

commencement



Above, from top photo: Principal Ty Tingle; senior class president Lauren Hebl; Jee Soo Ro; Andre Gary and Andrew Ching. At right: the class of 2006 gathers outside Phillips Church.



Photographs by Brian Crowley



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*After the spring's
record rains, it
was nothing but
blue skies for the
senior class at
their June 11
graduation
ceremony.*



Harkness and Humility

*Commencement address by Principal
Ty Tingley '48, '64, '01 (Hon.); P'99*



Clockwise, from left: Religion instructor Betsey Farnham passes out graduation programs; Hillary Gras, Michael Greer, Daniel Grew and Andrew Grossman and other members of the class of '06 process into graduation; Sarah Hardwick, Rachel Factor, Mary-Lynn Cesar, Hadley Gleason; leaning in for a good shot; studying the graduation program.

IT WAS WITH MORE than a little sadness that I headed off on sabbatical last fall and left the school in your hands while I did my research and traveled. The sadness came from the fact that I knew I was missing an exciting part of a great year led by a great class. One of the things that has always typified the class of 2006 in my mind is your collective spirit and energy. This is a group that never seems to have enough projects to do, and when each of you thinks you might be getting your 11 extracurricular activities under control, you start six more lest you might get too much sleep. You have had an active and significant year as your spectacular yearbook, the *PEAN* has well documented.





Clockwise, from above: Principal Ty Tingley salutes retiring faculty members Nita Pettigrew, David Arnold, Lewis Hitzrot '60 (and Patricia Hindman, not shown); Jonathan Spector, Jaccqueline Stephenson, Megan Thomas.

And there has been no shortage of other accomplishments for the class of 2006 in other areas of school life. Athletically, this class has taken a strong lead, with 13 New England–title teams in your last two years. Sports victories, as well as news and opinion, have been well documented in an excellent newspaper. The arts have flourished in your class as your senior recitals, concerts, art shows and dramatic productions have all attested. You were the first class to move into the new Academy Center as leaders of the school's clubs and activities. You've set a great tone in opening this building and many works of your impressive art decorate its walls.

But I think many of the faculty will remember yours as a class that took the notion of *non sibi* to heart and never missed an opportunity to extend help to people in need. Perhaps some of this derives from the times in which you live. September 11, 2001 occurred at the start of your eighth-grade year as you may have been just beginning to think about going away to school. During much of your high school career, the war in Iraq has dominated the headlines. Unprecedented natural disasters from the tsunami



to hurricanes have wrecked incalculable havoc. Exeter has been less turbulent, although it got rather wet this spring, but your education in this peaceful setting has been against a background of war, disruption and human suffering.

And the class of 2006 has never failed to search for ways to help others in need. ESSO has organized efforts to help victims of the tsunami and Hurricane Katrina. When the flood hit, Exeter students rushed off campus to fill sand bags and pump basements. They welcomed flood victims back to their homes with baked goods they had cooked themselves and then stayed to see if there was any other way that they could help.

And in another form of *non sibi* you supported our efforts to be good stewards of our planet through a number of conservation measures. We didn't quite win this spring's Green Cup Challenge, but we started a friendly competition with two of our sister schools that underscores the importance of conserving energy, a lesson our country desperately needs to learn.

The class of 2006 is a great class and one that has accomplished a great deal in your time at this academy. May is the month for reunions at Exeter, as you know since you were displaced from your seats in the Assembly Hall from time to time by alumni and alumnae anxious to sit right where they sat when they were undergraduates. Like all faculty I enjoy reunions for the chance they afford to catch up with former students and to hear the remarkable things they are accomplishing. But I am always struck by what alumni and alumnae remember of their time in this place. Often graduates don't remember the big events that you expect they will recall, and yet they remember in microscopic detail *minor* events that few others even noticed.

This actually gives rise to the *oldest* commencement joke in history; and since it is a joke that you'll hear at every commencement you attend for the rest of your lives, I want to be the first to tell it to you.



Clockwise, from left: Sally Pei receives the Faculty Prize for Excellence; trustee Bruce Hallett '67 presents Colton Heward-Mills with the Thomas Cornell Award, given by members of the senior class to the member who best exemplifies the spirit of Cornell himself and of Exeter.

Graduation Prizes

The Yale Cup, awarded each year to the member of the senior class who best combines the highest standards of character and leadership with excellence in his studies and in athletics:

Christopher Downer and Nicholas Downer, Stamford, CT

The Ruth and Paul Sadler '23 Cup, awarded each year to that member of the senior class who best combines the highest standards of character and leadership with excellence in her studies and in athletics:

Rebecca Austin, Medway, ME

The Perry Cup, given annually to a student who has shown outstanding qualities of leadership and school spirit:

George Stern, Lyme, NH

The Williams Cup, given annually to a student who, having been in the Academy four years, has by personal qualities brought distinction to Phillips Exeter:

Jenna Leahy, Exeter, NH

The Eskie Clark Award, given to a student in the graduating class who, through hard work and perseverance, has excelled in both athletics and scholarship:

Alison Maxwell, Exeter, NH

The Thomas Cornell Award, decided by the senior class and given annually to that member of the graduating class who exemplifies the Exeter Spirit typified by Thomas Hilary Cornell of the Class of 1911:

Colton Heward-Mills, Hillside, NJ

Cox Medals, awarded each year to those members of the graduating class who, having been two or more years in the Academy, have attained the highest scholastic rank:

William Cioffi, Barrington, NH

David Fort, Sewanee, TN

Katherine Koster, Elmwood Park, IL

Lulu Li, East Walpole, MA

Jin Gon Park, Seoul, Korea

Sally Pei, Hong Kong, China

Faculty Prize for Excellence, given to that member of the graduating class who, having been two or more years in the Academy, is recognized on the basis of scholarship as holding the first rank:

Sally Pei, Hong Kong, China



It was the time for the 25th reunion at a small college in New England. The president of the college, nearing the end of his tenure, encountered a 25th reunioner whose face was vaguely familiar but whose name was lost in the depths of time. The reunioner strode purposefully up to the president and grasped his hand. "Sir," he said, "I want to thank you. The advice you gave me at commencement has changed my life and become the words I live by every day."

"Really!" replied the president, struggling to remember what momentous words he uttered to this unknown graduate, "What exactly did I say?"

"Sir," replied the graduate. "As I crossed the stage at commencement, you shook my hand, looked directly into my eyes and said, 'Keep moving! Keep moving!'"

And so I wonder what memories of Exeter the class of 2006 will bring to its 25th reunion. Surely the class will share a memory about chairs. Hundreds and hundreds of chairs. And you will also probably spend a good deal of time recalling the remarkable organization of your very creative senior prank.

But I know you will have other memories as well, and many of those will be larger than the memory of what you did in specific classes and approach the greater lessons learned at Exeter, what the Exeter experience has meant for you. I wonder what those memories will hold.

You have gone to a school that is committed to a very special method of teaching. You are used to having conversations about the topics you are studying. Every year I visit with hundreds of alumni and alumnae around the country and they tell me that they miss the excitement of a good Harkness discussion. Often they tell stories of how, frustrated by large lectures in their college experience, they tried to organize Harkness-style discussion groups. And often these efforts failed because the participants didn't understand the responsibility of the Harkness table. They didn't understand that around the table everyone must be both a teacher and a learner.

I like to think that despite our jokes about Harkness warriors, there's a kind of humility to which all of us who participate in a



Above: Mike Scalise accepts the congratulations of a classmate. **Right:** Rebecca Austin receives the Ruth and Paul Sadler '23 Cup for character and leadership.

Harkness discussion must aspire. It's the humility that goes with really listening to what someone else has to say. It's the humility that goes with recognizing that someone else has a better idea and trying to build on that person's thought. It's the humility that goes with understanding that the group as a whole will move farther and accomplish more if you bite your tongue and let others complete the thoughts they are developing.

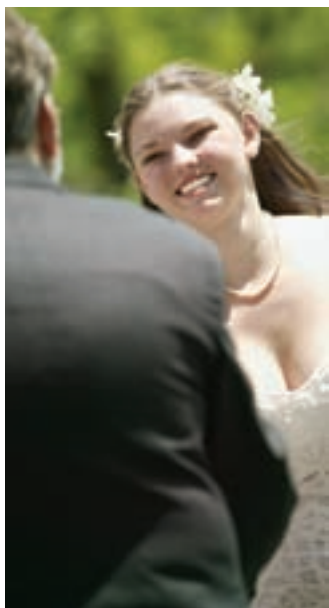
And this is a great leadership skill to take into your life after Exeter. There is much fascination in the popular press and on talk shows these days with the decisive, activist leader. In fact, most great leaders have been effective because they can build consensus; they can lead people to common ground; they can get things done. And they succeed because they knew how to bite their tongues and really listen and understand the agenda of others. That's a skill you've practiced around the Harkness table.

Another aspect of the Harkness conversation is that it is enriched by the perspectives and histories of those who enter into it. When I was traveling this fall on my sabbatical, I was struck by how different a simple dinner conversation could be in another country. Humans living in community tend to develop a set of common assumptions and conventions that steers conversation away from conflict. And somehow those assumptions and conventions harden into a world view that can, in the extreme, distort our perception of reality. A visit to another country whose assumptions and conventions are different from those of the folks back home can be a great reality check.

Many of the members of the class of 2006 have experienced the reality check of foreign travel through programs such as School Year Abroad or our term programs for foreign study. But for those members of the class who haven't traveled, just being at Exeter is a broad exposure to different cultures. You don't have to look very far around your Harkness table to see someone who has



Clockwise, from above: Jee-Yun Lim and Aviva Lillian; a big thumbs-up from Nathan Allukian; Sarah Zeidel '02 cheers for brother Josh Zeidel '06; Natasha Meyer.



