<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHOOL</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abington Heights</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coughlin</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crestwood</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dallas</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GAR Memorial</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanover Area</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hazleton Area</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holy Redeemer</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lackawanna Trail</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake-Lehman</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meyers</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMI Preparatory</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nanticoke</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwest</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pittston Area</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunkhannock</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Side Vocational</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilkes-Barre Vocational</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wyoming Area</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wyoming Seminary</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wyoming Valley West</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Abington Heights grads praise teachers at commencement

By Robert Tomkavage
rtomkavage@timesleader.com

CLARKS SUMMIT — Abington Heights High School valedictorian Shane Cummings believes much of the success achieved by the class of 2017 was a result of advice from the teaching staff.

For Cummings, four words — “work smart, not hard” — offered by AP Human Geography teacher Jason Burke held a special meaning.

“This sentence is something Mr. Burke’s students hear from him on a fairly regular basis and is something I think all of us have taken to heart,” Cummings said. “The motto, ‘work smart, not hard’ is something instilled in us by all our teachers and is what Abington Heights has been teaching us to do throughout our many years in the school district. When other people were thinking inside the box, we were taught to think outside of it.”

Cummings ended his speech, during the commencement ceremony earlier this month at Comets Stadium, with a simple message.

“You can do it,” he told his fellow classmates. “These last four years, I’ve seen all of us grow and evolve from awkward freshman into confident young men and women. The skills you have gained at Abington Heights will set you apart from your peers in society and have prepared you to accomplish your dreams.”

Class President Austin Catania compared the graduates’ future to the school’s nickname, the Comets.

“Just like a Comet traveling through space, you will be traveling out into the unknown,” he said. “For the last 12 years, we’ve known exactly where we would be and what we would be doing every fall. As of today, we’re beginning a new chapter of our lives and embarking on a new journey. For some, that means extending their education. While for others it means entering the workforce or serving in our nation’s military.

“As a Comet streaks across the sky, it seems to illuminate light until it is out of sight,” he added. “To me, this is very promising. For just like that Comet, our future is shining bright, and I wholeheartedly believe the class of 2017 is one of the brightest.”

While members of the class have experienced great successes in the arts, the classroom, sports and other extracurricular activities, Superintendent of Schools Michael Mahon was proud of another honor.

“The Class of 2017 adds to its many achievements the rare accomplishment of a 100 percent graduation rate,” Mahon said.

Mahon also recognized graduates Collin Huggler, Francis Kearney IV, Garrett MacKay, Timothy Nelson, Benjamin Vale and Ryan Williams, who plan to serve in the military.

Reach Robert Tomkavage at 570-704-3941 or on Twitter @rtomkavage.
ABINGTON HEIGHTS CLASS OF 2017

Jack Anthony Abdalla, Theresa Emily Acla, Sara Adelman, Kevin Brennan Albright, Alexandra Lynn Altier, Kristin Marie Altieri, Thomas Christopher Artley, Dylan Thomas Asay.


Maxwell Brownley Earl, Ryan Perry Eckerley, Nicholas Alexander Emmett, Nathaniel Joseph Engles, Alexandra Kyla Evans, Grace Margaret Evans.


Timothy Robert Habeeb, Nikole Lynn Hallock, Brandon Cole Hardy, Bailey Maxwell Willoughby Harris, Christian Michael Harris, Noelle Brianne Harris, Ryan Harvey, Peter John Heckman, Thomas Hildebrand, Logan Hivner, Hanna Marie Hlavac, Elizabeth Hobbie, Alain Nicole Hoylar, Kevin Quan Hu, Collin James Huggler, Jason Gordon Husisian.


Alison Mikayla Kane, Zachary Perry Karabin, Mason Jeffrey Kay, Francis Emmett Kearney IV, Nicholas Kerekes, Evan Joseph Kettle, Julia Khalil, Shania Angela Kiat, Nathan John Kizer, Benjamin Daniel Kontz, Natalie Brooke Kozar, Ryan Leo Kreyling, George Philip Kronick, Anissa Nicole Kunchick, Tyler Francis Kusma, Heather Leigh Kwolek.


Lauren Ashley Olevnik, Evan Micah Orr, Kyle Scott Osterhout, Brian Michael Ostrowski, Babatunde Samuel Osuntokun.


Stephen Daniel Yachwak, Thomas Alexander Yocum III.
Challenges, friendships and quality academics

By Geri Gibbons
For Times Leader

WILKES-BARRE — Valedictorian Shannon Drevitch told fellow members of the 2017 graduating class of Coughlin High School, that in spite of challenges the class had faced together, their experience as students has been marked by deep friendships and quality academics.

Still she drew laughter from the crowd gathered at the F.M. Kirby Center for the school’s graduation ceremony earlier this month as she described the building now housing the school. “It was often like 90 degrees. It was either hot or really really hot,” she said laughing. “And a hard hat might have been an appropriate part of the dress code.”

She encouraged members of her class to move forward, vigorously following their dreams. “Be bold, be courageous, be your best,” she said.

District Superintendent Brian Costello, acknowledging that he was unexpectedly adding to the day’s program, directed graduates to stand up and face the audience. “Make eye contact with one person that has made this day possible for you,” he said. “Now, give them a round of applause.”

Costello encouraged the graduates to become leaders. “Eleanor Roosevelt said that the future belongs to those who dream,” he said. “Couple those dreams with hard work to make them a reality.”

Honor student Kevin Kozerski, referencing

See COUGHLIN | 37

The Coughlin class of 2017 walks to the F.M. Kirby Center in Wilkes-Barre for their graduation ceremony earlier this month.
COUGHLIN CLASS OF 2017

Boys
First row, from left: Garrett S. Gagliardi, Class Treasurer; Srivatsav R. Challa, Class Assistant Treasurer; Kamal Patel, Class Secretary; Paul Michael Marinko, Jr., Class President; Emily G. Andrews, Class Vice-President.
Third row: Aidan S. Connelly, Jose D. Contreras, Kayla Cook, James Czerniakowski, Kazmere N. Davis, Miles Thomas Davis, Matthew W. Davison, Jr., Fernando Jose De La Cruz, Marco DeLuca, Malik Diop, Joseph Harley Dobrosky, Steven Dressler, Jr.
Sixth row: Kevin John Kozerski, Hunter Michael Krzywicki, Jacob J. Kuna, Andri R. Laureano, Gerald R. Lavan, Andrew Lenkofsky, Henry Levandowski, Darius N. Lopez, Jacob Michael Lupas, Matthew Christopher Malenovitch, Savion Regan McClo, Mekhi D. McDonald, Thomas McKenna, Stephen John Moon, Jr.

Girls
First row, from left: Garrett S. Gagliardi, Class Treasurer; Srivatsav R. Challa, Class Assistant Treasurer; Kamal Patel, Class Secretary; Paul Michael Marinko, Jr., Class President; Emily G. Andrews, Class Vice-President.
Third row: Bryanna Marie Brennan, Emily Cicon, Sandrina Giavanna Cinti, Katelyn E. Clewell, Mya Collins, Kiara Marie Cotillo, Clairemaine Onshanique Curtis, Morgan J. Daniels, Angelina Jeanine Davis, Paige M. Davis, Megan Domiano, Shannon Rose Drevitch, Arly D. Flores-Cantoran.
Seventh row: Bryony L. Pega, Mary Jeanie Pitack, Shayneen Niefa Pompey, Madison L. Pugh, Hannah E. Redding, Courtney Paige Regan, Kyleigh Rice, Diana Argentina Rodriguez, Jelysa Rosario, Courtney Rose, Julia Schneider, Tabitha Schwab, Alexis Marie Serafin, Ni’Ashia La’Khia Sherry, Mylaka Grace Slavish.
Eight row: Alexandra Elizabeth Smith, Yvette Sosa, Marysabel Soriano Ramirez, Diana Stavinski, Jessica Ann Stewart, Mykala V. Timek, Teshia Marie Todd, Cienna Catherine Tolmne, Lizbeth Torres, Maya Velez, Tatiana Vanessa Villalobos, Yasmin M. Waheed, Kiera Lea Warnagiris, Rebecca Williams, Gillian Marie Worosilla, Madison Mae Yech.
Absent: Moe’Na Manns,
Graduates will always be Comets

By Marcella Kester
For the Times Leader

WRIGHT TWP. — The 2017 graduates of Crestwood High School may have closed one chapter in their lives, but they now have the opportunity to begin a new chapter.

As the 208 seniors walked through a wooden wall that read “2017” and to their seats, students and faculty reminded the class of the importance of relationships, happiness and knowing that wherever they go in life they will always be a Crestwood Comet.

The first speaker of the evening was senior class Vice President Ian Beach.

Looking out into the crowd he told his peers that if Crestwood were the trunk of a tree, each student of the class of 2017 would be a branch, growing and stemming out to all the corners of the Earth. He said that while each student follows a different path, they should always strive for greatness no matter where life leads them.

“Wherever we go, whatever we do and in whatever way we bend the world to our will, Crestwood — in one way or another — will always be somewhat of a home to us all,” he said. “Whether you go on to become an astronaut or garbage person, be the happiest and best astronaut or garbage person you can be.”

The class opted to take somewhat of a different approach to their graduation ceremony, as many senior leaders chose to give musical performances instead of inspirational speeches.

Senior chorus members opened the event by singing the national anthem, followed by the Crestwood alma mater. Later in the ceremony, class President David Lackenmier performed a duet with fellow graduate Ashley Lewis, with seniors Elizabeth Hines, Schyler Kelsch, Nina McCormack and Abigail Martino also performing before and after the awarding of diplomas.

High school principal Christopher Gegaris addressed the class, becoming emotional at times.

The principal reminded the class that they have the power to make the world a better place, and that power starts by finding the good within themselves and others.

“I challenge you to make the investment in the power of human relationships,” he said. “Surround yourself with

See CRESTWOOD | 7
Crestwood

From page 6

good people, and it will lead you to the power of peace.”

He told the graduates to study people and their behaviors and to find good, admirable qualities in not only those around them but themselves as well. If they realize a quality they desire in others, practice that quality themselves so that they may become a better person, and in turn create a better world.

Gegaris himself was honored at the ceremony, as the class of 2017 will be his last as the high school principal. He is taking a position as chief of district operations at Crestwood and was given a standing ovation from students and audience members for his dedication to education and students.

Reach the Times Leader newsroom at 570-829-7242.

Congratulations
Sri!
We are so proud of you!!
Best of luck!!!
Love,
Mom, Dad, & Spoorthy

School:
Coughlin
High school

Congratulations!

WE ARE SO PROUD OF YOU!
MUCH SUCCESS IN YOUR
FUTURE ENDEAVORS!
LOVE
MOM, DAD, KELSEY, JUSTIN
AND YOUR FAMILY

Leroy Fettig
Coughlin High School
Ryan Webb
Wyoming Area

Breezy
Coolbaugh
Dallas Class of 2017

Congratulations!

Leroy Fettig

Ryan Webb

Congratulations!

WE ARE SO PROUD OF YOU!
MUCH SUCCESS WITH YOUR
BUSINESS STUBBS LANDSCAPING.
LOVE
MOM, DAD, KELSEY, JUSTIN
AND YOUR FAMILY

JUSTIN RINEHIMER
CONGRATULATIONS!
GRADUATED PENNSYLVANIA
COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY

ARLY FLORES
CHS '17
May your journey at King's College be filled with wonderful life changing experiences, soak up as much knowledge as possible. Always remember your family, we're out here rooting for you and

NICOLE HARPER
Wyoming Valley West
Class of 2017

Nicole will be attending Bloomsburg University.
Atypical year actually pretty good

By Marcella Kester
For Times Leader

DALLAS — It’s no question that the students of the Dallas School District had an eventful year.

But sitting on the field of Mountaineer Stadium earlier this month, students were able to talk about their final experiences, smile and laugh as more than 200 seniors prepared to walk across the stage as graduates.

In her opening speech, student council President Madison Hurst spoke of the atypical hurdles the senior class had to overcome during the past year.

