

View Points

JPII STUDENTS SELECTED FOR ALL-STATE CHOIRS

A record number of Pope John Paul II High School students have been selected for the prestigious Tennessee All-State Choirs.

A total of 16 students were selected for the choirs, including six for the SSAA Choir, which is an all-women's choir, three for the TTBB Choir, which is an all-men's choir, and seven for the SATB Choir, which is a mixed choir of men and women. Four more qualified as alternates for the SATB Choir. More than 500 students from 58 Middle Tennessee high schools participated in the competitive audition process. The only Middle Tennessee school to have more students qualify was Cookeville High School.

JPII students who qualified for the 180 member SATB Choir were: Kathleen Callahan, first soprano; Gabrielle Pare, second soprano; Katie Colwell, first alto; Brendan Melcher, first tenor; Foster McDaniel, second tenor; Daniel Steele, first bass, Jeremy Wilson, second bass. Qualifying alternates were: Audrey Colwell, first alto; Samantha May, second alto, Martin Strobel, second tenor; and Austin Dages, second tenor. Qualifying for the 96-member TTBB Choir were: Andrew Carr, first tenor; Will Maddox, first bass, and Zach Strehlau, second bass. Qualifying for the 120-member SSAA Choir were: Annie Scruggs, first soprano; Bre Wood, first soprano; Erin Inman, second soprano, Dymphna Nuestro, second soprano; Anna Robertson, first alto; and Lindsey Rousselle, first alto.

The Tennessee All-State Bands, Choirs and Orchestras, which are sponsored by the Tennessee Music Education Association, will gather at the Renaissance Hotel in Nashville April 15-18 for rehearsals and performances. The various choirs will perform their final concerts on Saturday, April 18, at War Memorial Auditorium in Nashville. Jj Ebelhar, JPII's choral instructor, serves as the State Ensemble Chair for the SSAA Choir.



Mark your calendar for the JPII Peoplechase

Make plans now to attend the Sixth Running of the JPII Peoplechase at 6 p.m. Friday, May 1, at Bluegrass Yacht and Country Club in Hendersonville. As always, the Peoplechase will feature a live and silent auction, dinner, dancing and a fun time with friends, all done with a Derby theme.

The Peoplechase is a fundraiser for JPII, and there are several ways you can help, including being a volunteer, donating an auction item, being a corporate sponsor, or buying an advertisement in the program – \$ 500 for a full page and \$250 for a half page.

For more information about sponsorships, donating an auction item, or advertising, contact Jo Lind Weaver at (615) 590-6008 or jolind.weaver@jp2hs.org.

JPII PEOPLE: SCHOOL CONNECTION

We hope to highlight the high school careers of some of our students with reference to their "feeder school."

St. John Vianney School

As students at St. John Vianney School in Gallatin, Lily Carter and Sean Sooker knew lots of people at JPII, whether it was former classmates, neighbors, or some of the high school's faculty with children at their elementary school. So picking JPII for high school last year was an easy choice for them and most of their eighth grade class. "Our school sort of followed JPII," Lily said.

Three-fourths of the way through their freshman year at JPII, they can recall their first days at the school. "I expected it to be a lot harder" than elementary school, Sean said, "which it is. It kind of expands your learning horizon." The class work at JPII is "what I expected," Lily said. "It's a good amount of work."

Another noticeable difference at JPII from St. John Vianney is the size of the school and the student body, Lily said. "It feels much bigger" than St. John Vianney, she said. Getting used to the jump in size "was easier than I expected it to be. I thought I would get lost." But both she and Sean said they were able to adapt quickly.

Helping them adapt were their friends at JPII, both old and new. "I knew a lot of people who were here already," said Lily, the daughter of Dr. Mark and Stefanie Carter. "They were excited we were going to go here," Lily said.

Before he arrived at JPII, Sean heard much about the school's academic expectations for its students and it's "more than" lived up to what he was told. But both he and Lily felt they were well prepared for JPII by the teachers at St. John Vianney.

