

THE LIVING ROOM TIMES

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FINAL LRT EDITION OF ALL TIME

“Members of the Class of 1999, welcome to the real world!”

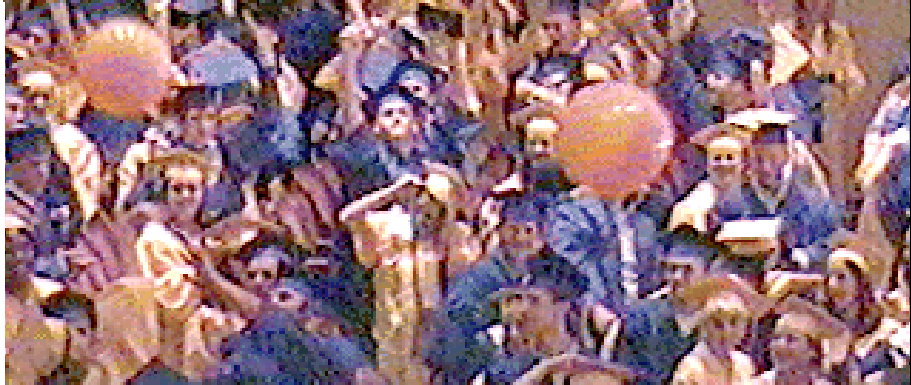
CELEBRATE

Unable to contain its own enthusiasm — or perhaps just uninterested in doing so — the Newington High School Class of 1999 went out with a bang, a hoot and a holler Tuesday night, recalling the past and looking to the future but mostly just celebrating the present.

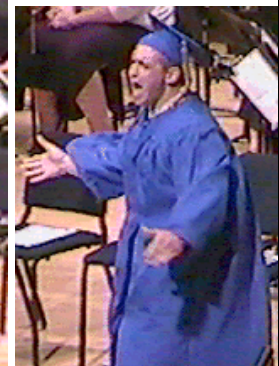
Speakers Tim Stevens, Sara Colpitts, Sean Vivier, and Claudio Gualtieri set the tone for the graduation ceremony with their well-delivered, well-received remarks, but it was the likes of Jeff Brunetti, Matt Kennedy, Armando Landrian, and Petra King who truly defined the evening with their unbridled energy and excitement.

Brunetti performed a long-planned pratfall on his way up onto the stage to receive his diploma, and was rewarded with a standing ovation. Kennedy pumped his left fist nearly a dozen times before his

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Above: Beach balls fly as the graduates celebrate. Left: Teresa Pellett removes her cap in triumph. Below: Nino DiBiase enjoys his moment.



**NEWINGTON HIGH
CLASS OF 1999:
LIST OF GRADUATES**

Elizabeth L. Acey
Melanie J. Allegrini
Stacy K. Allen
Mark P. Almeida
Christina M. Amaral
Carrie L. Angyal
Darcy L. Apicella
Sara M. Araoz
Karyn B. Bacinskas
Eileen M. Banach
Mary E. Bellizzi
Timothy Benson
Matthew A. Bergonzi
Brooke N. Bligh
Jeffrey B. Bloomfield
Jeffrey E. Blum
Tara A. Boisvert
Jennifer M. Bolduc



Tara Boisvert and Jen Bolduc walk across the stage.

Julie E. Bordonaro
Laura R. Borowy
Michelle L. Bowman
Donald J. Braman
Sherry L. Brecher
Alyssa D. Brideaux
Felicia M. Brown
Allison E. Bruey
Jeffrey M. Brunetti



Jeff Brunetti completes his long-planned pratfall as he walks up onto the stage.

“MAKE SOME NOISE!”

Class of '99 graduates with enthusiasm

(Continued from page 1)

name was even called, then kept celebrating all the way across the stage. Landrian leapt into the air when his name was announced and jumped up three times as his classmates roared. King hugged her father, Assistant Principal Donald King, then grabbed the microphone from him and yelled, “Make some noise!”

Noise was one thing which was not lacking Tuesday night. There was simply no holding the Class of '99 back as its exuberant graduates rolled full-speed ahead into the future.

As early as the afternoon graduation rehearsal, it was obvious that Principal Paul Hoey’s request for “decorum and dignity” without “hooting and hollering” would not be adhered to by the pumped-up graduates. As he explained the rules at the rehearsal, stating that “you’ll have plenty of time to party after graduation tonight,” a student yelled out, “We’ve got to celebrate in front of our parents!” As Hoey shook his head and said “no, you don’t,” another student added, “Yeah, my parents love me!” This comment was met with a defeated smile from Hoey—“I know they do,” he said—and laughter and cheers from many seniors.

The readiness of the seniors, soon to be graduates, to express themselves—early and often, and loudly—became quite clear as they gathered before the ceremony in a small upstairs room to wait for half an hour before processing in. Hooting and hollering were rampant and widespread.

Tim Hazelton and Collin Harmon were among those who, at one point or another, stood up on a high platform to get their friends cheering. Chris Knowlen and Paul Labowski screamed coded messages to friends on the other side of the room. Chaos ruled as seniors stepped out of their alphabetical lines to hug their friends. Hoey could do little more than look on helplessly.

When Principal Hoey and the rest of the administration did take an apparent disciplinary action, briefly removing Hazelton from the room, a riot seemed imminent as the seniors broke out into thunderous chants of “We want Tim!” Whatever the reason for his removal, Hazelton was soon brought back in and was allowed to march with his classmates.

When that march finally began, it was a mixture of decorum and enthusiasm. Parents stood and graduates slowly processed in as the symphonic band played the traditional “Pomp and Circumstance.” Flash bulbs popped everywhere, and

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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“C” for yourself: Ludlow reveals his first name

In the annual conclusion of a tradition which is practically sacred to AP English students, English teacher and department chairman C. Stephen Ludlow told this year’s class of students what the “C” in his name stands for. Any graduate who, while receiving his/her diploma from Ludlow after walking across the stage Tuesday night, asked him what the “C” stands for, was finally told the answer.

