



# THE COURIER

THE GENEVA  
SCHOOL  
NEWSLETTER  
SUMMER 2012



*The Geneva School Class of 2012*



# Jesus, the Author of our Storms

Mark 6:45-51 & Psalm 16

Baccalaureate Address delivered by Peter O'Driscoll on Thursday, May 24



*Immediately he made his disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. And after he had taken leave of them, he went up on the mountain to pray. And when evening came, the boat was out on the sea, and he was alone on the land. And he saw that they were making headway painfully, for the wind was against them. And about the fourth watch of the night he came to them walking on the sea. He meant to pass by them, but when they saw him walking on the sea they thought it was a ghost, and cried out, for they all saw him and were terrified. But immediately he spoke to them and said, "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid." And he got into the boat with them and the wind ceased.*

Mark 6:45-51a

*The following is an abbreviated text of Peter O'Driscoll's address. The full length audio can be found online at <http://www.genevaschool.org/about-us/audio>*

Verse 45 says, "Immediately he (Jesus) made his disciples get into the boat." The word "made," in the original language, is the same word that you would use if you made your child finish their vegetables when they didn't want to, or if you made them do their homework, or if you insist that they clean their room. The disciples didn't necessarily want to get into the boat, but Jesus insisted that they do so. There is a gracious hint of force here.

The Lord Jesus does not seek our permission for his will for our lives. God doesn't come to us in advance and ask for our permission before difficulties set in and trials overwhelm us. God is not obligated to get our consent before he sends a storm our way, or to check with us to see if it is alright before he sends us in a certain direction. You may go through a tough time financially; your son or daughter may become disillusioned in their walk with God and take a direction that is not of the Lord; a loved one may become ill; or you may get sick. Jesus doesn't seek our permission when these things happen, but instead he brings them into our lives to make us stronger, to teach us how to trust him, to learn from our storms, and to dig a "well" of spiritual water for the next thirsty pilgrim who is coming up behind us. When we go through difficulty, no matter how hard, Jesus is not nearly as interested in getting us out of trouble as he is in teaching us how to trust him and how to bear fruit while we are going through it.

I have been in a wheelchair now for over 34 years because of a car accident. If the Lord had come to me the day before my accident and said, "Peter, tomorrow I am going to permit you to have a car accident and you will be in a wheelchair for the rest of your life, is that OK with you?" I would have been inclined to say, "Absolutely not!" Who wants to be in a wheelchair all the days of their life? However, if I knew then what I know now—namely, that I would be married to Isabel, have three precious daughters, and be leading Orlando Children's Church—I would let him put me in this wheelchair all over again.



first place? Who is responsible for pushing us into this storm? The answer: Jesus!”

It is right here that we see the disciples struggling in obedience. They were in a tough spot not because they said no to Jesus, but because they obeyed him. Have you ever been there? You are trying to serve the Lord, you are trying to honor Christ, you are making every effort to do his will and please him, and yet the storms continue to roll in. If that describes you today I have some advice for you—get used to it, because it is not going away. Scripture is replete with one example after another of God’s people who, because they obeyed the Lord, found themselves in great trouble: Daniel was saved in the lion’s den, not from it; Shadrack, Meshack, and Abednego were saved in the fiery furnace, not from it; Paul was delivered while he was in prison.

What began as a tragedy has bloomed, by God’s grace, into the peaceable fruit of righteousness, and all for the glory of God.

The storms of life are always meant to make us stronger, but they are also permitted in our lives so that we can help others down the road. When we learn from our experiences we are able to put our arms around someone else who is going through a similar circumstance. Do you think Helen Keller has any advice for blind people? If I were to swing into a hospital room and find a teenager who has been in a car accident and is going to be paralyzed for the rest of his life, do you think I would know what he is going through? Jesus brings us through the storms of life so that our experiences equip us to help others.

We are creatures of crises. Job says, “Man who is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble.” Life is difficult and hard. However, it is not difficult and hard because God doesn’t love us; it is difficult and hard because he does. How many of God’s children would drift off to a life of indifference were it not for storms and trials? It is because of storms and difficulties that God keeps us close to him. Life is filled with wonderful opportunities brilliantly disguised as unsolvable problems. The Lord gives us just enough hardship to bend our knees, but not too much so as to break our back.

Let us take a closer look at this particular storm. In verses 47 and 48, it says, “And when evening came, the boat was out on the sea, and he was alone on the land. And he (Jesus) saw that they were making headway painfully...” Another translation says that “they were toiling in rowing.” Not only that, verse 48 says that it was “about the fourth watch of the night.” If we wanted to put ourselves in the boat with the disciples, here is the picture: you are three to four miles from the nearest shore, the sails are down, gale force winds are bearing down upon you, and it is between 3:00 and 6:00 in the morning. I also wouldn’t be surprised if the disciples were beginning to share these thoughts: “How did we get into this trouble? How did we get out here in the





# The Graduates and their Intentions

Jesus was on the shore while the disciples were struggling in the middle of the sea. Scripture tells us that he saw them straining at the oars. When we go through a storm and we are straining at the “oars of life” we often find ourselves saying, “Lord, if I just knew you were with me. If I just knew you were beside me.” Well, he is. But not only that, Jesus is the only one who can calm the storms in our lives. In the middle of the storm, when things seemed the most hopeless, Jesus came out to the disciples walking on the water. Imagine that! It doesn’t matter how bad things look and it doesn’t matter how dark they may appear. When the disciples least expected it, and when it seemed the most hopeless, guess who showed up? Jesus.

