



JAGWIRE

Spring 2022 - Issue 7 - Prom



Righting Rigor

Jefferson Academy schools take a look at what rigor means at the high school level and what it will look like moving forward.

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What is rigor?

Is it a level of difficulty? Is it hard work? Is it how you complete a task? The Oxford English dictionary defines rigor as “the quality of being extremely thorough, exhaustive, or accurate,” but what does this mean at Jefferson Academy?

You may have heard about recent board meetings to reestablish a definition of academic rigor at JA Secondary, JA Elementary, and Summit. The most recent study session, on April 12, had a dramatically low attendance, with only one student and one parent attending in person. Part of the problem has been that there is not a consistent definition of rigor across the schools.

Senior class president, Sam Lavenhagen, explains her thoughts on rigor: “Rigor is something that’s hard and difficult and makes you work for it.”

“I just don’t know if there’s going to be an answer that everyone is going to agree with” says Mr. Kirkley, high school science teacher.

“When I think of rigor in the sense of, academic rigor, I think about, trying your hardest in all your classes, studying, making sure you understand the materials, just going through to get it done, trying your best on every single assignment,” commented sophomore Ava Chung.

Many high achieving students fear that an increase in rigor would cause further strain on the student body’s mental health and increase the already high workload. While some teachers explained that there is a disconnect in the level of rigor between the elementary and the secondary level at JA.

Mr. Kirkley provided some insight into how he implements rigor in his science classes, such as college Biology, Earth Science, and various science electives.

“I would say that, rigor is getting students to step out of their comfort zone and challenge themselves,” explained Kirkley. “I think students are the ones we’re here for, so we need to start hearing their voices and listening to them and what they want,” says Kirkley.

Academic rigor at Jefferson Academy is often a heated topic. Parents, teachers, administrators, and students all have a vested interest in the learning process. Students and parents have the unique opportunity for public comment within these board meetings and can have their voice heard and considered.

As a result of the study sessions, the board members and administrations of the Jefferson Academy schools have created a definition and guiding principles of rigor which are now awaiting approval for release.



Gracia Beach 22

Righting Rigor

by Sophia Krout

DRAMATIC CHOICE

by Maddie Leyba

With performances ranging from monologues to musical theater songs the Scenes and Songs hosted by JA's drama club was a night of exhilarating entertainment.

"They can do scenes and songs. It's their choice. There are both junior and senior high students performing. All are members of the International Thespian Troop," remarked Ms. Grace about the exciting event.

Among the students who performed are Alton Peacey, Evaleigh Buckner, Finn Brunson, and AJ Jett.

"I chose 'His Luck' because there's a musician in it and because it was very different acting. Before I would play roles like Farquaad, which is the same reason I chose 'Dead Mom' from 'Beetlejuice The Best Musical' because it had a completely different vibe from everything else I've done," explains Peacey, on how he chose his performance pieces.

"His Luck" by Horace Holley is a monologue

dictating the sadness of 'Jean' as they mourn the loss of their husband. Peacey vividly recreated the scene and had some people in the audience feeling as if they too were mourning the loss of a loved one. But, he was also able to lighten the mood with his quick remarks and bubbly personality before and after his performance.

Finn Brunson, the president of the drama club, performed multiple pieces including a monologue from a play called "Fat Cat Killers," the song "Our Word" from 36 Questions, and a scene from "Flakey Lips" with Evaleigh Buckner, another member of the club.

"Flakey Lips is a really interesting play that examines the themes of racism and division between people through the lens of two young girls who live in two cities divided by a wall," remarked Brunson describing the scene they performed. "They were always told that the people on the other side of the wall were evil, but when everyone else in both towns mysteriously fall into a coma, they suddenly only have each other. It makes for a really fun and powerful piece to perform."



ANYONE NEED A HAIRCUT?

by Rhea Alexander

The lights go down. The audience hushes. The suspense builds until music diffuses the tension and ten upperclassmen fill the stage with loud apparel and even louder personalities. This was the beginning of a night full of laughs, dances, and surprises.

Jefferson Academy's annual Mr. JA took place on April 15th. This annual tradition is well known for its hilarious moments and is a chance for students to take part in a night of revelry and amusement. Mr. JA is not only good for laughs, as the night's proceeds were donated to UNICEF for Ukraine aid by the National Honor Society. This year, five seniors (Chris Coffman, Trevor Sengdara, Will Spencer, Brendan Stonecypher, and Justus Vigil) and five juniors (Mason Larkin, Jack McLucas-Kinder, Jordan Quach, Jacob Sayre, and Judah Weir) decided to take part in this infamous event.