And the answer is...

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(Continued on page 3)

**NEWINGTON HIGH
CLASS OF 1999:
LIST OF GRADUATES
(continued)**

Anthony P. Bruschino
Alexander H. Budney
Eric Burns
Whitney A. Cacase
Sabrina L. Calado
Christine A. Capenera
Lauren M. Caputa
Diane M. Caputo
Jillian B. Carbone
Debbie L. Carrier
Cindy M. Carvalho
Nick J. Casioppo
Jennifer M. Castelhan
Christina L. Cavallo
Natalie A. Chavez
Eva Chludzinski
Bindee Chokshi
Dennis Chow



Dennis Chow points into the crowd as he walks on stage to get his diploma.

Milan J. Cisar
Colleen M. Clark
Mychal G. Cocolla
Marisa B. Cohen
Sara L. Colpitts
Shannon M. Concatelli



After walking off stage, Shannon Concatelli shakes Tim Stevens's hand while Marisa Cohen hugs Claudio Gualtieri.

Lisa S. Cordeiro
Lauren E. Correll
Danny R. Costa

Enthusiastic Class of 1999 graduates with pomp, noise

(Continued from page 2)

cheers came from every corner—out of the mouths of grads and guests alike. As is the case seemingly every year, stateliness, rowdiness, and pure excitement fused together to defy Hoey's hopes and define the character of the ceremony: a potent brew of pure energy.

"Dr. Perlini, Mr. Hoey, members of the Board of Ed, friends, family, and other guests— before I begin, I really owe you all an apology," said Class President Tim Stevens as he started his speech. "You see, everyone can listen to my speech, but it is truly intended for my classmates."

Cheers, hoots, and a cry of "We love you Tim!" greeted this assertion by Stevens.

Contending that the "experts" who, in the wake of the Columbine shootings, have "been sent scurrying, wondering and trying to find out what is wrong with our generation" have "missed the point," Stevens stated that "the TV consultants, the writers, and the reporters have missed what's in this very room. We are not the end of the world. We're the beginning of a new one."

"It's all you, Tim!" someone yelled as the crowd roared.

"When I look around this room, I don't see the hate and the rage that all those experts claim dwell within us all," Stevens continued. "I see magic."

At that, Collin Harmon yelled out twice, "You're looking at me!" As the grads laughed and cheered, Harmon stood up and held his arms up in recognition. Stevens smiled and paused as Harmon enjoyed his moment.

Just about everyone, it seemed, had a moment all their own Tuesday night. Grads Jen Bolduc, Carmine Rinaldi, Jeff Cultrera, Heather Weinberg, and Kate Wright were all specifically referenced in Stevens's speech. Even this very newspaper, the *LRT*, was mentioned: "By the next time you see Brendan Loy, *The Living Room Times* will probably be available in 12 different languages and in 63 different countries," Stevens predicted.

"Make no mistake, we are the future," Stevens added as the graduates again hooted and cheered. Stating that he is "proud to be president of this class, but more than anything, proud to be a member of this class," Stevens said that when he made his famous "bottom of the barrel" election speech near the beginning

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Above: Class President Tim Stevens gestures to the crowd during a long ovation after his introduction as he waits to begin his speech.

Ludlow reveals his first name

(Continued from page 2)

Well, we can't tell you in print. To do that would ruin the tradition for next year's class of seniors!

We can tell you this much, however. In a poll conducted earlier this year by the *LRT*-affiliated *NHS Life & Times* website, six people made the correct prediction. They are: Tim Benson, Lauren Correll, Chris Manzione, Beth Milewski, Marel Nasinnyk, and Todd Stigliano.

Some of the guesses made by this year's AP English students were, in no particular order: Chester, Christopher, Clarence, Calvin, Charles, Cornelius, Carl, Curtis, Clark, Charlemagne, Cameljockey, and Crack Fiend.

**NEWINGTON HIGH
CLASS OF 1999:
LIST OF GRADUATES
(continued)**

Marco P. Crachat
Coreylyn Crane
Jason M. Cugno
Jeffrey J. Cultrera
Katherine M. Cunningham
Todd D. Czerwinski



Todd Czerwinski celebrates on stage.

Katrina S. Davis
Anand A. Desai
Shanil P. Desai
Joshua M. Deweese
Nino A. DiBiase
Christopher Dignoti
Sheri L. Dimock
Joseph J. DiNardi
Kathleen E. Dobruck
David R. Downes
Ian R. Drayton
Michael R. Duensing
Shannon L. Duplin
Sarah B. Duval
Nathan N. Emerson
Idalina M. Estanislau
Jennifer N. Ewaski
Michael K. Fahr
Mary Jane T. Faienza
Eric F. Faraday
Vera M. Ferreira
Kristen A. Fisher
Kristyn M. Fontanella
Veronique Fort
Ellen Fraser
Stacy B. Furman
Richard F. Gaivoto
Christopher Gemmell
Justin W. Gerace
Nello J. Germano
Timothy J. Giles
Ashley M. Gill
Dariusz Gogacz
Christina L. Gomez

Class of '99 graduates

Students follow Class President Stevens's advice to "enjoy our last night as seniors"

(Continued from page 3)

of the Class of '99's freshman year, he was "nowhere near right. Because no matter our age or grade level, we will always rise to the top. We are not the world's nightmare, but rather its hope... So let's enjoy our last night as seniors. Don't worry about anything but having a good time. We've all earned it. There will be plenty of time to change the world tomorrow."

The graduates hardly needed to be told to have a good time. They were already excelling in that department.

A shout of "We love you Todd!" rose from the crowd as Todd Stigliano sang his solo verse on the senior song, "Whenever You Need a Friend," written by graduate Mike Martocchio. When Martocchio—cajoled by music director Josef Treggor—stood up to take a bow, he was greeted with thunderous applause and the loud toot of an airhorn. When the applause died down, someone who had noticed the always-emotional Karyn Bacinskas crying on stage yelled out, "We love you Karyn!" Upon being introduced for her valedictory address, Sara Colpitts was met with hoots, whoops, and a scream of "Go Colpy!"