Jesus is not only the author of our storms; he is also the calmer of our storms. When was the last time you saw someone walking on water? This was so unusual and out of place that when they first saw Jesus walking out to them the disciples thought it was a ghost. They cried out to God for help. It was a good thing to pray because it was God himself walking out to them. Jesus said to the disciples, “Do not be afraid.” He then got into the boat with them, the winds died down, the storm ceased, and all the disciples were amazed. Just as Jesus is the author and finisher of our faith, he is also the author and finisher of our storms. If you look to him he will get into your boat and calm the troubled seas of your life.

*Peter O’Driscoll is pastor of Orlando Children’s Church, a 501(c)(3) children’s ministry dedicated to reaching at-risk students through physical nourishment, spiritual renewal, and the cultivation of authentic relationships. Every Saturday morning 14 school buses pick up more than 400 elementary-to-high-school-aged children from the poor neighborhoods of Orlando to attend Saturday church at the First Baptist Church of Maitland. More than 100 volunteers, including many Geneva students, help serve the children a free breakfast, supervise outdoor activities, and bring spiritual food to their hungry hearts.*

Amanda Boyle	Valencia College, Florida
Lucy Candeto	University of Central Florida
Katee Gmitro	Oglethorpe University, Georgia
Caroline Gray	Rhodes College
Janzen Harding	University of Florida
Olivia Hutto	University of North Florida, Honors Program
Michael Ikegami	University of Alabama, Honors College
April Jackson	Rollins College, Florida
Daire Jansson	Rollins College, Florida
Caleb Julin	Bryan College, Tennessee
Sam Knight	Florida Institute of Technology
Ansley Miller	Santa Fe College, Florida
Michaela O’Driscoll	Rollins College, Florida Honors Degree Program
Austin Padgett	University of South Carolina
Chad Sconnely	University of Central Florida
AJ Selvaggio	Samford University, Alabama
Ian Seddon	Rollins College, Florida Honors Degree Program
Alyssa Shriner	Florida Southern College
Amelie Streer	University of Florida
Emily Walker	Florida State University
Amanda Wilkes	University of Central Florida
Matthew Yates	University of Central Florida
John Youderian	University of Central Florida



# Geneva Team Wins Third Place at the MATE ROV International Competition

A four-man team comprising two 2012 Geneva graduates, Michael Ikegami and Sam Knight, took third place at the MATE ROV international competition on June 23. They also won the prize for “Outstanding Technical Report.” Over 700 students competed on 55 teams (including teams from Egypt, Russia, UK, and China). Our team of four had a robot with a budget of \$3000 while some teams had as many as 30 students, and one robot was over \$25,000.

2012 marks the eleventh year of the international competition. The event was held at the YMCA Aquatic & Family Center in Orlando, Florida June 21–23, 2012.

The Marine Advanced Technology Education (MATE) Center coordinates an international student underwater robotics (remotely operated vehicle or ROV) competition and a network of



21 regional ROV contests that take place across the United States and in Canada, Hong Kong, Scotland, and Japan. Student teams from upper elementary, middle schools, high schools, home schools, community colleges, universities, and community organizations, such as the Boys and

Girls Club and 4-H, participate. The competition consists of three different “classes” that vary depending on the sophistication of the ROVs and the mission requirements.

Michael and Sam both say their experience in the MATE ROV competition over the last few years has

been one of the most exciting and challenging things they have ever done. They persevered through long afternoons in eleventh grade attempting to develop a control system for the ROV that could be interfaced with an Xbox controller. Then, at the international competition, they managed to stay cool under immense pressure working and sweating over circuit boards until the very last minute, repairing a problem that had prevented their first mission from being successful.

*Congratulations!*



# Come Alongside Award

*Presented by Board Member Crosland Stuart*

Seniors, for the past 17 or 18 years your parents, family, and friends have gladly shepherded and nurtured you towards this day.

We too, at The Geneva School, have had those who were willing to shepherd and encourage us in ways that make this day possible. One person in particular has been at our side for the past 18 years—for as long as you seniors have been alive. This individual has been patient and kind, and he has always been eager to share his expertise and insight. The compound effect of his involvement has greatly benefited The Geneva School.

Professionally, he exhibits much of what we would hope for you—he is dedicated to his craft, he represents excellence in his profession, he finds joy in leveraging his gifts, he is more than generous, and he desires to see others succeed.

Next Tuesday will mark the beginning of the 20th year of The Geneva School and for the last 18 years today's recipient, Alan Frenkel, has helped to ensure that we grow and flourish. For those of you who don't know Alan, he has been our auctioneer since the inception of Geneva's auction. Over the years a conservative estimate is that Alan has helped us to raise more than \$2 million dollars. As a member of the team from Karlin Daniel & Associates since 1994, Alan has participated in hundreds of auctions in the areas of bankruptcy, estates, municipalities, antiques, charities, and business liquidations. Alan's reputation for marketing assets to obtain the highest value has made him known and highly sought after in the legal and financial commu-



*Alan Frenkel receives award from Crosland Stuart*

nities. It is no surprise to us to learn that Alan has earned the Certified Auctioneers Institute designation, which is the highest designation offered in the auction industry and is only held by 15% of all auctioneers—once again confirming that Alan is a cut above and outstanding in his field.

