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Colpitts leads valedictory race

Tight contests for top spots revealed as class rank posted



Above: Sara Colpitts, seen here in a 1995 "Glamour Shots" file photo, leads the Class of 1999 in rank with a grade-point average of just over A+.

Sara Colpitts, the "class genius" of the ninth-grade geometry "battles" who won the Class of 1999's top female scholar award in her freshman and sophomore years—but finished behind good friend Joanna Kornafel last year—is officially at the top of her class with one semester left until the valedictorian and salutatorian will be announced.

Despite slipping somewhat last year, Colpitts has clung to a grade-point average just over an "A+"—a feat made possible by the "quality points" she has earned taking many Honors and AP classes—just ahead of Sean Vivier, a National Merit Scholar semifinalist, by barely five hundredths of a point, and of Kate Harbeson, another Merit semifinalist, by slightly over one tenth.

Thursday's posting of the class ranks, updated through the end of senior year, was the first official release of Class of 1999 GPA rankings. The GPAs are listed by student IDs to protect students' anonymity, but *Living Room Times* editor Brendan Loy specifically obtained permission from all of the top ten students to print and publicize their ranks.

Following Harbeson was Claudio Gualtieri, fourth overall and #2 among males despite winning the top male scholar award in all three of his years at NHS. Evidently, Vivier—the class's top male on the rank list—has outdone Gualtieri in fourth-term grades and/or midterm and final exam grades, which count toward class rank but not toward the year-end scholar awards.

After Gualtieri came Nathan Emerson, meaning four of the top five students on

Class Rank: Top Ten

Class of 1999 students' GPAs through the end of junior year

Rank	Student	GPA
1.	Sara Colpitts	12.021 (A+)
2.	Sean Vivier	11.966 (A+)
3.	Kate Harbeson	11.918 (A+)
4.	Claudio Gualtieri	11.898 (A+)
5.	Nathan Emerson	11.673 (A+)
6.	Joanna Kornafel	11.495 (A)
7.	Sara Hamilton	11.365 (A)
8.	Jaimie Kwassman	11.222 (A)
9.	Liz Janelle	10.971 (A)
10.	Natalie Chavez	10.953 (A)

Note: All ten students listed above have specifically, explicitly given permission for their class ranks to be printed here.

The race for valedictorian

Student	Pts. behind Colpitts	Pts. behind Vivier
Colpitts		
Vivier	.055	
Harbeson	.103	.048
Gualtieri	.123	.068

The decisions on who holds the positions of valedictorian and salutatorian are based upon ranks at the end of the first semester of senior year. According to NHS Principal Paul Hoey, students are named to these positions based solely on their grade-point averages. If, however, two students in competition are within .05 points of one another, they are generally named as co-valedictorians or co-salutatorians.

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The streak is over: Newington football wins first game since 1996 — see page 2

Football Indians top Bulkeley, 16-8

Newington squad wins first game since '96, third since '93

Newington's football Indians defeated the Bulkeley Bulldogs on the road Friday night, 18-6, ending a winless streak dating back to October 18, 1996, and a losing streak which started before Dick Vida became the team's head coach.

It was just Newington's third win since the end of the 1993 season. The Indians, who lost their first two games of this season by scores of 41-0 and 49-0, improved to 1-2 with the win. They are undefeated—1-0—in CCC South conference games this season.

Bulkeley took an 8-0 lead with 7:39 left in the first quarter when the Bulldogs' Charles Cameron followed up his own 57-yard touchdown run with a two-point conversion pass reception. At that point, Newington had been outscored by a total of 98-0 on the season.

But in the second quarter, the Indians struck back. Bob Struzenski punched in a one-yard touchdown run at the end of an offensive drive as Newington pulled within 8-6. A two-point conversion pass from Travis Meyer to Carmine Rinaldi tied the game at 8-8, which is where it stayed through halftime and into the fourth quarter.

Then with less than four minutes to go in the game and Bulkeley driving towards Newington's end zone, Rinaldi picked off a pass at the Indians' 27 yard line and returned it 73 yards for a touchdown, giving Newington a 14-8 lead. Nuno Ramos added the two-point conversion to bring the score to 16-8.

"I'm just very happy for the kids," Coach Vida told *The Herald* of New Britain. "This is the first time the kids have smiled in a long time."

"We know it's a long road back," Vida added. "But I'm proud of everyone from the players to the coaching staff."

Through television and newspaper reports, as well as word of mouth, Newington students quickly learned of the result even though few attended the road game.

"That's amazing," stated one senior on America On-Line Friday night. "I never thought they'd win one this year."

"I'm so happy for them," wrote another online chatter.

Then there was the cynical outlook—common among Newington football fans in recent years. "It's a sorry state of affairs when Newington starts winning football games," one senior wrote. "I'm a little pissed... when the endzone was in sight, someone should have fumbled or run out of bounds or something. At least make the effort."

The Indians will make an effort to win their second straight game—and go on their first winning streak in nearly five years—this Friday at 7:00 PM when they take on the Southington Blue Knights at Alumni Field. It will be the Indians' first home game of the year, and will offer them a chance to reach .500 overall while staying undefeated in the CCC South—if they can upset a tough Southington team. Southington, ranked #14 in the state last week, is 3-0 after winning 24-14 over Conard, a team which beat Newington 41-0 on opening day.