“This year alone, we had to endure strikemas, Christmas, floodmas and the blizzard of 2017,” she said. “We’ve gone through a lot this year to get here. It’s unbelievable that it’s only taken 151 days.”

Hurst continued by saying that the events the seniors had to endure during the past year — combined with all other years — taught the class lessons that extended far beyond academics. She told her peers to remember these lessons, and use the skills they developed in school to prove themselves to those who doubt them along the road to success.

While students managed to acquire colorful beach balls and gleefully threw them across the field at each other, district Superintendent Thomas Duffy offered his remarks to the graduating class.

Duffy said that 2017 wasn’t “atypical” at all. Instead, he chose to highlight all of the accomplishments the class of 2017 and the district had.

“It would be easy to frame this monologue around how atypical, how uncharacteristic — and even historic — this school year has been,” he said, citing issues like a gas leak, flooding and, of course, the teachers strike. “However, after greater reflection, it becomes more apparent in more than a few ways that this year was actually typical, or better.”

Duffy went on to say that despite a tumultuous year students met or exceeded their expectations not only academically, but socially and culturally as well. Graduation rates reached 98 percent within the district, and he lauded students for achieving some of the highest SAT scores in Luzerne County. He also noted more than 150 seniors completed advanced placement courses with nearly all passing their senior career curriculum.

Graduates will enter higher education at more than 40 nationally recognized colleges and universities across the country, he said, and six graduates will go into the military.

Aside from recognizing the class and all their accomplishments, Duffy also opted to recognize another group during the ceremony: their caregivers.

Looking to the audience, Duffy asked parents and family members to look back over the last 13 years. From giving final goodbye kisses before boarding the school bus for the first time to making schedules around a slurry of extra-curricular activities, Duffy applauded graduates’ families for all of the work and support they put into helping their children succeed. He then asked the seniors to stand and turn around to thank their caregivers, creating a roar of applause and cheers.

Class salutatorian Sarah Strazdus and valedictorian Ann Metzloff both addressed their peers bringing messages of lifelong learning and growth. Going back to the days of kindergarten, Strazdus’ theme — “life goes on” — touched on the many events and scenarios the class had together, calling out particular people, places and events that drew a variety of emotions. From enduring social trends of the time to students from both elementary schools clashing as they became one school in the middle school, she told the class that they pressed through all the challenges they faced over the years — and life will be no different.

“Through all the trials and tribulations that our class has endured over the years, we have continuously been reminded that life goes on,” she said.

Reach the Times Leader newsroom can be reached at 570-829-7242 or on Twitter @TLnews.
DALLAS CLASS OF 2017

Tori Elizabeth Landon, Kate Lynn Lazzneri, Nina Gabrielle Leeds, Anna Lehane, Emma Michelle Lehman, Eric Morrison Llewellyn, Stephen Michael Lofing, Sara Kendall Lojewski.
Sidney Orion Neil, Abigail M. Noone, Anthony Steven Nyzio, Yeraldine Orduz, Riley Samantha Oremus, James Christopher Oschel Jr., Ronald Joseph Ostrowski III.
Andrew Mark Thomas Jr., Corbin Andrew Thompson, Jared Graeme Thompson, Joseph John Thompson, Justin Robert Thompson, Josephina Lee Treslar, Ryan Alabre Trumm.

Class of 2017

Congratulations Graduates!

On and off premise catering available.
WILKES-BARRE — David-Elijah Virgo wasn’t sure that he would make it to graduation this year at GAR Memorial High School.

Virgo said he had a difficult first quarter and didn’t think he would pass his trigonometry final.

“I looked at it, and I had studied,” he said. “But I didn’t know if I could do it. I did pass, though.”

And yet he remained undeterred.

“I studied every extra minute of every day,” he said, standing proudly in his cap and gown.

Virgo credits Principal Colleen Robatin and the school’s faculty with consistently encouraging him and making graduation possible.

Before the school’s graduation ceremony earlier this month, Virgo was not only looking forward to walking across the stage during the 90th annual commencement, but to leaving for Fort Benning in Columbus,

See GAR | 11
GAR MEMORIAL CLASS OF 2017

Class Officers: Nataliya Saulya Scarantino, class president; Nayeli Tapia, vice president; Ashley Banos, secretary; Cody Patrick Dzurisin, treasurer.


Patricia D. Dadap, Tatiana Davis, Erika Jimenez De La Cruz, Anthony V. De Los Santos, Marisa Elena DeGraffenreid*, Jay D. Deininger, David D. DeVito, Michael Drozda, Cody Patrick Dzurisin*.


Kemi Jones.

TyJaire Jarvis Shaneem Keith, Jonai Kimbrough, Christopher Ivan Kolativa, Roselyn Theresa Kosich*, Eric Richard Krzywicki.


Ruby-Leann Taylor Saéz, Julianna Rose Scammahorn*, Nataliya Saulya Scarantino*, Tabitha Marie Schneider*.


Kameliah L. Wilson, Davionna Whitaker, Taylor Ann Woods.

Austin M. Yelland*, Henri Thibont Zapata.

* - Denotes Membership in the National Honor Society

Reach the Times Leader newsroom at 570-829-7242 or on Twitter @TLnews.

GAR held its 90th annual commencement ceremony earlier this month.

From page 10

Georgia, to begin his service in the Army.

To Virgo, it was a perfect fit.

“I wanted to continue learning and to also have physical fun,” he said.

District Superintendent Brian Costello encouraged all the graduates at the ceremony to pursue their dreams with hard work.

“Dream big and be relentless,” he said. “Act upon your dreams.”

Valedictorian Nataliya Scarantino also encouraged fellow graduates to fearlessly pursue their dreams.

Looking upon her classmates, she told them, “We will take this world by storm.”

Scarantino also thanked friends and family for their support.

“It took a village for us to make it to this moment,” she said.

“Thank you for being that village.”

Robatin encouraged the graduates to move forward with confidence, drawing on their high school experience as Grenadiers as a source of strength and motivation.

“Do great things,” she said.

Reach the Times Leader newsroom at 570-829-7242 or on Twitter @TLnews.
HANOVER TWP. — Christopher Pelchar spent his time in high school learning to be himself.

As a class of 2017 Hanover Area graduate, Pelchar said he was “overwhelmed” walking into the junior/senior high school six years ago in the seventh grade.

“The questions going through my head were endless,” Pelchar, the president of the student council, said during graduation. He said he came from the Wilkes-Barre Area School District and didn’t know many people except for a handful of individuals he knew from sports.

But overtime, Pelchar, who will be attending Wilkes University for a pharmacy degree, said he came into his own and was able to bond with several groups of people “in this journey we call high school.”

“I don’t call myself a jock or a nerd,” he said. “Nothing bad can come with being true to yourself.”

Superintendent Andrew Kuhl brought a seven-page speech to the 46th commencement, but joked that it was because of bad eyesight and large type, not a long-winded speech.

The superintendent told students that teachers had made the class of 2017 into “community of classmates ‘made things a little more fun’”

“Nothing bad can come with being true to yourself.”

— Christopher Pelchar

See HANOVER | 13
HANOVER AREA CLASS OF 2017


Hanover

From page 12

learners” who “promote personal and community achievement.”

“We take pride in your successes,” Kuhl told the 135 graduates, who were dressed in school colors — blue and white. “You amazed us by the demanding schedules you kept.”

As a result of their hard work, 113 students will continue their education, whether it be at a career and technical center or a two-year or four-year college. In addition, five students are joining the military. “You are now prepared for the next chapter of your life,” Kuhl said.

When Stephen Dule, the senior class president, addressed the packed auditorium, he reminded them that “nothing deeply fulfilling is easy to reach.”

Dule, who will be attending Penn State University’s main campus for an electrical engineering degree, told his classmates to keep at their passions, which “we (the class of 2017) made our own” during high school.

“Climb the mountain of anything you are passionate about,” he said.

“There is a top.”

An emotional Gabrielle Baiamonte said her class was “one of the most interesting classes” which have roamed the halls of the Sans Souci Parkway facility.

“We lived through silly bands and Free Hug Fridays,” Baiamonte said. And though Baiamonte, a Temple University-bound biochemistry major, said her classmates were “non-cookie cutter individuals,” she said the class of 2017 “made things a little more fun.”

Reach Melanie Mizenko at 570-991-6116 or on Twitter @TL_MMizenko.

Congratulations Hanover Area Graduates!

Make graduation an occasion to remember with a timeless gift of fine jewelry.
Save on beautiful jewelry for that special graduate
Large selection of watches
DUNAY JEWELERS
428 Hazle Street, Wilkes-Barre • 570-822-5511 • www.dunayjewelers.com
Grads offered driving lessons for navigating life’s journey

By Steve Mocarsky
smocarsky@timesleader.com

HAZLE TWP. — Jared O’Donnell told the Hazleton Area High School Class of 2017 that while they should be proud of their accomplishments, they should also be mindful of some criticism of their generation.

“Older generations have described your generation as lazy, apathetic and unprofessional. One of the many tasks in life is to prove everyone wrong,” the school board president advised seniors at the high school’s 25th annual commencement on June 12.

“Prove to the world that through your profession, your energy and exuberance is directed at doing good and improving the lives of not just your own selves, but the lives of others,” O’Donnell said. “Help others less fortunate, stand up for what you believe in and let your voice be heard.”

The 707 graduating seniors heard words of encouragement and advice from administrators and their class leaders as well.

Principal Rocco Petrone told the class that hundreds of thousands of American high school students will be graduating in June, and they all have one thing in common — time. “How you choose to use your time is up to you. This is your time to write your own story and begin your own journey. This is just the beginning of what greatness lies ahead,” Petrone said.

Superintendent Craig Butler told the seniors it was a time to celebrate their success and to be proud of their accomplishments “as much as we are proud of you.”

In a tribute to parents, class salutatorian Dario D’Amato said parents, guardians and “all other beloved that have stood by us to offer us support” are the “behind-the-scenes heroes of this event. … They give us life’s greatest gift — unconditional love.”

Valedictorian Nicolas Vitagliano focused on the major things he and his classmates learned over their high school years — how to strive for success, how to become leaders and how to be mature.

“Our worries now focus around college housing agreements, full-time jobs or entering the military,” he said. “We grew up in a short span of four years. … We entered high school as boys and girls, and now we leave as mature men and women.”

Class President Emily Corrado spoke metaphorically about the journey that lies ahead for her and her fellow graduates, encouraging them to find the courage to “take a different road if the road you are on no longer provides a favorable destination.”

“Be unafraid. Grab at every opportunity, take chances, trust your instincts and speak in your own voice,” Corrado told them. You do not need roadside assistance or GPS, and more importantly, you do not need someone else telling you where to turn. When it comes to your future, you are always the driver.”

“Tomorrow,” she said, “I want you to go off in search of what makes you happy. Tomorrow, I want you to find a worthy dream. And tomorrow, I want you to chase it. But today — today requires no courage. Today, for one last time, you do not have to be brave. Today, simply have faith and be proud. Have faith not only in who you will be, but in who you already are. Be proud not only of what you will do, but of what you’ve already done.”

Corrado also encouraged her classmates to “remember this place and this day … these feelings and these friends.” And before bidding them goodbye and good luck, she offered one last piece of advice: “Keep your eyes on the road, but never forget the importance of your rear view mirror.”

Reach Steve Mocarsky at 570-991-6386 or on Twitter @TLSteveMocarsky.
WILKES-BARRE — During Holy Redeemer High School’s 10th annual commencement ceremony last month, its class of 2017 was reminded to move forward confidently but to also look back with gratitude.

Salutatorian Charlotte Maria told classmates that although high school had at times been difficult, it had taught an invaluable lesson.

“All our encounters — good and bad — have taught a lesson,” she said. “We are now prepared to move on to the next stage of our lives.”

The class, with 138 members, merited $17,642,992 in scholarships and awards, with 97 percent of its members planning to attend college.