Please join me in showing our appreciation for this year's Come Along Side Award, Mr. Alan Frenkel.

## Upper School End-of-Year Awards

Art (Dialectic): Madeline Noll ('16)

Art (Rhetoric): Amelie Streer ('12)

Biblical Studies (Dialectic): Emma Vargas ('16)

Christian Thought (Lower Rhetoric): Nicole Roy ('14)

Christian Thought (Upper Rhetoric): Daire Jansson ('12)

Classical Language (Dialectic): Stephen Miceli ('16)

Classical Language (Lower Rhetoric): Creed Miller ('14)

Classical Language (Upper Rhetoric): April Jackson ('12)

Drama (Dialectic): Madeline Noll ('16)

Drama (Rhetoric): Emily Walker ('12)

English (Dialectic): Madeline Miller ('16)

English (Lower Rhetoric): Lydia Francis ('14)

English (Upper Rhetoric): Michaela O'Driscoll ('12)

History (Dialectic): Andrew Mathias ('17)

History (Lower Rhetoric): Lydia Francis ('14)

History (Upper Rhetoric): Lily Cloke ('13)

Logic (Dialectic): Madeline Miller ('16)

Mathematics (Dialectic): Catherine Johnson ('16)

Mathematics (Lower Rhetoric): Jacob Farley ('14)

Mathematics (Upper Rhetoric): Michael Ikegami ('12)

Modern Language (Lower Rhetoric): Kaitlyn Hamil ('14)

Modern Language (Upper Rhetoric): Lily Cloke ('13)

Music (Dialectic): Madeline Miller ('16)

Music (Rhetoric): Janzen Harding ('12)

Photography (Rhetoric): Caroline Gray ('12)

Physical Education (Dialectic): Austin Manuel ('16)

Rhetoric (Lower Rhetoric): Patrick Chandler ('15)

Science (Dialectic): Catherine Johnson ('16)

Science (Lower Rhetoric): L.J. Noel ('14)

Science (Upper Rhetoric): Samuel Knight ('12)

Yearbook (Rhetoric): Michael Ikegami ('12)

### NATIONAL FRENCH CONTEST

Lauréat National: Catherine Deuchler ('15)

### DISNEY DREAMERS AND DOERS

Dialectic: Patricia Abely ('17)

Rhetoric: Michaela O'Driscoll ('12)

### THE ORDER OF THE TOWEL

Dialectic: Madeline Miller ('16) and Ben Reynolds ('16)

Rhetoric: Emily Walker ('12) and Danny Downward ('14)

### JUNIOR MARSHALLS

Keller Bright, Lily Cloke, Jordan Stewart



# Charge to the Junior Class

Janzen Harding, Regent of the Rhetoric Roundtable, 2011–2012

It's that time of year again. Anticipation mounts. Excitement brews. Team jerseys are donned. Over three billion people will be watching. It is the 2012 Olympics to which I refer, not this 2012 graduation ... or is it?

Juniors, the Olympics are, in a lot of ways, like graduation. In order to begin the journey, the ceremonial torch is passed on until those who have carried it far and long have the satisfaction of seeing it catch fire and set ablaze the tinder to which it has been set. It is the culmination of years of training and hard work. Participants are modeled and looked up to by the less-experienced enthusiasts. Coaches give final pep talks before sending their pupils out into the performance of their lives. Former champions look on with pride as their apprentices follow in their footsteps. So, Class of 2013, as you prepare to take the torch and step up as the new leaders of The Geneva School, I want you to stick with this Olympian theme by embracing the motto of the Olympics and applying it to your roles as seniors: "*Citius, Altius, Fortius*," swifter, higher, stronger. If you keep these goals in mind, you will exemplify a senior year well worth admiring.

For my purpose, I will mix the order of these to make sense sequentially, beginning with *Fortius*, stronger. As seniors, you will be the most looked-up-to class at the school. Let Paul be your coach when he says in 1 Corinthians 11:1, "Imitate me inasmuch as I imitate Christ." You will be expected to display leadership, a servant's heart, and grace. More prestige is yours, but more responsibility is yours also. Anybody who has been in a position of leadership can relate to the responsibility that comes with such a station. You will be stressed, face struggles, and doubt previously indubitable beliefs. Despair and pride accompany this new responsibility, so you must remember to whom you belong and to whom the glory must be given. Jesus will be your rock through your times of suffering and joy. You must be strong, both mentally and spiritually. You will need to strengthen your faith to succeed. High school isn't just a race; it's a plethora of games which test more than just endurance, and if you're not strong any lack of focus may lower your score or even take you out of the game. *Fortius*.

However, your senior year will depend on more than strength. You must reach higher, *Altius*. Set goals and strive to be better than you already are. Use this opportunity to set an example worthy of being followed. Your class has already set some records in academics and extra-curricular activities, but don't settle. Records are meant to be broken. Set new records in character and ethics. Establish new standards in patience

and service. You do not want to be sitting up here next year, looking back, realizing you could have done more. Leave it all on the floor. Walk out with some medals around your neck. Take challenging classes, hold yourself to high standards, and reach for new levels in your faith. Push yourself. Don't settle for the bronze, chase after the gold. *Altius*.

