“Here we’ve taken the next step in our education by learning not just to critique, but to create.”

— Patrick Meath and Jerome Schwartz, Senior Speakers
At Baccalaureate ceremonies Saturday, Dr. George Ball called on the Class of 2003 to be mindful of “the destructive consequences of power”; Professor Susan Ferguson spoke of what it means to be “truly free”; and Professor U. J. Sofia thanked the Class of 2003 for “broadening my own horizons.”

Above, Ryan Gold, who earned summa cum laude with a major in geology, applauds his classmates. He is from Talent, Oregon.

Far left, several members of the class of 2003 listen to the Commencement address, including Jeremy Thorn, left, a mathematics and physics major from Dayton, Washington; Emily Bennett, a studio art major from Lake Oswego, Oregon; and Matthew Butts, a biochemistry, biophysics & molecular biology major from Yakima, Washington.

Left, Ana Petrović, a chemistry major from Yugoslavia, and Noah Rosenberg, a biology major from Portland, Maine, join in the singing of The Whitman Hymn.
ou are unleashed on the world in one of its less propitious moments. These are grim days with terrorism still undeterred, and very likely intensified, by our victory in the Second Gulf War. Many Americans feel a sense of personal vulnerability they have never felt before. Even during the Second World War, a far more menacing conflict with far more dangerous foes, Americans did not feel personally threatened in the daily rounds of their lives. Terrorism has given a new and scary dimension to war.

We agree — at least the vast majority of us — on the objective of eradicating international terrorism. We may sometimes disagree on the best means of attaining that objective. Given this unprecedented mood of personal vulnerability, the idea is spreading that, when mortal danger threatens, we must suspend discussion and debate, that the time has come for patriotic Americans to rally round the flag, that the president must be unquestioned as the single voice of a united nation. “What have we elected him for,” observes one commentator, “if we are to act as if we expect our views to be treated as being of equal weight with his?”

This raises a couple of questions — questions that history might help us to answer. The first question is whether a democratic people have a moral obligation to cease debate and dissent when the nation is at war. And the second question is whether, as a factual matter, our ancestors abstained from debate and dissent when their government took them into war. These two questions presuppose a third: what is the true nature of patriotism anyway?

The answer to the first question is that going to war does not abrogate freedom of conscience, thought, and speech. War does not abolish the Bill of Rights. Even when the republic faces mortal dangers, the First Amendment is still there.
In the midst of the greatest war in American history, the Supreme Court in the case of \textit{West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette} held that a law compelling kids in public schools to salute the flag and to recite the pledge of allegiance violated the First Amendment and was therefore unconstitutional. As Justice Robert H. Jackson said for the Court, "If there is any fixed star in our constitutional constellation, it is that no official, high or petty, can prescribe what shall be orthodox in politics, nationalism, religion, or other matters of opinion or force citizens to confess by word or act their faith therein."

The decision was handed down on Flag Day 1943. Though young Americans were fighting and dying for the American flag on many fronts around the planet, the Court's decision outlawing compulsory flag salutes and compulsory pledges of allegiance was generally applauded. Most Americans in 1943 thought the decision a pretty good statement of what we were fighting for.

The role of dissent in the run-up to war is of course crucial. Of all the decisions a free people must face, the question of war and peace is the most solemn. Before sending young Americans to kill and die in foreign lands, a democracy has a sacred obligation to permit full and searching discussion of the issues at stake. There is no obligation to bow down before a reloaded imperial presidency. The views of the American people should indeed have equal weight with those of the fellow they send to the White House.

Nor does the actuality of war change the situation. As Theodore Roosevelt said in 1918 during the First World War, "To announce that there must be no criticism of the president, or that we are to stand by the president, right or wrong, is not only unpatriotic and servile, but is morally treasonable to the American public."

