

Schools of Thought

Newsletter of the Huntington School District

Summer 2003

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Class of 2003 Graduates

They came in waves of blue and white. They marched with heads held high. Their family and friends applauded. They paraded from the school and across the open field as the orchestra played Elgar's traditional "Pomp and Circumstance No. 1" and tears welled up in the eyes of parents and grandparents. Such was the scene at Huntington High School's 142nd Commencement Exercise.

A crowd of more than 2,000 packed Blue Devils Stadium as the Class of 2003 sat in chairs before a stage erected on the school's football field. The 90 minute rite of passage included a number of student speeches, including remarks by valedictorian **Jacqueline Bogan** and salutatorian **Allison Barone**.

More than anything, this was a day for students and family members to celebrate. "We did it," **Denielle Balsari**, senior class president said to cheers at the conclusion of her four minute speech. They more than simply "did it," with graduates offered \$6.269 million in scholarships and Huntington seniors headed to most of the nation's top colleges and universities.

"The graduation ceremony today marks the end of four wonderful years and the beginning of something, which, although difficult to predict, is guaranteed to be at least as great an adventure as the past few years," Ms. Bogan, an AP Scholar who is headed to Cornell University for pre med studies, told graduates during her valedictory address.

In her salutatory address, Ms. Barone, an AP Scholar with honors who will study biology at Trinity College in Connecticut, told classmates they should be confident in looking forward. "Each of us now faces our own future, a future that holds the promise of a new beginning for us all. Though we

may face that future and new beginning with trepidation, we can also enter that phase of our lives confidently, knowing that our experiences here have prepared us well."

"Today marks an ending and a beginning," superintendent **John J. Finello** told the graduates. "A time to day goodbye to established routines and familiar experiences and a time to greet with fervor and excitement the new challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. Whether you pursue careers in law, medicine, government, science, the arts, technical and vocational fields, the military or perhaps

teaching, choose your paths carefully and not hastily. Strive to do your best."

New graduate **Katie Lee**, who is headed to New York University next fall to study economics and play on the varsity tennis team, introduced her father **Robert T. Lee**, who serves as Huntington School Board president, adding a touching tribute: "He is my biggest

fan, and I am his. Whenever I need help, guidance, advice, or simply a good laugh, he is there."

The 218 graduates include 203 who are college bound, ten who will be entering the work force, three that have enlisted in the military and two that will be attending prep schools. "This year the college office processed over 2,000 applications," **Mrs. Karen Schlendorf**, Huntington's college counselor said. "Not only were our graduates admitted to some of the most competitive colleges and universities in the country, but they also won more scholarship money than any other previous class."



Good Luck Graduates

Valedictorian Jacqueline Bogan Travels Path to Huntington from China

There she was, center stage, commanding the attention of the Class of 2003 and a crowd of more than 2,000 at Huntington's commencement .

Jacqueline Bogan's short walk from her seat to the microphone was nothing compared to her journey six years earlier.

Ms. Bogan was born in China and moved to Huntington in seventh grade. "She was placed in our English as a Second Language (ESL) program for one year," said **Karen Schlendorf**, the high school's college counselor. From her humble beginning in America, Ms. Bogan climbed the ladder of academic excellence and has been accepted into Cornell University where she plans to major in pre med studies.

"Jackie is one of the most outstanding young women that I have ever had the pleasure of knowing," Mrs. Schlendorf said. "She is brilliant." During four years of high school, Ms. Bogan never earned a grade lower than an A and since eighth grade she has challenged herself with every honors and advanced placement course the school district offers, in the process earning a 102.2 grade point average.

A talented artist, Ms. Bogan's work has been exhibited in local art shows and Congressman **Steve Israel** nominated her for the Congressional Art Award.

"Jackie brings her entire class to a higher level of understanding of the most complex material," Mrs. Schlendorf said. "She pushes and prods, seeking to go beyond what the teacher has in mind for the lesson and yet teachers and students alike praise her for this effort. Her peers have enormous respect for Jackie."

Her valedictory address included a personal note: "I would like to thank my parents, who are always there to support and encourage me," she told classmates. Without them, I wouldn't be standing here today. I'd also like to dedicate my success to my grandfather, who passed away not too long ago.

A staggering GPA helped gain her admittance to Cornell, but good grades aren't what make Ms. Bogan "tick," Mrs. Schlendorf said. "For Jackie grades are secondary to the learning experience and learning for its own sake is her passion."