The grads' enthusiasm continued right through Colpitts's entertaining speech, which was a review of memorable events from the last twelve years in the Newington Public Schools, all set to the tune of the "Twelve Days of Christmas." When Colpitts reached the fifth-grade memory—"Class, this year we're going to learn the difference between boys and girls. It's sex education!"—the crowd responded with a chorus of wild cheers. From that point on, each time through the song, the graduates heartily sang along with "Sex education!"

Colpitts pleased the grads with her mention of the seventh-grade Williamsburg trip, amused everyone with her recollection of the eighth-grade dance, "which at the time, we thought was really cool, but now, we realize was pretty lame," and delighted those in her own homeroom with the quote "on the first day of ninth grade, Mrs. Code-anne said to homeroom 210: 'It is very important that you study hard and get good grades, because colleges will be looking at your high school transcripts later on when you apply. And make sure you sit quietly,

(Continued on page 5)



Above: Mike Martocchio takes a bow after playing and singing the senior song which he composed. Below: Angela Lewonczyk, Tara Boisvert, and Liz Janelle sing the second choral piece, the annual graduation tear-jerker "You'll Never Walk Alone."



Above: Students from homeroom 210 cheer as Sara Colpitts mentions them in her speech.

NEWINGTON HIGH
CLASS OF 1999:
LIST OF GRADUATES
(continued)

Samantha Gómez
 Thomas B. Greca
 Claudio W. Gualtieri
 Joseph S. Guerrero
 Jeffrey A. Gustavson
 Sara E. Hamilton
 Kaat E. Harbeson
 Collin Harmon
 Brent Harpie
 Kevin R. Hauschulz
 Kelly A. Haynes
 Timothy R. Hazelton



Tim Hazelton acknowledges his classmates' cheers as his name is called.

Shuku Henderson
 Robert M. Hlasyszyn
 Tracy Jagiello
 Gary L. Jameson
 Elizabeth M. Janelle



Having taken her diploma cover from Board Chairman Woods, Liz Janelle shakes hands with Principal Hoey.

Mark P. Jankowski
 Brynna L. Johnson
 Mark W. Jordon
 Timothy A. Jorel
 Elizabeth A. Joseph
 Lukasz W. Junger
 Matthew J. Kagan

Cheers, hoots fill Bushnell as Class of '99 graduates

(Continued from page 4)

say the pledge, and *always* listen to the announcements.' ”

Wild cheers and applause greeted the start of Colpitts' final verse: “On the last day of twelfth grade, I said to the graduating class of 1999...”

“For Newington High, this has been a year of triumph,” she said. “Congratulations to the softball team on their undefeated season—”

Cheers and applause interrupted the valedictorian once again.

“—the boys lacrosse team for making it to states—”

Yet again, wild cheers intervened.

“—and I couldn't forget the music department for their award-winning performance in Florida.”

As music students and others cheered, someone yelled out, “Football team!”

“And the football team,” Colpitts added, to the delight of many in the crowd.

“And we send our luck to Mobile, Alabama, where Kelly Laskowski is competing for the national Junior Miss title.” Again, applause filled the room.

“Graduation marks the end of an important period in our lives, but new beginnings are ahead,” Colpitts concluded. “High school is over. Let life begin.”

The graduates responded once again with wild cheers, then started to sing along as Colpitts completed the musical portion of the speech. Most everyone joined in near the end as she finished: “Big blue crayon, nothing really happens, get the grades for college, our first formal dance, Williamsburg is waiting, here is all your homework, sex education! Play the violin, learn to write in cursive, 2 times 2 is 4, and don't forget to color in the lines.”

When her valedictory address was done, Colpitts lingered behind the podium for a few extra moments, then headed back to her seat as the crowd gave her a 20-second standing ovation, the longest of any of the graduation speakers.

“I don't know how I'm supposed to follow either of those speeches,” said the next speaker, co-salutatorian Sean Vivier, referring to Stevens and Colpitts. “But here goes.”

Vivier recalled that when he was named co-salutatorian, he initially had no idea what he would say in his speech. “I suppose I could have done something about lasting friendships and... all the wonderful memories and good times that we've had in our high school years. But I don't get out much,” he quipped in a self-deprecating twist, much to his classmates' delight.

And besides, Vivier said, “in case you hadn't noticed, I like to do things a little bit different.” That remark was greeted with more hoots, “yeahs,” and even an “ow!” from the crowd.

“So I'd like to touch upon something that I don't think gets enough press at times like this: Have fun. Now I don't mean go out partying whenever possible and live a lifestyle of wanton hedonism—”

Predictably, the grads interrupted Vivier at this point with hoots and cheers. He gave a strained smile, then continued: “What I *do* mean is that you should enjoy life. While you're striving and achieving, keep your eyes on what you're struggling for, and never lose sight of it. You work in order to make your lives better... You do not work to make work the purpose of your life.”

“Sometimes, you just have to realize that some problems in life and some tasks are simply unimportant. Brush them off and pay attention to what is truly important,” Vivier advised.

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NEWINGTON HIGH
CLASS OF 1999:
LIST OF GRADUATES
(continued)

Barbara Kaminski
 Stacey A. Karalus
 Michael D. Kaufman
 Todd C. Kean
 Lauren C. Kelley
 Shannon C. Kelly
 Matthew R. Kennedy



As Shannon Kelly begins walking across the stage, Matt Kennedy (bottom right) waits and pumps his fist in anticipation.

Laura J. Ketteringham
 Brian Kilmartin
 Petra M. King



Petra King descends the stairs after grabbing the microphone from her father to yell, "Make some noise!"