During the Second World War, within a fortnight after Pearl Harbor brought us into the war, Senator Robert A. Taft of Ohio took the same line as Theodore Roosevelt. Bob Taft, as your parents and grandparents will tell you, was Mr. Conservative and a much revered Republican leader. "I believe," Taft said, "there can be no doubt that criticism in time of war is essential to the maintenance of any kind of democratic government. . . . Too many people desire to suppress criticism simply because they think it will give some comfort to the enemy. . . . If that comfort makes the enemy feel better for a few moments, they are welcome to it as far as I am concerned, because the maintenance of the right of criticism in the long run will do the country maintaining it a great deal more good than it will do the enemy, and it will prevent mistakes which might otherwise occur."

Bob Taft was everlastingly right. Leaders are never infallible. They will not benefit from the cessation or suppression of dissent. They may even pick up a good idea or two from their critics. There is little more insolent or more despicable than public officials, like the attorney general of the United States, who cry that those who dare question their acts are giving aid and comfort to the terrorists. I commend Senator Taft's wise words to Attorney General Ashcroft, whose attempt to outlaw legitimate debate is in the deepest sense un-American. Let us never forget Mr. Dooley's definition of a fanatic — a fanatic is a man who "does what he thinks th' Lord wud do if He only knew th' facts in th' case."

As for the second question, the factual question, the historical record shows that Americans have never refrained from dissent and criticism in wartime. Even in the American Revolution, a third of the colonists, according to John Adams, opposed the drive toward independence. The war of 1812 provoked serious and strident dissent. The historian Samuel Eliot Morison called it "the most unpopular war that this country has ever waged, not even excepting the Vietnam conflict."

President Madison's request for a declaration of war against Great Britain narrowly passed the Senate.
Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., received a Pulitzer Prize in 1946 for *The Age of Jackson* and a second Pulitzer in 1966 for *A Thousand Days*, his study of the Kennedy White House years.

A Harvard graduate, Schlesinger served during World War II with the Office of War Information and the Office of Strategic Services as well as in the Army. He was appointed special assistant by President Kennedy in 1961.

He spent most of his career as a scholar and teacher, retiring in 1996 as the Albert Schweitzer Professor in the Humanities at the Graduate School of the City University of New York.


He holds honorary degrees from several institutions including Oxford and Harvard.

by 19 to 13 votes and the House of Representatives by 70 to 49. After war was declared, Governor Caleb Strong of Massachusetts proclaimed a public fast to atone for a needless war “against the nation from which we are descended.” Most New England governors turned down presidential requests for state militia to reinforce the tiny federal army. “Mr. Madison’s war” converted the Federalist party, heretofore the proud champion of a strong central government, into a party advocating state-rights and nullification. John Quincy Adams even thought that the anti-war Hartford convention was a secession movement aimed at a separate peace with Britain.

The Mexican War was almost as unpopular. There was fierce opposition to the declaration of war. “People of the United States!” Horace Greeley wrote in *The New York Tribune*, “Your rulers are precipitating you into a fathomless abyss of crime and calamity! . . . Awake and arrest the work of butchery ere it shall be too late to preserve your souls from the guilt of wholesale slaughter!” The Massachusetts legislature passed a resolution declaring that the war, “so hateful in its objects, so wanton, unjust and unconstitutional in its origin and character, must be regarded as a war against freedom, against humanity, against justice, against the Union.” Thoreau wrote his famous plea for “The Duty of Civil Disobedience,” and James Russell Lowell condemned the war in his satiric long poem *The Biglow Papers*. In the midterm election, held in wartime, the administration of James K. Polk lost 35 seats and control of the House of Representatives.

The new House promptly resolved that the Mexican War had been “unnecessarily and unconstitutionally begun by the President of the United States.” Talk about giving aid and comfort to the enemy! A few days later a young congressman from Illinois attacked the presidential case for the war “as from beginning to end the sheerest deception.” He described President Polk himself as “running hither and thither, like some tortured creature, on a burning surface, finding no position on which it can settle down, and be at ease.” The young congressman was named Abraham Lincoln.