“More than you will ever know, I am extremely proud to be a part of this ceremony in which we honor and celebrate the achievements of the class of 2017,” Diocese of Scranton Bishop Joseph Bambera said. “The Scranton Diocese is blessed indeed with the presence of four outstanding Catholic high schools.”

See REDEEMER | 17
HOLY REDEEMER CLASS OF 2017

First row: Adam Napoleon Abad, Alex John Vilegi Abad, Julia Ann Adams, Matthew Leighton Adler, Isabelle Ava Albert, Guilianna G. Alberti, Ashley Elizabeth Andrejko, Meghan Armstrong.


Fourth row: Adam Andrew Chase, Jordan Anthony Choman, Nicole Marie Cirelli, Rachael Arianna Cochran, Kristen Marie Coffay, Megan Elizabeth Conlon, Sarah Elizabeth Cragle, Casey Erin Cryan, Amanda Curcio.


Seventh row: Jude Nicholas Height, Matthew A. Hine, Leeann Ho, Aaron Jacob Hoda, Molly Therese Holmes, Emily Lynn Hons, Khang Huynh (B), Holly Patrice Jabyac, Jenna Nichole Jachimiek, Paul Gregory Jason, Daniel Charles Jones, Rachel Ann Jones.

Eighth row: Joseph June IV, Autumn Rose Kaminski, Abigail Mae Kekles, Brendan Kennedy, Alexandra Regina-Rose Kester, Anthony Amin Khoudary, James John Kosik Jr., Brynn Anna Kukosky, Andrew Nicholas Lacina.


Class officers: Emily Easton, secretary; Matthew Hine, president; Anthony Molitoris, vice president; Andrew Lacina, treasurer.

Redeemer

From page 16

Bambera pointed out that four Catholic high schools remain open in the Scranton Diocese, providing opportunity for Catholic youth.

“You are an example of excellence,” he said. “Make your mark for good on this world.”
Rev. Joseph Elston, dean of students, called the class the “royal family of faith.”

Elston told them that their school colors, red, white and gold, the same colors as their caps and gowns, were a significant part of the event.

Referring to the color red, Elston said, “may the flame of your faith continue to fuel your future pursuits.”

Graduate Timothy Cavanaugh, president of the student body, said his 1,369 days of education had been “the time of my life.”

Cavanaugh, who also played high school baseball, said graduation was especially sweet having just won the district championships.

“We just won on Monday,” Cavanaugh said, smiling. “I’m wearing my medal.”

Msgr. David Tressler, diocesan superintendent of schools, told the graduates not to be afraid of what lies ahead, “but trust God as you begin the next chapter of your lives, finding each day both challenging and rewarding.”

Reach the Times Leader newsroom at 570-829-7242 or on Twitter @TLnews.

Bishop Joseph Bambera hands Sarah Ann Satkowski her diploma.
Kindness is theme at commencement

By Elizabeth Baumeister
ebaumeister@timesleader.com

CLINTON TWP. — People fanned themselves with programs in the heat of the packed gymnasium at the Lackawanna Trail Jr. Sr. High School. Despite the uncomfortable temperature and threat of rain that forced the school’s 61st commencement ceremony indoors, the atmosphere was that of excitement and celebration.

In her valedictorian address, Madison Lee, of Jermyn, spoke both of the past and future.

“I hope that we all remember where our journey began,” she said. “I hope that we never neglect to thank the people that helped us become the strong, confident individuals that we are today.”

In an emotional portion of the address, she thanked her own family members, through tears.

She also spoke of all the people she and her classmates have yet to meet in their lives, stressing the importance of treating them with kindness.

“My hope for us is that we choose to embrace them all,” she said. “Being kind and having tolerance for others is not always easy. Sometimes the most challenging things are the things that are most worth it. In this case, I’m not talking about a difficult class or tough job. I’m talking simply about having compassion. Whether it comes naturally or requires a little extra effort, choosing to be kind is always worth the endeavor.”

A daughter of Janine and Bill Lee, she plans to attend Pennsylvania State University next fall to major in bio medical engineering.

Salutatorian Ashleigh Clarke, of Factoryville, delivered an address with a mix of humor and seriousness. She joked about procrastinating on homework and checking social media during class, reminisced about crying through her first days of kindergarten and closed with eight “wishes” for her classmates, one of which was to “smile, be kind, respect all people, all the time.”

“This is a tough one, I’ll admit,” she said of that wish. “Always remember that, no matter what crisis or problem you’re dealing with on any given day, someone is worse off than you. There is a popular book and TV show called ’13 Reasons Why.’ ... Without going into a lot of detail about this controversial show, it’s important to point out how our small actions can have unexpected or unwelcome consequences.

“So, I wish for you to smile and be kind, even when it’s hard. It might change or save someone’s life.”

A daughter of Christy and Robert Clark, she plans to attend Marywood University this fall to study medical laboratory science.

Madisyn Peoples, commended student, spoke about striving for perfection, a goal she said is unattainable but leads one to excellence.

The Factoryville resident is a daughter of Cherie Peoples and plans to attend Philadelphia University in the fall to study bio chemistry.

Reach Elizabeth Baumeister at 570-704-3943 or on Twitter @ AbingtonJournal.
The Lackawanna Trail High School class of 2017 celebrates with the traditional tossing of their caps in the air at the close of the commencement ceremony, held June 13 in the school gymnasium.

Lackawanna Trail class of 2017 President Sarah Weisenfluh presents the senior farewell speech during commencement ceremony June 13.

Cassandra Brown, who graduated cum laude and is a member of the National Honor Society, received two department awards (art and English) during the Lackawanna Trail High School 61st commencement.

Travis Eric Ankoff, cum laude; Holden Scott Aylesworth.
Lauren Ramsey Baldwin, cum laude; Tyler David Baltrusaitis; Kayla Barbara Beechetti; Matthew Ryan Bergey; Anthony Carmelo Berrios, cum laude; Kelly Abigail Bird; Cassandra Ruth Brown, cum laude.
Ashleigh Morgan Clarke, cum laude; Natalie Ann Coccini; Scott Kelly Cokely Jr.; Connor Stanton Crock.
Liam Charles Dana; RuthAnna Marie Danowski; Davi Austin Doblado; Collin Stephen Domnick, cum laude; Miah Vicenta Dugan, cum laude.
Gregory Jones Ellsworth, cum laude.
Alyssa Bryanna Fiehl; Tyler James Flynn; Jaclyn Anneliese Fusik.
Grace Mary Gallagher, cum laude; Dylan Scott Ganser; Justin Keith Ganser; James Joseph Gillespie; Yekaterina Ann Grega; Aviana Elizabeth Guthrie.
Nicolette Laci Hagler; Noah King Hawthorne, cum laude; Evan Bruce Herron; Kayla Ann Holland; Colin William Holmes; Thomas Richard Huffsmith; Catherine Emily Huggler; Timothy John Husted Jr. Trina Autumn Ingalls.
Matthew Robert Kinback, cum laude; Sydney Taylor Kostick; Joseph Thomas Kubulis.
Taylor Courtney Lauzon; Madison Christine Lee, cum laude; Rachel Anne Lehman; Isabella Leschinski; Matthew Allen Loch.
John Arch Maier III; Kimberly Zeena Meckwood; Matthew George Merolla; Gina Marie Merrill; Cherokee Dawn Mitteer; Kyle William Morgan.
Mikayla Mylyn Nelson; Zackaria Nathanial Nicholson.
Ethan Philip Oswald, cum laude; Mikayla Rose Otto, cum laude.
Nicholas Alan Pawlukovich; Troy Madison Pensak; Madisyn Haley Peoples, cum laude; Courtney Christine Petrilak; Darien William Petty; Daniella Maria Piscitelli; Nicholas Anthony Price.
Monica Valeria Reich; Hunter Charles Reynolds; Faith Nicole Rivenburg; Amber Lynn Roberts; Elizabeth Marie Rodenbach, cum laude; Rachael Paige Rosengrant, cum laude; Marcus Michael Ross.
Jacob Daniel Sanders; Mackenzie Sarah Semken, cum laude; Sierra Lynn Sprowls; Allison Danielle Strauch, cum laude; Pandora Mae Symons.
John Darwin Thomas, Jr., cum laude; Hatima Thurston; Robert George Titus, cum laude; Brenden Scott Tobin; Ronnie James Traver.
Emily Mary VanFleet, cum laude; Sabrina Lee vonAhrens.
Sarah Lynn Weisenfluh, cum laude.

Featuring Paul's Famous Sausage and Kielbasa. We also have Fresh Fish & Fresh Meat Cut Daily.
By Camille Sicolo-Fioti
For Times Leader

LEHMAN TWP. — Family and friends cheered as the class of 2017 made its way onto the football field during Lake-Lehman High School's 59th annual commencement Friday night.

The band played “Pomp and Circumstance” as beaming parents wiped tears and snapped photos of the 162 graduates in black and gold.

Senior class President Ethan Sensbach said the thing he'll miss the most about school are the friends he has made.

“I see so many faces here that I used to play with at recess,” he said. “What’s hard about today is that there is so much joy about what we’ve accomplished, but it’s sad because we won’t be together in the fall.”

He urged his fellow graduates to cherish their memories but to look forward to the future.

“Memories of the past seem so much more valuable all of a sudden,” he said.

“The past shapes who we are, but don’t let it define your future. In the end, it’s not what you’ve done, but what you do. Don’t let go of the memories

See LAKE-LEHMAN | 21
but don’t hang on too tight where it’s impossible to see the future.

“The two things that really only matter is living a happy life and spreading it to others.”

Salutatorian Emily Johns urged the class to live in the present.

“This act of living in the present has allowed us to accomplish great feats,” she said. “We all have a different story. Make it your own and make it the best.”

Valedictorian Marina Malcolm said that as early as the eighth grade people asked what her future career plans were.

“We can plan but we can’t predict,” she said. “We are not psychics. Our futures are changing as we speak. Do not be afraid if and when your lives don’t match up with your plans. Be open minded.

“There is just as much success in paying the bills as buying a yacht. Do not compare your path with anyone else’s. Plan to make your futures ideal, but expect the unexpected.”

Struggling to keep her cap on through powerful wind gusts, she ended by giving her fellow students a few pointers.

“Stay humble, and kind. Look both ways. And remember to make sure to bobby pin your graduation hat before you step on the stage.”

Reach the Times Leader newsroom at 570-829-7242 or on Twitter @TLnews.
WILKES-BARRE — Principal Michael Elias described Meyers High School class of 2017 as a positive glimpse into the foreseeable future.

Elias detailed the specific accomplishments of the 150 member class, with 75 percent heading off to higher education, having garnered $4 million in scholarship money.

There most important accomplishment, he said, was having helped many people throughout the year through a variety of programs and activities.

Valedictorian James Langan, referencing the school’s alma mater told fellow class members that members of the class would remain “steadfast together,” as they moved toward the future.

