord daily for ways to cut even tighter and get the word out that the need is still very real. I am convinced that as we seek the Lord, He will be found and will continue to supply all our needs. Money is certainly talked about a lot, but that will never overshadow what our school really needs and that is more students. We have plenty of space and materials and desire. Please join me in praying that God will continue bringing those of like mind to partner with us in the Christian education of their children.

Lastly, I want to encourage you to keep up the fight for the Christian faith. Let me reassure you that it is a battle worth fighting. Fight for it in your marriage, in your parenting, at the workplace, in your neighborhood



CRAIG WALKER
administrator

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MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Due to teachers attending the ACSI Convention, there will be no school January 15-16th and early dismissal January 14th. Elementary students will be dismissed at 11:30 am; middle school and high-school students will be dismissed at 11:45 am.

BOOK FAIR A SUCCESS

Thanks, Bracken, for making our book fair such a success. Our sales totaled \$5,730! That gives us more than \$1700 in cash to purchase more items for our library and \$570 worth of free books from the publisher.

We want you to know how much we appreciate your participation. A special thanks goes to Melinda Smart, Rachel Jack and Rosalyn SteptEr for all the work they did behind the scenes to organize this event.

When we get all the books in, we are going to need lots of help in covering the books and getting them ready for check out. If you would like to do this, let us know.

We would like to thank Ruth Lansing and Mr. and Mrs. Morrison for each donating a VCR to the school. We are still in need of two new (or quality used) 19-inch or larger televisions.

Thanks again, Bracken. Once again, your generosity is amazing!

CAMERA CRISIS HITS YEARBOOK

As of Friday, our yearbook staff is down to only one marginally-well working camera. (The other two



ON THURSDAY, NOV. 13, MRS. PAYTON ACCOMPANIED SIX BRACKEN STUDENTS TO THE ACSI SPELLING BEE AT BELIEVER'S ACADEMY. FOR THEIR PART IN THE COMPETITION, AARON STRAIN, TORI RATHBURN, BUDDY TAYLOR, ZACH KRESTA AND JASON LINGLE ALL EARNED PARTICIPANT'S RIBBONS. CASSIE STIRM EARNED 3RD PLACE IN THE THIRD-GRADE COMPETITION. THANK YOU TO MRS. DENISE STIRM AND MRS. INGRID LINGLE FOR YOUR HELP WITH THE JUDGING.

cameras have put themselves into retirement.) The good news is, God is in control of this situation. So, we are putting the word out to all of our Bracken family to see if anyone can help. Do you have a camera that might fit our need? Would you be willing to donate it to our yearbook staff so we can cover all of the great things happening at Bracken? If God has laid it on your heart to do so, please call me at 980-3267. Thank you!

MRS. CINDY MOORE
YEARBOOK ADVISOR

ATHLETIC NEEDS

The new middle school basketball uniforms are in! They look great and will give a much better representation of our school than last year's uniforms. Thank you to all of the families that helped us meet this need.

Just a quick update on some of the needs in the athletic department:

We are continuing to raise money for the improvements to the front of the gym. We have currently raised approximately \$600 toward this \$6,000 project. We are excited to see that we have raised 10% of our goal. As stated before, the front of the gym needs some major "sprucing up." Many people feel it is the central and most prominently visible building on

campus. It is the first building you notice when you drive onto campus, and thus is the first impression that new families and visitors see when arriving at Bracken. When you combine that with the fact that it is the most used building on campus, we feel it is fitting to try to update and beautify this focal point of our school.

We are confident that the money will be raised for this and all of our projects as long as we continue to trust in Him to meet our needs and not ourselves.

If you feel compelled by the Spirit to contribute to this project please contact either the athletic office or the school office and we will be more than happy to let you know how to help. †



Join us for
INTERCESSORY PRAYER
Thursdays at 8:30am in Room 204

Our fall sports officially ended with some wonderful team and individual accomplishments. Our varsity soccer team finished second in the district and qualified for the playoffs. Although they were upset in the first round, they had a wonderful season and many players were honored for their performances. Colin Gaston, Caleb Gaston, Steven Pate and Daniel Yarter were all voted first team all-district. Nathan Staffel and Jeff Coleman were voted second team all-district, and Tyler Banks and Wes Henry were voted all-district honorable mention.

Our middle school team, which consisted of only 11 players, was able to advance to the league championship game for this season. With no substitutes available, our young warriors fought gallantly but fell a few goals short in the big game. However, their accomplishments this season were amazing and they did a great job playing and competing against much larger players and teams. Good job Bracken soccer!