Thirteen years later, Abraham Lincoln, now president, faced a war of his own. The Civil War saw acute divisions even in the north. The Copperheads — pro-Confederate northerners — denounced Lincoln as a dictator and called for a negotiated peace with the Confederacy. In the midterm election of 1862, the opposition gained 32 seats in the House, and Lincoln had doubts about his own prospects for a second term. Ten weeks before the 1864 election he wrote, “It seems exceedingly probable that this administration will not be reelected.” Fortunately for the future of the republic, he won, and the abolition of slavery was vindicated, though the opposition polled 45 percent of the vote.

As the historical record indicated, wartime presidents have never enjoyed immunity from criticism and challenge. The Spanish-American War and especially the follow-up campaign against the Filipino insurrection provoked vigorous criticism of William McKinley, the Republican president. In the midterm election held three months after the smashing American victory over Spain, the Democrats scored impressive gains. As the McKinley administration pursued the war against the Filipinos, opposition mounted.

William James, the great philosopher, explained why he decided to support the Democratic candidate William Jennings Bryan against McKinley in 1900. “There are worse things than financial troubles in a Nation’s career,” James said. “To puke up its ancient soul, and the only things that gave it eminence among other nations, in five minutes and without a wink of squeamishness, is worse; and that is what the Republicans would commit us to in the Philippines. Our conduct there has been one protracted infamy towards the Islanders, and one protracted lie towards ourselves.” Mark Twain proposed a revision of the American flag with “the white stripes painted black and the stars replaced by the skull and cross-bones.”

The First World War was preceded...
by an intense national debate. And in the midterm election of 1918, eighteen months after the declaration of war against Germany, President Wilson lost control of both houses of Congress to the Republican opposition. The Second World War was preceded by even more intense debate — the most angry of my lifetime, angrier than the debate over communism in the 1940s, or than the debate over McCarthyism in the 1950s, or than the debate over Vietnam in the 1960s. And in the midterm election of 1942, FDR, though a compelling and highly popular leader, lost 50 seats in the House and 8 in the Senate.

The pattern has continued — up to the midterm election of 2002. In 1950, five months after the start of the Korean War, the Republican opposition gained seats in both houses of Congress. So too in 1966, in the midst of the Vietnam War, the Republican opposition made gains in both houses. So too did the Democratic opposition in 1990 three months after the outbreak of the Gulf War. But in 2002, perhaps because of the new sense of personal vulnerability, the sitting administration for the first time scored gains in midterm elections held in wartime.

History shows that there is nothing sacrosanct about presidents in wartime. Indeed no president has any right to send young Americans to kill and die in foreign lands without the most frank and uninhibited discussion and debate. This is all the more the case when a fundamental transformation in the strategy of national security promises a vista of presidential wars stretching far into the future.

This transformation has taken place without the notice it deserves. For more than 40 years after the Second World War, our national strategy was based on containment and deterrence. It was that strategy that enabled the democracies to win the Cold War against Soviet communism — and to win that war peacefully. From time to time voices rang out calling for preventive war against the Soviet Union, but those voices were regarded as emanating from what Theodore Roosevelt used to call the lunatic fringe. It was lucky for us all; for, had we resorted to preventive war, few of us would be here today.

Now our president has proclaimed a new doctrine of ‘anticipatory self-defense,’ a fancy term for preventive war — the doctrine that has replaced containment and deterrence as the basis of our foreign policy. This is precisely the doctrine that the young congressman from Illinois challenged in 1848. “Allow the President,” Abraham Lincoln said, “to invade a neighboring nation, whenever he shall deem it necessary to repel an invasion . . . and you allow him to make war at pleasure. . . . If, to-day, he should choose to say he thinks it necessary to invade Canada, to prevent the British from invading us, how could you stop him? You may say to him, ‘I see no probability of the British invading us’ but he will say to you ‘be silent; I see it, if you don’t.”’