Nicole Gordon, who teaches senior English at Meyers, said she had every confidence members of the class would
**MEYERS CLASS OF 2017**

Jordon A. Allen, Pablo Alejandro Franco Almonte, Joel Gomez Arias, Kelvin Perez-Arias, Maria Armbruster.
Courtney-Jaiden P. Ballard, Is’Mell I-C Ballard, Scott Banta, Yelicia Zamudio-
Thomas Capinas, Joseph Anthony Carchilla, Gionna M. Carmelengo, Aurora Lynn Caroway, Ashley Chavez, Tyler Clark, Dakota Clugston, Meghan Cook, Alicia Christine Costello, Kristen Cunningham.
Madyson Davies, Clarissa Day, McDaniel DeJesus, Eliam De La Cruz, Eluid Desrosiers, Matthew Gerard Dessoye, Essence Faith Dobson, Logan Domanski.
Jade Ann Palacios-Eglivitch, David Espinoza, Jordan Evancho, Jay Eyerman.
Elise Fellerman, Jason Reynoso Florentino, Kevin Huertero Flores, Robert Christopher Formola, Paul Joseph Fox, Damaris Franco.
Annette Kasper, Devon Keiper, Alex P. Kendra, Carson M. Kosloski, Kendra Krollick, Stanley Kwok.
James Harrison Langan, Sydney Lonsdale, Jose Perez Lopez, Ana Maria Luna.
Emily Mangold, Aracela Martinez, Je’Vondrea McClair, Joseph McCoy, Kelli Meginess, Claudia Molnar, Alfonso Mondragon, Mawa B. Moore, Kaitlyn Lynette Moreland, Meghan Elisabeth Morris, Zaire Mouzone, Namir Z. Murphy.
David Gerald Nargoski, Jacob Frank Nargoski, Geraldine Elizabeth Newhall, Loretta Lee Newhall, Forest Hoang Nguyen, Anton Vad Nielsen, Kayley A. Nilson, Cindy N. Peralta Nin, William Norton.
Dominique Ogan, Lillian Margarita Olmedo, Rajon Osborne, Lauren Owca, Aida Ozuna.
Anthony Ramos, Jarod Francis Ritsick, Rodolfo Rivera, Jr., Rocco Rodano, Tabria Alexandra Rodgers, Kerlyn Abigail Rodriguez, Brainy Rojas.
Genevieve Thomas, Noah Threatt, Dustin Phillip Tighe, David Torres, Elias Joel Torres.
Isaac Vergara, Jeffrey Vergara, Waldo Vergara, Alex Vidot, Willie Wallace, Danielle Walley, Destiny Linda Williams, Khabir Atallah Williams, Zackery Winn, Bradley Wright, Kimberly Wychock.
Quinton Yachera, Jacob Yurko, Alexis Zigler.

---

**Meyers**

From page 22

successfully move forward.

“I believe that members of this class will excel and move on to do amazing things,” she said.

Gordon spoke of the great loyalty that alumni have to the school, continuing to bleed “blue and gold” even as adults.

Amy Basham-Torres, also a teacher in the district, said many Meyers High School graduates have attended Ivy League universities.

I would put any of our students up against students from any private school,” she said.
Near the end of the ceremony, students suddenly froze in various positions in a mannequin challenge to the delight of the audience with many taking photos of the graduates in various poses.

Whatever you wind up doing after you leave these hallowed halls,” Elias said in closing his remarks, “do it to the best of your ability.

“Remember, there are not menial jobs, only menial attitudes.”

Reach the Times Leader newsroom at 570-829-7242 or on Twitter @TLnews.
CLASS OF 2017

By Geri Gibbons
For Times Leader

FREELAND — MMI Preparatory School’s graduating class of 2017 have many things of which to be proud.

Its 42 members amassed more than $6.4 million in merit scholarships and awards, averaged SAT scores well above average and were accepted to 71 percent of the colleges and universities to which they applied.

And yet, as salutatorian Allison McGeehan told attendees of the school’s 125th commencement exercises last month, it was the “little things” that most impacted the lives of students during their attendance at the school — little things that ranged from parental assistance with projects and with transportation to extracurricular activities to teachers who interjected humor into class material and brought academia alive.

“Our accomplishments are your accomplishments,” she told the faculty and parents gathered. “You’re often forgotten contributions make us the people who stand here today.”

Debra Minzola, of Drums, said her daughter Olivia Minzola’s graduation with honors reflected not only a commitment to academic achievement and future success, but to family.

See MMI PREP | 25
MMI PREPARATORY CLASS OF 2017

Ali Aijaz, the son of Fakhruddin and Dr. Naghma Aijaz, Mountain Top.

Niklas Byriel, the son of Julia Byriel, Drums, and the late Kim Byriel.

Dana Carrato, the daughter of Dr. Anthony and Carmine Carrato, Hazleton; Anirban Chowdhury, the son of Bhaskar and Saumitri Chowdhury, Hazleton; Kevin Cibak, the son of James and Deirdre Cibak, Sugarloaf.

Eric Degenhart, the son of Dr. John and Janet Degenhart, Hazleton; Gabriella DeMelfi, the daughter of Daniel and Esme DeMelfi, Hazleton; Evan Dryfoos, the son of Llewellyn and Maura Dryfoos, Sugarloaf.

Katherine Eschenbach, the daughter of David and Maureen Eschenbach, Drums; Ryan Eschenbach, the son of David and Maureen Eschenbach, Drums.

Douglas Genetti, the son of Timothy and Michelle Genetti, Sugarloaf; Lacee Gera, the daughter of Marianne Gera and Joseph Pavlick, Drifton.

Jai Jacob Hoover, the son of Jai and Ninotchka Hoover, Mountain Top.

Garrett Kost, the son of Joseph and Natalie Kost, Freeland; Joey Kress, the daughter of Jessica Holliday, Drums, and Joseph and Tracy Kress, Sugarloaf.

Kayla Leonard, the daughter of Gregory and Karen Leonard, Hazleton.

Megan Marchetti, the daughter of David and Andrea Marchetti, Freeland; Catherine Matyas, the daughter of Michael and Wendisue Matyas, Sugarloaf; Allison McGeohan, the daughter of Thomas and Sandra McGeohan, Drums; Kyle McGuire, the son of Joseph and Janet McGuire, West Nanticoke; Dillon Merenich, the son of Michael and Cindy Merenich, Freeland; Olivia Minzola, the daughter of Joseph and Debra Minzola, Drums.

Joshua Narrow, the son of Howard and Marie Narrow, Hazleton; Athena Nicholas, the daughter of Anna Jean Mackler and Richard Malavenda, Hazleton.

Anna Olivieri, the daughter of Jack and Mariah Olivieri, Sugarloaf; Keenan Overa, the son of Timothy and Lori Overa, Drums.

Kisan Patel, the son of Dr. Dilipkumar and Dr. Minaben Patel, Mountain Top; Danielle Pileggi, the daughter of Daniel and Sandra Pileggi, Albrightsville; Elizabeth Pinto, the daughter of Karen Pinto, Mountain Top, and John Pinto, Maplewood, NJ; Lois Ann Sari, the daughter of Izzet and Mumine Sari, Drifton.

Beauregard Tron, the daughter of Jonathan Smith and Beatrice Russo-Smith, White Haven; Jonathan Smith, the son of Jonathan Smith and Beatrice Russo-Smith, White Haven; Lucas Smith, the son of Robynn Smith, Drums; Evan Spear, the son of William and Marylynn Spear, Hazleton.

Daniel Tron, the son of Dr. Eduardo Tron and Dr. Graciela Bianco, Mountain Top.

Jacob Weiksner, the son of Mary Ann and William Flyzik, Freeland, and Daniel Weiksner, Coaldale; Kyle Williams, the son of Robert and Stephanie Williams, White Haven.

Nicholas Young, the son of Christian and Nicole Young, Freeland.

MMI Prep

From page 24 and community.

“My graduation present to her was a string of pearls. At first she asked why,” said Debra Minzola. “I told her she would wear those pearls on interviews, at her first job and on the most important moments. She’ll grow into the pearls and, just like those pearls, I’ll be right next to her.”

Retired Army Major General Peter Bayer, an 1980 graduate of the school, also reinforced the importance of building relationships and living a life of service.

Bayer detailed his life journey, from attendance at Lehigh University where he was introduced to the ROTC, to an Army career that spanned three decades.

Like the other speakers, he encouraged graduates to put people first and to live with purpose and passion.

“Find your purpose, and pursue it with passion,” he said.

Graduate Joshua Narrow, of Hazleton, standing in the reception line at the conclusion of the ceremony, was overwhelmed not only with gratitude for a quality education providing a multitude of opportunities for the future, but with the abundance of support that surrounded him throughout his education at the school.

“Family, teachers, close friends, all surrounding and celebrating with me, brought me a type of solace that confirmed my previous belief in teamwork,” he said.

Class President Dana Carrato, concluding her graduation-themed parody of Clement Clarke’s Moore’s Twas the Night before Christmas, told her classmates, “Do what your heart loves and don’t forget to have fun.”

Reach the Times Leader newsroom at 570-829-7242 or on Twitter @TLnews.
NANTICOKE — Kayla Aufiero graduated from Greater Nanticoke High School earlier this month not only as the class valedictorian but also as class president.

And although Aufiero and other members of her graduating class took much pride in wearing their caps and gowns, it was two small loops of ribbon — one green and one orange — carefully affixed to those caps and gowns that many graduates said were the most significant part of their attire.

“We’re wearing the ribbons in honor of Aaron Kreitzer, our classmate who couldn’t make it tonight because

See NANTICOKE | 27
Grevera also referred to the cast of the event. "You have," he said looking down on the graduates, "taught me kindness."

Grevera said the class had demonstrated such kindness during recent fundraisers to benefit Kreitzer and his family. "You have," he said looking down on the graduates, "taught me kindness."

Kaitlyn Corkell, class treasurer, emphasized action in her words to fellow graduates telling them to "ditch the dream."

"Be a doer and not a dreamer," said Corkell. "Passionately pursue your goals."

Justin Casey, president of the National Honor Society, looked back on the enthusiasm his class felt at the beginning of their senior year, before getting busy with studying, planning and daily life.

"But when I look out on the sea of blue and white, I see that energy again," he said. "Success will be yours if you seize it."

Reyna Villafranca, class secretary, quoting Ed Kotch, told her classmates, "The fireworks begin today. Each diploma is a lighted match. Each one of you is a fuse."

"I have no doubt," Villafranca said, "we will light up the world."

Reach the Times Leader newsroom at 570-829-7242 or on Twitter @TLnews.
Tales of failure, hard work, risk taking meant to inspire

By Steve Mocarsky
smocarsky@timesleader.com

UNION TWP. — Members of Northwest Area Senior High and Middle School’s Class of 2017 heard words of praise and encouragement from their principal and class leaders last week, while an alumna’s stories of failure and her challenging them to work hard, be open to diversity and take risks likely steered them closer to a path of success after graduation.

Sixty-three seniors earned diplomas at the school’s 61st annual commencement on June 16 — an achievement Principal Ryan Miller said reflects the students’ hard work. Miner said he’s sure the seniors are experiencing a variety of emotions — some glad to be finished with high school and eager to begin the next chapter of their lives, others sad to be leaving friends, their homes and their school, and still others unsure of what the next part of their life will look like.

“All of these emotions are OK — they’re normal,” Miner said. “Here’s all you have to remember — the next chapter of your life is not written yet. You control your own destiny. Your family, friends, school — they’re here to guide you, but you are in charge. Tomorrow’s a new day, and your opportunity for a fresh start.”

Salutatorian Samuel Edwards thanked district administrators, school board members, teachers and parents for all they did to support, nurture and educate him and his classmates over the years. Quoting Winston Churchill, Edwards advised his classmates to “keep calm and carry on,” reassured they are well-prepared for whatever paths in life they choose.

Valedictorian Michael Samulevich thanked the school board and administrators for ensuring students receive a well-rounded education while some other school districts have been cutting programs such as music and the arts.

Class President Sarah Zultevicz introduced guest commencement speaker Brenda Nitsch, a 1984 graduate of Northwest Area, an adjunct professor at the prestigious Eastman School of Music, and a member of the music faculty at Webster Thomas High School in Webster, N.Y., since 2001.

Zultevicz read a considerable list of accolades Nitsch has earned for her work with students, including the 2008 Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra Outstanding Choral Teacher Award.

After sharing some stories about her time in high school, Nitsch recounted auditioning for District Chorus as a sophomore.

“My first time around was absolutely disastrous,” Nitsch said. “I didn’t make the cut. I was devastated. I think it was the first time I was told I was not good enough.”

She took her audition music home, tore it to pieces and set it on fire, frustrated she didn’t spend enough time preparing for the audition. She promised herself she would do better next time, and she did, making it to districts, regionals and states the following year. But sophomore year was far from her last encounter with failure.

“I had to fail many times before I truly understood that I couldn’t rely on my natural abilities, and that funny sopranos are a dime a dozen,” Nitsch said.

She said she worked harder in college, but still wishes she had done more. “I wish I had the maturity to realize that the harder I work, the better I learn my craft, the better I hone my skills, the more I am setting myself up for a successful future. Talent will only take you so far. So whether you’re going to college or trade school or joining the work force, work really, really hard.”