In volleyball, our varsity girls advanced to the second round of the state playoffs after their second-place district finish. Lyndsey Reed was voted the MVP of the district, the first time a Bracken volleyball player has achieved this honor. Also making first team all-district was Laura Ross. Brooke Taylor was named second team all-district, and Amanda Browning and Stormie Sanders were voted all-district honorable mention.

Our middle-school volleyball teams won the league championship in both the "A" and "B" divisions. The girls' teams worked hard and improved all season. The future of Bracken volleyball looks bright as these young ladies look forward to being a part of the Lady Warrior program.

Our varsity cross-country teams competed at the state meet in Waco and again proved themselves two of the elite teams in Texas. Although they did not finish as well as last season, both teams did finish in the top four. The boys' team finished fourth, ending their three-year reign as state champions. Both Daniel Yarter and Tyler Banks finished in the top 10 and received all-state honors. The girls finished in third place this season. Tiffany Wetz finished in the top 10 for the girls and also received all-state honors.

Our middle school cross-country teams also excelled as the boys' team placed second in the league championship meet. Camron Price, Jared McGuire and Travis Strain all placed in the top 10. Our girls team only had four runners, so they could not compete in the team standings, however Morgan Furnish also placed in the top 10 in the individual standings.

Congratulations to all of our fall teams, and we look forward to next fall. †



JAMES JOHNSON
athletic director

Soccer News...

Our varsity team had a very good year, placing second in our district, with a record of 13 wins and eight losses. Most of the team will return next year, so we are hopeful of even greater things. The loss to Houston Sweetwater Christian will challenge us even more next season.

Our middle school team also had a fantastic year with a

record of 10 wins, four losses and three ties. They played hard all season with only 11 players and no substitutes. They finished the ISAL Tournament in second place.

I am so proud of these young players and honored to be the coach of both teams. Thank you for such a wonderful season. †

COACH HARMON

ALL DISTRICT FIRST TEAM	ALL DISTRICT SECOND TEAM
Collin Gaston – Offense	Nathan Staffel – Offense
Caleb Gaston – Midfield	Josh Cross – Midfield
Daniel Yarter – Defense	Eli Spector – Defense
Steven Pate – Keeper	Jeff Coleman – Defense
ALL DISTRICT HONORABLE MENTION	
Tyler Banks – Midfield	Wesley Henry – Defense

... in with the Danes



JIM CAGLE
secondary principal

As I returned to my office, I noticed six or seven boys exiting the classroom next door. Now, it was already halfway into the period, when everyone should have been deep in concentration. Whenever I see students leaving a classroom when a class is going on, red lights and sirens immediately go off in my head and I wonder what's happening that these students aren't in class. Have they been kicked out? Is the teacher not in the room? What mischief is

afoot? Quickly moving toward the suspicious looking group, I was about to speak when, all of sudden, they all shouted in unison some Shakespearian phrases, flung open the classroom door and rushed back into the classroom. So I went in with the Danes, found an empty seat at the back of the classroom and watched in amazement as a room full of junior boys dramatized Hamlet.

Observing in the classroom is one of the joys of my job. I make both expected and unexpected visits to see what is happening and to watch our fine faculty as they teach your students a myriad of lessons, using a variety of methods and teaching strategies. And they are doing a wonderful job!

One day, I waited patiently while a class of middle school students finished writing in their journals. The exercise is usually done at the beginning of class to help the students get focused, allow them to do some creative

writing and stimulate their thinking. The question they were to answer was, "If you could give any gift to any one you wanted, what would you give and to whom?" The answers of those students who volunteered to share what they wrote reflected their age, their gender, their thoughts and their hearts. One would give an ATV, another land, still another wanted to give salvation. A "billion-room house" was the gift a student wanted to give to her mother so all her family and relatives could be together all the time. Is this a happy family or what? But another simply and genuinely said she would give her heart to Jesus.

Another of our students has published a newspaper for her class and is encouraging other students to live a Christ-like life. Here's a brief excerpt: "I've been thinking more of myself rather than thinking of who I should reach out to. And that's not what I should be doing... So I encourage everyone to be a giver, not a whiner. To strive to think of others before yourself. When you see someone walking to a class by themselves, go up and talk to them, it will brighten their day and yours!"

Parents, that is what's going on at Bracken Christian School. Students are learning to give their hearts to the Lord and encouraging others to live a Christ-like life.