Lincoln added that the founding fathers in the constitutional convention “resolved to so frame the Constitution that no one man should hold the power of bringing this oppression upon us.”

The policy of anticipatory self-defense is the policy that imperial Japan employed in its attack on Pearl Harbor on a date that, as an earlier American president said, would live in infamy. Franklin D. Roosevelt was right when he said this, and today it is we Americans who live in infamy. The global wave of sympathy that engulfed the United States after 9/11 has given way to a global wave of fear and hatred of American arrogance.

The new doctrine converts us into the world’s judge, jury, and executioner — a self-appointed status that, however benign our motives, is bound to corrupt our leadership. John Quincy Adams foresaw all this in a speech he gave on July 4, 1821. “Wherever the standard of freedom and independence has been or shall be unfurled,” Adams said, “there will
[America’s] heart, her benedictions and her prayers be. But she goes not abroad, in search of monsters to destroy. She is the well-wisher to the freedom and independence of all. She is the champion and vindicator only of her own.”

America well knows, Adams continued, that if she goes abroad in search of monsters to destroy, “the fundamental maxims of her policy would insensibly change from liberty to force. . . . She might become the dictatrix of the world. She would be no longer the ruler of her own spirit.”

America as the world’s initiator of preventive war? As the world’s self-appointed judge, jury, and executioner? Is this a good idea? The decision is your generation’s to make. But I would ask you to reflect on wise words uttered by a president whom I had the honor and the good luck to serve in the White House.

“We must face the fact,” President John F. Kennedy said 42 years ago in this state and on the University of Washington’s 100th anniversary, “that the United States is neither omnipotent nor omniscient — that we are only six percent of the world’s population — that we cannot impose our will upon the other 94 percent of mankind — that we cannot right every wrong or reverse each adversity — and that therefore there cannot be an American solution to every world problem.”

I suggested early on that our first two questions — whether a free people is obliged in wartime to shut up and not question their government and whether Americans had in fact done that in the past — presupposed a third question: what is the nature of patriotism anyway?

True patriotism, I would propose, consists of living up to the nation’s highest ideals. Carl Schurz, who emigrated from Germany to become an influential figure in 19th century America, defined the true meaning of patriotism when he said: “Our country, right or wrong. When right, to be kept right; when wrong, to be put right.”

Let this be the watchword for the class of 2003!
POWER'S PERIL
by George Ball,
Professor of Biblical Literature Emeritus

This would be a good time to look at three books, one dealing with our pre-human condition, one on the middle ages, and a new one written for our day. The first is Robert Ardrey's book, written 40 years ago, African Genesis, in which he claimed that the formative act in the development of the human race occurred when one of our anthropoidal ancestors first picked up the leg bone of an antelope and smacked a baboon on the head with it, reducing the baboon to food. To Ardrey, the concept of wielding a weapon to achieve that result was an intellectual feat, requiring the mind to form an image of the consequences of an act before actually seeing them. This act put further pressure on the proto-human brain to develop and expand its conception of tools and their uses. Ardrey goes on to develop a huge conclusion from this: that the history of the human race is the history of the development of the weapon. We produce increasingly sophisticated weapons of destruction and have done so throughout our whole human existence. While this particular theory is no longer referred to, there is enough to it to trigger thought. Some of our most advanced science is still in the area of development of weaponry.

For the second of these three books turn to northern Europe, in the general area of Denmark, Holland, Germany, and Poland in the 13th century. The account of life in that region, before there were any formal histories, is contained in a book called Kudrun. It is a saga, very much like the Icelandic sagas. The story in it is one of unending warfare going on through the generations, of constantly changing alliances, with each generation rising up to avenge the cruelties of warfare carried out by the preceding generation. Here are a couple of sentences from the saga: “Later when the youngsters of this land have grown to manhood, then we shall exact vengeance from Ludewic and Hartmuot.” “It can only come about when the many noble orphans, who are children now, grow up and reach an age at which they can bear arms. They will remember their fallen kinsmen, and will be glad to help us in this mission of war.” This idea staggered me: raising children for the specific purpose of continuing a war. To those people the aspects of civilization, music, art, drama, literature, philosophy and religion, and even science (except for its use in improving armament) would be of inferior importance.

