



CLOCKTOWER CHRONICLE

NASA engineer Johnson named Alumnus of the Year

BY NATHAN WHEELER

CLOCKTOWER CHRONICLE EDITOR

Peter Johnson's degree from Rend Lake College was the launchpad to a stellar career. Literally.

The RLC Class of 1985 graduate, and this year's RLC Alumnus of the Year, used his education at RLC and beyond to transform himself from janitor to NASA engineer. It took hard work and a determined focus on education.

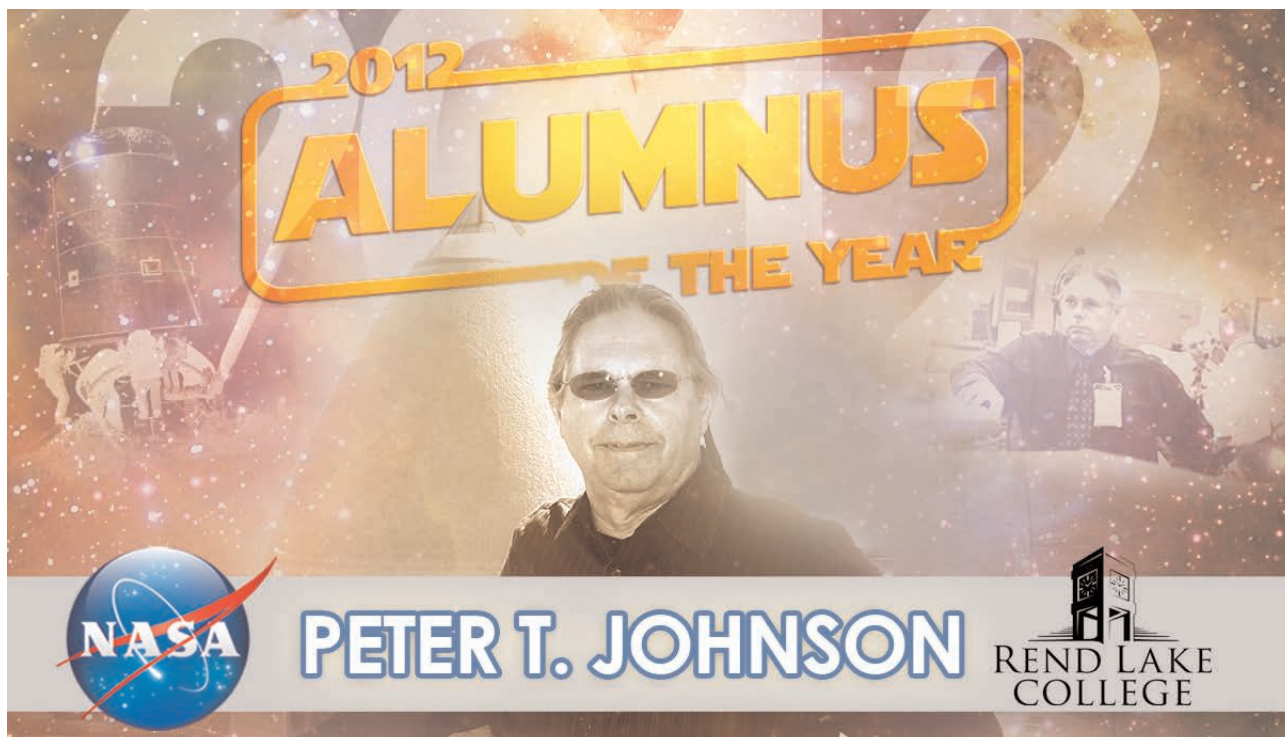
"I worked as a janitor at Bethel Elementary in Mt. Vernon," he explained. "A social worker in Mt. Vernon, Ms. Watkins, arranged for me to be involved in the CITA program. That allowed me to work on an Associate in Applied Science at Kaskaskia College. But once I realized that degree would not lead to an engineering degree, I entered Rend Lake College."

He graduated with his Associate in Science and didn't waste any time pursuing education beyond RLC. Two years later he earned his bachelor's degree in electrical engineering from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. While at SIUC, he ran his business – a television and stereo repair outfit called Johnson Electronics – to help support his wife, Cindy, and their infant daughter.