As the sky grew dark on Friday night, numerous students and families rushed to the auditorium at 7:00 pm. These eager audiences were greeted by the event's engaging emcees, Bennett Subach and Eden Woodward. The competition started off with a bang as each participant showcased their unique (and mostly humorous) talents for the enthusiastic onlookers. Lively performances, including a surprise haircut and emotional ballads, were only fueled by the bold crowd with plenty of comments to spare.

After all ten competitors displayed their talents,

the show quickly progressed with a carousel of formal looks sported by these ten upperclassmen. Energetic music and a receptive audience created a confident atmosphere as these students strutted the stage in their finest clothes.

Following a diverse talent show and a chaotic runaway performance, each participant took their turn in the hot seat for interrogation from the emcees. Controversial questions about pineapple on pizza and cryptocurrency elicited a wide range of emotions from the invested crowd.

To bring the dynamic lineup of events to a close, five duos danced their hearts out in a final competition. From Taylor Swift's "Shake it Off" to Katy Perry's "California Girls," the ten candidates gave it their all, delivering a memorable performance for all spectators.

After a short break and time for the judges to deliberate, the ten upperclassmen gathered on the stage sharing final thoughts and awaiting the results. Making the podium was

Justus Vigil in third place and Brendan Stonecypher in second. Senior Chris Coffman took home the gold (two prom tickets) for his intriguing rendition of "You're Beautiful" by James Blunt.

Regardless of the final outcomes of the night, each and every participant (including the emcees) gave their all in this dazzling performance. Behind the scenes, sound crews and NHS members worked diligently to ensure the event progressed seamlessly. Like every other year, this year's Mr. JA proved to be an unforgettable night that will continue to liven up the school's community for years to come.



A NIGHT (AND WEEK) TO REMEMBER

by Anna Sapron

Music, colorful lights, friends, an historic venue, and even great snacks were what made prom a night to remember. Seeing friends dressed up and dancing the night away all combined to make Prom 2022 a memorable experience for all the students who were able to attend.

“It was nice to see everyone gathered together after everything that has happened in the past few years it made this extremely gratifying,” commented junior Eden Woodward.

Memories were made for all who attended with experiences that only a prom night can bring.

“The most memorable part was getting to go with all my friends and getting to experience it all together. From pictures, the limo, Denver, the dancing, all of it was a piece that made the night what it was,” remarked prom king Chris Coffman.

Prom night was also an opportunity to reflect on relationships and friendships that have formed throughout students' time at JA.

“I had a good time overall. I enjoyed prom with my friend group,” said prom queen Amelia Winn.

Student Government did a fantastic job of organizing this event. Although challenges were encountered, it didn't stop them from creating a successful prom, the first since the pandemic.

“The most challenging part of working the night and making it successful was making everything flow well,” explained sophomore Jessie Schaffer.

In order for the magic to happen, it took the effort of a lot of students working a long time.

“Planning started the year before, around this time of year last year,” said Student Body President Justus Vigil. “We also have to figure out the assembly and Spirit Week days” he said.

The Tivoli provided a warm and welcoming environment for students. There was plenty of room upstairs with snacks included, and a packed dance floor for students to enjoy the memorable night.

“The venue was interesting and had plenty of space, as well as a pretty crowded dance floor, which made it awesome,” remarked senior Diego Saenz.

The 2022 Jefferson Academy Prom was surely a night to remember for most students who attended especially considering the challenges since the pandemic hit. Upon returning to school many students were excited to talk about the night, the memories, and the magic... although maybe still a little tired from what will be unforgettable.



DREAM DAY

by Jacob Brackney

From coast to coast, countless high school students dream about playing their favorite sport in college. That dream has become a reality for seven more JA/Summitt students this year when they signed their college commitment papers during ceremony in mid-April.

One of the best parts of Signing Day is that it provides an opportunity for students to attend their dream schools. Bear Bauer, Andrew Smith and Cameron Butman signed to play men's soccer. Giana Leoni signed for women's swimming and McKayden O'Donnell signed for women's soccer. Evan Mills signed for men's cross country and track and Kyle Hirsch for men's basketball.

"It had been my dream school for a while since I've had family go there and I've seen how well it sets you up," commented Giana Leoni about signing with United States Merchant Marine Academy. "It's also a federal service academy meaning I essentially get free college with mandatory military service after graduating from the academy. Getting recruited to swim there was just another plus for me."

Kyle Hirsch's reason for signing with Central College was a little more straightforward.