I invite you to come "in with the Danes" to the classrooms and experience Christian education at Bracken Christian School. †

National Junior Honor Society

This year's NJHS is already off to a great start. With the help of Mrs. Watters and Mrs. Walker, the NJHS members were responsible for making the "Soccer Extraordinaire" possible. The purpose of this was to encourage students to bring canned goods for a food drive. Two different grades played soccer against each other for sixteen minutes. For additional help, every ten cans or boxes of food donated were worth one extra point. Every grade brought many cans: sixth grade brought 180 cans, seventh grade brought 88 cans, eighth grade brought 196 cans, ninth grade brought 498 cans, 10th grade brought 324 cans and 11th grade brought 190 cans.

The sixth grade played the seventh grade and sixth grade won (18-13). The eighth grade played the ninth grade and ninth grade won (50-27). The 10th grade played the 11th grade and 10th grade won (32-22). The seniors did not play this month, but next month a different grade will sit out and allow the seniors to participate. The soccer games were fun and very successful.

On Nov. 6, the NJHS members delivered 1,476 food cans to the Bulverde/Spring Branch Community Service Center. The volunteers at the center were very grateful and appreciative of all of the donations. The NJHS

NHS honors new inductees

Congratulations to the new inductees into the National Honor Society. Students must be a member of the 10th, 11th or 12th grade classes, have attended BCS for at least one year, and meet a rigid set of guidelines to be approved by the faculty council. Initially, students are allowed to complete a high school survey based upon a cumulative GPA of 90 or higher. After completion of the survey, student information packets are given to all members of the faculty council and

recommendation for approval is made. Students are then invited to a candlelighting ceremony and luncheon with their families at Olive Garden afterward. Bracken's NHS is an active community service organization with students participating in weekly service projects in the community, as well as serving the school. Below is listed the criteria that the faculty council uses to determine induction. If you see these students, please congratulate them; it is a privilege earned. †

Inductees

SOPHOMORES

Jessica Dudley
Kayla Gueldner
Stacy Pate
Bridgette Reyes
Stormie Sanders
Annika Stolhandske
Emily Watters
Tiffany Wetz

JUNIORS

Channing Farris
Christina Jacobson
Steven Pate
Eli Spector

Selection of new members for the Betty Kight Chapter National Honor Society

SELECTION PROCESS

The NHS Faculty Council, with input from the entire faculty, selects NHS members at Bracken Christian School using the following criteria:

1. **Scholarship** – a combination of a 90 cumulative average.
2. **Leadership** – the student who exercises leadership in the following manner:
 - * demonstrates leadership in promoting school activities.
 - * exercises influence on peers in upholding school ideals and the Lord.
 - * contributes ideas that improve the civic life of the school.
 - * is able to delegate responsibilities.
 - * exemplifies positive attitudes.
 - * inspires positive behavior in others.
 - * successfully holds school offices or positions of responsibility, conducts business efficiently and effectively, and is reliable and dependable without prodding.
3. **Service** - the student who serves:
 - * demonstrates leadership in the classroom, at work and in school activities.
 - * is thoroughly dependable in any responsibility accepted.
 - * is willing to uphold scholarship and maintain a loyal school attitude.
 - * participates in some outside activity: church groups, volunteer services for the aged, poor, or disadvantaged, family duties.
 - * volunteers, dependable and well-organized assistance and is gladly available and willing to sacrifice in offering assistance.
 - * works well with others and is willing to take on difficult or inconspicuous responsibilities.
 - * cheerfully and enthusiastically renders any requested service to the school.
 - * is willing to represent the class or school in inter-class and inter-scholastic competition.
 - * does committee and staff work uncomplainingly.

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KAREN WATKINS
counselor

It is never too early to start thinking about and even planning for college. Certainly, once a student enters high school, each course, each activity and each opportunity to participate in a meaningful service only enhances the likelihood of acceptance into the college of choice. “In every survey, taking tough courses and getting good grades have been #1 and #2.”¹ Making every effort to learn as much as possible in high school will give a student the best chance for success in college. It is recommended that a student take the college preparatory curriculum, which is the Recommended Program or Distinguished Achievement Program (Note: refer to the handbook for a listing of the required courses).

In addition to taking the most challenging courses available, there are several other factors involved in the admission process.

The essay – not all universities require an essay for admission. It is an opportunity to tell the university something unique, or discuss goals and personality traits. The college essay is not the same as the English essay. It requires practice and perseverance to perfect it.

Involvement in activities – it is better to be seriously involved in a few activities than casually involved in many. Pick a passion and stay with it throughout high school.

Test Scores – all colleges require the ACT or the SAT for admittance. These tests are college entrance exams of equal weight. All colleges accept either test, although certain colleges prefer one over the other. Unfortunately, because college prep courses and services are readily available, strong scores do not guarantee admittance; however, low scores may keep a student out.