ART DURITY

Clockwise, from left: brothers Nick and Chris Downer—shown here with father Tony Downer '75, grandmother Huan Kee Chan, mother Amy Chan Downer '75 and sister Caroline Downer '08—share the Yale Cup for character and leadership; English instructor Mercy Carbonell and Sam Duprey; Luz Rosario and Chelsea Rodriguez.



grown up in a different culture or, if not that, at least grown up with perspectives very different from yours.

I thought of this a number of times this spring as I listened to your senior meditations. Whether it was Kelly Cho or Min Jae Yu telling of growing up in Korea, or Parnian Nazary recounting her life in Kabul under the Taliban, or Mairead Small Staid's poetic insight into faith, or Amy Weston's journey from man to woman, each meditation brought us understanding of the unique frames of reference that make up this class and this school.

And here is another valuable leadership experience. We speak of the United States as a diverse country, as indeed it is. But even in our great metropolitan areas, few people have the experience of living together with people of every race and ethnicity and religion from around the world. Few have the opportunity for late-night talks in dormitories with friends whose families see the world with very different eyes. And few have the opportunity to laugh together, to enjoy sports together, to grow accustomed to the common humanity we share. You can all remember what it was like to come to this place and learn to trust people who were strangers. Having had that experience, you are well equipped to make your way in the very diverse world beyond Exeter, to build bridges and inspire trust, and lead this world to a more peaceful future.

And in your thousands of dis-

cussions and hours studying, you have learned something of the history and the context of the great issues of our time. There is considerable tension in the United States about what the real outcome of high school education should be. Some would argue that the high school years are simply about acquiring skills, skills that would make you a better engineer, a better computer programmer, a better doctor. And many who focus on this outcome also focus on numeric ways to measure performance, on testing. Of late the skill-focused, testing-oriented side of this old debate has been ascendant; but there is another way of looking at the high school curriculum, and it is important at Exeter.

One of Exeter's traditions since 1993 is the senior bookmark. Seniors are invited to submit a list of titles to the librarians. Usually these are from six to 10 books, all united in some thematic group and clustered under invariably clever titles. The Academy Library prints the bookmarks and distributes these little mini reading lists to any visitor who would like them. This year there were 42 senior bookmarks suggesting over 300 titles that might be a good read.



Time is on their side: In 1906, when Erwin Bruce Hallett graduated from Exeter, his family presented him with a gold pocket watch (far left). Exactly 100 years later, his great-grandson E. Bruce Hallett IV '06 (left) received his Exeter diploma—and the same engraved watch, presented to him by his father, trustee E. Bruce Hallett III '67 (right), which had been passed on to him in turn by his own father, Dr. E. Bruce Hallett Jr. '40 (center).



I suspect that all of those who were interested enough in reading and confident enough in their ability to suggest a reading list to others came to Exeter as good readers. What grew in your time at Exeter was the range of your reading tastes and your interest in the greater world. How else would you explain the day student from Exeter who listed seven books about the Middle East on her senior bookmark? Or the senior whose nine titles included works by Dostoyevsky, Kierkegaard, Cervantes, Goethe, Chekhov, Sartre and Stephen Hawking, an international reading list of remarkable breadth. Or the senior whose recommended list ran from *The Sound and the Fury* to *Winnie the Pooh*.

Exeter has asked you to read broadly and stretch your imaginations. It has asked you to challenge yourself with difficult prose and to understand complex situations. In math and science it has never offered you easy cookbook solutions, but asked you to solve rigorous problems, to explore, to experiment. In doing this, Exeter has not focused on simple outcome measurements like standardized testing, but on the growth of your minds.

Of course, the class of 2006 was a group of extremely able, well-educated students when you arrived at Exeter. And thus the academic experience we have given you would not work for every student in their high school years. But one *could* hope that every student would take away the capacity you have achieved to look beyond the obvious appraisals of contemporary issues and to read broadly, to think carefully and to cross the boundaries of the conventional in thought and seek your own solutions.

The class of 2006 seems poised to make these efforts. This is a class of great energy with an inspiring willingness to reach out and help others. You have learned to listen to others and grow through that conversation. You have learned to trust those of very different backgrounds from yours. And you have learned to explore fearlessly in the world of ideas, to question conventional solutions by the measure of broad and thorough learning. All these accomplishments will bring you great happiness in your life and great success. And may they prepare you for a lifetime of leadership tempered by the spirit of *non sibi*, which you have come to understand so well. ●



Top: Graduation offered Parnian Nazary (center) of Kabul, Afghanistan, many reasons to celebrate, starting with the presence of her family—father Mohammad (second from left), mother Zarghna (third from right) and sister Toba (second from right)—whom she had not seen since coming to Exeter in 2004. Joining in the celebration are Robert Azzi P'02 (left) and religion instructor Jamie Hamilton (right), who served as Parnian's second family during her time at Exeter. **Middle:** Timothy Schuman and Andrew Schuman. **Bottom:** Pam Parris, Grace Cineas and English instructor David Weber.