Jennifer L. Kleczkowski
 Cynthia A. Klubnik
 Christopher Knowlen
 Joanna M. Kornafel
 Christopher R. Kotch
 Robert E. Kowal
 Jaimie L. Kwassman
 Paul M. Labowski
 Jessica R. Lackenbach
 Armando Landrian
 Jared A. Lantzman
 Kelly L. Laskowski
 Kristen A. Lee

'99 grads go "loca" for speakers at ceremony

(Continued from page 5)

"Once in a while, do something out of the ordinary— like riding your bike in 40-degree weather in shorts and a t-shirt," he added, making a direct reference to one of his own well-known quirks. As the crowd responded with an amused rumbling of noise, the co-salutatorian continued, "Trust me, it's very life-affirming." Scattered applause and a cry of "Yeah Shin!" greeted this statement. "And when people taunt you for doing this unordinary thing—because they will—brush them off too. Life is too short to be caged in by societal norms."

A 12-second standing ovation awaited Vivier when he finished his remarks. And the enthusiasm kept rolling, right through to the next speaker, fellow co-salutatorian Claudio Gualtieri.

The crowd could barely contain itself as Gualtieri was called up to the podium. Cries of "yeah," "Claudio," and "I love you!!" filled the room as President Stevens introduced the popular "G-Man."

Gualtieri's speech was filled with "inside" references, each of which thrilled those who "got" the joke. In an allusion to Mr. Ludlow's AP English tradition of random discussion at the beginning of class, Gualtieri called his salutatory address a "very special 'good of the order.'" Reflecting on the "perpetual mountain-climb of life," Gualtieri recalled the elementary school "legend of Mr. Spaghetti Face" and the middle school Williamsburg trip, "one whole week away from mom and dad" which featured "late-night pranks on roommates and the trick of putting a towel underneath the door to avoid lights-out."

"For many of us," Gualtieri said of the seventh grade adventure, "that week away from home was living la vida loca." That quote from the popular Ricky Martin song got a round of cheers and "whoos" from the crowd.

In high school, Gualtieri continued, "even if we did poorly on a calculus test, we could always hope for that potential calculus cook, or winning the pot to get the lowest grade." And, he added in another "inside" reference to a very memorable—if rather unprintable—incident earlier this year, "I know that the guys in Italian IV will remember a certain video in particular of the trip to Italy in '93."



Above: In between cheers for "Mr. Spaghetti Face," Williamsburg trip pranks, and Ricky Martin lyrics, grads listen intently to Claudio Gualtieri's speech.

"Although all of our high school memories will come to a close in just a few hours—" Gualtieri went on, only to be interrupted by an enthusiastic "who"— "the climb of the mountain of life has simply reached a plateau, not the peak."

As the final student speaker finished his remarks—ushered off the podium by a 15-second standing ovation—the crowd's energy was nowhere near *its* peak. There was a temporary calm during the symphonic band's performance of the soothing *Irish Tune from County Derry*, but when Principal Paul Hoey took the microphone, the grads would prove that they were ready to yell some more.

(Continued on page 7)

NEWINGTON HIGH
CLASS OF 1999:
LIST OF GRADUATES
(continued)

Tina-Marie Lentini
Lauren Levesque
Angela M. Lewonczyk
Bianca A. Lobo
Kara L. Lopes
Brendan L. Loy



After shouting "I love you guys," Brendan Loy blows a kiss to his classmates.

Alison J. Lucey
Melinda A. Lukman
Stephen C. Lundgren
Dayna R. Madore
Margaret Q. Majewski
Jenny L. Manzi
Christopher Q. Manzione
Monika Marchut
Diane Marques
Sarah M. Marques
Andrew J. Martin
Michael J. Martocchio
Arthur J. Maselek
Jennifer E. May
Ryan T. McBride
Matthew B. McCarter
Derek M. McDonald
Jason A. McGrath
Heather A. McKeever
Ebony M. Mendoza
Scott A. Mercer
Jonathan Merrick-Sander
Matthew G. Merzwa
Travis C. Meyer
Joseph R. Michalski
Michael P. Mierkiewicz
Melanie E. Milazzo
Elizabeth A. Milewski
Laci-Ann Mosher

No holding back as Class of '99 loudly graduates

(Continued from page 6)

Noting the academic success of the Class of '99, Hoey listed some of the more prestigious colleges and universities at which this year's NHS graduates have been accepted. Not surprisingly, many of the pumped-up grads gave a holler when their future college was mentioned. Also not surprisingly, the loudest and most sustained cheers were for the University of Connecticut. But when the principal got to the end of his fifty-school list without mentioning one of the most popular college choices of NHS graduates—nearby Central Connecticut State University—the crowd did it for him, loudly yelling "Central!!!"

"My purpose in doing that is to show that this is just an outstanding class academically," Hoey said. He then proceeded to discuss various other areas in which members of the Class of '99 will be remembered—"whether it be in music, art, athletics, writing, or publishing."

For example, Hoey said, "girls lacrosse became a full varsity sport... because members of this class had the courage and determination—" The grads jumped in with a whistle and several cries of "Bolduc," referring to the girl who almost single-handedly brought girls lacrosse to NHS, Jen Bolduc.

"Nate Emerson and Sara Colpitts were selected as the Connecticut Association of Schools Scholar-Athletes," Hoey said. He was quickly cut off by widespread yells of "Nate Dog!" "A crowning moment for Jen Bolduc and Carmine Rinaldi was being named the top senior male and female athletes—" he continued, once again to be interrupted by cheers for the students he was mentioning. "Alethia Weir captured the state championship in track and field—" Cheers and applause intervened again. "—And Sean Vivier got his black belt in karate this year." Yet again, the crowd applauded enthusiastically.

"I will always remember Greg O'Donnell and Tim Jorel," Hoey continued, pausing as O'Donnell and Jorel stood up to acknowledge sustained cheers. "I'll remember them for rallying the crowds at our home football games in freezing temperatures, suffering with no shirts, painted blue and gold."

"I'll always remember Derek McDonald for getting revved up at hockey games," Hoey said, again giving a moment for the grads to cheer as McDonald stood up. "I'll remember the successful pep rallies this past year planned by the student council, the incredible music performances, and outstanding musicals over the last four years."

