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Studium

Labor

# The Standard

A publication of St. Andrew's Academy

## Saber Tournament Nets a Bronze Medal

## Standing on the Shoulders of Giants

by John Seel, Ph.D.

The morning of December first was windy and rainy, when St. Andrew's Academy fencers set out early in the morning for Reno, Nevada, to participate in the Youth Saber Tournament hosted by High Desert Fencing Alliance.

Over the past five years, St. Andrew's Academy fencers have been training with foils, but saber was introduced to these fencers only in the past three months.

One fencer, Emma Foos, started the day nervous for her first tournament; but in the end she was third in her pool, and took a ribbon for Best Attitude. Jessica Yang earned a ribbon for Most Focused Fencer, and Aidan Foos came home with a bronze medal, placing third overall.

One referee for this tournament was the fencing coach for University of Nevada, Reno; and another was a Junior

“American farmers are the only farmers who can read Homer.” – Thomas Jefferson

While Thomas Jefferson boasted of the education of the commoners of his day, that education he praised—a classical one—now makes no immediate sense to most parents and students. The study of Latin and

Greek and what are called the “Great Books” is thought to be kin to taking cod liver oil; it might be beneficial, but one assumes that there must be a less distasteful alternative in modern America. Surely, the advent of computers and new research on cognition has provided alternative means of instruction surpassing the rote and drill used to learn a functionally dead language and read centuries-old books.

But this is a false conclusion. In spite of the advances of online ed-tech platforms, the best education remains one that



l-Emmalie Foos, r-Jessica Yang

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Olympic Fencing runner-up, though he declined to tell what year that had been! Several fencing students from UNR also came to the event to help out with judging.

Intern Samuel Miller, saber fencer and assistant coach, worked with the fencers under the direction of Coach Robert Montavon. Altogether, twelve from Lake Almanor were there representing St. Andrew's Academy, either competing or making the most enthusiastic cheering section at the event!



*Aidan Foos executes a well timed stop cut.*

## **Summary, Chapter 6 of Helen Keller's Autobiography**

by Emma Foos  
third form student (9 yrs old)

**H**elen learned what love meant in this chapter. She wanted to know what it meant when she brought violets to Miss Sullivan. Miss Sullivan spelled in her hand, "I love Helen." And Helen responded, "What is love?" Miss Sullivan tapped her chest.

"Is love this?" Helen spelled. "No."

"Is it the sweetness of the flowers?"  
"No."

"Is it sunshine?" "No." A little later, Helen was stringing beads. She had made lots of mistakes, and her teacher carefully corrected them. Then Helen began thinking. Miss Sullivan pointed to her forehead, and spelled, Think. Then, Helen realized what think meant. She then asked "What is love?" Her teacher spelled, "Love is like the clouds. We can't touch them, but they pour sweetness into everything. Without love, you would not be happy, or want to play." And that is how Helen learned what love meant.

# **St. Andrew's Academy has a New Website Address:**

**[standrewsalmanor.org](http://standrewsalmanor.org)**

**and**

# **New Email addresses**

**[admin@standrewsalmanor.org](mailto:admin@standrewsalmanor.org)**

**[office@standrewsalmanor.org](mailto:office@standrewsalmanor.org)**

**In addition, faculty can be  
reached by first letter of first  
name + last name +  
[@standrewsalmanor.org](mailto: @standrewsalmanor.org)**

is infused with the study of the great books of the past, the enduring legacy of the best of thought, art, music, and literature.

This is the stuff of which great minds are made, and it is also the stuff of which our children are starved.

There is a reason contemporary students rank at the bottom of international assessments: behind such advanced countries as Iceland in literacy, Slovakia in mathematics, and Ireland in science. The U.S. is ranked in the bottom third of all countries participating. It is past time that parents wake up to the fact that

## Jerusalem and Athens

Many Christians wonder why one should pay attention to the Greeks and the Romans. The Greeks are widely known for their acceptance of homosexuality and the Romans for infanticide. Ever since the church father Tertullian pondered in the second century, "What does Jerusalem have to do with Athens?" Christians have wrestled with the relationship between Christianity and Antiquity.

