

View Points

JPII STUDENT ELECTED YOUTH IN GOVERNMENT GOVERNOR

Junior Aaron Weber became the first JPII student to be elected governor at the Tennessee Youth in Government Conference. Weber, in his first year at JPII, brought a wealth of experience to his historic run from his previous participation in Alabama's Youth in Government program. Debating a wide range of topics from income tax to immigration, Weber topped a strong field of five candidates to earn his victory. As governor, Weber will run the 2010 YIG conference and oversee his cabinet at next year's event.

JPII students earned other honors as well. Ben Garretson, Jordan Julow, Aaron Weber, Aaron Wiek and Jeremy Wilson placed second in the YIG Academic Bowl. Freshman Danielle Coluccio's bill to implement a suicide prevention curriculum in public schools was adopted and signed into law. Juniors Ryan Kilpatrick and Aaron Wiek received an Outstanding Bill Award for their work on tax incentives for organic farming. Jeremy Wilson earned selection as one of 16 Tennessee students to represent the state at the National Affairs Conference in North Carolina this summer. Two JPII students served as officers for the conference: Hailey Rowe was Clerk of the Red Senate and Shiksha Mahtani served as Floor Leader of the Blue House. Serving the conference as Committee Chairs were students Gala Cude, Jeremy Wilson and Amy Wiggington.

For the 2010 conference, Gala Cude was elected Red Chief Engrossing Clerk, Greg Seals earned election as Clerk of the Red Senate and Jeremy Wilson won his race for Speaker Pro Tem of the Red Senate.

In addition, Jordan Julow and Amy Wiggington earned honorable mention for their debate skills in the Red Senate, Ben Garretson was one of three students to take home an Outstanding Statesman Award in the Red House and Austin Swift was one of three students to pick up an Outstanding Statesman Award in the Red Senate.

JPII's participants were: Press, Lindsey Rouselle; Governor's Cabinet, Gabriella DelGandio; Blue House, Danielle Coluccio, Shiksha Mahtani, Simran Mahtani, Emily Peel, and Lexie Walden; Red House, Emily Bruchas, Gala Cude, Ambralin Griggs, Ben Garretson, Justin Hickerson, Ryan Kilpatrick, Danielle Morgan, Laura Walden, Aaron Wiek, Jeremy Wilson; Red Senate, Jordan Julow, Hailey Rowe, Greg Seals, Austin Swift, Aaron Weber, Amy Wiggington.

Christopher Garner accepted into Governor's School of Arts

JPII junior Christopher Garner has been accepted into the 2009 Governor's School of Arts. The four-week program begins in June at Middle Tennessee State University in Murfreesboro. Christopher was chosen out of more than 1,000 applicants. The students in the program will study music, visual art, dance, filmmaking or theater, with the opportunity to meet and work with artists, master teachers, and internationally known performers in the arts. One of the most important aspects of the Governor's School is participants live, work and play with other talented and gifted students.

Christopher has been an active member of the theater program at JPII, including a leading role in the spring musical of "Hello, Dolly." He is the son of Andy and Katy Garner of Nashville.

JPII PEOPLE: SCHOOL CONNECTION

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

Two Rivers Middle School Hunter Middle School

For both Danielle Whittaker and Derick Samayoa, coming to JPII for their freshman year was an investment in their future. "Coming to JPII could be good for my future," said Danielle, who wants to be a lawyer someday and was attracted by JPII's Mock Trial program. Danielle was able to portray a witness for the Mock Trial team's competitions this year. "It was a lot of fun."

Derick and his family decided a JPII education would be a better preparation for college, Derick said. He's also following his cousins to the school, Maria Asencio, a senior, and Alenjandra Asencio, a fellow freshman. Like Derick, Danielle has a cousin at JPII: junior Jalissa Mosby.

Danielle is one of four students in the freshman class this year who came to JPII from Hunter Middle School in Hendersonville. Derick is the only freshman from Two Rivers Middle School in Nashville.

"It's so challenging," Danielle said of her experience at JPII. "It's harder than I thought," Derick echoed. His public schools didn't expect as much from the students as JPII. "Here they expect a whole lot more."