This brings me to my third point: *Citius*, swifter—as in, your senior year will go by more swiftly than you can imagine. Don't get caught dreaming about the ceremonies at the end of your struggle; you have trained for the actual competition, not the end result! The year will progress in its own time, so don't rush, otherwise in a year you'll be crying to Taylor Swift singing, "Oh darling, don't you ever grow up!" Enjoy your last year of high school. Revel in the moment. Because time is fleeting and this year will fly by, you want to make it count. Leave a legacy. For instance, take advantage of Geneva's connection with Orlando Children's Church and involve other students, or start a new tradition where seniors bond with grammar school students. Be someone's hero. Your time may be short, but your memory can last a lifetime. Senior year is your time to shine, so don't hasten through an already fleeting year. *Citius*.

So class of 2013, get ready to shed your sweats and don your jerseys. You have meticulously practiced, trained, and prepared for this next step. It is time for you to be stronger, reach higher, and live swifter. The gold is yours for the taking. So here's the torch; be an Olympian!

# Salutatorian

Michaela O'Driscoll



We all know the feeling. After hours of devoted study and mental preparation, the day of fate has arrived. While some peacefully rest in the assurance of all their hard work and study, others are uneasy and attempt to cram as much as they can just hours before the test begins. Most of the time, last second cramming is not effective; it is the day in and day out commitment and discipline before a test that will ultimately pay off.

Another test awaits us, but unlike the tests we've experienced before this point, it will be continuous; a daily striving in diligence and perseverance to consistently master it. Our integrity will be challenged and our character called into question. We have been studying and preparing with the help of our parents and teachers, but now it is our turn to take the studying into our own hands. It has become our responsibility, and only by God's grace will we succeed. We must study well and continue to lay a firm foundation, for as the Apostle Paul warns in his first letter to the Corinthians, "... each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done." The fire is imminent. Will our foundation hold up through the blaze? How can we pass the tests?

If we care about standing firm and enduring through the fire that awaits,

we must remember three things as we leave this place: to unceasingly find our confidence and identity in Christ, to not squander on vain pursuits the abilities with which God has blessed us, and to not limit by our own pride and narrow perspective the ways in which God can use us.

At this point in our lives we feel invincible, assured of our foundation and certain of what lies ahead. While confidence is good, we must make sure it is in the right thing; we must make sure this confidence is in God. If we rely on our own strength we will fail. Only when we faithfully seek God's will for our lives, whatever that may be, will we be fulfilled. We must also find our identity first and foremost in Christ. All else is temporary; all else is uncertain and changing. Only Christ and what we have allowed him to achieve through us will remain in the end.

He desires to bring forth his kingdom in us and that is why he has given us much: opportunities inconceivable to most and loving parents and teachers who have helped us along so far. He has bestowed on each of us the gifts of leadership, service, and wisdom. He has entrusted us with these for a reason. We have been given the chance to affect people for the better and to show them the love of Christ, but this might mean sacrificing our own ambitions and selfish desires. We often do not know how he will use us—perhaps it will be in a way we least expect or by humbling us that he will achieve his will.

God has given me the opportunity to be a part of a children's ministry in town. Every week, we sing songs and worship with the kids. It has been a struggle lately to keep everything running smoothly because our sound system is outdated and ends up malfunctioning mid-song most of the time. It was one of those weeks; nothing was going right. There was a constant buzz in the speaker and the projector was not working properly. I was frustrated and

embarrassed for my own sake. In the midst of the chaos, I looked down and saw a small and poorly dressed young girl singing and praising God with all her heart. I couldn't bear it; I sat down and began to cry. Who am I to hinder the work of God in the lives of these kids for the sake of my own pride? God can use anyone and any situation to reach people. If that means humbling me, so be it. Let us remind ourselves of this daily. A seemingly insignificant action can have a monumental impact in the life of a person. God's will can be achieved in and through our weakest moments. For this reason, we must consistently seek God in all areas of life and in every pursuit.

In Latin class this year, we read the poet Virgil and his story of the travels and struggles of Aeneas to eventually found the glorious city of Rome. Along the way, Aeneas was blown off course and he and his men ended up in the north African city of Carthage. While this wasn't Aeneas' end, it certainly was a necessary and helpful step in awakening and rekindling his *pietas*: "his dutiful conduct toward the gods, his parents, country, benefactors, or anyone else to whom he had any obligation." Geneva has been a necessary and vital foundation in awakening our *pietas* toward God, our parents, our fellow Christians, and toward the City of God. It is in this city that we must daily strive to be active and dutiful citizens. Though Carthage was instrumental in reminding Aeneas of his ultimate duty and a necessary part of his journey to achieve his destined end, it was not the end of his story. In the same way, we would not be the people we are today without Geneva. But Geneva's end is not to instruct and embolden us so we can sit stagnant within its walls. Our purpose waits for us out there. Let us not linger in Carthage. We are bound for a greater city.

Class of 2012, it is our turn now to rise up as the people of God in a broken world. Let us walk boldly in Christ's will all the days of our lives.