It is at least fair to ask if we are any different. When we look back on our last century, we are looking at the century that was by far the most destructive of human life in all of history.

Turn now to the third book, a contemporary one by a professor at the University of Chicago entitled The Tragedy of Power Politics.
The tragedy described in the book is that international relations are always ultimately determined by military power. Nations with superior power will simply dominate the scene. At the moment, the decisive power in the world is the United States, but that may not be for long either. As Professor Mearsheimer points out in that book, this role may soon be China’s, where the number of potential soldiers is far ahead of that of almost any other nation, and the Chinese are rapidly increasing their scientific expertise. Other nations nearly always learn to copy any newly developed weaponry. Think of all the nations that now can and do make atom bombs. Think of the recent Cold War where each of the two nations in the perilous standoff had the power to transform the other into a radioactive dust cloud.

To me, the real tragedy is that all of these three sources, the prehistoric, the medieval, and the modern, have two things in common: First, they assume the security of nations depends wholly upon military power, and second, the subject of ethics is never mentioned. Yet without ethics we would not be human. We would be only one more biological species, dangerous to ourselves and others. The word “human” is not a biological term; it refers to a level of conscious responsibility that a species can reach. The ethical obligation would require us to assign value to every human life and accept the need to share, cooperate, and sacrifice in responding to all instances of human pain, distress, and conflict. There are of course many private and governmental programs which do minister to human need, but they tend to be drowned under the casualties and costs of wars, which seem never to cease coming.

However, hope is not entirely futile. Many centuries from now when humanity looks back upon its lengthening history, the 20th century will stand out as unique: as the first century when the human race succeeded in creating an operating structure to keep the nations at peace with each other, to create rules for international military and commercial relationships, to adjudicate disputes, and to respond to natural disasters. This organization is of course the United Nations and its related agencies. The United States may bypass and downgrade the United Nations now, but the time will come when the United Nations will be our protection and that of all nations.

In her essay on The Iliad, Simone Weil points out that there is no one in The Iliad who escapes the destructive consequences of power: some it kills, and the rest it intoxicates — those who never learn their own limits are destroyed.

If we do not learn, the next era may well be a post-human era.
him and afflicts him. Philosophy is what isolates him and what moves him to say in secret, at the sight of a suffering man, ‘Perish if you will; I am safe and sound.’”

This questioning of a single-minded pursuit of reason opened me to a serious consideration of the relevance for me personally of the journeys of heart, spirit, and soul that lie at the center of many of the Core texts.

It led me to explore meditation and the power of the mountaintop experiences. We read in Core of Moses encountering God on Mt. Sinai, of Greek heroes encountering their gods face-to-face, and of the resurrection of Jesus. We read of Romantic poets, seeing into the life of things with a transcendental vision. But there is no clearer account of an ascension to the heights than that offered by Plato’s Symposium, a bizarre and playful account of a drinking party turned debate tournament. One of the guests is Socrates, and he speaks of a woman named Diotima who advises Socrates to strive to reach the pinnacle of wisdom through loving — first loving specific beautiful people, then all beautiful people, then beautiful laws, customs, poetry, even wisdom itself. Finally Diotima describes what sounds like a mystical experience in which one sees “the Beautiful itself, absolute, pure, un mixed, not polluted by human flesh or colors or any other great nonsense of mortality.” Socrates goes on to explain that Diotima said that living in a way that takes one closer to this divine vision is a good way of living. We are all pregnant in body or soul, she says, and if we really follow the path of loving Beauty, we may find it possible to give birth to true virtue. A life well lived indeed.