The freshman retreat, held each year a few days before the start of the school year, is a good way to meet people and is a good bonding experience, Derick said. His advice to next year's freshmen? Don't be shy on the retreat, get involved in the activities, they are fun. Making new friends doesn't have to stop at the retreat, Danielle said. "Don't be shy, and don't limit yourself to one group of friends," she advised future JPII students. Being involved in extra-curricular activities is a good way to meet people as well, she said. Besides Mock Trial, Danielle was on the basketball cheerleading team. "Cheerleading introduced me to a lot of people," she said. "I made friends with a lot of people in every grade."

Derick, who is in the Interact Club at JPII, also recommended getting involved in activities outside the classroom. "See what you like and just go for it," Derick said.

JPII People ... Derick Samoyoa and Danielle Whittaker!



NEW MEMBERS INDUCTED INTO SOCIETAS

Societas Equitum, or simply Soceitas as it's popularly referred to in the halls of JPII, is the school's leadership and service honor society. Its members serve as the face of JPII in the wider community, commissioned to lead and to serve.

On Sunday April 19, Societas bid farewell to 21 graduating seniors and inducted six rising seniors and 18 rising juniors. Members are selected through a joint application and faculty nomination process based on scholarship, academics, leadership qualities, a strong commitment to community service and a willingness to provide peer leadership at JPII.

Among the duties are supervising the lunch line, opening school assemblies and leading the closing prayer at the end of the school day, providing the core staff for the annual freshman retreat, assisting the faculty on the first day of school orientation for new students, and serving as school ambassadors to the outside community.

The departing seniors are: Maria Asencio, Shelby Bosi, Ellie Gibson, Jillian Hinesley, Rosie Mahoney, Anna Robertson, Margaret Ross, Haley Seger, Libba Smith, Mackenzie Stephens, Emily Griggs, Brianna Hoover, Ellen Lovell, Emily Mills, Jessica Najjar, Emily Ward, Gabriel Arroyo, Brad Barrett, Jon Brocco, Ricky Corazza and Sam

JPII TEACHER HITS SILVER SCREEN IN 'HANNAH MONTANA THE MOVIE'

Pope John Paul II High School drama teacher Gary Schleimer has gone Hollywood. Schleimer has a small part in "Hannah Montana The Movie" starring Miley Cyrus.

"It was an enjoyable experience," Schleimer said of shooting his scenes for the film in Nashville last summer. "The film is pretty much what I expected. It took three days to film these couple of scenes, which is typical."

"This just happened to be an opportunity that happened at the right time," Schleimer said. Schleimer's character, referred to in the script as "Distinguished Man" is in a scene at a banquet. "My role involves a lot of sight gags," he said. "It's a very minor role," he added. But his scene made the final cut and he's in the credits.

Schleimer and three students from his Advanced Theater Class – Jordan Thornhill, Christopher Garner and Megan

ROLLINS RETURNS AS GIRLS BASKETBALL COACH

Dr. Mark Seyfred had a successful first year as the head girls basketball coach at JPII, finishing with a 16-12 record. But he felt the program could reach higher with more help. So he turned to Athletics Director Julie Rollins, the person he had followed as head coach and to whom he had been the top assistant for four years.

At first, Coach Rollins offered to come back as Dr. Seyfred's assistant, but he suggested they go back to their winning formula of Coach Rollins in the head coach's spot and he as her assistant. Coach Rollins eventually agreed and in June she'll resume the job as head girls basketball coach that she held for the school's first six years.



Some of the newly inducted members of Societas, JPII's leadership and service honor society, are pictured with advisors Dr. Judy Caron, second row far right, and Brent Fernandez, back row, far left.

James.

New members include: rising seniors Sarah Hartzheim, Dominica Pasci, Brianna Keightley, Carter Reese, Melissa McConnell and Joseph Staley; rising juniors Meredith Allen, Tommy Joe Bednar, K.D. Fox, Joseph Griggs, Jenny Hipsher, Jordan Julow, Kaitlyn Hughes, John Mainland, Leah Loven, Joseph McGrath, Sarah Park, Collin Neal, Julia Ross, Devin Patel, Katherine Roy, Seth Walker, Abbie Wood and Scotty Wright.

Lee – got the chance to attend the Nashville premiere. Schleimer couldn't take all the students who wanted to attend the premiere with him, so he had a lottery to pick the three lucky young actors.

So what do Schleimer's students think of him being in a movie? "They think it's great," he said. "They're all excited."