# Valedictorian

Michael Ikegami



Sometime around the fifth grade, my parents gave me the best gift a ten year old boy could have asked for: a room to myself. My father, an architect and the son of an engineer, used this gift not only to save my brother from my habit of talking in my sleep, but also to teach me about building. But today, I'll spare you from a speech about laying foundations or measuring twice before cutting once; instead, I'm here to talk to you about paint.

I remember it distinctly: it was a hot summer day (we all know the kind), and before me was a pile of dark brown, scuffed baseboards; two dilapidated sawhorses; an old, stiff paintbrush; and a can of high-quality, brilliant-white paint. Something here didn't fit: why would I be wasting such pricey pigment on these old beaten baseboards? My dad's answer was simple: thicker paint comes at a higher cost, but it only takes one coat to get the job done.

My friends, today we will be leaving this school to paint weathered baseboards. The equipment we've been given is not much different

than the graduates of the other forty thousand high schools across the country: outside of Geneva, any change in mechanical energy still equals the work done by non-conservative forces, Socrates was still placed on trial, and Thoreau still took his trip to Walden Pond. As graduates of The Geneva School we have been blessed with unbelievably unique education experiences—studying logic, Latin, and philosophy, in addition to writing theses and learning rhetoric—but the world we are entering as we leave Geneva is no different than the world other graduates across the country are preparing to enter.

This world we live in is far from pristine. In fact, it has been scuffed, scratched, and graffitied. It is a world where the madman is no longer the one who cries in the street, "God is dead,"—rather, it is he who claims that Christ has risen. It is a world where people are addicted, hurting, and sold into slavery; where disease kills and people are murdered. There is real evil in the world—and it doesn't take a Christian to realize it. But let's not forget that today we are receiving something more important than a piece of paper, a seat in a college class, or a new method by which we can wage war on the world's problems. We have been formed to love and serve Christ. My friends, we have rich and thick paint.

Where others will try to change the world by force, we can change it by grace. Where economic or political revolutions fail, we have the love

of Christ. Where other paints take multiple coats, ours covers all. And though it comes at a much higher cost, take heart, my friends, for Christ has overcome the world. As St. Augustine states, "... he who does not love believes in vain, *even if what he believes is true* ... unless he believes and hopes for this: that he may through prayer obtain the gift of love."

Hold fast to Christ's love. Remember that, just as Christ has changed us, he can change others too. Remember that we love because he first loved us; that our riches are not of this world; that love covers a multitude of sins; and that our paint is different than the paint with which the world paints. Don't let trials, persecution, or doubt supersede the gifts you've been given. Work hard *solī deo gloria*; work to change the world. But work through Christ—not solely through money, or fame, or power, but through his love.

Class of 2012, let's not leave this place thinking that our work is done: we have lives to invest in, people to care for, pains to heal, and callings to fulfill. Rather, let's cross this stage knowing that we are going to paint different baseboards; that they are as scratched and beaten as ever; but, most importantly, that wherever we go, Christ has already gone ahead of us and that it is his love that heals the wounds of the world and pardons our offenses. My friends, we have been given thick paint at a very high cost; let's put it to good use.

# Paying Attention

*Commencement Address delivered by Ms. Cherie Harder, President of the Trinity Forum*

*Friday, May 25, 2012*



First, congratulations are in order.

Graduates, you are to be doubly congratulated today—not just for graduating from high school, but for graduating from *this* school, The Geneva School. For you have completed your studies and are graduating from a school not merely dedicated to training you to be an employable worker, but from a school committed to cultivating, educating, and ennobling the entirety of who you are—as a person made in the image of God, with talents, strengths, abilities, imagination, an inborn wiring for relationship, and a latent capacity to know and to love that which is true, beautiful, and good. To graduate from such a school is not to be equipped for a good job, or even a good college, but a good life.

Your teachers, supported by your parents, have introduced you to the accumulated wisdom of thousands of years of civilization. You have studied the words, the works, and the lives of some of the most profound, imaginative, and eloquent men and women in all history. And some of you have even finished The Geneva Capstone, where you wrote

and then defended a thesis, and as part of the Western Narrative Project, synthesized the entirety of Western Civilization.

And so, it is hard to imagine what more can be added now. So I'll offer one modest form of encouragement for the very exciting years ahead, which is simply this: pay attention. Or, more specifically, pay attention to the content that you consume, to the friends that you keep, and to the stewardship of your life and loves.

Why is this important? As one neuroscientist said recently, "Attention can be considered the ignition key of the mind. A vast array of our mental and physical actions follow what we attend to." In other words, what we choose to pay attention to is freighted with moral, intellectual, and even spiritual import.

Paying attention may be simple, but it is certainly not easy. In fact it is probably more difficult now than it ever has been. Many things compete for our time and attention and more than ever before, it is the cultural norm to spend our lives distracted.

Neilsen, a global marketing and advertising research company, found that the average American actually spends more time consuming entertainment than at work. The average teenager sends or receives more than 3,300 texts each month—or more than six per waking hour.

Where does this leave us? For many of us we are working more hours than ever before, but we are more likely to be in debt. We call, we email, we text, and we Skype more than ever, but we are also more likely to complain of loneliness or broken relationships. We have access to oceans of information, but can't focus and can't make sense of it. Left to drift in the cultural stream, we are quite likely to wind up, in the words of one sociologist, "fat, addicted, broke, with a house full of junk, and no time."