One way to answer this is that the Greeks raised questions



Raphael's School of Athens

many children are wasting their time in school. They graduate uneducated and ill-prepared for life. There is a better way and it is to recover traditional education. This is the soaring benefit of classical schooling and a great books education.

## Standing on the Shoulders of Giants

We cannot go forward without first going back. G.K. Chesterton notes, "All the men in history who have really done anything with the future have had their eyes fixed upon the past." Baylor University church historian D.H. Williams writes that if the contemporary church wants to be faithful, "it cannot do so without recourse to and integration of the foundational tradition of the early church." We will not be prepared for the future without first appropriating the riches of the past.

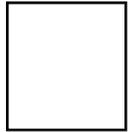
Only our contemporary hubris, what C. S. Lewis called "chronological snobbery," keeps us from depending on the rich tradition of the Christian church and its thinkers. We must humbly appropriate this tradition once more. It is the foundation of a Christian mind and the sources of Western Civilization.

that are only answered in the gospel. "The One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you," Paul told the Athenians. Peter Kreeft observed that the Hebrews provided the West a highly developed understanding of morality just as the Greeks provided important insights into metaphysics. He writes, "The Jews gave us conscience; the Greeks, reason. The Jews gave us the laws of morality, of what ought to be; the Greeks gave us the laws of thought and of being, of what is." It was in the Middle Ages that Hebraism in its Christian form and Hellenism in its Roman form met, creating the seedbed of the modern world. Western civilization itself is a fusion of Hebrew, Greek, and Christian intellectual traditions. This fusion stands as one of the greatest intellectual and cultural achievements in history

What does Athens have to do with Jerusalem? Everything. One brings the right questions; the other, the right answers. The postmodernist has neither questions nor answers.

Christians today need to recapture this earlier pre-modern mind in order to engage our current postmodern culture.

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An exposure to the classical mind serves as an antidote to the modern mind and thereby makes possible the growth of a truly biblical mind.

The late Charles Colson, who wrote widely on the importance of developing a Christian mind, was a vocal advocate of classical Christian education movement:

This is also why I so strongly support Christian classical education.... It combines, you see, the two historic goals of a liberal education: the cultivation of knowledge and the cultivation of character. It shows us the continuum in the intellectual history of the West that goes back to the Greco-Roman era and, therefore, enables us to better understand our own postmodern era. If we cut ourselves off from the past, we can't understand the present. And it's particularly critical...to understand the philosophical and cultural currents that have shaped our society.

One of the requirements, then, of developing a Christian mind is a reengagement with the great works of the classical and patristic period. No meaningful engagement with our intellectual heritage can avoid the study of the classical tradition.



Above: St. Anselm, Medieval Scholar and Archbishop of Canterbury;  
below: St. Andrew's Academy Choir with guest choristers

*John Seel is a long-time educational reformer, founding board member of the Council on Standards & Educational Accountability, former headmaster of the Cambridge School of Dallas, and contributor to Building a Better School: Essays on Exemplary School Leadership (Paideia, 2012). He is also on the National Advisory Board for St. Andrew's Academy and works with St. Andrew's students as a college counselor. He and his wife, Kathryn live in Cohasset, Massachusetts. They have four grandchildren. He is the president of Kid's Cultural Renewal, which seeks to renew culture at the root of the next generation by harnessing the power of kids' media to help them become global leaders of great character.*



## Advent Lessons and Carols End the Term

St. Andrew's Choir led the singing of an Advent Lessons and Carols service on December 6 to close out, as is traditional at St. Andrew's, the Michaelmas Term before students take their Christmas Break and boarding students travel home for a visit.

Guest choristers this year included Mr. Dan Foos, Father of the choirmaster, Bob and Holly Satterfield of Chester, and St. Andrew's Church parishioner Joelle Hicks. The choir led the singing of the

carols and also performed four anthems. *Behold, the Fig Tree* and *God Be In My Head* by John Rutter are both contemporary

compositions. Tallis' *Third Mode Melody*, and the Canticle *Nunc Dimittis* were composed during the 16th century.

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