Keen Mind Leads Allison Barone to Huntington Salutatory Address

Allison Barone may be small in stature but she made her presence felt intellectually around Huntington High School for the past four years. She may have needed a platform to stand on when she stepped to the podium to give the salutatory address at the 142nd Huntington Commencement, but her academic achievements speak for themselves.

"Allison has a keen mind and a drive to succeed," college counselor **Karen Schlendorf**, said. "She is always learning, stretching herself and seeking new opportunities to reach her goals."

Ms. Barone will attend Trinity College in the fall and plans to major in biology. "In the classroom Allison is a motivated, creative, focused student who is known as a wonderful contributor to class discussions," Mrs. Schlendorf said. "She comes to class prepared; prepared to learn and prepared to teach. She involves herself in the material so that she is easily able to help her peers and regularly does this."

A GPA of 100.64 ranked her second among seniors and provided an opportunity to give the salutatory address to classmates.

She has consistently chosen to challenge herself with some of the most demanding courses, including five Advanced Placement and an honors Spanish course in her senior year. "Teachers remark that her writing and research skills are excellent and that she is a pleasure to have in class," Mrs. Schlendorf said.



Top Students: Valedictorian **Jacqueline Bogan** (left) and salutatorian **Allison Barone** gave keynote addresses at the 142nd Commencement Exercise.

Huntington High School 2003 Graduation Briefs

In a rhythmic, folksy talk featuring perfect cadence, Class of 2003 President, **Denielle Balsari**, who is heading off to Providence College in Rhode Island, said she wasn't comfortable giving graduates specific advice about their futures. She did, however, offer up a few personal gems. "Stay true to who you are and have no expectations from anyone other than yourselves. Keep honesty and trust close to your heart. They are the two things in life that truly represent who you are as an individual."

* * *

Christina Essopos first met Superintendent of Schools **John J. Finello** when she was a youngster attending Washington Elementary School where Mr. Finello was serving as principal at the time. The circle was complete when the Class of 2003 member introduced the school district's chief executive at the commencement exercises.

"He attended Lincoln and Flower Hill elementary schools, R.L. Simpson Junior High School and is a graduate of Huntington High School, Class of 1968," Ms. Essopos, who will attend George Washington University, told the crowd. "Following his graduation from St. John's University, he returned to the district as a teacher. During his 31 years in Huntington, Mr. Finello has served as a teacher, curriculum coordinator, assistant principal, principal, assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction and now superintendent.

"A lifelong resident of the community, he is proud of Huntington's 346 year commitment to public education and tradition of excellence. It is my pleasure to now introduce the man I first knew as my principal at Washington Elementary School and someone whom many of us have truly gotten to know and to respect as an active member of the community and role model, Mr. John J. Finello."

* * *

Huntington School Board President **Robert T. Lee** had the pleasure of being introduced to the commencement crowd by his daughter, **Katie Lee**, a member of the Class of 2003.

"He is first and foremost my dad, but his responsibilities as school board president are ones that he also cherishes," Ms. Lee, who is bound for NYU, said. "He believes in the strength of the public school system, and he passionately believes that every child deserves the best. He will always go

the extra mile on someone's behalf; whether it means staying after a meeting until the wee hours listening to a concerned parent or taking time off from work to talk to a teacher.

"My dad is one of the smartest people I know. He has a generous heart, an impassioned soul and I strive to be more like him every day." The pair enjoyed an emotional embrace on the stage before graduates and their families.

* * *

On her last day as a Huntington teacher **Judy Jakhelln** helped distribute diplomas to members of the Class of 2003, but not before senior **Leslie McDaniel**, who is headed to SUNY Binghamton, introduced the longtime high school health educator to the commencement crowd.

"Within the walls of Huntington High School there is one room that I could always count on to be open to the students, whether it be for extra help or advice," Ms. McDaniel said. "This room belongs to Mrs. Jakhelln. I am only one of the many students who has been blessed with knowing Mrs. Jakhelln. Her generosity, kind words, and instruction will not be forgotten."

* * *

Senior class president **Denielle Balsari** presented the Class of 2003's gift: "A stone engraved plaque that will be set into the brick wall at the entrance of the building. It will read, 'Welcome to Huntington School, Home of the Blue Devils.'"

AP Scholar with Honors
Allison Barone

National Merit Semifinalist
Laura Titus



Huntington High School 2003 Graduation Briefs

Jonathan Widawsky, who is an academic powerhouse himself and headed to the University of Rochester, introduced salutatorian **Allison Barone** to the crowd and let them in on the fact that she isn't all study and no fun.