"But most of all, I will remember a scrawny, skinny freshman—"

"Who, Nino?" someone yelled out, referring to football player Nino DiBiase, drawing scattered laughter from the crowd.

"—who showed up at orientation with his video camera—"

The crowd interrupted Hoey again, this time with cheers for the person he was actually talking about: *LRT* editor Brendan "camera boy" Loy. Acknowledging the cheers and yells, Loy stood up, waved, and blew a kiss to the class.

"I wondered, 'Who the heck was this young man filming everything we did, [taking] pictures of everything that was going on?'" Hoey continued, only to be interrupted yet again—this time by laughter as Loy stood up and took a flash picture of Hoey. The principal himself pointed at Loy and chuckled. "Thank you, Brendan," he said with a smile.

"What will Newington High School do without Brendan Loy? ... What will happen to *The Living Room Times*?" Hoey asked as the crowd reacted with

(Continued on page 8)

**NEWINGTON HIGH
CLASS OF 1999:
LIST OF GRADUATES
(continued)**

Christina L. Mozzicato
Marel A. Nasinnyk
Cindy L. Netupski
Brian Newbold
Yahara Ngo
Evelyn Ni
Gregory N. O'Donnell
Jessica M. Olson
Jessica R. Palmer
Lopa H. Pandya
Christina M. Pappa
Amy M. Parks
Akash A. Patel
Bhavin Patel
Nishant H. Patel
Alison M. Pelkey
Peter M. Pellegrini
Nicholas T. Pelletier
Teresa M. Pellett
Allyson M. Perlini



Allyson Perlini hugs her father, School Superintendent Ernest L. Perlini (left) as Jen Persaud (right) walks on stage.

Jennifer J. Persaud
Michael J. Phelps
Derri A. Pickering
Kimberly A. Pina
Joseph P. Ploszay
Kristina L. Polomsky
Brian M. Putorak
Josh J. Puzzo
Juan Ramirez, Jr.
Nelson Raposo



Collin Harmon and Nelson Raposo hug.

Class of 1999 celebrates its graduation from NHS

(Continued from page 7)

nostalgic “aws.”

“I could go on and cite many memories of many of you—” Hoey continued, then added in a concession to yells from the crowd: “and, yes, the football team did win its first game this year—but I don’t want to ramble on.”

The crowd’s mood temporarily calmed as Hoey wrapped up his remarks and School Superintendent Ernest Perlini took the podium. But as Perlini reached the end of his speech, turned to Board of Education Chairman Stephen Woods and said, “Mr. Woods, it gives me a great deal of honor to certify to you and to the members of the Newington Board of Education that the graduating class of 1999 has successfully completed all of the requirements...,” his voice was drowned out by the cheering graduates who sensed that the distribution of diplomas was close at hand. A single beach ball began flying around the room as the sustained cheers continued; it was confiscated by Assistant Principal Jeffrey Schumann, prompting perhaps the only “boos” of the night from the grads.

After Mr. Woods completed his remarks, it was indeed finally time for the diploma presentation. Each student had his or her own moment in the spotlight, and many were not shy about expressing their excitement. Derek McDonald raised the roof; Joe Michalski danced a jig; Carrie Ripley blew a kiss. Rob Kowal leaped on stage and looked about ready to either high-five or body-slam Mr. Woods. Danny Sayad acrobatically jumped several feet above the stage. Yahara Ngo grabbed the microphone from Assistant Principal Donald King and yelled, “Yankees rule, baby!” Allyson Perlini hugged her father, School Superintendent Dr. Ernest Perlini, as she strolled across the stage.

The celebration really got wild with the last four graduates in Stoddard House. Brian Zapatka walked on stage early, yelled “who!” as soon as his name was called, and raised his clenched fists in celebration; the audience responded noisily, and horns could suddenly be heard everywhere. His brother Pat Zapatka pointed enthusiastically at the crowd and received a similar response. Mike Zarotney was greeted with a hearty ovation as well, and David Zinkerman was met with thunderous applause as he pumped his left fist and became the last Class of ’99 grad to walk across the stage.

Within a few seconds, as Zinkerman reached the end of the line, everyone in the class stood up and began screaming their lungs out. Horns started blowing with renewed force, beach balls began flying, silly string erupted from the Doran House section, and the unbridled celebration truly got underway.

After almost a 90-second break of hooting, hollering, and tossing two beach balls and a partially deflated soccer ball around, the grads turned their attention to President Stevens as he walked to the podium, reached up to the tassel on his cap in preparation for switching it from the left to the right side—the traditional signal of official graduation—and declared, “Ladies and gentlemen of the Class of 1999, welcome to the real world!”

Stevens switched his tassel around, the rest of the class followed suit, and the floor of the Bushnell erupted: 272 former Newington High School students, now officially alumni, were also now officially in party mode. Some of them screamed, some of them hugged, some of them pumped their fists, some of them threw their caps into the air. Eventually, all of them recessed out into the parking lot—and, symbolically, marched out into the future, leaving Newington High behind and moving into the “real world.” The Class of 1999 had graduated.

More pictures—
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**NEWINGTON HIGH
CLASS OF 1999:
LIST OF GRADUATES
(continued)**

Jennifer B. Redd
Silvia S. Ribeiro
Carmine G. Rinaldi
Carrie T. Ripley
Patrick D. Ripley
Lisa M. Rivard
Debra A. Robinson
Brenden S. Roche
Sandra C. Rodrigues
Sarah E. Rolfe
Jason R. Rose
Elizabeth A. Rubasky
Joshua L. Rubin
Peter A. Ruchwa
Bryan J. Rudolph
Melanie I. Rugar
Sara E. Rzeszutek
Jennifer R. Salonia
Joey L. Sanchez
Eileen M. Sandelli
Jeffrey C. Santos
Kevin C. Santos
Steven M. Santos
Sarah E. Saunders
Daniel S. Sayad



An enthusiastic Danny Sayad leaps on stage as his classmates applaud.