"Juggling a family, a business, and school at the same time was definitely a challenge. From that experience, I have great respect for all returning students! Sometimes I think I am successful today because I was an older, returning student. I was ready to do what it took to get a good education."

He credited strong examples set for him by his parents when he was growing up. His father was a chemist.

"I made a conscious decision going to Rend Lake College to pursue a degree in electrical engineering and, on my father's advice, took a broad range of



engineering courses rather than specializing in any particular field. My father ... suggested that companies would prefer someone with breadth and would provide specific, job-related training after hiring."

His mother was also an analytic chemist. She stopped working to stay at home and raise Peter and his brothers. When the boys entered elementary school, she went back to school to be able to teach mathematics.

"I would watch her study when we came home from school and then watch her work hard grading papers once she became a teacher. I learned from them both, by example, that succeeding requires effort and that it is OK to struggle. I also found that collaboration was much better than competition. That was one gift I took from going to a community college. I see that communities work together for everyone's benefit. That is not always the case for a large school, where the goal seems to be

competitive and to be better than your classmates."

Collaboration is an absolute must where he works now.

NASA was never a goal. It wasn't even a dot on the radar until one day when he was walking through the basement of the engineering building at SIUC.

"There was a handmade sign, made from a cardboard box, that said 'NASA interviews tomorrow.' That sign led to an interview and a job offer for the Shuttle Human space flight program at Kennedy Space Center in Florida."

Johnson, fresh out of SIUC, was hired as an Instrumentation System Engineer. It was 1987 – a year after the Challenger accident on Jan. 28, 1986, when the space shuttle broke apart shortly after lift-off, killing all seven crew members. Many can remember watching the tragedy play out on live television. Classrooms across the country were tuned in to watch crew member Christa McAuliffe – the woman who was planned to become the first female teacher in space. The accident prompted U.S. President Ronald Reagan to order an extensive investigation into what happened. NASA's organizational culture and decision-making processes were called into question.

In the early 1990s, Johnson was promoted to Technical Lead for the Space Shuttle Orbiter Instrumentation Section. His section has been renamed the Flight Instrumentation Section, and is now within the Flight Avionics Division, following the cancellation of the space shuttle program.

"As an Instrumentation Engineer, my job is to ensure the engineers responsible for the various subsystems on a spacecraft – electrical power generation, environmental controls, propulsion, main engines, et cetera – can monitor and assess the performance and operation of those subsystems both on the

ground and while in orbit and, should an unpleasant event occur, have sufficient data of an acceptable level of quality to be able to determine what went wrong and what sort of corrective action needs to be taken to recover and ensure the problem never occurs again."

His work in that area earned Johnson a Silver Snoopy. According to the NASA website, a Space Flight Awareness Silver Snoopy Award is the astronauts' personal award. Eligible candidates have made contributions toward enhancing the probability of mission success. Johnson was nominated by Astronaut Jim Newman.

"Before then, data went from the Space Shuttle Orbiter by radio to mission managers on the ground and the mission managers verbally told the crew what was going on. I was able to give the astronauts a data link where they could see everything that was being sent to the ground. The first time they used it to perform a rendezvous, they saved over 50 percent of the fuel allocated for the operation because they could see what they were doing in real-time. From then on, it became a valuable resource that was used on every mission."

Johnson also received the NASA Exceptional Achievement medal for work to resolve a problem with engine cut-off sensors that resulted in twice scrubbing the STS-122 mission (Atlantis).

Most people think of NASA and imagine what they see in Hollywood movies. Astronauts, scientists, doctors, engineers, administrators – all hooked up and linked in, communicating from mission control to space, in its own small world. It turns out that's pretty close, according to Johnson.

"Around Kennedy Space Center, it always interests me that we are a small city unto ourselves, with our own power plant, health service, and train yard - including three locomotives. Kennedy Space Center is interesting in that our role in the Space Shuttle Program basically extended from landing, servicing the Orbiter, installing the payload – like a new module for the International Space Station or repair components for the Hubble Space Telescope – stacking the solid rocket boosters and external tank, mating the Orbiter to the stack and, finally, launch countdown."

He went on to explain that KSC only plays a support role during the actual mission. But as NASA began to prepare for the next generation of space capsules and launch vehicles, Johnson became one of a handful of KSC engineers who were able to move into on-orbit support for their subsystems. This role, known as the NASA Subsystem Engineer (NSE), was a very exciting and a rare exchange of authority from the Johnson Space Center [in Houston], he said.