Distraction will keep you from focusing on what matters most. It will keep you from investing in that which is most valuable. It will keep you from taking on the big challenges, which you may be called to by God. It will distort your outlook, and dissipate your energies.

Of course, it doesn't have to be this way. But to avoid it requires intentionality. Your school has already modeled this for you by intentionally choosing to focus not on this fad, or that trend, or the job skill *du jour*, but on the best of what Western Civilization has to offer.

**For the years ahead, one area that I encourage you to pay attention to is the content you consume.** For the last several years, you have been fed extraordinary food for thought. But now, you will increasingly make your own decisions about the books you read, the articles you skim, the texts you reply to, the internet sites that you surf, and so on. And the content you consume will not only affect *what* you think about, but *how* you think. After all, there is a reason why advertising is a multi-billion dollar industry. What we hear and pay attention to, even if for just ten seconds, actually has a demonstrable impact on what we buy. Moreover, there is much evidence to suggest that much of the entertainment that we focus on affects who we are in really quite frightening ways. For example, the more violent entertainment people watch, the more aggressive they become, the more desensitized to

the pain of others they become, and the more likely they are to subscribe to what has been called “mean world” syndrome—the mistaken view that the world is actually more violent, harsher, and meaner than it actually is.

The stories that we read shape our moral imagination—for good or ill. Many of you are probably fans of C.S. Lewis and may remember from *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* the crisis that happened when Eustace confronted a dragon for the first time and didn't know what to do. C.S. Lewis adds as an aside that this was because Eustace had never read any of the right stories. So, when confronted with a moral danger, he simply was not equipped.

If you let yourselves drift in the cultural stream the content that you are most likely to consume will be the mediocre, the trivial, the violent, and the pornographic. There is, much like junk food, a diet of junk that can ruin your capacity to recognize and appreciate what is truly great. There is a reason why no one eats a Twinkie before an excellent glass of wine. The reason is that junk, even in



small amounts, can distort and even ruin your ability to recognize and to fully appreciate that which is truly complex, magical, and invaluable, even when it is right under your nose.

Now, this is not to say that ideas, arguments, and artistic statements that you disagree with shouldn't be listened to, understood, and engaged. They can, and should. Many of you will be going off to colleges where you will encounter opposition on a daily, if not hourly basis. As a college student myself, one of my roommates was the college president of Campus Crusade and the other was the president of the Harvard Civil Liberties Union. It was an education in and of itself! Such challenges are not to be feared at all; they are to be understood and they are to be engaged. However, there is a world of difference between passive consumption and active engagement.

**A second area to pay attention to is the friends you keep.** I mean this both in the sense of paying attention to what sort of friends you keep, and in the sense of paying attention to and investing in keeping the friends you love. The Bible has a great deal to



say about friendships and advises that we often take on the characteristics of our companions. And indeed, there is growing healthcare and neurological evidence for this spiritual truth—that we, as social creatures, tend to take on the habits, practices, attitudes, and assumptions of our friends. We are relational creatures, formed for and formed by relationship, and we will be changed by those that we choose to befriend.

But, just as one should pay attention to the friends they make, it is just as important to pay attention to keeping those friends. Last night, I heard from several different sources the depth of the friendships you have formed while you have been here at Geneva. I encourage you to invest in sustaining those friendships. The friends you have made over the last couple of years may well be your friends for life. There are few joys in life that rival that of a long and seasoned friendship.

Sociologist and columnist David Brooks put it this way, “The deeper the relationships a person has, the happier he or she will be.” People are pretty bad at judging what will make them happy—they tend to vastly overvalue work, money, and real estate and vastly undervalue intimate bonds and the importance of arduous challenges.

**This leads me to the third point: pay attention to the stewardship of your life.** There is often a misconception that good stewardship somehow involves being cautious and playing it safe, shying away from risk or challenge. Of course this is not supported biblically. In the parable of the talents, you will recall, the two who went out and invested the talents they were given, who took risk, grew those talents and were the ones who were commended. The one who played it safe, who held it close to his vest and

buried his talent in the ground, was the one who was chastised.

Each of us has been given different talents, abilities, capacities, and imagination to give, to invest, and to engage. It is way too easy to think small. Indeed, it is the cultural norm to simply not give it much thought at all—to drift with the cultural current, to do what is comfortable, what is common. But, the Bible is full of examples of God calling someone to something far more wonderful than they could ever have imagined. However, the first thing they had to do was leave their comfort zone. It is very difficult to predict where you will be called or the challenges that you will face, but one can prepare.

One of the things we like to do at The Trinity Forum is provide leaders with stories that communicate truths about what is possible by showing what is actual. The real life stories of men and women throughout history can help us fire up the imagination about what is possible. Many of you have probably read Martin Luther King’s, *The Letter from the Birmingham Jail*. When thrown into jail with no paper, he drew not on

current policy statements but upon a classical education—on Augustine, Aquinas, and Bunyan—to write his arguments on scrap paper and toilet paper. Dietrich Bonhoeffer went back to Germany in the midst of great uncertainty and great danger, not knowing what the future held, not having any precedent to follow, but knowing that God had called him there. Florence Nightingale flouted the proprietary standards of the time of what a woman’s role was and went against the cultural current to become a nurse, completely revitalizing the entire industry and saving thousands of lives.