Nitsch also said it’s important to open oneself to diverse people, places and situations, and to take risks. “Risk opens you up to new ideas, skills, opportunities and experiences. Risk allows you to conquer your fears,” she said.

Her final piece of advice?

“Don’t settle for what you think you should be,” Nitsch said. “Be who you want to be, and do what it takes to make that happen.”

Reach Steve Mocarsky at 570-991-6386 or on Twitter @TLSteveMocarsky.
Congratulations to The Class of 2017!

Follow Your Dreams

Dr. Eugene R. DeMinico
Board Certified Chiropractic Sports Physician, American College of Chiropractic Orthopedists

Pittston Chiropractic Clinic
84-86 South Main St. Pittston • Ph: 570-654-0036
www.deminicochiropractic.com

CLASS OF 2017

Hazleton

From page 15

Destiny Marie; Nunez, Yareliz Crystal; Nunez Jimenez, Cindy; Nusch, Maxwell Jeffrey; O’Byrne, Sean Michael; Ogando, Ludwig; Oliver, Alyssa Leigh; Ortiz, Miguel Angel; Oswalt, Benjamin T.; Ozoria, Jaritza Celine; Paez, Santa Isabel; Paisley, David John; Paisley, Summer Nicole; Paisley, Michael Andrew; Palaggi, Angelo John; Palaggi, Anthony J.; Palfej, Benjamin Nicholas; Palma, Mattea Elizabeth; Pape, Stephen Gabriel; Paredes, Kayla Flor; Pataki, Lauren C.; Patel, Hima Kamleshbhai; Patksan, Leisandria Elizabeth; Pauline, Maria Elise; Paulino, Kendry Rafael; Payne, Dalton Michael; Pecora, Kyle M.; Peguero, Cristian Miguel; Peguero, Estephany; Peguero, Yanida; Pehala, Justin Tyler; Pena, Wilsinia Nicole; Peralta-Munoz Grismair, Lisbeth; Perdomo-Tineo, Rosario; Peretz, Joseph; Restituyo De La Cruz, Dilenia Maria; Reyes, Gisbely; Reyes, Jose Rafael; Reyes, Silvio Alejandro; Reyes Cruz, Rafael Gabriel; Reyes Mejia, Roldany; Reyes Rodriguez, Marlene Noemi; Reyes, Antonio; Reznick, Curtis Michael; Riedel, Brian David; Riofrío, Christopher; Rivas, Blanco Skarlin; Robinson, Avery Emmanuel; Robinson, Matthew Keith; Rodriguez, Dalberto; Rodriguez, Leisa Marie; Rodriguez, Shadira; Rodriguez, Rodriguez, Acosta Bryan Joel; Rodriguez Ramirez, Jenifer Y.; Rodriguez, Santana, Dulce Miguella; Rodriguez-Gilroy, Nena Torin; Rojas, Michell; Rojas, Akish Linead; Romero, Yokeiry; Rondon Luna, Julio Gabriel; Rosario Shabelis, Lisbeth; Rosenstiel, Elijah Nikita; Roth, Olivia Rose; Ruch, Quentin Xavier; Rudden, Taylor Christine; Ruiz, Steven Jose; Ruiz, Cesar; Rumaldo, Leiry Laura; Rumaldo Popeter, Emmanuel; Ruocco, John Francis; Ryba, Natalie Rose; Sakusky, Heath A.; Salas, Marcelo DeJesus; Salazar Dulce, Maria; Salvador, Alexander; Sanchez, Joshua M.; Sanchez Aracena, Yunarys; Sanchez Diaz, Steven; Sanchez Gomez Yeferzon, Fernando; Sanchez Mejia, Adony; Sangurima, Mark Anthony; Santana, Chris Michael; Santana, Matthew; Santana Batista, Neyla Anachiha; Santana Fernandez, Pedro Julio; Santana Medina, Jonays Rossann; Santiago, Mivelys C.; Santiago, Alexis Milagros; Santos Cornelio, Daniel; Santos Agramont, Lisbeth Victoria; Santos Arias, Reynaldo; Santos Ventura, Rafael Jose; Santos Rojas, Eduardo de Jesus; Santos-Rojas, Endy Arturo; Satija, Pranjal; Sauер, Isabella Hope; Sauers, Kathryn Valerie; Saullo, Michael Anthony; Savage Alyora, Lynn; Scatton, Rachel Marie; Scatton, Rebecca Lee; Schell, Rebecca Ann; Schlack, Richard W.; Schneier, Shannnon Renee; Schneider, Abigail Julia; Schrader, Lizabeth Mary; Searfoss, Owen River; Serafine, Micaleena; Serach, Frank Anthony; Shane, Erica Lynn; Sharp, Taylor Elizabeth; Sheetoo, Alexis Rose; Shoqpe, Cassandra L.; Silkowski, Chelsea Anna; Silva, Genesis; Simon, Lenin Shamill; Simpkins, Steven Scott; Siroka, Brian; Skotek, Morgan Alexandra; Slavescu, Corrime Nico; Sloane, Gianna Suzette; Sluck, Blake David; Smaglik, Trevor Lee; Smith, Elizabeth Anne; Smith, Jassilli Mery; Smith, Joshua Michael; Smith, Kyle Charles; Smolinsky, Emily Rose; Soden, Hannah Nicole; Solarik, Cali Marie; Sonntag, David Glenn; Soriano Gonzalez, Jenna Josefina; Sosa, Odalys; Soto, Jordi; Stauffer, Colin Davis; Stewart, Cameron James; Stock, Courtney C.; Stoehrer, Kelly Ann; Stofka, Angela Binelda; Stroh, Hailey Ann; Sturm, Morgan Nicole; Suero, Leslie Mariam; Supon, Danielle Kiley; Suriel Alvarez, Angel Leonel; Sutton, Matthew Jued; Sweeney, Angela Elizabeth; Sypniewski, Joseph Daniel.

Teles Vieira, Sara Sofia; Timcho, Jonathan Kevin; Tineo, Rosario; Tineo, Steven Omar; Tirado, Jorge Rabino; Tolentino, Joa Yeison; Tomax, Gabriela; Torres, Maria Michelle; Torres, Michelle Maria; Torres, Emmanuel; Torres-Rodriguez, Alexandra Maria; Torrstrup, Ariol E.; Trammell, Lyndsay Angel; Triano, Eden; Trivelpiece, Megan Marie; Trokan, Zachary Edward; Tuggle Gianna, Chiera; Turse, Christine M.

Ulerio, Anthony; Ulerio, Carlos Miguel; Ulsharer, Julianna Brooke; Updike, Brandon Michael; Urena, Jenifer; Urena, Luis Felipe; Urena, Yordy; Urena Yudith, Altgrafica; Urena Lopez, Ricardo Luis; Urenovitch, Jordain Charles; Ustonofksi, Tyler Joseph.

Vanblargan, Hunter Francis; Vargas, Jelmi; Vargas, John Blaze; Vargas, Justin Armando; Vasquez, Adrianna Marie; Vasquez, Osni Emmanuel; Vazquez, Desteny Rose; Vega, Andres Darío; Velasco, Theanny J.; Velez-Irazary, Amilkar; Veloz, Larissa; Ventura, Lizdani; Ventura, Andriedy; Vicente, Randor; Viera, Marcus Angel; Villar, Fredery; Villegas Gema, Patricia; Vitaccco Ebony, Gianna; Vitaglione, Nicolas Robert.

Waldron, Seth Tyler; Walker, Rashawn Anthony; Wallen, Cody Peter; Walper, Joshua C.; Walser, Kendall Stephanie; Walton, Katelyn Leean; Warner, Amanda Monica; Watro, Anastasia Sophia; Weaver, Alonna Hampton; Weikel, Daulton Charles; Welch, Chelsea Marie; Welch, Ryan M.; Wenner, Jessica L.; Wersinger, Austin Richard; Wersinger, Samantha May; Whitesall, Andrew J.; Whittaker, Sean Michael; Williams, Haley Adrianna; Williams, Brinnie Marie; Winchilla, Sarah Elizabeth; Wojcik, Joshua John Paul; Worayla, Bryan A.; Wright, Frederick Ryan; Wright, James Richard.

Yan, Rosario Eleury; Ynnuzzi, Dominic J.; Yencha, Lucas James; Young, Sabrina V.; Youngcourt, Lauren Kate; Zabretsky, Adam Joseph; Zamudio, Mirella J.; Zanolinli, Sabrina Leigh; Zapata, Brinnia; Zapata, Duran; Madonna Capobsky; Ashley Lauren; Zaremba, Samantha J.; Zelizer, Lucas James; Zipovsky, Brittany Lynn.

Minutes before the Hazleton Area High School class of 2017 processed to the graduation stage outside, Ashley Albrecetcha, left, Ann Amentler, center, and Clara Bannon make sure their caps and tassels are properly adjusted.

Tony Callaiio | For Times Leader
YATESVILLE — As the sun set on Charley Trippi Stadium earlier this month, the high school careers of 236 Pittston Area Senior High School students came to a close.

The school’s 51st annual commencement ceremony would’ve been moved inside if weather didn’t cooperate — but it did, and the stadium’s home stand filled with loved ones waiting for their graduate’s name to be called. Most were armed with signs, noisemakers and smartphones, but Avoca resident and Pittston Area Class of 1991 member Larry Seaman was armed with something else: pride.

“He’s going to college and I didn’t go,” Larry said of his son, Brandon. Brandon graduated with honors with distinction during the ceremony and plans to study engineering at Penn State’s Worthington campus. “It’s a big thing that he’s going.”

Class President Hayley Farrell offers remarks.

See PITTSTON | 31

Classmates of Pittston Area’s first graduating class of 1967 were on hand for their 50th anniversary ceremony. The class was seated on the field for the ceremony.

Ashley Adams, Milena Adams, Nicholas Alfano, Esmeralda Alfaro, Adriana Alvarado, Chase Anderson, Jacob Anderson, Kayla Ardo, Christopher Arens, Sienna Aruscavage, Taryn Ashby,

Mia Barbieri, Corin Barletta, Ellie Bartoli, Kristen Basta, Cody Beers, Kala Berlinski, Michelle Bidding, Kyle Biggers, Amber Blannard, Arianna Boccardi, Hunter Booth, Tyler Boylan, John Brady, Mark Brady, Susanne Brenner, Emily Brody, Thomas Brody, Sara Butler,

Jordan Cadwallader, Marissa Cairl, Alexander Carannante, Ali Carroll, Cody Cawley, Jordan Cegelka, Joseph Chaiko, Cheyenne Chapman, Julienne Chropwicki, Zabrina Cocker, Mackenzie Connors, Jarrod Cooper, Scott Corti, Alexandria Cox, Justin Coyne,

Samuel D’Eliseo, Jason DeBoard, Joseph DeLucca, Anthony Demark, Joseph Demich, Katrina Dillon, Cheyenne Dixon, Kimberly Dominick, Christopher Dudek, Alexandra Dunn, Kristen Durling, Lynn Durling,

Michael Elko, Tessa Esser, Jacob Evans, Hayley Farrell, Dillon Faulkner, Joseph Fisher, Justin Fitzpatrick, Antonio Fralicciardi, Kali France,

Joseph Gallia, Shelby Gardner, Allysia Giamusso, Leah Goas, Seth Gollmer, Samantha Gorton, Sierra Gorzkowski, Paul Greco, Anthony Griffith, Sydney Gross, Taylor Guarneri, April Gulla, Ashleigh Guthrie, Julia Guziewicz,

Meghan Halpin, Patrick Hartman, Matthew Havrilla, Morgan Hewitt, Nicholas Hill, Austin Hodle, Kayla Hogan, Matthew Holly, Jason Homchek, Amy Hoover, Uniquee Hurtado, Som Min Huynh,

Tyler Jackson, Brianna Jenkins, Emily Jobson, Nicholas Johnson, John Jones,

Jordan Kalinas, Michael Kishel, Tyler Kitchen, Christopher Klein, Raechel Kochanowski, Marius Kohut, Garrett Kosierowski, Alana Kozloski, Margaret Kraser, Leo Krashnak, Kayla Kuna,