"Let me tell you a little about her," said Mr. Widawsky. "The fact that she is a conscientious, hard working, and dedicated student goes pretty much without saying. She is, well, the salutatorian. But I know Allie away from the realm of books and studying. Believe me when I say that she is fun, welcoming, courteous, humble and my list of boring adjectives can go on and on."

* * *

Chrissy Babcock has big plans to one day be a teacher and will begin her studies at Iona College in the fall, at the commencement she introduced best friend **Sara Ramirez**, who served as president of the Huntington High School student body this year and who will be attending SUNY Albany to study political science and linguistics, to fellow Class of 2003 members.

"After eight years of our friendship Sara continues to impress me with all of her qualities and capabilities. Sara is the most honest person I know. She is caring, talented, intelligent, hardworking and outgoing. In my eyes, Sara will always be seen as undeniably brilliant. So with all that being said, I would now love to introduce a girl who I've got nothing but love for, Sara Ramirez."

* * *

Sara Ramirez spoke one last time to her classmates at the Huntington's 142nd commencement and told them to learn from everything they experience in life.

"Granted there are times in which our whole world seems to crumble," she said. "Nothing seems to be going right, and you feel alone. It is in those times that we must keep going, because all of us know how amazing overcoming adversity is. So to my fellow classmates I say this: Never forget the people you met while visiting Blue Devil Country, for they contributed to the most constant thing in life: change."

Many thanks to all the local businesses and individuals who contributed to our school district clubs, teams and organizations this past school year!!!



Singing Star: Katherine Plonski, who will study at the Berklee College of Music in Boston, climbed the stage and brought down the house with a stirring rendition of David Friedman's, "We Can Be Kind."



Wisdom: Superintendent **John J. Finello** told the graduates they should always strive to do their best and maintain high personal standards. Mr. Finello graduated in 1968 from Huntington High School.

Huntington History . . .

The Class of 2003 continues the long tradition of public education in the Huntington School District, which saw six young men and women receive the first diplomas issued by the district in ceremonies held July 18, 1862 in the First Presbyterian Church across the street from the current town hall. That unbroken line has continued through the Civil War, two World Wars, economic depressions, social upheavals and natural disasters.

Jeneva Candice Mitchell Wins Gates Millennium Scholarship

Jeneva Candice Mitchell is headed to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with all expenses paid for four years of study thanks to Bill and Melinda Gates. Ms. Mitchell has been named a Gates Millennium Scholar and plans to study education and become a high school math teacher. The scholarship will also pay for graduate study.

“I am very excited about winning the scholarship and going to UNC,” Ms. Mitchell said. “Huntington High School certainly did right by me. I really enjoyed my time here.”

Ms. Mitchell graduated Huntington in the top fifteen percent of the senior class with a 94.4 grade point average.

At Huntington High School she dove into the extracurricular activities program, participating in B.U.T.Y. (Bring Unity to Youth) and as a peer trainer for the A.W.O.D. (A World of Difference) program, serving on the Yearbook staff and as the student government’s vice president, running on the track team, and being a member of both the Spanish and Math honor societies.

“Candice (as she is known) has mastered the importance of time management, she has been successful in serving in many capacities and enjoying these varied activities while meeting her academic responsibilities as well,” said **Helen Anderson**, a retired Huntington English teacher.

A sense of community has led her to participate in the planning of Thanksgiving and Easter dinners at her church and serving as a cheerleading coach in the Police Athletic League program. She also enjoys Jazz dancing, piano playing, reading and just plain helping others.

“Her ability for critical thinking is outstanding,” said **Dr. Rosalie Peck**, a former Huntington chemistry teacher. “She asks excellent questions and doesn’t just sit passively and copy notes.”

Kim Damore, a Huntington physical education teacher nominated Ms. Mitchell for the Gates Millennium Scholars program. “In my many years of teaching I have had the wonderful opportunity of developing relationships with extraordinary young people,” Mrs. Damore said. “Candice holds strong at the top of this list.”

“I hope to become a math teacher in Huntington or at another high school on Long Island,” Ms. Mitchell said.



Millennium Scholar: Jeneva Candice Mitchell

Mitchell was awarded a Millennium Scholarship by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The award will pay all her expenses at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and for graduate studies. She hopes to become a high school math teacher.