And they've found new friends are easy to make at JPII. "You meet people pretty quickly," said Sean, the son of John and Colleen Sooker. "I feel comfortable here," Lily said. "It's easy to socialize and make friends."

The advice Sean would give students preparing to attend JPII next fall would be "definitely do your homework or you'll fall behind." He added, "Don't freak out, just try and you'll be alright."

JPII people ... Lily Carter and Sean Sooker.



JPII ATHLETES INK COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS

Three Pope John Paul II seniors announced on National Signing Day that they will continue their athletic careers in college before family, friends, faculty, students and television cameras. Wesley Tate announced he would attend Vanderbilt University on a football scholarship; Devin Wilson accepted a scholarship offer to play football for Tennessee State University; and Kathy Musacchio will play soccer at East Tennessee State University.

Wesley, the leading rusher for JPII for the last two seasons, and an all-state running back, is a defending state champion in the 100 meters. The Commodores' winning record and win in the Music City Bowl last season helped lure Wesley to West End Avenue, he said. "Wesley is a good, prototype SEC tailback," JPII Head Coach Jeff Brothers said. "He has great size, great speed, great hands, he can block, break tackles, and he has the ability to score from a distance." But Wesley brings more than physical gifts to the football team, Coach Brothers said. "He's more

than just the statistics that show up on the sheet." He was a hard worker and was a leader, according to Coach Brothers. "That will be hard to replace."

Devin Wilson, a wide receiver and defensive back at JPII, was attracted to TSU because of the wide open passing offense they employ, he said. He'll play wide receiver in college. "He's a guy that kind of went under the radar because of injuries," Coach Brothers said. "He has great size and great hands," and is a physical blocker as a receiver, the coach added.

Kathy Musacchio is headed to an up-and-coming soccer program at East Tennessee State University, she said. But academics also helped attract her to the school. "They have a really good biology program," she said. "I'm really interested in biology."

Kathy plays midfield on the soccer team and helped JPII reach the state tournament semi-finals last fall.

A SEASON OF FIRSTS FOR WRESTLING TEAM

The 2008-09 season for the JPII wrestling team was a year of firsts, said Coach Billy Whitaker. For the first time, the team won a tournament, had four wrestlers place in the state tournament, and had its highest finish in the team standings of the state tournament. "It was a good year," Whitaker said.

The Knights were lead by senior co-captain and four year starter Thomas Garbarino, who was named by the Middle Tennessee wrestling coaches to the Dream Team at 119 pounds. Thomas finished the season with a sixth place finish in the Division II Wrestling Individuals State Tourney – the second year in a row he has medaled – and a 32-7 record. For his career at JPII, he amassed a 140-37 record.

"He's been a great leader. He's had a great work ethic," Whitaker said. "He's a great student, he's a good athlete. He's a great person. ... I know whatever he does, he's going to be successful." Other Knights who medaled in the state tournament included:

- Junior Danny Mogan, who placed fifth at 125 pounds. "Danny peaked at the right time," Coach Whitaker said. "He had a solid season, but he wrestled his last couple matches as good as he wrestled all year."

- Sophomore Brandon Marino, who placed sixth at 130 pounds. It was the second straight year Brandon medaled at the state tournament, finishing sixth at 125 pounds last year.

REGISTRATION OPEN FOR JPII AT KNIGHT

This is Pope John Paul II's third year with its adult education program, JPII at Knight. The program has wonderful offerings again this spring, including: The Biblical Roots of Catholicism, Spanish Conversation, Creative Writing, Finding Your Singing Voice, Adult Fitness Clinic, Helping Your Student to Study, and a class in financial budgeting called, More Month than Money? Spanish begins Thursday, March 26, the other classes

begin March 31 (with the exception of More Month than Money? which meets three Thursdays beginning April 2 and is only \$25!)

Please call (615) 822-2375 for a flyer or go on line to our website and click on "ALL NEWS" then scroll down until you can open the flyer. For more information, you may also email: ginger.farry@jp2hs.org

Library hosts Writers Café

Pope John Paul II High School students, parents, faculty and staff enjoyed a Writers Café evening in February, showcasing students' poems, essays and songs.