Your story will be your own. Many people have poured much into you—their love, their care, their encouragement, an extraordinary education, and an appreciation of what is good, true, and beautiful. There are exciting times ahead—times of opportunity, growth, exploration, and discovery. Steward them well. Pay attention. And congratulations!

*Cherie Harder’s address to the Class of 2012 can be listened to online at: <http://www.genevaschool.org/about-us/audio>*





# Order of the Towel

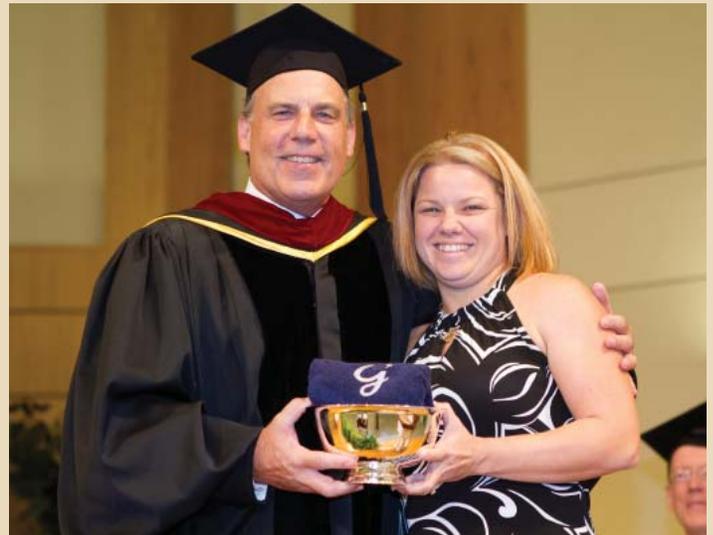
Presented by Headmaster Robert Ingram

The HMS Indefatigable was a 64-gun ship of the line commissioned in 1784 by the British Royal Navy. Her long and distinguished career was immortalized by both the Horatio Hornblower series and the more recently acclaimed sea-faring novels of Patrick O'Brien. The Indie, as she was more affectionately called, was so named because of the indomitable energy she always projected in the service of her king.

I love the sound of the word “indefatigable” as it rolls off the tongue. Even more I love to be around people who have boundless energy, who seemingly cannot be exhausted no matter how long or arduous the work they engage.

Today we have the opportunity to award the Order of the Towel to a person whose name ought to be “Indie” because of the indomitable energy she always projects in the Christian service of her King.

The Order of the Towel is named to commemorate Christ's selfless act of devotion on the night of the Last Supper. Gathered together with his disciples, Jesus girded himself with a towel and proceeded to wash the feet of each one. This legacy of servant leadership is unparalleled in the scriptures but is nonetheless a model for each of us to emulate. Annually at graduation, The Geneva School

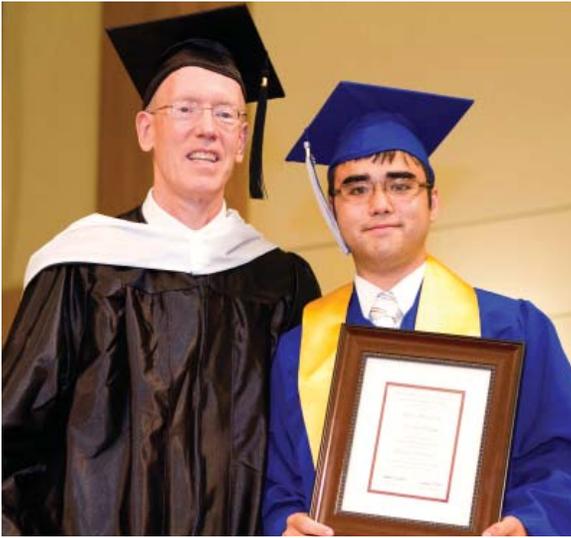


*Kelly Mathias with Headmaster Robert Ingram*

acknowledges the servant leadership demonstrated by a parent within the school community.

This year's recipient has boundless energy in the service of others. There is no realm or domain or project in the life of the school that does not bear her strong but gentle touch. From the Fall Festival to the Auction to service projects to homeroom duties to office assistance she seems ubiquitous. Her love to serve, to volunteer rather than having to be sought out and coaxed, is exceeded only by her gracious and willing spirit.

Join with me as we acknowledge the Indefatigable Kelly Mathias.



## *L*iteris Award

Given to the senior who best appreciates, appropriates, and applies the ideals of classical education, informed by the liberal arts tradition of The Geneva School, the Literis Award is a \$750 scholarship granted by the board of governors upon the recommendation of the administration and rhetoric faculty.

*Dean of Faculty Jim Reynolds presents the Literis Award to Michael Ikegami*

## *F*ide Award

Given to the senior who manifests in thought, word, and deed a sincere commitment to the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, informed by the Reformational distinctives of The Geneva School, the Fide Award is a \$750 scholarship granted by the board of governors upon the recommendation of the administration and rhetoric faculty.