Flashback: The last time Newington football won a game, Travis Meyer (#13) was a sophomore on the bench, cheering alongside Jason Rose, Louie Leon, and Bob Hlasysyn. Friday night, Meyer—now a senior and the starting quarterback—led his team to a 16-8 win over Bulkeley.

Part of Highway I-70 to be named for Mark McGwire

WASHINGTON (*United Press International*)—Mark Twain had his day but he never hit 70 home runs. Now the stretch of Interstate 70 passing through St. Louis named for the famed author is on track to be renamed after St. Louis Cardinal Mark McGwire.

The Senate has approved a bill proposed by Sen. Christopher "Kit" Bond, R-Mo., to name the highway segment after the slugger who hit 70 homers and shattered a long-standing, single-season major league home run record in 1998.

Note: Mark McGwire will appear on *The Late Show With David Letterman* on Oct. 19.

Bond said his bill was inspired by St. Louis Post-Dispatch columnist Bernie Miklasz, who opined Monday on McGwire's feat: "That's not a home run total; that's an interstate."

Senators have approved the bill on a voice vote. Bond says McGwire has brought positive attention to St. Louis, Missouri and the game of baseball through his "hard work, determination and doggedness."

The bill is expected to be adopted by the House.

Colpitts first, Vivier second in GPA

Top students tightly packed in "a very bright class," says Hoey

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the present leaderboard are from Martin Kellogg—all except the leader, Colpitts, a John Wallace alumnus.

Additionally, three of the class's top five students are boys; only two are girls. However, the bottom half of the Top Ten is all-female. Rounding out the Top Ten are Joanna Kornafel, sixth; Sara Hamilton, seventh; Jaimie Kwassman, eighth; Liz Janelle, ninth; and Natalie Chavez, tenth.

Word that the list had been posted on the bulletin board outside the Magee House office spread quickly Thursday morning, prompting a mad dash of students at the beginning of third period and many more surges of interest as the day went on. Reaction was varied as students individually discovered their GPAs and ranks: some were delighted to learn they are in the Top 150 or Top 200, while others were disheartened to have missed the Top 10 or the Top 5%. Still others simply wanted answers to questions such as "what's an 8.333 mean?"

It didn't take long before the spread of rumors allowed interested students to begin matching names with the anonymous ID numbers posted on the wall. By sixth period, an unofficial list of the entire Top Ten had been compiled—partly because nine of those ten students had a Calculus class together that period. Josh Rubin jokingly pleaded with teacher Peter Huybrechts to devote the entire period to a discussion of the class ranks.

Although Thursday's posting of the ranks was these seniors' first official word on their GPAs and their standing among their classmates, some compared this update to an unofficial understanding of what the ranks were of top students at the end of last year's first semester. That understanding is based on a belief that when attendance was taken at the introductory meeting for prospective National Honor Society members last January, the roll was called by the order of the students' class ranks at that time. *The Genius! Journal* last year reported that Colpitts was called first at that meeting, followed by Harbeson, Gualtieri, Vivier, and Emerson. That would mean that during the second semester of last year, Vivier leapfrogged over both Harbeson and Gualtieri to move into the #2 spot.

It seems Gualtieri was prophetic when he expressed surprise on June 4, 1998 at receiving his third consecutive top male scholar award. "I thought Sean was going to get it this year," he said of Vivier, who was in fact gaining ground on him in the rankings.

Colpitts, meanwhile, evidently had nothing to fear

when she, on that same day, wondered, "Am I still #1?" Indeed she is—and still in position to claim the honor of delivering the valedictory address at graduation. All she needs to do now is maintain the status quo.

Colpitts's desire to be her class's valedictorian is no secret. She has talked of the possibility in the past—including last June, when she commented after losing the top scholar award to Kornafel that "only next year, when the valedictorian and salutatorian come out, will I really care"—and in the minds of some, she has been the front-runner since the beginning of freshman year. On Thursday, however, she was reluctant to speak of her newly-discovered lead, fearing that doing so would "jinx" her success. She did not initially admit to being the student whose ID number was at the top of the rankings; then, even when she had made that concession, she would not accept congratulations.

Harbeson has often been viewed as Colpitts's top challenger, but the list released Thursday indicates that Vivier has taken that spot. Gualtieri, once dubbed the "Great Male Hope" by ninth-grade geometry teacher Lou Ruggiero during a "Battle of the Sexes" against Colpitts, has slipped to fourth—but is still only just a bit more than one-tenth of a grade point behind first-place Colpitts in the tightly-packed race among the top four students.

NHS Principal Paul Hoey marvelled at how close many of the students' GPAs are to one another in the upper echelon of what he called "a very bright class." In some cases, distances between students on the list are measured in thousandths of points—such as the contest for #13, the last spot in the Top 10% of the 272-person class. The thirteenth-place student has a GPA just .008 ahead of #14, who in turn is just .002 in front of #15.

As for what promises to be a close call in the race for the top two spots, Hoey said that when two competing students finish within five hundredths—.05—of one another, co-valedictorians or co-salutatorians are generally named. That fact could become significant, with Colpitts's lead over Vivier only .055, and Vivier's lead over Harbeson even smaller, at .048 points. Harbeson, for her part, is only .020 ahead of Gualtieri. The first major break in this extreme closeness at the top of the class occurs between Gualtieri and Emerson, who are separated by a whole .225 points.

With things as tight as they are at the top of the leaderboard, Sara Colpitts's June 4 uncertainty still rings very true. Her words: "So... we'll see."