Jordan Levandoski, Aaliyah Lewis, Cheyenne Loeffler, Brandon Lucek, Joshua Luder, Nicholas Lynch,

David Maisano, Gavin Malampy, Joseph Mancini, Danita Marranca, Cameron Martin, Jonathan Martinez, Joshua Mawson, Samuel Mayhoff, Michael Mazurkivich, Zachary McCabe, Joshua McGilvary, Abigail Megliola, Christopher Merithew, Calysta Messner, Cory Miglionic, Melissa Mikus, Robyn Lynn Miller, Kaytlyn Miscavage, Patrick Mitchell, Karl Modlesky, Michael Montagna, Emily Morahan, Reilly Moran, Kayla Moscatelli, Paul Moska, Vanessa Muracco,

Meagan Nayavich, William Neal, Timothy Newell, Jennifer Nickas,

Erin O’Boyle, Kyle O’Fier, Madison Osticco,

Thomas Pace, Katilynne Parrent, Julia Parrick, Emi Patel, Haley Perrego, Helena Petro, Bailey Pichota, Carl Pisack, James Pliska, Samantha Pontier, Jordan Powers, Holden Prescott, Tyler Price,

Dominique Quaglia, Scott Quick, Jesse Quinnan. Luis Rivera, Veronica Rizzo, Joseph Robert, Lauren Robert, Abigail Roberts, Kaylee Roberts, Jessica Rosencrans, Gabriela Rubino,

Umar Salabuddin, Nicole Salvatore, Samantha Santana, Katie Saranchuk, Dustin Saul, Jillian Scanlon, Brandon Seaman, Erin Senese, Hannah Seyer,


Edward Tavaglione, Cassandra Thomas, Kaylee Thomas, Keyshawn Thompson, Jessica Tighe, Kira Tokar, Morgan Tomaszewski, Tyler Tricarico, Taylor Trombly, Arthur Tucker, Abigail Turner.

William VanDyke, Caleya Velez, Kyanna Velez, Tiffany Vincavage.

Brandon Walker, Serena Walsh, Tyler Walsh, April Wanalisat, Kyley Warrick, Jordan Washko, Kyley Weller, Jonele Werner, Matthew Wesley, Jessica Wesolowski, Mercedes White, Taryn Whitman, Michael Whitt, Joclyn Wilk, Sydney Williams, Robbie Wychock.

Breanna Yashkus, Dakotah Yost.

Bruce Zamudio, Jordan Zbegne, Ryan Zenalis, Anthony Zimmerman, Albert Zuba, Brianna Zychal, Danielle Zydkos.

is the force that drives us,” Ferrell said. “We saw these people and we looked up to them. That’s when we began to discover who we were and who we wanted to become.”

After Farrell’s speech, the school’s 11 valedictorians took the podium one after another. Milena Adams, Mia Barbieri, Arianna Boccardi, Ali Carroll, Michael Elko, Brandon Lucek, Samantha Pontier, Jillian Scanlon, Steven Shamnoski, Austin Smith and Albert Zuba highlighted points made by retired United States Navy Admiral William H. McRaven in his book “Make Your Bed: Little Things That Can Change Your Life... and Maybe the World.”

Pittston Area School Board President Kent Bratlee also addressed the Class of 2017, encouraging its members to define victory on their own terms.

“I believe success is both individualized and personalized,” Bratlee said. “I can tell you this: you define your own success, so be the best whatever you want to be. I can promise you that this school, its teachers, its staff, our community and our love for you is true and never ending. You are Patriots; you have this in your blood. So take your lives, set your goals and find your success.”

The first class from Pittston Area to pursue success, the Class of 1967, served as special guests during the ceremony. Class of ’67 member Therese Wrubel’s attendance had a dual purpose — to celebrate 50 years since her own graduation and hand a Pittston Area diploma to her grandson, Tyler Tricarico.

“I believe success is what you define your own success, so be the best whatever you want to be. I can promise you that this school, its teachers, its staff, our community and our love for you is true and never ending. You are Patriots; you have this in your blood. So take your lives, set your goals and find your success.”

During the ceremony, Pittston Area students (now graduates) Mackenzie Connors and Anthony Demark performed the Green Day song “Good Riddance.” Despite its name, the song is a sentimental one — its subtitle is “Time of Your Life” and members of the graduating class thought that phrase epitomized their experience at the school so well they made the track their class song.

Reach Gene Axton at 570-991-6406 or on Twitter @GeneAxtonTL
‘Make your indelible marks on the world’

By Steve Mocarsky
smocarsky@timesleader.com

TUNKHANNOCK — Tunkhannock Area High School’s Class of 2017 was offered advice for a successful future from class leaders, administrators and a longtime teacher before turning their tassels at the school’s 133rd annual commencement on June 9.

The ceremony began in a reflective tone, as senior Brian Muckin called for a moment of silence “in light of the recent tragedy that has struck our community,” referring to the shooting deaths of three Weis market employees by a 24-year-old co-worker just a day earlier.

After thanking parents, family and friends of the 190 soon-to-be graduates and the faculty and staff for their support, Muckin encouraged his classmates to “live life as if it were impossible to fail. No matter how hard life gets, never give up.”

Muckin introduced classmate and best friend Christopher Brennan, who plans to join the U.S. Navy, to lead the Pledge of Allegiance. After the pledge, Brennan recognized his seven classmates who also planned to enter military service.

Class President Connor Helsel said he had no words of wisdom to share with his classmates, but rather, he encouraged them to reflect on the influence Tunkhannock Area has had on them.

“As great as it all was, or at least most of it was, we all now have our individual paths that we need to follow. I’m not worried,” Helsel said. “I’m not worried because I think of all that we have been primed to. Remember (our senior) slideshow and remember the progress we have made from little kids who thought only of the moment in front of them to high school and now to adulthood, ready to embrace our futures.”

Salutatorian Mitchell Fowler said he and his classmates have “outgrown our current surroundings” and “our lives are about to change again. As terrifying as it may be that everything we have grown accustomed to will change, we shouldn’t let this fear overwhelm us. ... It takes courage to let go of the familiar and embrace the new,” he said.

Valedictorian Ashley Spencer advised her fellow graduates in several areas, including to “follow your heart no matter where it leads you (and) listen to your conscience.”

After recognizing six teachers who would be retiring this year, Superintendent Heather McPherson asked everyone in attendance to stand, except for the senior class, and directed her message to the soon-to-be graduates.

“Class of 2017, look around you. I hope that you can feel the love, the hope and the expectations that surround you here tonight. All of these people ... have shared their best gifts with you and for you and hope to make the world a better place through you,” McPherson said.

Faculty keynote speaker Maria O’Boyle, who is retiring at the end of the school year, also delivered numerous pieces of advice and reminded the seniors that they can learn a lot outside of the school and workplace by gleaning bits of wisdom from parents, grandparents, even elderly neighbors, if they took the time and paid attention.

“Follow your dreams, not the dreams someone has always dreamt for you,” O’Boyle instructed. “Do what makes you happy, do what you want. I know I did,” said O’Boyle, whose voice wavered as she became emotional, apparently reflecting upon the choice she made to become a teacher as her 32-year career was coming to an end.

“Now, Class of 2017, go out there and make your indelible marks on the world,” she said, bringing her address to a close. “O’Boyle, out.”
TUNKHANNOCK AREA CLASS OF 2017

Jordan Michael Alguire.

Samantha Haley Carfi, Olivia Nicole Carichner, Rachel Marie Caudell, Matthew Harold James Christofferson, Donald Charles Church, Jr., Evan Tyler Clark, Richard Paul Clark, Melissa Lynn Compton, Joseph Robert Cook, Kayla Nicole Coolbaugh, Justin Michael Cooper, Jacob Ryan Crawford, Mason Wayne Crawford.


Rachel Elizabeth Eckert, Trystan David Edmondson, Joseph Michael Elias.


Jessica L. Hall, Dakota James Hallock, Gabrielle Mercedes Hamlett, Emma Mae Harding, Tyler Michael Hardy, Katelyn Nicole Hawley, Megan Elizabeth Hayward, Connor Heisel, Ethan Bradford Hoefer, Hunter J. Hopkins, Chase Von Hottenstein, Ty Cameron Hue, Conner Thomas Hulslander, Cassidy Rose Hunsinger, Robert Frazier Hunt.

Joseph Ivan Ianni.

Connor Daniel Jenkins, Rachel Marie Johnson, Christina Emily Jones.


Jessica Hope LaBar, Samantha Lynn Lacey, Sakulsap Lakul, Abril Elizabeth Lance, Christina Nicole Lawrence, Paige Victoria D'Ann Layden, Natalie Amber Lent, Madisyn Suzanne Courtney Low-Konen, Eponine LaVonne.

Hope MacDonald-Scotti, Andrew Carl Macko IV, Paige Alexis Malinowski, Sarah Rose Martinez, Anthony N. Mastroianni, Jesús Andrés Méndez Pérez, Noah Steven Metzer, Tristin Louise Michalowski, Casandra Lee Miller, Mikayla Christine Mills, Hunter Jeremie Mingus, Alexis Nicole Mock, Anna Elizabeth Moffitt, Paige Elizabeth Mokychic, Jennifer Rose Morrison, Brian Christopher Muckin, Dakota James Murphy.

Ted Carl Nafus, Jr., Searra Elisabeth Nester, Shanley Catherine Nester, Avery Reece Newhart, Alyssa Lynn Nichols, Cadence Joy Nichols, Falon Marie Nonnemacher.


John Sylvester Quinn.


Michael Steven Taylor, Nicholas Anello Thomas, Andrew Richard Tinna, Thea Louise Tomlin, Devon Francis Toms, Cody Robert Traver, Sabrina Marie Traver, Sarah Elizabeth Traver, Catherine Jeanne Trexler, Faith Michele Turner.

Morgan April Vaow, Rachel Elizabeth Vaow, Ashley Jordan Vikara, Ezra Thomas Voda, Kyle Jacob VonOhlen.

John Michael Walsh, Jr., Sydney Morgan Walters, Ashley May Wertman, Kaelin Mary Whitaker, Damon Jonathon Williams, Daniel J. Williams, David James Williams, Michael David Williams, Zhane Patrick Williams, Nathan Eugene Wilson.

Quinn Matthew Zalewski, Timothy Thomas Zalewski, Brittany Ann Zamber
Grads told to be proud of their education

By Marcella Kester
For Times Leader

PRINGLE — Plenty of enthusiastic attendees filled the gym inside the West Side Career and Technical Center earlier this month to cheer on roughly 100 graduating seniors.

Although the group blended in with one another in their blue and yellow robes, friends and family were quick in distinguishing their graduate from the rest as they pulled out their cellphones — and an occasional air-horn — to support their loved ones.

“We are all gathered here today to celebrate the academic achievement each and every one of us present has accomplished here during our years at West Side CTC,” class President Steven Yuhas said during his opening speech.

“Each and every one of us were welcomed into this school with open arms from different districts and different student families.”

Chief school Administrator Thomas Duffy also spoke about how the class joined together as one after arriving to the school from five different school districts.

Asking all West Side CTC alumni in the audience to stand, Duffy demonstrated to the group that the school’s graduates are all over, performing a vast array of jobs and trades throughout the Wyoming Valley and beyond. Duffy told the class that when they walk across the stage, they too will become an alumni and should be proud of their education while striving for success.

The ceremonies keynote speaker was 1981 West Side CTC graduate Charlie Hayes. The former school valedictorian received numerous scholastic, athletic and social awards throughout his tenure at the school. He became a broadcast specialist for the U.S. Army before starting his own entertainment and marketing business in Northeastern Pennsylvania.

Reminiscing back to when he was student, Hayes told the class that his entire high school experience consisted of fighting for what he wanted and thought was right.

“The point is anything about you that’s worth fighting for — you aren’t given opportunity — you fight for it,” he said.