Jamie M. Schultz
Jonathan D. Schuman
Laura M. Scott
Daniel E. Seremet
Joseph G. Serfass
Carissa Sfakios
Aida Shahnazarian
Christopher Simcik
Malgorzata Solek
Morgan P. Sones
Susan A. Spaziani

GRADUATION '99: THE SPEECHES

Tim Stevens: "We are not the world's nightmare, but rather its hope"

"Dr. Perlini, Mr. Hoey, members of the Board of Ed, friends, family, and other guests — before I begin, I really owe you all an apology. You see, everyone can listen to my speech, but it is truly intended for my classmates. ("Yes!", *cheers*, "We love you Tim!", *hoots*)

As all of you in this room are aware, the attention paid to teens this year has reached an all-time high. In the wake of the Columbine tragedy, the nation has been sent scurrying, wondering and trying to find out what is wrong with our generation. Articles with titles like 'How to spot a troubled teen,' 'The secret lives of teens,' 'How much Internet is too much?,' and 'The problem with cliques' are found in every major magazine and newspaper in the country. Experts everywhere have been displaying their theory on our moral degeneration. And each and every one of them has missed the point. ("Whoa!", *cheers*)

For all the money, clout, and credentials in the world don't make a difference, because the TV consultants, the writers, and the reporters have missed what's in this very room. We are not the end of the world. We're the beginning of a new one. ("Yeah!", "Whoa!", *cheers*, "It's all you, Tim!")

In the nation's rush to save us from ourselves, they fail to realize most of us don't need to be saved. When I look around this room, I don't see the hate and the rage that all those experts claim dwell within us all. I see magic. ("whoa") I see...

(Collin Harmon yells, "You're looking at me! You're looking at me!", then holds his arms up, stands up and faces the crowd as the grads laugh and cheer. Tim pauses and smiles, then continues when the grads quiet down.)

I see intelligence. I see athleticism. I see creativity, strength, and compassion. More than any of these, however, I see a drive to succeed.

Jan Bolduc is going to make sure no one ever has to deal with the (eating?) problems she had when she becomes a physical therapist. ("Yeah Jen!", "whoa," *cheers*, "We love you Jen!") Carmine Rinaldi will one day be teaching physical education (something something) sports. (*cheers*) Jeff Cultrera will be teaching young minds with his heart and his humor. (*cheers*) When Heather Weinberg returns from URI, she'll (...minds...) (*cheers*) Kate Wright is off to Washington, DC, to become our new political hope. (*cheers*) And finally, by the next time you see Brendan Loy, *The Living Room Times* will probably be available in 12 different languages and in 63 different countries (*cheers*). Make no mistake, we are the future. (*several* "whoos," "yeah")

These articles could almost make someone ashamed of being a teenager. But standing in this room, I can feel nothing but pride. Proud to be a teenager, proud to be president of this class, but more than anything, proud to be a member of this class. ("Yeah," "whoos," *cheers*) I realize now that when I first ran for president and said we were at the bottom, I was nowhere near right. Because no matter our age or grade level, we will always rise to the top. We are not the world's nightmare, but rather its hope. Each of us holds a key to the future, and I have complete faith looking out today that it's in the right hands. (*one* "whoa!")

So let's enjoy our last night as seniors. Don't worry about anything but having a good time. We've all earned it. (*hoots, applause*) There will be plenty of time to change the world tomorrow. Thank you very much. (15-second standing ovation, *cheers, horn blows*)

Sara Colpitts: "Sex education! ... and don't forget to color in the lines"

NOTE: Lines in *italic* were sung, not spoken, by Colpitts. Lines in **boldface italic** were sung in unison by Colpitts and large portions of the audience. Notes in (*italic and parentheses*) indicate crowd reactions and are not part of the speech.

On the first day of first grade, my teacher said to me, 'Don't forget to color in the lines.'

On the first day of second grade, my teacher said to me, 'Class, this year, we're going to learn the multiplication tables. 2 times 2 is 4.'

In the middle of the third grade, the teacher said to us, 'Class, we're going to learn to write in cursive.' 2 times 2 is 4, and *don't forget to color in the lines*.

Sometime during fourth grade, the teacher said to me, 'Class, everybody is going to learn to play an instrument. You can play the violin. Learn to write in cursive, 2 times 2 is 4, and don't forget to color in the lines. (hoots, cheers)

On the first day of fifth grade, the teacher told us all, 'Class, this year we're going to learn the difference between boys and girls—in sex education.' (wild cheers, "whoos") Play the violin, learn to write in cursive, 2 times 2 is 4, and don't forget to color in the lines.

On the first day of sixth grade, the teacher said to me, 'You are expected to have 1.75 hours-worth of homework. And here it is! Sex education! (cheers, horn blows) Play the violin, learn to write in cursive, 2 times 2 is 4, and don't forget to color in the lines.

In the beginning of the seventh grade, the teacher said to me, 'This year, we're going to Williamsburg.' (cheers) Here is all your homework, sex education! (hoots and cheers) Play the violin, learn to write in cursive, 2 times 2 is 4, and don't forget to color in the lines. (cheers)

On the last day of eighth grade, a new event had we: the formal dance, which at the time, we thought was really cool. (laughter) but now, we realize was pretty lame. ("whoa," laughter) Williamsburg is waiting, here is all your homework, sex education! Play the violin, learn to write in cursive, 2 times 2 is 4, and don't forget to color in the lines. ("whoos")

On the first day of ninth grade, Mrs. Codeanne said to homeroom 210: (kids in that homeroom cheer and whistle) 'It is very important that you study hard and get good grades, because colleges will be looking at your high school transcripts later on when you apply. And, make sure you sit quietly, say the pledge, and always listen to the announcements.' (cheers) Our first formal dance, Williamsburg is waiting, here is all your homework, sex education! Play the violin, learn to write in cursive, 2 times 2 is 4, and don't forget to color in the lines.

