



# THE BEAR FACTS

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ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC SCHOOL

## Payne, Greene to lead Youth Leg

By JOANNA BELLAN  
*The Bear Facts*

Two St. Joseph Catholic School students – juniors Benjamin Payne and Noah Greene – will lead Youth Legislature next year as governor and lieutenant governor.



BEN PAYNE

Payne was unopposed in his race for governor, while Greene defeated another candidate for the No. 2 post. They will preside over the Junior youth Assembly next spring and the Youth Legislature next fall.



NOAH GREENE

“This is a great opportunity to showcase St. Joe’s strong leadership,” Greene said. “With Ben as governor and me as lieutenant govtornor, Youth Legislature will never be the same. We bring a vibrancy to the offices this program has rarely seen.”

St. Joe Principal Keith Barnes agreed. “This is a great and notable achievement for two outstanding students,” Mr. Barnes said. “To win the top two elected positions – one unopposed – says a lot about Ben’s and Noah’s leadership skills and their ability to get things done. It also says a lot about the quality of students we have here at St. Joe.”

The 2014 session of the Youth Legislature took place last month in downtown Jackson. The three-day conference is a mock legislature in which high school students craft, debate and vote on bills.

Payne and Greene led a 27-member delegation from St. Joe to the annual conference. Youth Legislature is a program for ninth through 12th grade students.

The Junior Youth Assembly, which will meet in the spring, is a similar program on a smaller scale and designed for sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth

See YOUTH LEG, Page 3

## 7th grader advances to Madison County bee

By LEILA DE GRUY  
*The Bear Facts*

Seventh grade student Nezhiah Igwebuike will advance to the upcoming Madison County Spelling Bee following her win at the annual St. Joe Bee on Monday, Dec. 1.

Igwebuike competed with 17 other seventh and eighth grade students. After many tough rounds of competition, Igwebuike emerged victorious and took the coveted spot in the county competition.

The final two competitors were Igwebuike and eighth grader Anna Rose Myrick. Seventh grader Caleb Fields took third place.

The Spelling Bee has been a significant event for students in grades 7 and 8 for many years at St. Joe. Even though it is a competition, students always have a great time.

“I may not have won,” Myrick said,

See SPELLING BEE, Page 3

## DECKING THE HALLS



*Annual, popular ‘Gifts of the Season’ Christmas concert spreads holiday cheer at St. Joseph Catholic School*

*Critique by Drew Milner,  
photos by Jack Hall and Frances Huff*

Just minutes before his Sunday performance, talented senior drummer Buddy Paul Martin was preparing himself for his last ever “Gifts of the Season.”

With drumsticks in hand, Buddy said, “I’m a little nervous, but I’m definitely ready.”

“Gifts of the Season,” the annual, wildly popular Christmas concert staged by the Fine Arts Department every year, took place at 7 p.m. on Dec. 5 and at 2 p.m. on Dec. 7.

The event began with a creative poem by Emily Miller titled “My Christmas Tree,” which greeted the audience with a feeling of Christmas.

Most of the songs were traditional Christmas songs, but with their own St. Joe touch. A great example would be “Silent Night”. The singers gave a powerful representation arrangement of a longtime seasonal favorite.

In “Ding Dong Merrily on High,” Mr. Ronnie Russell, the band director and chairman of the Fine Arts Department, seemingly controlled the band and worked them like clockwork.

Every section played exactly when they were supposed to, which created a blend of beautiful sounds. The band and choir came together in “Carol of the Bells.”

See GIFTS OF THE SEASON, Page 7

### INSIDE

■ More  
“Gifts of the  
Season”  
photos,  
PAGE 7



**TOP PHOTO:** Buddy Paul Martin, left, Maddy Davis and Robert Simmons entertain guests in the lobby of the Fine Arts building during intermission of “Gifts of the Season” on Sunday, Dec. 7. “Gifts of the Season” is produced annually by the Fine Arts Department. *Photo by Jack Hall/The Bear Facts.*

**BOTTOM PHOTO:** Jack Collins, left, Caleb McCullum and Ronnie Russell perform during intermission. Mr. Russell serves as chairman of the St. Joe Fine Arts Department and teaches band at St. Joe. *Photo by Frances Huff/The Bear Facts*

## St. Joe’s very own Secret Santa Claus

By ELLEN GWIN  
*The Bear Facts*

Every year, Brother John goes out of his way to collect gifts for those in need. Brother John is the 11th grade religion teacher and 12th grade government teacher. He has always been active in the community and is always trying to find ways to help others.

During Thanksgiving, Brother John fed many families with the help of the 7th-8th graders, in addition to several other active campus organizations. He asked everyone to donate just a little bit of money to help give those in

need a satisfying Thanksgiving meal. His kindness does not stop there; he encourages the spirit of giving to others during Christmas time as well.

Brother John has been giving gifts to those in need for approximately 16 years.

“When I first came here, we would have two big tables filled with toys and educational things,” he said. “We would then bring in wrapping paper, and I would let my seniors wrap these toys and put the names on it.”

Among the popular items people donate are bikes, books and anything a child may need. Each gift has a child’s

“We would have two big tables filled with toys and educational things.”

– Brother John Brennan

name on it in order to make it feel more personal. The Service Club and many teachers also help donate and volunteer for this great cause.

These days, on the weekends, Brother John brings toys and volunteers to a chapel to help him label each toy.

Around 30 families are helped each year through this program, which means around 60 to 90 children receive toys for the holiday season. Brother John makes sure families receive toys as well as necessities.

“We get warm clothing for children,” Brother John said. “We’ll buy things like underwear, socks, and jackets if needed. We’ll buy uniforms for Jackson public school kids. We’ll buy shirts,

See BROTHER JOHN, Page 3

### INSIDE THIS EDITION

- Opinion: Page 2
- News: Pages 3, 4, 6, 7
- Entertainment: Page 5
- Bruin Sports: Page 9, 10

### DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know Christmas was declared a National Holiday in the United States on June 28, 1870?

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