*Dean of Faculty Jim Reynolds presents the Fide Award to Michaela O'Driscoll*

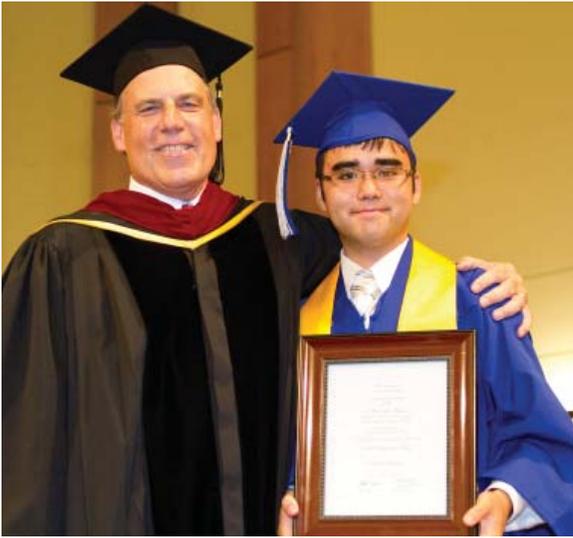


## *I*mago Award for Fine and Performing Arts

Given to the seniors whose vibrant imaginations, remarkable skillfulness, and creative works in the fine arts and the performing arts best imitate the artistry of our creator, the Imago Awards are \$500 scholarships funded by private individuals upon the recommendation of the administration and the rhetoric faculty.

*Board member Dan Pugh presents the Imago awards to Alyssa Shriner (Fine Arts) and Emily Walker (Performing Arts)*





## Capstone Award

The award for the most outstanding thesis recognizes that student who best exemplifies the scholarly and rhetorical qualities that The Geneva Capstone seeks to foster: thorough research, knowledgeable inquiry, persuasive writing, and cogent and thoughtful speech. The \$1000 scholarship is funded by private individuals upon the recommendation of the thesis directors and headmaster.

*Headmaster Rev. Robert Ingram presents the Capstone Award to Michael Ikegami*

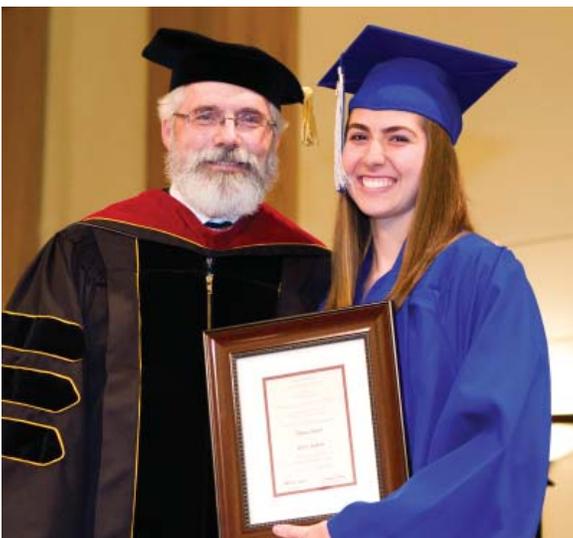
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## Quest Award

This award is presented to graduating students who have completed thirteen years of Christian classical education at The Geneva School from kindergarten through twelfth grade.



*Dean of Students Dr. Mike Beates presents the Quest Award to (counter-clockwise from left) Lucy Candeto, April Jackson, Amanda Wilkes (Geneva DeLand and The Geneva School), and Chad Sconnely (Geneva DeLand and The Geneva School).*



# Back-to-School Events

## Senior College Prep Boot Camp

Friday, July 27 • 9:00 am–4:00 pm

*College applications, application essays, interviewing, Naviance, resumes, etc.*

## New Parent Orientation

Monday, August 13 • 7:00–8:30 pm

**In the gym at the main campus**

*New parents, don't miss this very important informational meeting. Please have at least one parent present to represent your family. No childcare is provided.*

## Rhetoric Retreat at Southwind Younglife Camp

August 15–17

*Rhetoric students should be at school by 8:00 am on the 15th. They will return by 3:00 pm on the 17th.*

## Meet-the-Teacher

Wednesday, August 15 • 1:00–3:00 pm

*For students in grades pre-K–6*

## Back-to-School Skate Night

Saturday, August 18 • 5:00–7:00 pm

Semoran Skateway on 436 in Casselberry

*\$6 for all skaters (free for non-skaters)*

*Tickets available August 15 from the front office*

## New Moms' Coffee

Friday, August 24 • 8:30–10:00 am

*After morning drop-off at Aloma Church Round out the second week of school with a time to meet other new mothers and hear some words of wisdom from a few "veteran" Geneva moms.*

## Fall Open Houses & Special Meetings

Monday, August 20 • 7:00–9:00 pm

*Open House for parents of 6th–9th grade students*

Monday, August 27 • 7:00–8:30 pm

*Open House for parents of 10th–12th grade students*

Wednesday, August 29 • 7:00–8:30 pm

*Open House for parents of 1st–5th grade students*

Tuesday, September 4 • 7:00–8:30 pm

*Open House for parents of pre-K & K students*

Tuesday, September 11 • 7:00–8:30 pm

*Math in Focus meeting for parents of 2nd–6th grade students*

## Fall Senior Dinner

Friday, September 7 • 6:00 pm

*Interlachen Country Club*

*For all senior students and their parents*

The Geneva School  
2025 State Road 436  
Winter Park, FL 32792