"To know that I was responsible for the health and welfare of a crew that was 120 to 200 miles above the Earth was exciting, terrifying, and humbling – all at the same time!"

Johnson has been involved with 110 successful missions, starting with the post-Challenger return to flight mission in 1988 and including Endeavour's Intel-

Johnson.....
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Johnson mans his station in Firing Room 2 with other members of Kennedy Space Center's Engineering Leads and Management Team during the launch count down for STS-134 Space Shuttle Endeavour.

Student trustee shares experience serving as school representative

BY BEKA KASH

CLOCKTOWER CHRONICLE STAFF

Met Student Trustee Kelsey Allen. Kelsey is from Bonnie and is a student at RLC majoring in Ag Production and Ag Business.

When she isn't busy with school, she serves as the Student Trustee on the Rend Lake College Board.

BK: What is your job as Student Trustee?

KA: I sit in on the meetings and give input for the students and how we feel about issues at Rend Lake.

BK: Are there a lot of responsibilities?

KA: Besides going to the meetings, I try to attend the events on campus and talk to the students to see their views.

BK: What's it like working with the board?

KA: They are really cool, nice people who respect my input. I didn't think they would care what I had to say, but they listen to my ideas.

BK: Why did you want to be the Student Trustee?

KA: At first I didn't know what it was, but my Ag teachers sug-



Kelsey Allen

gested it so I thought about it and decided to run for it. I'm glad they told me about it because it's a great thing to be a part of.

BK: What do you think about it?

KA: I love it. It is a great opportunity. This year I got to go to nationals in Boston and met other Student Trustees and it was an awesome experience.



Students offered chance to visit Italy in 2014

BY AHEANNA GRIZZELL

CLOCKTOWER CHRONICLE STAFF

At Rend Lake College, students are offered a plethora of opportunities to capture, and they learn from these educational experiences that few people get to come across. In May 2014, another great opportunity will arise to interested students: a magnificent tour of Florence and Rome in Italy.

Attendees will spend eight days, from May 19 to May 26, visiting the greatest monuments and tourist attractions in Italy,

such as the Sistine Chapel, St. Peter's Basilica, the Colosseum, and more. They will also sight-see two of the most famous cities of Italy - Florence and Rome.

The trip includes round-trip flights, transportation, hotel rooms, daily meals, and a full-time tour director. Enrollment in SOCI 2101/01 during the summer of 2014 will be required to attend the tour.

Jeannie Mitchell, the group leader and instructor for the class, says that the trip is a "life-changing experience." She has

planned trips for Rend Lake College students before. A group of students got to visit England, Ireland, and Wales last year.

For more information on the cost, daily schedule, and other specifics, please contact Mitchell or visit the website at <http://www.efcollegestudy-tours.com/preview-tour.aspx?gt=1347746>. The tour number is 1347746. There is also a Facebook page that can be accessed by connecting with Mitchell by calling the college at 437-5321.

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Kristy Meagher



Mara McQuillen



Desiree Weiss



Marciano Ali

RLC Campus Connection

The Chronicle's own Fernando Jacinto set out on campus to find out:

Q: Do you think the world will end on Dec. 21, 2012?
Kristy Meagher, 32, Pinckneyville, Community and Corporate Education Administrative Assistant

A. I do not. No one really knows when the world is going to end besides Jesus.

Mara McQuillen, 18, Detroit, Mich., Major: Dental Hygiene

A. I don't think it is because it's too soon.

Desiree Weiss, 19, Benton, Major: Dental Hygiene

A. No. People said the world was going to end in 2000 (Y2K problem) and in 2006 (Mark of the Beast) but it never happened. So I don't think it's going to end. No one really knows when the world is going to end.

Marciano Ali, 21, Brooklyn, N.Y., Major: Automotive Engineering

A. Not really. There's a possibility that it'll keep going...depending on how things are going as far as global warming and all issues that they ASSUME there is a reason why it's going to end. I don't think it is. I think we still got a few more years ahead of us.

