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## A truthful knight's tale

Kathleen Higgins/Post-Register  
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*The Knights of Veritas, a traveling educational organization, aims to clear up misconceptions of medieval knights.*

A medieval battle took place last week in the small province of Quincy.

Local parents and children gathered at the site of the future Quincy library on Wednesday. They were all there to see the Knights of Veritas. The knights come out of Moses Lake and are affiliated with a nonprofit educational organization.

The knights are a work of Eric Slyter, who began his medieval quest when he was a child, then later progressed through medieval theater. Slyter started the Knights of Veritas in 2004 after he began teaching a German longsword class.

ADVERTISEMENT Slyter said his goal is to "give an historically accurate portrayal of medieval knights, not feed the misconceptions."

Slyter and his opponent, Justin Monk, one of Slyter's longsword students, along with assistant Rebekka VanDerDoes, discussed the characteristics of a knight and what it means to be truly chivalrous. Slyter asked the children questions about what they thought a knight was. Answers came back as, "noble," "brave," "chivalrous" and "kind."

Slyter focuses on the teachings and fighting of Johannes Lichtenauer, a 14th century German swordsman.

When the fighting got under way, Slyter and Monk explained the different swords and uniforms they had. Slyter's suit was custom made, but is historically accurate, as were all the weapons and other armor. Eric's first task was to explain the difference between stage combat and real combat by performing two fights and asking the audience which was real and why.

He then moved on to teaching the children about the four guards that are used in the Lichtenauer type of fighting, from the roof, horns of the ox, the plow and the fool.

The children were asked after every fight which guard was used and whether either knight was in danger. Slyter explained the geometry, leverage and math involved in sword fighting.

To emphasize his point, he asked for two volunteers from the audience, 9-year-old Brandon Melburn and 12-year-old Deva Kirk.

These two participants were matched up against 18-year-old, 160-pound Monk, and they won through the simple use of leverage.

"Bigger and stronger does not always prevail," Slyter said.

After Slyter and Monk fought without armor, they began to suit up and explain what each piece of armor was called and what it protected.

Slyter showed the children the weaknesses in the armor: the armpits, eye slots, wrist cuffs and behind the knee.

When questioned about the armor being heavy or hurting, Slyter said, "The armor is quite comfortable. All I can feel is a vibration when I'm hit, but it's really hot."

In the end, Slyter explained that the code of chivalry is not dead.

"Does armor or a sword make a knight? No, it's bravery," he said, pointing to his heart.

"What cannot be bought or sold dwells in here."

For more information about Slyter's German longsword class, visit [germanlongsword.com](http://germanlongsword.com), and for more on the Knights of Veritas, visit [www.knightsofveritas.org](http://www.knightsofveritas.org) or call 509-855-1500.

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