The library was transformed into an intimate café with candlelit votives handcrafted by Colleen McCormick's 3-D art students. Theatre student Matt Self constructed a dramatically lit brick wall backdrop for the readers. The audience enjoyed appetizers featuring recipes from "The Relay for Life Cookbook" – sales of the cookbook benefits cancer research. The Global Humanities student organization sold Fair Trade coffee and chocolate.

Highlights of the evening included Nashville Country Music songwriter Steve Nelson, who performed a song he co-wrote with JPII Junior Sean Druffel. The song, "My Season with the Team," described Sean's fun year with the JPII basketball team.

Some of the poems were written by juniors and seniors in Richard Stephenson's Creative Writing class as well as Jennifer Smith's AP English class. Other submissions were written in classes such as Social Justice. A poem by Tiffany Davis entitled "No, Not My Baby Girl" described the plight of a mother forced into the sex trade in Asia. Anna Robertson was inspired by her experiences volunteering at a senior citizen home and composed a song about a woman who suffered from Alzheimer's Disease.

Freshmen as well as sophomores also performed their writings. Sang-doe Lee, sophomore, performed a poem entitled "Sheep" that described conforming to peer pressure. Senior Jackson Mooneyham provided a humorous moment with his satiric essay "On the Importance of Cutting the Grass."

The Writers Café was sponsored by the JPII Librarians and the Teen Read Advisory members Danielle Coluccio, Mimi Glass, Thomas Koen, Cecilia Lavoie, Briana Keightley, Ashlyn Keightley, Joey McWhorter and Ashley Montgomery.

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For schedule
information
visit the
school
website:

www.jp2hs.org

DEACON EDWARDS HAS HELPED SHAPE JP II

What is most appealing about Pope John Paul II High School, according to Deacon Brian Edwards, the school's campus minister and theology department chair, is it challenges the students, it emphasizes liturgy on a weekly basis, and it provides a well-rounded education. Deacon Edwards has been part of building the well-rounded education and high academic standards since before the school opened for students.



Deacon Brian Edwards

Deacon Edwards was working as a licensed clinical social worker at a mental health center when plans for the new high school were being discussed. "I inquired about a position as a teacher and campus minister," he explained. "I loved what I was doing but I loved the idea of being here" as the school was being built.

One of his first responsibilities was to create the theology department curriculum and campus ministries. At JP II, students are required to take theology classes all four years, including Scripture as freshman, church history as sophomores, morality and social justice as juniors, and apologetics and Christology as seniors. His goal in building the theology curriculum was to make sure when students graduate from JP II and head off to college they understand and can defend what the church teaches or at least recognize misunderstandings others might have about the Church. College can be a time when students will be most challenged about what the church teaches and their faith, he said.

As campus minister, Deacon Edwards organizes the Communion services and Masses before school, prepares the all-school liturgies, prepares students for the various ministries needed to celebrate Mass, organizes activities such as the Sacrament of Reconciliation, Eucharistic Adoration and the Stations of the Cross, and coordinates each of the class retreats every year.

Deacon Edwards and the rest of the school's faculty and staff must find a balance of promoting the school's Catholic identity while being open to the non-Catholic students. The goal, he said, "is to be unapologetically Catholic yet recognizing the brotherhood of all Christians." When a non-Catholic student asks questions about the Catholic faith, Deacon Edwards said, "I respect their faith like I expect them to respect mine."

His faith has been an important part of his life. "Ever since I was a child, I thought I was called to be a priest," Deacon Edwards said. "In hindsight, I was called to an ordained ministry, but it wasn't the priesthood."

After graduating from Father Ryan High School, Deacon Edwards entered the seminary at St. Ambrose College in Davenport, Iowa. He left the seminary after graduating with degrees in theology and English.

After time as a teacher at St. Bernard Academy, Deacon Edwards became a licensed clinical social worker. In the mid-1990s, the Diocese of Nashville organized a class for men interested in being ordained as permanent deacons. Even before he and his wife, Cathye, married, he said, they talked about the possibility of him becoming a deacon if the opportunity ever presented itself. After four years of study, he was ordained a permanent deacon in 1999, and has served since at St. Edward Parish in Nashville.

