



Winder is shown with the award that the Air Force Academy presented her with at graduation.

## Neumann Graduate Receives Air Force Academy Appointment

By Ariana Winder, 2009 SJNRA Graduate

I am privileged to have been appointed to the United States Air Force Academy as a member of the Class of 2013 and dutifully represent Lycoming County in doing so.

In a letter from Chevalier P. Cleaves, Colonel, USAF, and Director of Admissions, he stated, "Congratulations! You will be joining a select group of our nation's finest young people as you take this challenging and rewarding step toward becoming a professional Air Force officer."

He continued, "This appointment is awarded to about 1,500 of our 9,200 applicants [representing 62 percent of which passed all the admissions tests]. It is equivalent to a scholarship valued at \$403,000. Your previous accomplishments indicate you have the potential to meet the demands and challenges of the Academy and you should be extremely proud of your appointment, as only the best of the best are so honored."

My faith- and service-based education and the support of my teachers and staff at St. John Neumann Regional Academy gave me the focus and determination needed to seek an appointment with the Air Force.

The aura of faith at St. John Neumann has prepared me both mentally and spiritually for the hardships that I will surely face. For I truly believe that my faith in God enables me to obtain any goal which I seek to accomplish.

Through assemblies with morally targeted speakers, such as the Power Team, and the attitude of the extremely loyal staff, I discovered what it takes to live a Christian life as Jesus once lived.

To take the more challenging road — staying up late at night doing hours of Advanced Placement homework after a long day of track practices and working at the local TJ Maxx, or performing up to 40 hours in community service work — that's what it means to be fully present; that's what it takes to live a dedicated life, continually looking toward the bigger picture.

My St. John Neumann teachers challenged me by constantly providing extra practice and setting higher standards. My fellow classmates, equally as dedicated as I, challenged me by continually providing academic competition and support to reach higher goals.

St. John Neumann Athletic Director and former Air Force member, Mr. Frank Lupacchino, challenged me by being the first mentor to suggest the pursuit of an Air Force career.

Mr. Lupacchino provided fascinating stories about his experiences, and he offered his support by organizing a meeting with the local recruiter to discuss a career in the Air Force. After the meeting, I knew that an education at the Air Force Academy would be the only possible choice that could mirror the caliber of education, challenge, structure, and caring qualities of St. John Neumann Regional Academy.

In a letter from my new track and field coach, Major Dahlke, he describes the first of two basic training periods that I will undergo.

He stated, "It's all about your journey. It begins on Day 1, In-processing: completely confusing, completely foreign and completely miserable. But don't forget, everything here is done for a reason. This first day, for example, is to take away some individuality and make you feel the same: scared, lost, and lonely. It forces you to look to one another for support and comfort."

This description of the Air Force Academy exemplifies all that my educational career at St. John Neumann has embodied. Truly, every single thing is done for a very specific reason.

We are assigned hours of homework to gain knowledge that will take our studies to the next level. We wear uniforms which allow us to focus on the true mission of what our education is for. We go to weekly masses at St. Boniface to strengthen and preserve our faith in Christ.

The people at St. John Neumann have had a profound impact on me and have changed my life forever.

I will take the lessons and high moral standards that I obtained at St. John Neumann with me as I "cross into the blue," continuing my education from one Academy to the next. I wholeheartedly thank each and every Neumann teacher, staff member, cafeteria worker, classmate, and fellow member of such a wonderful family I will always call my own.

Thank you, St. John Neumann Regional Academy, for making me the woman I am today and instilling in me the dedication, pride, and faith that I will carry throughout my life and career as an officer, serving our nation at a time where the easier road cannot be followed.



# inside

A closer look inside our schools from the students' perspective

WILLIAMSPORT SUN-GAZETTE  
Monday, June 22, 2009  
Page B-8



This page was created by students at St. John Neumann Regional Academy

## Odyssey of the Mind Victory

By Adam Bahr, Senior

Being on an Odyssey of the Mind team requires hard work, commitment and lots of teamwork. Qualifying for the Odyssey of the Mind World Finals takes all of that and much, much more.

Our team began working on our Odyssey of the Mind problem in October, seven months before the world competition. The problem that we chose to solve was entitled "Earth Trek", and it required team members to design and create an original small vehicle that would travel to four different team-determined environments. Much of our time was focused on those two important areas of the problem. We also spent a great deal of time fine-tuning our spontaneous problem-solving skills. We had many props to build and put many hours into building them and the vehicle in preparation for the regional competition in March at the Berwick Area School District.

At the Regional competition, we earned first place and qualified to compete at the state competition, held at Williamsport Area High School, in April. We were excited and proud to place first at the state competition as well. This victory qualified us to represent our school and the state of Pennsylvania at the Odyssey of the Mind World Finals in May.

After winning at the state level, we continued to improve upon our props, re-built the vehicle, and practiced more spontaneous problems in preparation for the world competition, held at Iowa State University in Ames, IA last month.