But there is more. Human life is at least as much about the depths as it is about the heights. And the Core readings represent this well — they lead to the Roman underworld, to the crucifixion, and to the suffering of Job. They lead to Greek tragedy as well, and to the idea that it is in the tragic experiences that we have the potential to gain the deepest wisdom. I quote here a few lines of Aeschylus’s play Agamemnon: “Zeus, who guided men to think, / . . . has laid it down that wisdom / Comes alone through suffering . . . /From the gods who sit in grandeur /Grace comes somehow violent.” Through embracing and cultivating encounters with both the heights and the depths of human experience, through step-by-step movements of the soul, the spirit, the heart and the mind, I feel it may be possible to learn how to live in a way that recognizes the best of human potential. This, I have come to believe, has to do with freedom and with love.

Toni Morrison’s extraordinary novel, Beloved, guides me here. Her novel interweaves the stories of slaves and former slaves in mid-19th century America, and in the accounts of their sufferings and struggles to find healing, there is revealed much wisdom, perhaps nowhere more plainly and movingly than in this comment of a character called Paul D, about the relationship between love and freedom. He recalls a nearly unbearable situation in which he was imprisoned on a chain gang in Alford, Georgia. In that torment, he says, “you protected yourself and loved small . . . Grass blades, salamanders, spiders, woodpeckers, beetles, a kingdom of ants. Anything bigger wouldn’t do. A woman, a child, a brother — a big love like that would split you wide open in Alford, Georgia. . . . to get to a place where you could love anything you chose — not to need permission for desire — well now, that was freedom.”

In my years of considering the question “What does it mean to be truly free” in the context of Core readings, I have come to believe that Toni Morrison has it right — that to be truly free is about being able to love anything you choose to love. And that means, for me, to be able to love it all. It means even being able to follow the command of Jesus to love one’s enemies.

And such a freedom, such love, opens up the possibility of overcoming fear. Again I am guided by...
Morrison’s novel, this time by a dialogue between a young woman named Denver and her dead grandmother, Baby Suggs. Denver is terrified, facing what was unquestionably a graduation as frightening as any you or I will likely encounter. She is afraid to leave the yard of the only home she has ever known to step out into a world she knows to be filled with unspeakable dangers. Out of her fear, Denver calls on the spirit of Baby Suggs, who often warned her of those dangers, and says, “You said there was no defense.” Baby Suggs replies, “There ain’t.” So, the granddaughter asks, “What do I do?” And Baby Suggs answers: “Know it, and go on out the yard. Go on.”

It is that wisdom that has inspired my own decision to graduate this year with you, to graduate again—and I hope that I will continue to graduate over and over again. I wish the same for you. I hope you won’t settle for an illusion of safety, for the easily known, or for the life of the mind alone. The heart, soul and spirit have their journeys too, and while their graduations may not involve ceremonies like this one, they may be the most important experiences of your life. As you gather your college experiences and prepare to enter new worlds, I offer again to you these words of Baby Suggs: know it — know all of it, know everything you have felt and learned here, know what a difficult and dangerous thing human living can be, “Know it, and go on out the yard — Go on.” May the fruits of your good living be true joy, deep wisdom, and the ability to love in a hurting world whatever, wherever, and whenever you choose to love.

\[SO, \, THANKS\]
\[by \, U.\, J. \, Sofia,\]
\[Associate \, Professor \, of \, Astronomy\]

resident Cronin asked me to speak here because he knows that I feel close to this group of graduates. I counted up all of the seniors that I’ve had classes with, that I’ve gone on trips with, that I’ve served on committees with, and that I’ve been a fraternity or pre-major adviser to. Eliminating all of the overlap, I’ve calculated that I’ve interacted with 198 of the 352 seniors who are graduating . . . that’s 56 percent, that’s huge! It’s no wonder that I feel a special attachment to this class . . .

The students and faculty here both chose Whitman over other institutions. You likely chose Whitman four years ago because it suited your personality and educational needs. Most of the faculty chose Whitman because of its character, which obviously is greatly affected by the students.