Anna Moreton, 19, McLeansboro, Major: Education

A. No. It's too soon for it to end.



Anna Moreton

'Lincoln' delivers one of the most powerful performances of the year

BY TYSON HILL

CLOCKTOWER CHRONICLE STAFF

Those who found themselves in a theater over Thanksgiving weekend, attempting to see Steven Spielberg's newest epic "Lincoln," most likely dealt with large crowds, long lines, excessive prices, sporadic seating, and — for the extremely unfortunate — a lack of ability to purchase a ticket because the show sold out. For those who encountered this problem, remember in the future to arrive early. Because, as with any movie of this caliber, it will sell out fast. "Lincoln" did. And for good reason.

This film's potent combination of acclaimed director Steven Spielberg, and Academy Award-worthy acting on behalf of Daniel Day-Lewis and his splendid cast of co-stars, provides one of the most powerful films of this generation.

In January of 1865, just months before the Confederate surrender at Appomattox Court House and the resultant end of the American Civil War, Abraham Lincoln set out to hammer in stone his greatest and most controversial accomplishment; the abolishment of slavery through the ratification of the 13th Amendment to the United States Constitution. Over the course of that final January, Lincoln, along with a team of his advisors and a few under-the-table "lobbyists," work to intimidate, bribe, and persuade a number of democrats previously on the fence regarding the amendment, as well as maintain the loyalty of any wavering republicans. Of course, most of the bribery and intimidation is done by the "lobbyists," while Lincoln and his team of advisors use their words to turn others to their cause.

Daniel Day-Lewis gives a rousing performance as Lin-



DANIEL DAY-LEWIS
LINCOLN

coln, towering over his co-stars, all while speaking at barely more than a whisper. This is no small feat, considering this film's ensemble cast includes Academy Award-winning actress Sally Field — "Norma Ray" (1979), "Places in the Heart" (1984), "Forrest Gump" (1994) — in the emotionally stirring role of Mary Todd Lincoln; Academy Award-nominee David Strathairn — "Good Night and Good Luck" (2005), "The Bourne Ultimatum" (2007) — as Lincoln's Secretary of State and right-hand man William Seward; and Academy Award-winner Tommy Lee Jones — "JFK" (1991), "The Fugitive" (1993), "No Country for Old Men" (2007) — as the radical Republican leader, eventual Vice President, and die-hard abolitionist Thaddeus Stevens.

Day-Lewis' performance gives a superb example of how Lincoln's quiet reserve and commanding presence caused the citizens under his leadership to view him as nearly divine in stature. Throughout the film, Sally Field makes multiple references to how the people would see him as the semi-divine and her as the crazy wife to which he was tied down.

Spielberg's masterful storytelling and superb leadup

keeps audience members on the edge of their seats. Even the history buffs in the audience, who know exactly what happens, would feel a tingle in their spine as the final vote to ratify the 13th amendment is cast into history and both whites and blacks frolic with joy as the amendment is ratified and the fight for freedom wins one more major victory.

This stirring historical drama deserves to be watched again and again. Those who have yet to watch it, fearing a repeat of the Vampire Hunter fiasco, can allay their fears. This is the Lincoln film audiences have been waiting for. Steven Spielberg's polished flair and the masterful acting of this ensemble cast bring this screenplay to life and net "Lincoln" 5 movie tickets out of 5.

Since "Lincoln" is set in a war many consider to be the bloodiest this nation has ever endured — some scenes in the film reflect that — and for some graphic images and a splash of adult language, "Lincoln" receives 3.5 popcorn buckets out of 5 for family friendliness. In the film's final moments, as Lincoln is proclaimed dead, the physician states, "It's 7:22 a.m., Saturday April 15th. It's over. The president is no more. Though he belongs to history," and so too does this film.

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Johnson.....
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sat capture, repair and release; and the Hubble repair mission where he was asked to assist on an independent peer review of the Hubble Space Telescope replacement control unit/science data formatter that was installed. While every part of every mission may not have went as planned, lessons were learned without lives lost. But out of them all, one of his strongest memories is from Feb. 1, 2003.

"[I was] standing with my wife and son by the river that runs past my home, waiting for the twin sonic booms that announce the return of the Space Shuttle Orbiter to the landing strip at Kennedy Space Center. It is not very often that I was able to do this, since I was usually in the

'Firing Room' monitoring the health of the instrumentation system. But, that day I was at home. I knew something was wrong. There is no good reason for the sonic booms not to be heard."