He went on to say that the school teaches far more than academics; it teaches independent thinking, problem-solving and working hard to get what you want.

Citing his grandmother, Hayes told the graduates they all need “ICE” to succeed in life: insight, courage and energy.

“The students of West Side CTC really fall into a category of non-conformists. They

Photos by Amanda Hrycyna | For Times Leader

See WEST SIDE | 35
First row: Jose M. Rodriguez III, Jocelyn Marie Parsons, Mark Coolbaugh Jr., Nicole Finney, Steve Yuhas, Sarah Gacek.
Fourth row: Patrick Mcgee, Jared Novitski, Jake Jones, Tizah Smith, Kelsey Hawk, Stacy Allen, Sommar Moyer, Mary Zagata, Destinee Klytor, Britanni Jo George, Tyeira Brown, Kaelie Albertson, Kristi Tomcho, James Kulp, Nick Harris, James O’Rourke, Todd Connors.
Fifth row: Michael Rasmovicz, Joshua Olexy, Nick Jensen, Aaron Lewis, Meghan Klinges, Kaila Hartman, Morgan Joserwicz, Gabrielle Witten, Rebecca Shields, Amber Stoodley, Carol Brewster, Breanna Champluvier, Thomas Frankowski, Thomas Pisano, Benjamin Quiroz, Michael Toporcer, Dakota Harvey.
Sixth row: Brennon Mcgee, John Novitski, Ryan Savitski, Tobias Metz, Frederick Ohme, Jared Levance, Cody Goble Matt Repko, Ethan Rasmus, Timothy Sult, Zach Mcmanus, Mathew Williams, Eily Wright, Zach Meyers, Dakota Harvey.
Missing from photo: Joshua Parker and Grace Culbertson.

West Side

From page 34
choose to be different than their peers at their home districts,” he said. “They choose to come to West Side CTC. The independent thinking of a student choosing to come to West Side CTC is the independent thinking that make graduates at West Side CTC excel far beyond those of the silent majority.”

As students stood row-by-row to ascend onto the stage for their diplomas, underclassmen worked on their own trades as many worked the event by taking photographs, recording video and more.

Once the diplomas were handed out and students were back in their seats, graduate Mark Coolbaugh Jr. silently walked to the front of the stage, raising his arms as he signed to his peers that the time had come to stand and officially turn their tassels, becoming graduates.

Class valedictorian Nicole Finney gave the final remarks before closing the ceremony.

Reach the Times Leader newsroom at 570-829-7242 and on Twitter @tlnews.

Congratulations Graduates!

Pinnacle Rehabilitation Associates

PAIN STOPS HERE!
Our expert hands-on treatment will improve your mobility, increase your strength, and decrease your pain.

 Covered by Medicare
All Major Insurances Accepted

Most insurances Do NOT Require a Referral
520 THIRD AVE., KINGSTON • 714-6460
201 S. MAIN ST., PITTSTON • 602-1933
115 N. MAIN ST., TAYLOR • 562-7770
www.pinnaclearhabilitation.net Find Us On
The Wilkes-Barre Area Career and Technical Center awarded certificates to 239 students last month. Outstanding seniors were John Greskiewicz and first runner-up Robert Gilroy. Nominees were Danielle Buntz, Grant Campbell, Bradley Kotarsky, Justin Remphrey, Jayson Scott, Brittney Ann Thomas, Matthew R. Tisdel, Melissa Vergara and Vanessa Judith Aleene Wolf.
Coughlin High School valedictorian Shannon Rose Drevitch addresses the graduating seniors.

From page 4

Rudyard Kipling’s poem, “If,” encouraged students to move through their lives with courage.

“Whatever challenges life throws at you, embrace them as a learning experience,” he said. “Life’s a journey — embrace it.”

Emily Andrews, named a “scholar with distinction,” told her classmates what they love and work toward it, while being aware of the needs of others.

“I hope that we will care less about ourselves and more about others,” she said. “No dream is unreachable until you stop fighting for it.”

Graduate Lexi Kowalski plans to attend the University of Arizona this fall to start a new chapter of her life.

Still, Kowalski sees her time at Coughlin as an opportunity for preparation for whatever lies before her.

“It was difficult at times,” she said. “But it was great.”

As Taylor Banas, made his way onto Public Square for photos after the ceremony, he was surrounded by friends and family.

“Class of 2017

Lyman Price, Matthew Sebokla, Zachary Weisenfluh
Child Care: Essence Dobson, Samantha Penko, Josmarlin Ramirez, Kaylee Roberts, Tanasha Stanley, Melissa Vergara, Hanna Voyton.


Cosmetology I: Destiny Castirignano, Kristina M. Cragle, Jeanette Evans, Erin Jones, Priscilla Laureano, Sierra Quinn, Payton A Spitalik, Kellie Stair

Cosmetology II: Rachel M. Lacomay, Kevin Nichols, Vivian Ruiz Padilla, Brittney Thomas


Culinary Arts II: Bryanna M. Brennan, Luis J. Gonzalez, John M. Greskiewicz, Renalyn M. Heavener, Stephen Holzman, Keshia Hooker, Claudia Molnar, Gwendolyn P. Powell, Jacinda K. Sartin, Tyler Shovlin


Drafting: Tyler Clark, Jacob R. Eberhardt, Justin R. Engle, Roan Frame, Amelia R. Lee.

Electrical: John Holland, Justin Morstatt, Dean Nalaschi, Zackery Tomcho, Christophe Waters, Tyler Zaykoski.


Marketing: Dyajah L. Granger, Marquasha White

Masonry: Zachary Hagenbach, David M. Maisano


Plumbing & Pipe Fitting: David L. Hunter, Robin A. Prado

Residential Construction: Sean M. Haughnley, Jacob J. Montanez, Kelvin Perez-Arias, Edwin Tapia, Keyshawn Thompson, Dustin P. Tighe

Warehouse Management: Cody Beers, Joseph Fretty, Logan J. Kitson

Welding: Zachary Biros, Joshua Cameron, James Czerniakowski, Noah J. Donahue, Michael W. DuVall, Jacob M. Gerlach, Troy Harris, Dakota J. May, Chad M. Phillips, Ricky C. Porter, Zaine E. Wallace

Coughlin held graduation at the F.M. Kirby Center earlier this month.”

Photos by Sean McKeag | Times Leader

Reach the Times Leader newsroom at 570-829-7242 or on Twitter @TLnews.
A stadium of sunshine on a gloomy day

By Jimmy Fisher
jfisher@timesleader.com

WEST PITTSTON — The sky was dark and the air had cooled, but the rain held off as the bright smiles and warm thoughts from graduating seniors filled Anthony “Jake” Sobeski Stadium with endless amounts of positive energy.

Wyoming Area High School graduated 188 seniors, boys in green and girls in gold caps and gowns.

Class Vice President Albert Sciandra kicked off the speeches, saying it was the day that marked the end of their high school careers and their time at Wyoming Area.

“When I was younger, these four years of high school felt like it was taking 100 years to go by,” he said. “But looking back, it feels like it went by in just a few short months.”

Sciandra talked about the friendships he and his classmates will carry on, including the friendship of the late Eric Speicher, a classmate in attendance in spirit who died from a brain tumor in December 2013.

A green gown and cap was draped on an empty chair, to remind graduates their departed classmate was still there.

“He was not only one of the nicest, but one of the most genuine people I ever got to know,” Sciandra said. “I know he’s not here in person, but there’s no doubt in my mind that he’s here in spirit.”

After the reading of the class poem by Lacey Fassett, class president and valedictorian Peter Butera thanked family members for helping him on his road to graduation and encouraged his classmates to thank those who helped them as well.

“Every one of us graduating have those special people in our lives that care for us everyday, and love us unconditionally,” he said. “To all of you here today, we cannot thank you enough for everything you’ve done for us.”

From there, Butera’s speech took a turn, saying the lack of a real student government combined with the authoritative attitude of some teachers, administrators and board members prevents students from developing as leaders.

Before Butera could finish, his microphone was cut off, much to the disdain of the audience and his classmates, but he was given a standing ovation as he returned to his seat.

Katrina Stravinski, salutatorian, took the stage next and encouraged her classmates to not only dream big but dream bigger and look toward the future.

“Each and every student here has the potential to make a difference in our community and in the world,” she said. “Graduates, this is a time to look to the future and also reflect on the memories we made throughout high school. Remember that you can obtain anything and everything, and nothing is impossible.”

After performances by the high school chorus and the class song, “Look to the Sun,” Wyoming Area Superintendent Janet Serino and school board president Elizabeth Gober-Mangan, offered remarks of their own, telling students Wyoming Area will always be their home.

High school principal Jon Pollard held a personal connection with the graduating class, as its members were first sixth grade students when he served as principal of the Secondary Center.

“This group was my first group of sixth-grade students when I arrived at Wyoming Area, and in a moment of serendipity or irony, I have the privilege of sending this group off twice,” he said. “Pollard encouraged the students to try new things in life and to always give it their best shot.

“Remember to read good books and watch bad movies,” he said. “Listen to music, because it is one of the most common ways to bring back memories. Don’t forget to suggest something crazy. Remember, at some point, there was a meeting where someone said ‘Hey, let’s make a movie about a tornado full of sharks.’”

After Pollard’s speech, the students were called one-by-one to receive their diplomas and be cheered on by friends and family in the audience.

Some students waved back, some danced their way back to their seats, and some did a quick dab.

After Pollard introduced the graduating class of 2017, the students made their way to the center of the football field and threw their caps in the air to officially close the book on their journey at Wyoming Area.

Reach Jimmy Fisher at 570-704-3972 or on Twitter @SD_JimmyFisher
Wyoming Area male graduates
Fifth row: Alexander David Chronowski, Matthew Booth, Dylan Charles Kostak, Jeffrey Urban, David Louis Alberigi
Eighth row: Adam Christopher Buczynski, Kyle Christopher Peeperling, Joshua Joseph Kopcza, Skyler Teven Scobola, Joseph Frances Mikoliczyk IV, Sean Ian Rozelle, Cole Paul Keating, Anthony Joseph Saitta, Dean Parker Smith, Michael Donald Wall, Dante Carl DeLuca.
Wyoming Area female graduates
First row: Raelyn Destiny Chludzinski, Angela Maria Fanelli, Makaila Lyn O’Reilly, Emily Louise Uritz, Ashley Kay Donovan, Victoria Leigh Braccini, Eden Elizabeth Stella, Maria Margaret Ross, Cassandra Bernadette Wilson.
Fifth row: Madison Dianne Mulhern, Alexis Nicole Crossley, Caitlin Skrip, Austin Cole Smith.
Wyoming Area female graduates
First row: Raelyn Destiny Chludzinski, Angela Maria Fanelli, Makaila Lyn O’Reilly, Emily Louise Uritz, Ashley Kay Donovan, Victoria Leigh Braccini, Eden Elizabeth Stella, Maria Margaret Ross, Cassandra Bernadette Wilson.
Fifth row: Madison Dianne Mulhern, Alexis Nicole Crossley, Caitlin Skrip, Austin Cole Smith.
Wyoming Area male graduates
Elizabeth Butcho, Tiffany Amber Schmitz, Jessica Ann Hopkins, Cara Lynn Dooner, Elizabeth Nicole Weaver, Nicole Elizabeth Romanowski, Alexis Marie Saunders, Emilie Elizabeth Wanko, Jolene Lizabeth Fink, Ariel Marie DePietro.
Sixth row: Shari Alyce Liddick, Taylor Rayne Rindgen, Lacey Aileen Fassett, Tiana Darby, Breanna Nicole Cannell, Grace Marie Angelella, Christina Maria Nakalas, Rachel Marie Johnson, Ariana Pamas, Lydia Jean Edwards, Lauren Kelsey Shission, Abigail Nicole Franklin.
Seventh row: Vanessa Shedlock, Keely Rose Matthews, Evelyn Urban, Emily Rose Goyne, Morgan Joann Coolbaugh, Nahasia Laniec Catty, Tahira Shawneett Sessions, Julia Nicole Bonomo, Nadine Elizabeth Green, Victoria Lauryn Webb, Katie Nicole Wolfgang, Jessica Marie Kupiec.