"What made me choose my college was getting to actually visit the college, take a tour, as well as

meet with the basketball head coach. I pretty much fell in love with the place in no time. It felt like a pretty easy decision in the end with getting the opportunity to play the sport I love."

Both Hirsch and Leoni knew what it would take to achieve their dreams and sign with their schools of choice.

"What has helped me to the point of signing for college was my hard work and dedication in the classroom and on the court," stated Hirsch. "Seeing the bigger picture throughout my high school career has paid off in a huge way; understanding that there is more to a simple homework assignment than it may seem."

When asked what advice they would give to other students in order for them to achieve their dreams, the rising college athletes had some sound guidance.

"My biggest piece of advice is to not be lazy in your college search and to really weigh all of your options. Ultimately, do what is best for you and feels right, but it never hurts to research everything before you decide," stated Leoni.

Hirsch added, "Some advice I'd give to younger students is to work hard in all aspects of your life, stick to what you love, and never give up on your dreams no matter how far-fetched they may seem. Your biggest competitor is yourself!"



JAGS POWER THROUGH

by Gianna Gagliano

The Jags are split half and half!

Boys lacrosse is 5-5 as the season comes close to an end. The team found early success in their season with an opening game win, as well as four more wins to follow. They compete in the 4A Metro League against very tough opponents from much larger schools. However, the Jags have proved they can hang with these opponents despite being slightly shorthanded right now.

As the season began, the lacrosse team faced some very difficult challenges that left them very undermanned. They lost numerous players due to injuries and other factors, leaving them in a difficult position to begin the season.

"At the beginning of the season, because we had such a little amount of players, it felt very, very tiring to play," remarked sophomore Connor Scarboro. "Lots of important players could not play this season, so we had to make do with what we had and continue on."

This shorthandedness did not stop the Jags though. They continued their practicing, training, facing adversity, and moving on. In fact, one word to define this season and the attitude of the team would be "competitive."

"We compete," commented Scarboro, "even though

we don't have as many numbers as we would like. We show up to every game and battle no matter the opponent."

What makes this team successful is the camaraderie and the coach-player relationship. The lacrosse team thinks of each other as a team

and family, and that speaks volumes to the success they have found.

"We think of each other as one big family," says Scarboro. "Before every game, we repeat the words 'one team - one family' to break the huddle and I think that speaks to the relationships we have with each other. Also, we all have a great relationship with our coaches. They value us and want to make sure we are at the top of our game all the time."

This team is all around supportive and fulfills the standard of excellence that JA has instilled upon its students by being supportive of each other both on and off the field. With support from the bench, as well as support in everyday life, the team brings positive energy and a standard to attain.

"The bench is always positive and uplifting and will always high-five players as a result of things they did well," states Scarboro. "Yelling and chanting for players on the field is a big part of

the bench. It is also a big part in making sure that they know their teammates have their back and support them."



STRIKING JAGUAR GOLD

by **Gianna Gagliano**

The Baseball season is in full swing! With only a couple more games to go, the team hit some homeruns but also had its share of strike-outs.

With every game, the team strives to get better. But sometimes, that is difficult when there is a lack of consistency. Sitting on top of multiple wins, the team struggles to get in their groove as they suffer defeats after big wins.

“The baseball season has had its ups and downs,” reflected sophomore Cody Boone. “We struggle with being consistent from game to game. We will beat solid teams like Manitou Springs, but then in the next game, roll over [when playing] against Liberty Common. If we find that consistency, there’s no doubt in my mind we can go far in the playoffs.”

Every team needs a good coach that will push them to be their best. A good coach means a lot to the success or failure of the team and can separate the great teams from the not-so-great teams. The baseball team has found their high points and good games to all be due to their coaching staff and the way they encourage the team to be their best every day.

“The main reason we have success is because of our coach,” says Boone. “He makes us do things the right way every time or there will be a consequence that will make us want to do what he is asking of us.”

Looking forward to the playoffs, the team has started honing in on perfecting the “little things”

that make a big impact. They do this by practicing and critiquing their fundamentals.

“Our practices now mostly focus on the little things in baseball, the fundamentals,” states Boone. “We are working on doing the little things right so the rest of the game comes with relative ease.”



RUNNING RAMPANT

by **Jacob Brackney**

The Jefferson Academy Jaguars ran away with multiple championships last Saturday with the girls’ team winning the Metro League Championship and the boys coming in as runners up.

In addition, league championships were won by Emilee Harding for the 110 Hurdles, Jessica Schaffer for the 300 Hurdles, Sierra Haberman for the High Jump, Chrisly Kelly-Cannon for the Triple Jump and the Long Jump, and Evan Mills for the 1600 Meter Run.