The Columbia broke up over Texas during reentry, resulting in the death of all seven crew members. Debris from the disaster stretched from Dallas and into Louisiana and Arkansas. A massive, organized ground search was conducted to recover debris over the months that followed the tragedy.

"Eventually, one of the tape recorders that I was responsible for was found in the wreckage and I was tasked with hand processing that data and distributing it to those who would eventually identify the source of the failure. A piece of foam from the

external tank had come off, striking and punching a hole in the leading edge of the wing, allowing superheated gases to enter the wing, leading to the breakup."

Johnson will speak at the RLC Foundation's 2012 Annual Dinner. This year's theme revolves around "Inspiring Gifts." In Johnson's case, it is the gift of possibility – the possibility RLC provided him years ago when he was a janitor looking for more and the possibility he personally offers to future students.

"Education is the key to a full and rich life," he said. "I've always considered myself to live in a zen-like manner. I eat when I'm hungry, sleep when I'm tired, and take life as life presents itself. But, it is education that allows many more and better opportunities to present themselves. I certainly would not be where I am today if I had been content with my first set of experiences."

He returned to school again, this time earning his Master's Degree in Electrical Engineering, specializing in Digital Signal Processing, at the University of Central Florida in Orlando, in 2007.

"Rend Lake College provided me the firm foundation I needed to move on to the higher-level engineering courses I took at SIU and in my job at NASA. Whether by luck or fortune, I've never had to take an additional prerequisite for a class that followed any of those I took at RLC. RLC provided an exceptional footing for my educational and career path."

His advice to students is to never stop learning and remember that it all starts with the fundamentals. He said he still reaches for those

math, engineering and physics textbooks he used at RLC.

"I've found that I never stop learning. There will always be new tools to aid in whatever field you are involved in, whether that be arts, science, machining, sports, or engineering. Stay abreast of those tools as they will stimulate new ideas and approaches. At the same time, rely heavily on the basics of your field. There is a reason you were taught the vocabulary and foundations of a subject first. Everything grows from there."

Peter and Cindy Johnson live in Florida. Cindy worked as a music teacher at Bethel Grade School, Opdyke-Belle Rive Grade School and Casey Junior High School when they lived in Mt. Vernon. She has continued her passion for music education – now as the Music Resource Teacher for the 86 schools in Brevard County where they live. Their oldest daughter, Katie Childs, was born in Mt. Vernon and now lives in Brooklyn with her husband Erik. Katie works for a small organic beauty company called Red Flower.

Peter said she is having "some of the best experiences I have ever heard." Their other daughter, 18-year-old Tricia, is in her first year at New College of Florida – a small, state honors college in Sarasota. She is studying math and literary arts with a current goal of working in publishing, he said. Their son, 16-year-old Nick, is gifted in science and mathematics, along with being "a stunning musician," Peter said. Nick plays piano, is one of 12 cellists in Florida's 2011-12 All-State



Johnson is pictured here at the top of launch pad A, just next to the top of the external tank used by Space Shuttle Discovery during the STS-131 mission.

2012 Alumnus of the Year, continues our tradition of excellence. He holds an accomplished position in a career that most people only dream of while they are watching space shuttles launch."

Johnson will officially receive his award at the RLCF Annual Dinner, Dec. 6, at the Mt. Vernon Holiday Inn. The evening begins with cocktails at 6 p.m., followed by dinner and ceremony at 6:30 p.m. Tickets are available for \$40 each by calling 437-5321, ext. 1214 or 1324, or by sending an e-mail to foundation@rlc.edu. A table of 10 can also be reserved.