GOOD LUCK 2017 WYOMING AREA GRADS!

Northwestern Mutual

PROTECT AND GROW YOUR FINANCIAL FUTURE.

John J Carr
CLU®, ChFC®, CASL®
Financial Advisor
(570) 408-9289
jack-carr.com
Wyoming Seminary graduates look to future

By Patrick Kernan
pkernan@timesleader.com

KINGSTON — This year, Wyoming Seminary held its 173rd Commencement ceremony. But for the 131 graduating seniors in the class of 2017, thoughts were only about the future.

The students in the graduating class come from far and wide, as the class of 2017 is home to students from five states and 14 different countries. Grace Leahy, of Wilkes-Barre, the member of the class selected to give the address — Wyoming Seminary does not use the traditional system of selecting a valedictorian — summed up this varied group’s experiences by highlighting advice for the future.

Leahy referenced another commencement speech, delivered by post-modernist author David Foster Wallace to the 2005 class of Kenyon College, which was later published as an essay entitled “This Is Water.”

In his original commencement speech, Wallace suggests that the point of education is to learn how to think, and that those who can’t do this find themselves “totally hosed.”

“Lastly, I encourage you to enhance your thinking by embracing other people,” Leahy said at the end of her list of ways to happiness. “Maybe you’ll be that ‘good thing’ that someone else thinks back to. So show empathy.”

The commencement address delivered by Randolph Granger, academic dean and social sciences faculty member, echoed many of the points brought up by Leahy. Granger also commended the class on their role in the school community. “As a community, I have observed none better than Wyoming Seminary in being a supportive and nurturing environment,” he said, “and as seniors, you have led that effort on the student front.”

At the commencement, a variety of awards were presented to the seniors by Kevin P. Rea, president of Wyoming Seminary, with Paige Allen, of Mountain Top, winning the Harry W. and Emma R. Ruggles Award for Outstanding Graduate. Jill Stretanski, of Shavertown, Spanish teacher and co-coordinator of Wyoming Seminary’s Accelerated Placement program, won the Frances and Louis Maslow Upper School Teaching Award for her years of “effective teaching.”

At the end of the commencement ceremony, the school’s Cokesbury Bell was rung a total of 17 times, one time to represent each of the decades of Wyoming Seminary’s history.

Reach Patrick Kernan at 570-991-6119 or on Twitter @PatKernan
Mansur Abdul-Malik, Laurel, Md.; Elizabeth Abraham, Kingston; Moriah Adeghie, Bloomsburg; Ali Ali, Hargeisa, Somalia; Frederick Allaire, Mascouche, Quebec, Canada; Paige Allen, Mountain Top; Lauren Anderson, Mountain Top; Juan Astegiano, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Joseph Banks, Dallas; Xiaohan Bao, Shenzhen, China, P.R.C.; Liam Barrett, Shavertown; Hanna Barry, Hauppauge, N.Y.; Matthew Bean, Moosic; Gabriel Belanger, Mascouche, Quebec, Canada; Bridget Bork, West Seneca, N.Y.; Hubert Bournival, Levis, Quebec, Canada; Simon Bowyer, Mono, Ontario, Canada; Duncan Breig, South Abington Township; Joseph Butler, Kingston.

Giovanni Camacho, Middle Village, N.Y.; Porntep Chaisang, Bangkok, Thailand; Xiaoran Chen, Beijing, China P.R.C.; Carly Clemente, Dallas; Joseph Correll, Easton; Kyle Cortez, Kitty Hawk, N.C.

Dominick D’Alessandro, West Pittston; Ryan Deas, Fredonia, N.Y.; Alyssa DiCostanzo, Commack, N.Y.; Connor DiLeo, Coopersburg; Nicholas DiLisi III, Malvern; Kieran Duggan, Woodbury, Conn.

Jasmine El Boukili, Sugar Notch; Connor Evans, Mountain Top.

Erica Fletcher, Hanover Township; Meaghan Francis, Woodbridge, Conn.

John Kehl III, Mountain Top; Andrew Kim, Dallas; Michael Kim, Dallas; Cassandra Kizis, Dallas; Max Kletm, Wohltorf, Germany; Alyssa Kristeller, Shavertown; Reu Kurisaka, Chiba City, Japan.

Etniene Lachance-Perrault, Levis, Quebec, Canada; Emily Laurore, Shavertown; Alexander Lazier, Kirkland, Quebec, Canada; Grace Leahy, Wilkes-Barre; Emily Lehman, Mountain Top; Mary Theresa Lehman, Hanover Township; Reeya Lele, Pittston; Jacob Lill, Loganville, Ga.; Kyra Little, Forty Fort; Olivia Lovito, Effort; Nicole Rose Lukesh, Wyoming.

Nina Magnotta, Forty Fort; Erica Manson, Nanticoke; Joseph Marseille, St-Laurent, Quebec, Canada; Payton McCormick, Dallas; Connor McGovan, Pittston; Ariana Michak, Harveys Lake; Shelby Monk, Hanover Township; William Moss, Marietta, Ga.; Noah Munley, Moosic.

Daniele Nave, Shavertown; Genevieve Nardone, Dallas; Ninh Nguyen, Hanoi, Vietnam; Quentin Novinger, Mountain Top.

Imran Pakbaz, Kabul, Afghanistan; Gabriel Pascal, Forty Fort; Alexandra Peck, West Pittston; Quang Phan, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam; Anderson Roy Phillips, Scranton; Jared Platnik, Bethel, Conn.

Claire Quinn, Millersville. James Reilly, Harveys Lake; Diederick Reitsma, Forty Fort; Christian Rickrode, Mountain Top; Jake Riegel, Coplay; Katherine Romanowski, West Pittston; Jake Rosner, Mountain Top; Grace Ross, Union Dale; Charles-Antoine Rousseau, Mont St. Hilaire, Quebec, Canada.

Alexandre Sabourin, Gatineau, Quebec, Canada; Kyla Salato, Long Beach, N.Y.; Brenna Sadowski, Dupont; Sean sunlight, Massece, Quebec, Canada; Andrew Schukraft, Dallas; Sarah Schuman, Shavertown; Michael Semenza, Hazle Township; Parshwa Sheth, Mumbai, India; Julien Simons, Kingston; Samir Singh, Jenkins Township; Kaylee Sminky, Laurel Run; Mei Snow, Dallas; Nutthakarn Soisaeng, Chaint, Thailand; Alexis Sokach, West Pittston; Spencer Stirewalt, Shavertown; Abigail Straub, Bear Creek; Ching Sung, Hong Kong, China P.R.C.; Connor Switzer, Harding.

Otis Thresher, McDonough, Ga.; Ryan Touey, Kingston; Eamon Tuttle, Kingston; Georgio Vavlas, Pittston; Valteri Virta, Vantaa, Finland.

Xinkai Wang, Nanjing, China P.R.C.; Dominic Wright, Dallas.

Haishan Xu, Kuning, China P.R.C.; Seung Yang, Seoul, South Korea; Shuming Yao, Beijing, China P.R.C.; Jieying Yu, Shenzhen, China P.R.C.

Stanley Zaneski III, Edwardsville; Alexander Zaykowski, Dallas; Richard Zemanek, Kolin, Czech Republic.
Family a central theme at ceremony

By Geri Gibbons
For Times Leader

KINGSTON — When Colleen Cwalina walked across the stage to accept her diploma from Wyoming Valley West High School earlier this month her entire family cheered for her.

The gathering of a family for such an event might seem a small blessing, but it was one that Cwalina did not think would be possible.

Her brother Peter “P.J.” Cwalina, an Army specialist, is stationed at Camp Carrol, South Korea, 26 hours away by plane, and Colleen had resigned herself to his absence on her graduation day.

“He had told me several times that he couldn’t get leave to come home,” she said. “And I thought he just couldn’t come.”

Then on Wednesday her parents called her over to a family friend’s house, and she was reunited with her brother.

He had flown in on Tuesday and originally planned to wait until graduation day to surprise her, but he said he wanted to get home and sleep in his own bed.

“We’re all here,” said mom M.J. Cwalina, with tears streaming down her face, referring to herself, husband Pete, P.J. and Colleen. “This is huge.”

Family seemed to be the order of the day at the district’s 51st commencement as Spartan Stadium was filled with family members clutching bouquets and straining to see their young loved ones.

Superintendent Irvin Deremer addressed over 300 graduates, reinforcing the value of family, loyalty to community and maintenance of character in his address to those gathered.

Deremer told students although they had worked and studied for graduation day, it was not an end, but a beginning.

“We’re often told that to get anywhere, you need to know someone,” he said. “That is true. In order to succeed, the person you need to know is yourself.”

Deremer went on to encourage the graduates to be familiar with their strengths and weaknesses and to be ready when opportunities presented themselves.

“Every job is a self-portrait of the person who did,” said Deremer, encouraging the graduates to pursue excellence and to use each moment wisely.

“‘You are the future,’” he told graduates. “‘You will steer the world.’

Student council President Sweta Patel told fellow graduates that even more important than the knowledge and skills they had obtained as high school students they had made lifelong friendships.

“You are well prepared to go out into the world,” she said.

In concluding her remarks, Patel quoted Dr. Seuss, “You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself any direction you choose. You’re on your own. And you know what you know. And you are the one who’ll decide where to go.”

Reach the Times Leader newsroom at 570-829-7242 or on Twitter @TLeaders.
Wyoming Valley West Class of 2017

Adam A. Abuelhawa, Mohamed Tarek Abuelhawa, Khalid Darnell Adams, Hamid Jamal Al-Hawa, Courtney Lynn Allabaugh, Kiera M. Allabaugh, Nicholas Lee Angelroth, Gregory Michael Askew, Aaron Joseph Austin.


Damian Jason Davies, Raymond Patrick Davis, Sydney Deats, Madeline Irene Georgette Delarche, Nina Noelle Dellarte, Jonathon M. Derhammer, Cheyanna Raven Derr, Lauren Ruth Devens, Tyler DeWald, Amber Lynn Dipani, Brooke M. Dombroski, Allison Nicole Dotter, Dynata Caesar Dow, Ashley N. Duda, Sierra Lexia Dudek, Gianna Marie Dutter.


Colyn E. Inniss, Dani E. Iorio, Alexxis L. Ivanchit.

Brandon M. Jacobs, Katelyn Marie Johnson, Julia Simone Jonelunas, Montell Robert Jordan, Sean Thomas Judge Jr.


Calvin Naugle, Michael Christopher Nellis, Tyler James Norton, Fiumes Novas, Joseph Novitski, Celeste Pilar Nunes.


Myles Anthony Charles Vassello, Natalia Vivanco, Justin R. Vought, Irwin B. Wainwright, Michael J. Walsh, Ian L. Waruneck, Davis J. Weaver, Trevor J. Weiss, Andrea Ann Welles, Stephanie Devine Wenzel, Ryleigh Catherine White, Crystal E. Whitmore, Andrew Joseph Wiedwald, Nancy Louise Wildner, Amanda Marie Williams, Haniyah Nahquiera Williams, Paige Lynn Williams, Tylar Auston Williams, Shawn Patrick Williams Jr., Kanpitcha Wimonthanasit, Olivia Justine Winters, Cassandra Lynn Wright.

Madison Rose Yoh, Zanihah Nymer Briel Youngbe-Salpele, Kyle Evan Yuskov, Raphael James Zbysheski
LIKE WHAT YOU SEE?

ORDER A KEEPSAKE POSTER OF ANY PAGE IN THIS PUBLICATION.

SIMPLY FILL OUT THE ORDER FORM BELOW
All posters must be picked up at 15 North Main St. Wilkes-Barre during normal business hours.

Each poster is $25  Two posters $20 each  Three or more $15 each

Page Number _____________________  Number Requested _________________________________
Name ______________________________________________________________________________
Address _____________________________________________________________________________
City, State, Zip _________________________________________________________________________
Phone Number __________________________________________________________________________