Schleimer is in his second year at JPII. His experience as a professional actor in Chicago and Nashville helps him in the classroom, Schleimer said. His students "know I'm not just talking, but I'm doing it," he said.

He also tries to give his students who are interested in pursuing theater in college a solid academic foundation. His Advanced Theater class is a college prep course that focuses on acting. "If they were to go into a BFA course (in college), they would receive a similar training," Schleimer said.

"We have always enjoyed working together so much," Coach Rollins, who has recorded more than 550 wins in 26 years as a head coach, said of Dr. Seyfred. "He does a great job."

Coach Rollins will get some more assistance with some of her duties as athletics director. Roger Jones will handle more duties relating to the school's compliance with the rules and requirements of the Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association. And Dr. Seyfred will take a bigger role in overseeing all the Parochial League games played on JPII's campus, Coach Rollins said. He's also the head volleyball coach at JPII.

JPII Class of 2009 admissions rolling in

JPII seniors kept a close eye on the mailbox this spring, awaiting their college admission letters. "JPII graduates matriculate to colleges across the country," said Headmaster Faustin Weber. "They attend some of the best schools in the nation."

As of this writing there are nine students (the most in the school's history) accepted to Vanderbilt University – one of the most selective colleges in the country. There are an additional five students on the waiting list – meaning that they qualify for admission, but due to Vanderbilt having to keep its freshman class size down, they may have an opportunity to be admitted later.

JPII students have been accepted to some of the top state schools like the University of Georgia, the College of William and Mary and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and top Catholic colleges like Notre Dame, Loyola-Marymount and Marquette University.

JPII students have cast their nets wide across the country this year, and have hauled in acceptances from schools like Hamilton College and Colgate University in New York, the University of the Atlantic in Maine, West Coast schools Pacific University, Pitzer College, and Lewis and Clark College and Florida's Flagler University and Eckerd College.

JPII also is represented well in our home state of Tennessee, with acceptances to all of the flagship state institutions and great private colleges like Belmont University, Rhodes College and the University of the South at Sewanee.

This year the college counseling office at JPII processed more than 875 applications to more than 230 different colleges and universities.

All of this highlights the hard work and determination our students have put in to their high school education. There are so many choices available to them and they are reaping the rewards of their effort.

Support
JPII
Athletics

For schedule
information
visit the
school
website:

www.jp2hs.org

LUKE DIAMOND IS A 'JPII GUY'

Luke Diamond's decision to become a teacher was "a seminal event in my life." His journey to teaching began as an engineering student at the University of Michigan, where he earned degrees in naval architecture and marine engineering. But an engineering internship his junior year, where he was trapped in a cubicle doing the same thing every day, convinced him that a career in engineering wasn't for him.



Luke Diamond

"I wanted to be with people. I wanted to be in some sort of ministry. I want to be of service to people," said Mr. Diamond, the son of a Methodist minister. He had worked summers at a Methodist summer camp in Michigan. "I loved that job, loved it," Mr. Diamond said. Eventually, the satisfaction he got from working with youngsters at the camp convinced him to become a teacher. Once he decided to become a teacher, everything fell into place, he said.

Mr. Diamond started his teaching career as a substitute in Macon County, where his wife, the Rev. Amanda Diamond, was serving as a Methodist pastor. He next taught eighth grade math at Ellis Middle School in Hendersonville for three years.

"I came to JPII because I knew I wanted to teach physics," Mr. Diamond said. He was hired to start the 2003-04 school year at JPII. In his first year, he taught chemistry, and the second physics and one math class. Since then, he's taught only physics classes.

A few years ago, JPII changed its science curriculum to move physics from the upper grades, which is when most schools teach it, to the freshman year, under what's called the Physics First curriculum. "I love Physics First," Mr. Diamond said. "Everything I experience tells me this is the way we should have been doing it all along."

Most of his students are freshmen, and that's just fine with Mr. Diamond. "I love teaching freshman. They're so authentically themselves." The freshman year is a year-long orientation session for the students, Mr. Diamond said, learning what is expected of them as high school students. "Kids will rise to the level they see around them," he said, and the atmosphere at JPII encourages aiming high. "The culture here is it's OK to be smart, it's OK to work hard."