All throughout the tenth grade, no one said much to me, because not much happens during sophomore year. (laughter) No one pays any attention to you, (laughter) and everybody just can't wait to be upperclassmen. Get the grades for college, our first formal dance, Williamsburg is waiting, here is all your homework, sex education! Play the violin, learn to write in cursive, 2 times 2 is 4, and don't forget to color in the lines. ("wee hoo!")

On the first day of eleventh grade, Mr. O'Connell said to me (hoots and cheers), 'I wish I could meet Henry the Eighth. And did you know, I'm a friend and ally of Rome. (laughter) Now get out your box of colored pencils, and a big blue crayon.' (cheers) Nothing really happens, get the grades for college, our first formal dance, Williamsburg is waiting, here is all your homework, sex education! Play the violin, learn to write in cursive, 2 times 2 is 4, and don't forget to color in the lines.

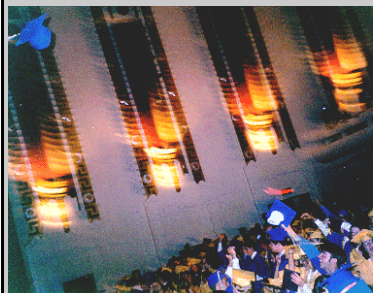
On the last day of twelfth grade, I said to the graduating class of 1999: ("yeah!", "whoa!", "wild cheers and applause) What a year this has been. So many great things have happened, but it still feels like the year just flew by. I don't know about you, but in one year, I've certainly changed, and I'm glad to say for the better. For Newington High, this has been a year of triumph. Congratulations to the softball team on their undefeated season (cheers), the boys lacrosse team for it to making states (wild cheers), and I couldn't forget the music department for their award-winning performance in Florida. (cheers; someone yells "football team!") And the football team. (cheers) And we send our luck to Mobile, Alabama, where Kelly Laskowski is competing for the national Junior Miss title. (cheers and applause) We wish she could be here with us today. But now, as the millennium draws to a close, so does our time at Newington High. Graduation marks the end of an important period in our lives, but new beginnings are ahead. High school is over. Let life begin. ("whoa," wild cheers) Big blue crayon, nothing really happens, get the grades for college, our first formal dance, Williamsburg is waiting, here is all your homework, sex education! Play the violin, learn to write in cursive, 2 times 2 is 4, and don't forget to color in the lines. Thank you very much! (20-second standing ovation)



**NEWINGTON HIGH
CLASS OF 1999:
LIST OF GRADUATES
(continued)**

Timothy G. Stevens
Todd D. Stigliano
Jessica H. Stoddard
Robert C. Struzenski
Benjamin L. Sullivan
Shaun M. Sullivan
Jennifer M. Tagle
Jennifer R. Tamalavic
Timothee J. Thibeau
Matthew J. Thomsen
Jennifer M. Tillman
Amanda A. Titus
Nicklaus W. Todoroff
Kenny J. Traceski
Eric P. Urciuoli
Ryan A. Vicino
Sean R. Vivier
Sean M. Waterman
Heather S. Weinberg
Alethia S. Weir
Anne B. Whipple
Christopher J. Whitaker
Allyson M. Widlak
Lisa H. Williams
Kathleen E. Wright
Phoenix J. Young
Brian J. Zapatka
Patrick J. Zapatka
Michael R. Zarotney
David B. Zinkerman

**“Ladies and gentlemen,
members of the Class
of 1999, welcome to
the real world!” —class
president Tim Stevens**



A cap flies through the air inside the Bushnell as the Class of 1999 begins its celebration after formally graduating.

GRADUATION '99: THE SPEECHES

Sean Vivier: “Have fun... don't ever let work control your life”

I don't know how I'm supposed to follow either of those speeches, but here goes. (*yells, hoots*) Here goes.

You know, when I was first informed that I was co-salutatorian and that I had to write this speech, I hadn't a clue what to write. I suppose I could have done something about lasting friendships and all the wonderful times — all the wonderful memories and good times that we've had in our high school years. But I don't get out much. (*laughter and applause, “Yeah Sean!”*)

Then there's always the ‘We should all feel proud knowing we've earned our right to graduate through hard work and determination.’ Or the old ‘You control your destiny. You are the future!’ But you already know all that, so there's certainly no need for me to elaborate on either subject. And in case you hadn't noticed, I like to do things a little bit different. (*“whoa,” “yeah,” “ow!”*)

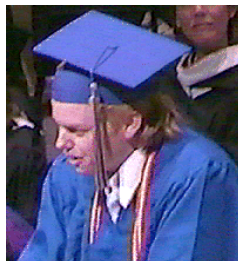
So I'd like to touch upon something that I don't think gets enough press at times like this: Have fun. Now I don't mean go out partying whenever possible and live a lifestyle of wanton hedonism (*“whoa,” cheers*). What I do mean is that you should enjoy life. While you're striving and achieving, keep your eyes on what you're struggling for, and never lose sight of it. You work in order to make your lives better. The education you will receive will buttress you in your chosen career, and that career will provide you with the money you need for basic amenities, for security, and for entertainment. You do not work to make work the purpose of your life. So if you can, find a job that's fulfilling, not one that simply saps the energy out of you. I'm not suggesting a job that's a walk in the park; after all, there's a certain feeling of pride that comes from overcoming a challenge. Still, don't ever let work control your life. You can tell yourself it's to make your life better, but if you allow it to possess you, you may just find everything you were working for is gone, irreclaimable.

Of course, there will be times of great stress when you are incredibly busy. That's just the way things are. Just don't let it become a habit — because before you know it, the work you are doing will be your life. Still, even in these times of exigency, there is always room for enjoyment. If you have only two minutes of spare time, use those two minutes just to socialize with your co-workers. If you have any form of wit, use it — people seem to enjoy that, and maybe it will brighten someone's day. Laugh whenever possible; not only is it just plain fun, but it buffers your immune system and increases serotonin levels in the brain, increasing your overall health and ability to function... (*cheers and applause*) While you're rapidly travelling from one place to another, notice the fact that the scenery is gorgeous and the fresh air smells great.