Fantasy Football Challenge

WEEK 13

| Mark's Team | | | Josh's Team | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|-----|----------------------------|---------------------|-----|
| Pos | Player | Pts | Pts | Player | Pts |
| QB | M. Ryan (ATL) | 10 | (NO) D. Brees | QB | 15 |
| | E. Manning (NYG) | | (GB) A. Rodgers | | |
| RB | R. Rice (BAL) | 13 | 10 | (HOU) A. Foster | 10 |
| | CJ Spiller (BUF) | | 0 | (PHI) L. McCoy | 0 |
| | R. Bush (MIA) | | | (SF) F. Gore | |
| | A. Peterson (MIN) | 28 | | (SEA) M. Lynch | |
| WR | V. Cruz (NYG) | 10 | 23 | (DET) C. Johnson | 23 |
| | S. Smith (CAR) | 18 | 16 | (CHI) B. Marshall | 16 |
| | V. Jackson (TB) | 5 | 2 | (ARI) L. Fitzgerald | 2 |
| TE | T. Gonzalez (ATL) | | 0 | (NE) R. Gronkowski | 0 |
| | J. Graham (NO) | 5 | | (SF) V. Davis | |
| K | L. Tynes (NYG) | 11 | 6 | (CHI) R. Gould | 6 |
| | M. Bryant (ATL) | | | (GB) M. Crosby | |
| DEF | Texans | 23 | 4 | Bears | 4 |
| | Ravens | | | 49ers | |
| Week 13 Total Pts 123 | | | Week 13 Total Pts 76 | | |
| FF Total Pts..... 1,080 | | | FF Total Pts 1,218 | | |

This symbol means the guys picked that player to start.

Fantasy Football Tip for Week 14 - Looking for some upside in Week 14? St. Louis Rams wideout Chris Givens is the top waiver wire pickup, according to www.fantasypros.com. Givens is owned in 15% of Yahoo! leagues and his stock is on the rise, especially when Danny Amendola's out. If Amendola's injuries continue to keep him sidelined, look for QB Sam Bradford to keep targeting Givens more than any other receiver. Givens is averaging nearly 12 fantasy points per game over the last seven starts, in standard scoring leagues.

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SPORTS SECTION

Five Warriors sign with universities in early signing period

BY NATHAN WHEELER
CLOCKTOWER CHRONICLE EDITOR

Five members of Rend Lake College's baseball team recently inked agreements to continue their careers at four-year programs in Tennessee, Ohio, and Illinois.

Sophomores Nick Andros (Goreville), Cory Farrow (Elizabethtown, Ky.), Tiry Burch (Santa Claus, Ind.), Brandon George (DuQuoin) and Jason O'Brien (Emden) all

took advantage of the early signing period and inked scholarships to the universities they liked. Andros and Farrow will play at Lipscomb University, an NCAA DI program in Nashville, Tenn. Burch is headed to Ohio University, a NCAA DI program in Athens, Ohio. George will play at NCAA DI Southern Illinois University in Edwardsville, and O'Brien will go to Quincy University, an NCAA DII program in Illinois. They were joined

by their coach at RLC, Tony Etnier, at their signing engagement on campus. Etnier talked about his players making their commitments early.

"It means they are ready to make a decision," he said. "They liked the places they visited and liked the fit. It usually means they were heavily recruited as well and found a place that they liked."

Farrow is the son of Tony and Debbi Farrow. He is a

right-handed pitcher from Elizabethtown High School who wants to pursue a career teaching high school math. He likes Lipscomb's baseball program, as well as the chance at a good, private education. He also likes the location and said the campus is beautiful. Etnier said Farrow will be a good fit at Lipscomb.

"His velocity sits at 86-90 with good movement, and his slider and change up complement the movement on his fastball," said Etnier. "Cory has been a hard worker since he stepped foot on campus and will be a solid pitcher at the DI level."

Andros, the son of Luke and Tina Andros, also likes Lipscomb's campus, baseball program and overall atmosphere at the university. He said he is excited about playing DI baseball. "I felt like I couldn't pass up this opportunity," Andros said. The left-handed pitching product of Goreville High School said he wants to major in physical therapy.

"Nick had a good spring for us last year, going 6-4 with a 2.40 ERA and 56 strikeouts in 60 innings pitched," said Etnier. "As a returning All-Conference selection, Nick will help anchor a deep staff for us this spring. His fastball is excellent for a lefty, sitting in the 85-89 range. He was

heavily recruited this fall and Lipscomb University will be getting a really big, tough, lefty to add to their staff."

Burch is the son of Jay and Angie Burch. He is a graduate of Heritage Hills High School in Santa Claus, Ind., and is majoring in business. The RLC short stop said, "I'm looking forward to continuing my baseball career at Ohio U next year after Rend Lake. It is a dream come true."

"Tiry had a great fall for us," said Etnier. "He is a very steady player and is capable of playing short stop, second base and third base at the next level. Tiry's bat has really come along since last year and should be big for us this spring. Ohio University is getting a nice player with him."