Mr. Diamond also has several responsibilities outside the classroom. Along with the rest of the science faculty, he helps coach the school's Science Olympiad team. He is the assistant dean of students, and is in charge of the Veritas Honor Code system. Mr. Diamond also coordinates the Loughlin Scholars trip to England each year. The exchange program provides an opportunity for about a dozen freshmen each year to spend three weeks during the summer in England and then host an English student for three weeks at the start of the school year. "For three weeks in the summer they are an English student in an English school with an English family," Mr. Diamond said.

One of the most attractive things about teaching at JPII is the sense of community he feels here, Mr. Diamond said. The faculty and staff are "people who really care about these kids and reach out to them. And kids realize it and respond." Mr. Diamond hopes to stay at the school far into the future. "I think I'm a JPII guy."

CAMPUS HOSTS TAYLOR SWIFT VIDEO SHOOT

Pope John Paul II High School in Hendersonville became the center of Music City on April 17, when Country and pop music singing sensation Taylor Swift came on campus to film her latest music video.

"It was a lot of fun for the students," said Headmaster Faustin Weber. "We think it will be a great way to showcase our wonderful school and students."

The video for the new song includes scenes from a high school prom and a high school football game, which made JPII a perfect choice. The video was filmed on Friday, April 17, one day before JPII's prom and the production company was able to use the the school's prom decorations. About 30 couples were chosen to fill out the crowd in the prom scenes, decked out in their prom dresses and tuxedos.

Once the filming moved to the football field, JPII's football team provided the players and coaches for the game action sequences featuring Taylor's co-star in the video, Lucas Till, Miley Cyrus' recent co-star in her movie "Hannah Montana The Movie."

Meanwhile Taylor had two roles, a cheerleader and a member of the school band, so JPII's cheerleaders and band members got a chance to be up and close during filming. Also, JPII's students, parents and Taylor Swift fans filled the stands just like any Friday night home football game during the season.

Sophomore Scotty Wright, a manager for the football team, was on the sidelines during the filming of the game scenes. "It's been kind of crazy," Scottie said of the day with the production company taking over the campus. The whole school had been looking forward to having Taylor Swift and the production in school for the day, he said.

The Swift family and Taylor, the biggest selling artist of 2008 in America, the 2007 CMA Horizon Award Winner, and winner of the 2008 ACM Album of the Year, have a tie to JPII. Her younger brother, Austin, is a junior at the school.

If production on the video is complete before the end of the school year, Mr. Weber said, the school will be given a chance to see their moment in the spotlight.

STUDENTS SPEND SPRING BREAK IN PARIS, LONDON

Fifteen of JPII's finest left on a lucky Friday, March 13, for a nine day stay in Paris and London. The group consisted of 13 students and two sponsors. Since the freshman trip was cancelled this year, Coach Julie Rollins was available to travel, and Coach Richard Stephenson organized the trip on her behalf. The students spent parts of four days in Paris and parts of four days in London. They traveled between the famous cities on the Eurostar through the Chunnel.

While in Paris, they saw Sacre Coeur at night, ate crepes in Montmartre, went to the Arc de Triomphe and the Eiffel Tower, and became proficient in riding the Metro, which is the Paris underground. The group traveled to the Palace at Versailles where they were able to see parts of the building including the Hall of Mirrors which had been closed for renovation. Famous EF guide, Jean-Christophe Parquier, was the tour guide for the group.

Upon arriving in London, the group went immediately to the Tower of London for a look at the White Tower and Crown Jewels. They also took guided tours of Westminster Abbey, the Globe Theater, and the British Museum. The weather was perfect and the behavior of the students was exceptional.

The group included Ashleigh Kelly, Cecilia Lavoie, Anna King, Coach Rollins, Margaret Ross, Margaret Noah, Morgan Trent, Sarah Hickam, Amy Adams, Ethan Ramsey,



Julie Rollins, front row right, led a group of students on a spring break trip to Paris and London. Here they are pictured outside Westminster Abbey in London.

Mason Taylor, Colin Dugan, Matt Finaly and Reed Binkley.

The group had some scrumptious meals in Paris and wanted Mr. Mike McLaren to know that they had "bangers and mash" and "fish and chips" when they moved to the UK. They are all sure that they can handle big cities after conquering our "two cities," Paris and London.



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COLLEGE CHOICES

LUKE DIAMOND

Admissions Office

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GRADUATION

2:30 P.M.
SUNDAY, MAY 24

GRAND OLE
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