Our St. John Neumann team has qualified for World Finals for the past several years and was thrilled to have the chance to attend again this year. We always enjoy pin trading, meeting kids from other states and countries, and attending the opening and closing ceremonies at World Finals. Odyssey of the Mind World Finals is truly a unique and enjoyable experience, and



PHOTO COURTESY OF JOHN A. TROISI

Front row, from left, are Doug Hasko, Phillip Trometter, Emily Sheleman and Katie Bahr, and back row, Coach Kathy Bahr, Coach Jeff Trometter, Adam Bahr, John Mattiace, JoAnne Murphy and Coach Keith Bauer.

one that provides memories to last a lifetime.

In Iowa, we competed against 41 teams from around the world, including Japan, China and Poland. Our team was thrilled to receive second place in the world at the Odyssey of the Mind World Finals. We proudly walked on stage, received our silver medals and trophy, and shook the hands of the many volunteers and organizers of the Odyssey of the Mind program. All of the time and effort that we put in to solving the Earth Trek problem over the past seven months paid off not only in the earning of the silver medals, but in the realization that, as a team, we worked together and came up with a solution that merited worldwide recognition.

Upon our return home from competing in Iowa, we were met by a police escort and Mayor Gabriel J. Campana. We followed the escort to City Hall and were greeted by a large crowd cheering on our victory. Mayor

Campana congratulated us, and then issued a proclamation declaring June 2nd, 2009 "St. John Neumann Regional Academy Odyssey of the Mind Day". He then gave the entire team certificates to commemorate the day.

On June 12, 2009, our team was honored to meet with State Representative Rick Mirabito at his office in Williamsport. Representative Mirabito took the time to ask us about our interests and our future plans, as well as the details of our Earth Trek solution. He then presented us with certificates from the Pennsylvania House of Representatives in recognition of our accomplishment.

My team and I are grateful for all of those who have supported us and shared in our victory.

We look forward to starting the problem-solving process again in a few months, and we know that regardless of the outcome, the Odyssey of the Mind experience is one that will benefit us for a lifetime.

## Commencement speakers deliver powerful messages

St. John Neumann Regional Academy held its commencement exercises at the Community Arts Center on June 5.

St. John Neumann Class of 2009 Salutatorian Daniel Stephen Sholder welcomed distinguished guests, family members and fellow students to the graduation ceremony.

In his remarks, he said, "With this ceremony, we leave this place we have called home. We leave the support system that has consistently sustained us for the past six years. Our Catholic education provided us with the cornerstone necessary to face the challenges that the future holds."

Throughout our years at St. John Neumann, we have gained the courage to defend our Catholic beliefs and the ability to practice it correctly and fully.

Our families were our first teachers. Through their sacrifice, they allowed us to continue our education at this great school. They placed a Catholic education foremost in their priorities and for this we remain appreciative."

The keynote speaker for the commencement exercises was Msgr. John Jordan, a professor at Catholic University of America.

Msgr. Jordan administered at the Office of Ministry and Advancement for the National Catholic Educational Association and was the Executive Director of the NavityMiguel Network of Schools.

In his remarks, he said "As the name of Jesus was



RAYMOND WENZEL/Creative Images Studio

Msgr. John Jordan, keynote speaker, is shown at the SJNRA graduation.

the glory of St. John Neumann's preaching, so is that name of Jesus the glory of this school named in his memory. It is this Christian school community that gives its "seal of approval" to you this evening.

What is underneath those caps and gowns reveals itself in all that you do with your lives.

You wear the clothing of the mason, for your destiny is to build.

You are one who builds the future. Some will build cities. Some will build lives. Perhaps even one will build an empire. But all will be builders on the solid foundation that this Catholic school community has given you.

Today you have the seeds of hope rooted firmly in your lives because you have responded to the invitation to a personal relationship with Jesus through the community of your family and this school.

The Good News you heard sends you out now to build your future. How you

approach it will make all the difference in the world."

St. John Neumann Valedictorian James Michael Creeley Jr., in his response for the Class of 2009, stated, "There is a passage in St. Luke's Gospel which says, 'Much will be required of the person entrusted with much, and still more will be demanded of the person entrusted with more.' In other words, for whom much has been given, much is expected."

At St. John Neumann, our instructors taught us to think critically and tackle the tough problems. Our education provides us with a set of values which we will carry within us far beyond our high school walls.

In addition, St. John Neumann provides us with a community.

We are friends, and we all learn from each other. We learn to balance faith, academics, and extra-curricular activities.

Most importantly, St. John Neumann Regional Academy provides us a sys-

tem of morals. Our Theology classes outline our faith and challenge us to recognize the world's disparities as opportunities for justice and empathy. We defend what we believe, despite popular cultural, social and political pressures. We learned from our teachers to notice society's imperfections, and because of our Neumann education, I am positive that we can make a difference volunteering to alleviate those deficiencies.

But what does the world expect of us? Our education teaches us the value of perseverance. Therefore, our parents and teachers expect us to persevere through challenges in our lives.

The values instilled in us by our St. John Neumann community prepare us to lead and to follow when appropriate. Our Catholic identity separates us from our peers, and will enable us to take roles of leadership by example.

Although we enter a drastically different world, let us not forget where we came from.

And in this new, unfamiliar world, let us dare to be different as well. Let us be patient when others are irate. Ask God for the courage when cowardice is the easier option. And let us be faithful when the rest of the world loses faith.

Why? Not because society expects it of us, but because we know what God expects of us."

Creeley concluded, "Let us each recognize the great deal we have been given and expect much from ourselves as a result."