"I love being a deacon," he said. "I'm a husband and a dad first, then I'm a deacon. Yet deacon is what defines me in many ways in my role here."

KAREN PHILLIPS NAMED 2009 OUTSTANDING AP TEACHER

Karen Phillips, dean of studies at JP II, has been named the 2009 Outstanding AP Teacher of the Year in the Southern Region of the College Board. "We're thrilled for Karen," said JP II Headmaster Faustin Weber. "She's an exceptionally professional, competent and caring woman. I have relied on her heavily in my first year here." Ms. Phillips traveled to Atlanta to receive her honor on Feb. 20.

Ms. Phillips began teaching Advanced Placement classes while teaching at Gallatin High School. When she joined the staff at JP II before the school opened, she made AP classes an important part of the curriculum. The Advanced Placement program offers college-level courses to high school students. Students in the AP courses take a national exam at the end of the school year, and depending on their score, can earn college credit. Besides the opportunity to earn college credits while still in high school, Ms. Phillips said, the program produces students more prepared for college classes and gives them the opportunity to move into advanced level courses in college.

"Even if students don't pass the national exam, they've required themselves to work through a faster pace and a more demanding class," Ms. Phillips said. The AP classes give students a deeper, richer high school experience, she added.

The program also provides the faculty excellent opportunities

for professional development, said Ms. Phillips, who teaches the AP European History class at JP II. And it allows JP II to measure its success teaching against schools from across the country. "It's as close to a national curriculum as anything out there," she said.



Karen Phillips

JP II is approved to offer 20 different AP courses in English, social studies, math, science, and the fine arts. "We're at the point right now where 70 percent of our graduates have taken at least one AP exam" while at JP II, Ms. Phillips said. Last spring nearly 80 percent of JP II students taking AP tests received passing grades, including 28 students who earned the highest score of 5 on the AP calculus test.

"We've had great success with AP classes," Ms. Phillips said, and she wants to expand the program. What sets AP students apart is their desire to push and stretch themselves academically, Ms. Phillips said. "I think that stretching is good for them," she said. "Students feel good when they have been successful and worked hard."

KNIGHTS FALL JUST SHORT OF HOCKEY THREE-PEAT

JP II's reign as the king of the hockey mountain ended this year, when the Knights quest for a third straight state championship fell one game short.

After Father Ryan ended the Knights' season with a 4-1 win in the Predators Cup final, JP II Head Coach Bjorn Svedin thanked his team for three great seasons. "We were in six straight finals," including the GNASH Cup tournament to name the Middle Tennessee champion and the Predators Cup tournament for the state championship, he said. "That's a strong statement," Coach Svedin said.

With the end of the season came the close of the high school hockey careers of eight seniors: Captain Ryan Sterrett, Finn McCarthy, Lucas Svedin, Jacob Bourget, Ben Lafrancois, Jeremy Polman, Ricky Corazza and Wade Booker. "I coached some of these kids in in-line 10 years ago," Coach Svedin said. "It's a tight group."

"I think JP II builds character" by stressing discipline and academics, said Coach Svedin, who stepped down as coach at the end of the season. Not only do team members shine on the ice, but in the classroom as well, he said, noting that several of the seniors are headed to top academic universities



Coach Bjorn Svedin shakes hands with Knights Captain Ryan Sterrett and the rest of the team after the Predators Cup championship game.

next year. "It's a brain trust in the locker room. Trust me," Coach Svedin said. "They're smart."

While the team will be losing a large senior class, a lot of good young players will be back. "JP II will be good," Coach Svedin said. Among the returning players are Taylor Holmes, Denver Williams, Anthony Golio, Steven Lewandowski, Clark Henson, Clay Brewer, Ryan MacConnell, Alex Klein, Aaron Wiek, Max Rasmussen, Thomas Griffin, Eddie Leonard and others. The Knights finished the season 20-6.



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Admissions Office

822-2375

info@jp2hs.org

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