Involvement – this is not a sport activity, but rather a commitment to making a student’s school a better place. Entrepreneurial programs or dedication to a cause make a student stand out among others of equal standing.

Character recommendations – it is important for a student to build a relationship with teachers who, when necessary, can write meaningful and glowing letters of recommendation. Remember that a recommendation is just

that, a recommendation. Students should only choose teachers or staff that can write an impressive letter. If a teacher is not able to write one because of poor performance or poor relationship, then find someone else.

Commitment – believe it or not, colleges do want to know a student’s enthusiasm for the particular college. The best form of interest is a college visit. Our seniors have just completed a series of college tours that started in their junior year, and has enabled them to visit campuses, sit in on classes and talk to department professors in the areas of interest for each student. Standing on that college ground and hearing what God may say to each and every student is a critical part of the entire decision process.

Community service – although most schools now require some form of community involvement, colleges easily recognize the casual participant versus the dedicated servant.

Supplemental recommendations – impersonal letters of recommendation are of no value and can even hurt a student, but letters from coaches or long-term volunteer supervisors and from pastors can be valuable in that these people give a different perspective of the student.

According to the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC), the top four criteria influencing admission decisions are:

<u>Factor</u>	<u>Percent of Importance</u>
* grades	92%
* admission test scores (ACT/SAT)	86%
* class rank	66%
* counselor recommendation	67%

Finally, I would like to address the issue of scholarship scams. Every week I receive scholarship opportunities, primarily for the seniors, but occasionally for the juniors. Whenever these scholarships come in, I ask the students who is interested and pass out the information accordingly. The following is information concerning scholarship scams from FASTWEB. Worst-case scenario, please come and ask me about what you think is a scholarship. †

SCAMS: 101

A NEW KIND OF SCAM – FINANCIAL AID SEMINARS:

A seminar may or may not be legitimate.

What are the warning signs?

- While the presentation might be free, the services aren't: you may be pressured to give them a check, checking account number or a credit card to sign up for the service.
- You are told that the program can adjust your income and/or assets to make it seem like you earn less money, thereby qualifying for more aid. Such practices are often illegal. \$6.6 billion in scholarships went unclaimed last year.'

Statements about unclaimed awards are misleading. They generally refer to tuition reimbursements that aren't available to the public. Scholarships are competitive and are awarded. "You are guaranteed a minimum of \$1,000 in awards." A service can't guarantee any scholarships because they have no control over the scholarship judge's decisions. "We have a 96% success rate." These false success rates indicate the percentage

of students they've successfully matched with the database, not the number of students who actually receive money. "We'll need a bank account/credit card number to verify your information."

Your bank account and credit card information is confidential. A legitimate scholarship provider won't ask for this information. "We will do all the work for you."

To win a legitimate scholarship, you must submit your own applications, write your own essays and solicit your own letters of recommendation. There is no way to avoid doing the work.

QUICK SCAM WARNING SIGNS:

- A fee.
- A "money-back guarantee."
- A request for your credit card or bank account.
- States you've won an award for which you didn't apply.
- Do not supply valid contact information.
- Guarantee you will win an award.
- Require personal financial information (such as credit card numbers or checking account numbers) to "verify" or "hold" a scholarship.

FASTWEB Aug/Sept 2003

Free search of more than 600,000 scholarships and 4,000 colleges: www.fastweb.com

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4. Character - the student of character:
 - * takes criticism willingly and accepts recommendations graciously.
 - * constantly exemplifies desirable Christ-like qualities of cheerfulness, friendliness, poise, stability, humbleness.
 - * cooperates by complying with school regulations concerning property, programs, office, halls, etc.
 - * demonstrates the highest standards of honesty and reliability.
 - * shows courtesy, concern and respect for others.
 - * observes instructions and rules, punctuality and faithfulness both inside and outside the classroom.
 - * manifests truthfulness in acknowledging obedience to rules and showing unwillingness to profit by the mistakes of others.
5. Spiritual Walk:
 - * actively pursues education and knowledge for the pleasure of glorifying God and working to do all things in an excellent manner.
 - * demonstrates a walk with the Lord by actions and deeds that exemplify Christ and what His actions would be.
 - * demonstrating that others are more important than self and has a humble attitude.
 - * evidence of knowledge of scripture and a daily devotional time.
 - * desire to glorify God in all areas of life, school, home, friends.
 - * exemplifies respect for teachers, school personnel, administration and the board of trustees.
 - * willingness to take a stand for Christ even at the cost of popular opinion. †

Mexico Mission 2003



MARK PALMER
elementary principal

It was certainly my treat to be a part of Bracken's first foreign mission emphasis this past September. I wanted to share with you some of my experiences and some of what I learned through this opportunity. This was the first mission trip for me, although I have wanted to go on one since college.