We love teaching here, and you’re the reason why; as a group you’re intellectual, curious, interested, interesting, hard working, considerate, confident, well-rounded, and just plain nice! You’re great people to spend time with, and we’ve gotten a lot out of our time with you. I know that I haven’t properly thanked you for that, so, thanks!

We’ve enjoyed watching you become the people that you are. I was looking at your “lookbook” yesterday. The visible changes in many of you are amazing; some of you look like completely different people. Even more profound are the internal changes that you’ve undergone. In the past four years you have learned to be independent and to think for yourselves. In your time here, you have set the foundation for who you’ll be for the rest of your lives. We’re proud that we had a hand in helping you to define the person that you are . . .

Most of you entered the College four years ago already knowing everything. That’s when you started “Survivor: Whitman Bubble.” We isolated you in a small town and presented you with intellectual, physical and social challenges that
I assure you that the class of 2003 will always stick out in my mind. You helped me to learn how to be a better teacher, how to be an adviser, and how to have fun with students, and I have had a lot of fun with you . . . the first Mr. Whitman Contest, Poker Night, Space Balls and Animal House at the TKE house, dinners and parties at students' houses, dinners and parties with students at my house, Arthur's Jazz Club in Greenwich Village, goat hijacking in Tanzania, etc. And dare I risk the nerdly statement that classes with you were a lot of fun too. Two examples that stick out in my mind are Astronomy 100 Section A Fall 1999 (That class was 70 percent freshmen. You sang “You Lost that Lovin' Feeling” to me at the start of class one day. That's not likely to ever be repeated or forgotten) and Astronomy 330 (cosmology) this past semester (The seniors brought a yellow penalty flag to throw out whenever they didn’t believe what I was saying. Again, not ever likely to be repeated or forgotten). Believe me, I will always remember the class of 2003.

As far as what I learned from you: It’s this class that taught me what a great resource the students are for broadening my own horizons. You taught me that you don’t have to be stuffy to be respected. You taught me that it’s good to deviate from the syllabus when you’re interested enough to follow up on something. I learned from you that I’m really just another old guy. . . . I learned a lot of lingo from this class. You may have laughed at me when you had to explain the word “prefunc,” but now when I hear “dude, let’s prefunc this thing,” I can easily translate it into “my dear sir or madam, would you like to have a refreshment with me before the Baccalaureate ceremonies?” Although I can’t repeat most of the words that I learned from you, I’m thankful for knowing them. By far the most important thing that this class has taught me is that even as the old guy, I can have good friends among the students.

As you have changed, so have we. We’re always learning from the students; I feel like I’m continuing with my liberal arts education 17 years after starting it. Each new group of students brings different insights and viewpoints, so it’s a never-ending process. You might think that your class would eventually get lost among all of the classes before and after yours. That’s always going to be true to a certain extent, but it’s also true that your class has left its unique indelible marks on the College and faculty.

As far as what I learned from you: It’s this class that taught me what a great resource the students are for broadening my own horizons. You taught me that you don’t have to be stuffy to be respected. You taught me that it’s good to deviate from the syllabus when you’re interested enough to follow up on something. I learned from you that I’m really just another old guy. . . . I learned a lot of lingo from this class. You may have laughed at me when you had to explain the word “prefunc,” but now when I hear “dude, let’s prefunc this thing,” I can easily translate it into “my dear sir or madam, would you like to have a refreshment with me before the Baccalaureate ceremonies?” Although I can’t repeat most of the words that I learned from you, I’m thankful for knowing them. By far the most important thing that this class has taught me is that even as the old guy, I can have good friends among the students.

The College will miss this class and I will really miss this class. Go off and do good things and come back to tell us about them! And thanks again for a wonderful four years.

Amelia Holeman, Ilwaco, Washington, deserves the big hug after graduating cum laude with honors in history.