These incredible results are only possible because of the hard work and dedication that every member of the track team has put in over the seasons. That dedication also helps create memories and experiences that stick with you.

When asked about one of her favorite experiences, Ava Chung stated, “Definitely hitting a personal record, accomplishing your goal and throwing further than you have been - it is the best feeling.”

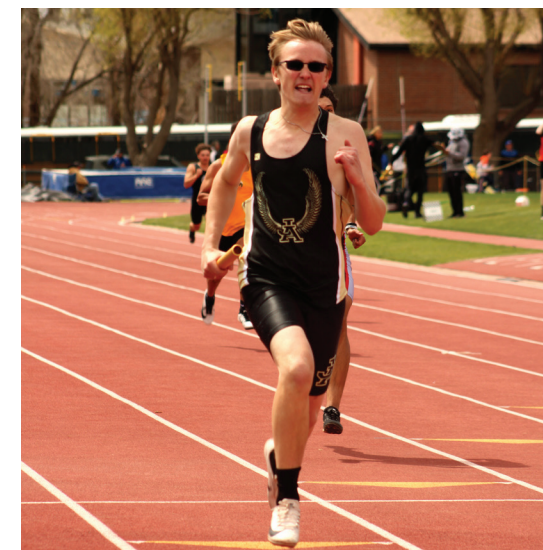
In addition to improving on personal bests, there is also the team factor to consider.

Hurdler Levi Hinson commented, “My favorite experience has been spending time with the team and watching them get better.” While Jacob Balle added, “My favorite part is the people and the relationships you make.”

Along with supporting their teammates, there are also surprises from people. Best said by distance runner Connor Berg, “Tim Parish has surprised me the most because of how fast he has gotten running the 1600m. He cut his personal record time down by 12 seconds in just three days.” Hinson added, “Ali Smith, who is a freshman, started working with hurdles only a few months ago, but is very good and is really getting the hang of hurdles. It is very impressive to see.”

With the season wrapping up some of the team members are already looking forward to next season.

“Seeing how well the team works together and how the hard work we are putting in is showing up on the track is great. Kids are doing very, very well, and it’s exciting to see,” Chung states. “I look forward to the meets. They’re always so much fun!”



LADY JAGS ON THE PROWL

by Mackenzie Estep

Cleats kick up the turf. A player's foot repeatedly strikes the ball, moving across the field. One deep breath before the remaining energy is used to swiftly kick the ball straight into the goal. The crowd roars and the girls of JA soccer achieve another great win.

The JA girls' soccer season is on a roll. Varsity currently has an overall record of 11-2, and 7-1 in the league. The Jags are highly ranked with varsity being #3 in the league and ranked #19 in the state.

Despite varsity's continuing success, they have been facing some challenges as well. Many of their regular and starting players have not been able to play due to injuries. This caused the starting lineup and the normal play of the team to change briefly, though it has not affected their record thus far.

"It has been a little up and down this year. It has been very different to last year with the injuries on our team, but I believe that these struggles will make us better and it will help us make it far in the league," remarked sophomore varsity player Sarah Welsch.

The team continues to encourage each other through the challenges of the season and pushes them to be the best players they can be. This almost-family feel to the team is one of the major reasons for their consistently successful seasons.

"My favorite thing about being on the team is my teammates. I love my teammates because they are always supporting me and when I get down

on myself, I have them to pick me up. I am just so thankful for my team," said Welsch.

The JA girls' soccer team has always been a massive force on the field. They continue to be in the top teams in the league and send many teams home disappointed. They not only continue to win, but they have also ended many games with the Mercy Rule (scoring 10 more goals than the opposition, causing the game to automatically end).

"Our season has been really good so far. We have

not lost, so that's always good. I think we all work together really well which has been the reason for our amazing results," said Marissa Martinez, a current sophomore JV player.

According to Martinez, the team has found their rhythm. They continue to have a good team dynamic and know each other well, leading to their success.

"I'd say some highlights from the season so far would be my goal, and we have mercy ruled three teams now. When we

played Liberty Commons, we mercy ruled them in 25 minutes, so that was pretty cool," explained Martinez.

As the season pushes on, both teams plan to continue their winning streak and varsity hopes to make it to postseason play and possibly states.

"For the rest of the season, I hope we can win the rest of our games and have a clean season. I think a good goal this year would be to go undefeated," said Martinez. "My goal is to make it to states and finish what we started," adds Welsch.