Working in Christian schools has impressed me with the need for practical application of the Word of God. When students merely learn the facts of the Bible without putting them into practice, they are not changed. They can become bored, self-righteous, puffed up and indifferent. We are told in James 1:22-25 to be hearers of the Word, but we are also warned to not be hearers only. We must also be doers. Otherwise, we become deceived into thinking that we are fine, when in reality the Bible has had no impact. The same can happen to us in church as well. If we are not active to apply what we hear, we lose these truths and miss the blessings that God intends for us.

The group that went to Mexico City had a great opportunity to act on their faith and to learn firsthand many of the things that we heard or read about.

We visited some homeless street children. We provided them food and drink, sang to them, testified to them (through a translator), interacted with them with our limited Spanish, and played soccer with them. We also assisted in getting some medicine and prayed over a young man with a wounded leg.

We helped with the construction of a home that will help deliver some of these kids from the streets. We are

still seeking to help with the financial needs in assisting this project.

We witnessed the work that God was doing in others who have a lot less than we do, and yet we could see that they are people who are truly blessed.

We realized how much we have in this country and how truly blessed by God we are.

We were touched by the genuine needs others have and felt the deeper satisfaction that comes by being engaged in something that is selfless and eternal.

We experienced the great enjoyment that a group of believers can have when they are focused on service, particularly to those who could not pay us back. Our fellowship during this week was very special.

We felt God working in our own hearts.

I am looking forward to going back in the future, and I am making plans now to do that. Many of the others in our group have expressed a desire to go back as well. Being involved in something where we see God at work (and where He is working through us) is deeply fulfilling. In this setting, it is easier to see that people are more important than things, and service is more enjoyable than selfish pursuits. In expressing our love of God to others we were able to show God our love.

"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in. I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me..."

Matthew 25:35,36

It is living out what we have been learning in the Bible. †

Mr. Walker continued from page 1

and in our country. In reality, as believers, it is the ONLY battle that matters. Galatians 6:9 says, "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up." I am here by the grace and provision of God. May the Lord be your peace, today and always. The Harvest is upon us. Let's be ready.

I love Living it out loud for Him. †



**PRAY FOR
OUR TROOPS**

BCS Robotics Team winners...

The Bracken Christian School Robotics Team, in its first year competing in the S.A. B.E.S.T. (Boosting Engineering, Science and Technology) Robotics competition, won fifth place out of 32 teams. The competition required each team to build a robot using only the materials provided. The teams had six weeks from the kick-off to game day to brainstorm ideas, design, build and test their robot. This year's game, "Transfusion Confusion," had a medical technology theme, with red and white balloons representing blood cells. With four robots competing per round, each robot was to flip a "decontamination" switch, remove balloon "cells" from an "artery" (the balloons are being blown by a fan just to make it a little more challenging), and deposit as many balloons as possible in the team's scoring area. All this must be done within three minutes.

The team, with the help of several mentors (Richard Hall, David Ross, Craig Walker and Bill Brockmeier) worked many hours after school and Saturdays for six weeks to bring their ideas to reality. Once they had their robot, Dr. Robotnik, built, they practiced driving in a mock game field. The competition took place on Oct. 25 at St. Mary's



(LEFT TO RIGHT)BACK ROW: PATRICK TABLER, MRS. LINDA WALKER, RACHEL KORKOSZ, MRS. JULIE KORKOSZ, STEPHANIE SWIENTEK. FRONT ROW: ANDREW KORKOSZ, KYLE HALL, TYLER HILGENDORF.

University. Thirty-two teams participated, including many from 5A schools and schools with many years' experience in the competition. It was a very exciting day with bands playing and lots of cheering, not to mention pressure. Each team competed in eight rounds. BCS made it to the semi-finals with a seventh-place showing. In the semi-final round, our drivers took us to

a fifth place spot, just out of the running to go on to the final round. The team was blessed to have done so well in their first attempt. They learned a lot about problem solving, teamwork and how to make Lego models into an actual functioning robot. They have grand plans to make it to the regional competition next year. †

Technology Tidbits

CAROLINE BOOTH



TECH TIP:

A quick way to view a larger portion of a web page at one time is to press the F11 key once. This will eliminate all but one menu bar at the top of your page. This can be especially helpful if you are using a smaller monitor screen. To return to the "normal" view, just press the F11 key again. †

NOTABLE QUOTES:

"There is no better opportunity to receive more than to be thankful for what you already have. Thanksgiving opens up the windows of opportunity for ideas to flow your way."

— Anonymous