George is a right-handed pitcher and criminal justice major at Rend Lake. The son of Ray and Janet George of DuQuoin said he is excited about his future at SIUE. "It is the perfect fit for me and makes me feel at home. I like everything about the program," he said. Last spring as a freshman, George went 8-2 with a 3.12 ERA on 55 strikeouts in 66.1 innings pitched.

"Brandon competed every time out last year," said Etnier. "His record speaks for itself. With a

very good slider and an 86-91 mph fastball, Brandon will undoubtedly help lead our staff this spring and compete well for the Cougars at SIUE."

O'Brien is the son of Mike and Tammy O'Brien. A product of Hartsburg-Emden High School, the southpaw pitcher finished his freshman season with the Warriors last spring at 2-1 with a save and 20 strikeouts in 27.1 innings for a 2.63 ERA. O'Brien said he is excited to play for Quincy next fall and get his degree in finance.

"Jason is another lefty that did really well for us last spring," said Etnier. "He has shown improved velocity this year, living at 84-86 with good movement and a sharp curve ball. Jason should add depth to our rotation this spring and will be a great fit at Quincy University."

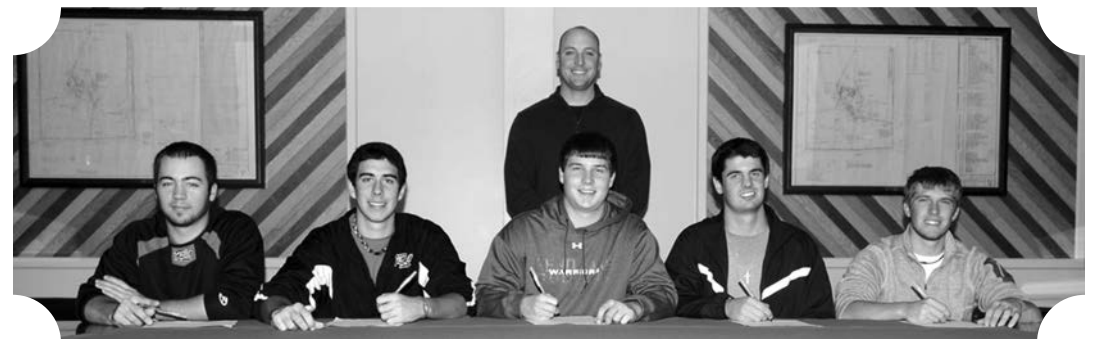
"Everybody who comes to RLC has a goal to move on to the next level," Etnier added. "It's always nice when a good number of guys sign early with quality programs. It says a lot about their talent level and character. We've got a lot of other good players too. They've gotten quite a bit of interest from four-year schools, but they are waiting until the spring to make their decisions."

For all things athletic at The Lake, visit RLC online at www.rlc.edu/warriors.

Women's basketball



Meet the Team — FRONT ROW, FROM LEFT; Tazonda Gibbs, Chelsea Smith and Regina McClarn. STANDING, FROM LEFT; Jennifer Moeller, Elyse Jackson, Jasmine Guthrie, Marquita Hilliard-Williams, Zekaryah Thorn, Kayla Murphy, Kristina Henley, LaNeice Cannon and Tyra Gooch.



Rend Lake College Warriors baseball coach Tony Etnier (STANDING) recently joined five of his sophomore student-athletes on campus as they signed to play at four-year programs after RLC. FROM LEFT are; Cory Farrow of Elizabethtown, Ky. (Lipscomb University), Nick Andros of Goreville, Ill. (Lipscomb University), Brandon George of DuQuoin (Southern Illinois University - Edwardsville), Tiry Burch of Santa Claus, Ind. (Ohio University) and Jason O'Brien of Emden, Ill. (Quincy University).

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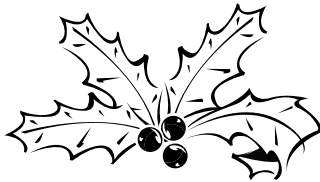


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RLC EVENTS

- Dec. 6 — Last day for RLC Bookstore "Book Buyback and Rental Return"
- Dec. 6 — Rend Lake College Foundation Annual Dinner — Mt. Vernon Holiday Inn
- Dec. 7 — RLC Faculty/Staff Holiday Party, Gym
- Jan. 11 — Faculty Student Learning Day
- Jan. 14 — First day of Spring Semester

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