But even within hectic schedules, there is room to ease the pressure. Sometimes, you just have to realize that some problems in life and some tasks are simply unimportant. Brush them off and pay attention to what is truly important. Take only a handful of tasks on at a time, and don't take on tasks that are unnecessary if you can possibly help it. Otherwise, you may find yourself suffocated by stress, with no time to take pride in your work before you're tackling the next project.

Once in a while, do something out of the ordinary — like riding your bike in 40-degree weather in shorts and a t-shirt. (*rumbling of noise*) Trust me, it's very life-affirming. (*scattered applause, “Yeah Shin!”*) And when people taunt you for doing this unordinary thing — because they will — brush them off too. Life is too short to be caged in by societal norms.

And don't let anyone make you feel guilty for not wanting to work every waking moment in your life. It is not a loss of work ethic to want the time to simply enjoy the fruits of your labor. But if you remember only one thing from this entire speech, please remember this: There is a significant difference between hard work for the sake of hard work and hard work for the sake of accomplishing something. Thank you, that's all I have to say. (*cheers, 12-second standing ovation, horn blows*)



Claudio Gualtieri: “The climb of the mountain of life has simply reached a plateau, not the peak”

Good evening faculty, parents, distinguished guests, and especially all the enthusiastic members of the NHS graduating class of nineteen hundred and ninety-nine. (*cheers*) It is with great pleasure and honor that I stand before you today to deliver what I consider a very special “good of the order” (*scattered laughter*) to reflect on the accomplishments of our Newington schooling experience.

Fellow students, today we meet at the crossroads of our lives, the culmination of our grueling 13-year trail through the Newington school system. The trail can be compared to the perpetual mountain-climb of life, where every step provides a greater and broader perspective on life. If anyone questions how far we have come, I ask them to just consider our starting point: the big, scary elementary school. (*light laughter*) For those attending Anna Reynolds, (*hoots and cheers*) I remember our biggest fears were the legend of Mr. Spaghetti Face (*hoots*) and not being able to reach the water fountain on a very hot day. Yet today, that imposing elementary school would seem like munchkin-land to us. Instead of having to jump up now and take a drink of water, we must kneel down.

With the move from elementary school to middle school came the end of recess and cubby holes, and the beginning of lockers with combinations, and passing periods. Perhaps the most memorable time in middle school was the Williamsburg trip: one whole week away from mom and dad. (*cheers*) I'm sure you remember the late-night pranks on roommates, and the trick of putting a towel underneath the door to avoid lights out. (*“Yeah!”, hoots, applause*) For many of us, that week away from home was living la vida loca. (*“Whoa!”, cheers*) But at this point, as many of us are on the threshold of going away to college, to the military, or into the workforce, the Williamsburg trip appears to be only a small adventure.

The roughest yet most rewarding leg of our mountain climb so far has been high school. In high school, we were plagued with rigorous classes and the bumps and rocks of reports, homework, and tests. Despite these road hazards, there were far more positives to look back upon. Even if we did poorly on a calculus test, we could always hope for that potential calculus cook, or winning the pot to get the lowest grade. (*laughter, applause*) In addition, we have all come to appreciate film footage and guest speakers to get us out of a day of lecturing. I know that the guys in Italian IV will remember a certain video in particular of the trip to Italy in '93. (*sustained “Yeah,” whoops*) And in terms of sports, who can forget the fierce floor hockey rivalries we had in our junior gym class? (*cheers*)

Although all of our high school memories will come to a close in just a few hours, (*“whoa!”*) the climb of the mountain of life has simply reached a plateau, not the peak. In the next few years, each of us will be presented with obstacles and choices which will determine how high up the mountain we climb. Clearly, a molehill would be easier to climb than the Himalayas, but I want to remind you that ‘ease’ is not in the dictionary of the Class of '99. Granted, high ambitions and goals in life will take some work to reach, but the satisfaction of achieving one's aspirations is quite fulfilling. My fellow students, I know all of you possess the charisma, strength, and fortitude to climb any mountain you choose. So make sure not to short-change yourself. Remember that halfway up the highest mountain is far superior to the pinnacle of a molehill, but that the views around the corner will be ever more spectacular. For this reason, I encourage all of you to make choices which will serve as stepping stones to allow you to continue scaling the very highest mountain, so that your next accomplishments may seem as small as the water fountains of elementary school and the Williamsburg trip of middle school. Congratulations and best of luck to the Class of '99. (*cheers and applause, 15-second standing ovation*)



GRADUATION '99 IN PICTURES: MOMENTS TO REMEMBER



Clockwise from top left: Collin Harmon stands up in the middle of Tim Stevens's speech to declare, "You're looking at me!"; Chris Manzione (near the bottom left corner), Jason Martin, Mike Martocchio, and Jenn May (near the top right) are among those enjoying Sara Colpitts's speech; Tim Stevens (right) is also enjoying it, while Principal Paul Hoey seems less than ecstatic at the chants of "Sex education!"; Matt Kennedy and other Doran



House students cheer as one of their friends receives his diploma; two female grads share a high-five after getting their diplomas; Beth Milewski and Jeff Cultrera embrace as they walk out of the Bushnell; Sandy Rodrigues screams with joy while Matt Kagan and others bat a beach ball into the air as they slowly march toward the parking lot; Rob Kowal holds up his diploma and celebrates; Matt McCarter marks the occasion with a cigar outside the Bushnell as he clutches his diploma.



A note from the editor: This final issue of *The Living Room Times* is dedicated to all the people who have helped me over the years as this newspaper has grown from a middle-school "rag sheet" into a high-school institution — especially Sandy Pilz, Lou Ruggiero, the Stone family, the Kellogg "Schnucks," and most of all, my parents, Joe and Leanna. Thank you all so much... and perhaps the *LRT* will see you again at a class reunion someday. Who knows?