Top Student: Soon she will leave Huntington for Cornell University, but first 2003 valedictorian **Jacqueline Bogan** took time to speak to fellow graduates and their relatives. Ms. Bogan, who compiled a 102.2 grade point average, emigrated to the United States from China as a seventh grader. She plans to pursue pre medicine studies at Cornell.

2003 Advanced Placement Scholars

**Jeanna Barbieri, Jeremy Beck,
Jacqueline Bogan, James Kelly,
Peter Malone, Wayne Slingluff and
Jonathan Widawsky**



Forward March: Flag bearers **Eric Selhorn** and **Alexandra Nussdorf** led the 2003 commencement procession of seniors, school district trustees and teachers to Blue Devils Stadium for the ceremonies.



The Graduate: After four years of excellence, **Denielle Balsari** received congratulations from her parents, Joan Marie and Dennis, after the ceremonies ended. Ms. Balsari served as senior class president and is headed off to Providence College.

With a donation of \$130, you can become a Huntington Schools' Patron of the Arts. Your tax deductible gift will be used to completely refurbish one of the 1850 audience seats in the high school auditorium.

In appreciation and recognition of your donation, a brass plaque will be placed on your refurbished chair, including an inscription of your choosing. Call the music office at 673-2106 for more information or to arrange a contribution.



Remembering: Huntington School Board President **Robert T. Lee** said that he remembers many of the graduates since they were young children, so he felt comfortable telling them what he tells his own kids: "Hard work, dedication and commitment to what you believe in pays off. Take pride in what you do, lend a helping hand to others along the way, and everything else will follow."

2003 Recipients of Regent's Diplomas with Honors

Denielle Balsari, Adam Baltutis, Jeanna Barbieri, Michael Barnett, Allison Barone, Jeremy Beck, Jacob Bluestone, Kristen Boege, Jacqueline Bogan, Jamie Dicke, Christina Essopos, Jessica Fremed, John Fulton, Jr., Marissa Gagliardi, Kristen Giani, Robert Grammatico, Thomas Cumming, Taemi Izumi, Elizabeth Kalbers, James Kelly, Justine Kelly-Fierro, Kathryn Lee, Brandon Logigian, Leonidas Loucas, Peter Malone, Michael Malusa, Gregory Re, Georgianna Reilly, Jeneva Mitchell, Maria Isabel Saravia, Concetta Schling, Eric Selhorn, Wayne Slingluff, Danielle Smith, Alexander Steinberg, Christopher Strub, Jack Thomson, Laura Titus, Melissa Wadolowski, Jack Wheeler, Alyson Whitehead, Jonathan Widawsky,

National Merit Commended

James Kelly
Alex Steinberg

Class of 2003 Senior Academic Awards

2003 CSH/Huntington Soccer Club Scholarship
Laura Bell, Kristin Boege and Eric Selhorn

A.L.I.V.E. Outstanding Student Scholarship
Veronica Hernandez, Krystle Narine

Alumni Cups Denielle Balsari, Jonathan Widawsky

Alumni Scholarship Denielle Balsari, Jonathan Feustel

American HS Mathematics Award Jonathan Widawsky

American Legion Citizenship AwardAdam Baltutis and
 Kathryn Lee

American Legion Music AwardJeremy Beck and
 Laura Titus

Atlantic Wind SymphonyAlison Howard

Bausch & Lomb Science AwardJonathan Widawsky

Blue Devil Band East River Savings Service Award
 Melanie Duggan, Kristen Giani and Daniel Kapner

Cal Hansen Memorial ScholarshipZachary Rotz

Carmela Santorsola Provenzano Jeanna Barbieri and
 Jeneva Mitchell

Daughters of American Revolution
 Christopher Strub and Sara Ramirez

Delta Sigma Theta SororityJeneva Mitchell

Dentists for a Better Huntington Justine Kelly-Fierro

Dorothea Wadell ScholarshipBethany Rogers

E.C. McGaul Award of Huntington Fire Department
 Alicia Parada

Edna Van Wart Mathematics Award ... Jonathan Widawsky

Evelyn Daniels Memorial AwardJeanna Barbieri and
 Thomas Cumming

Frances Bifulco Howley Memorial Scholarship
 Jacqueline Rossbotham

Frank Carino Award of Huntington Fire Department
 Adam Baltutis

French Award Laura Titus

Grace Gilbert Scholarship John Cane, Ernestina Rivas

H2M Group Scholarship Taemi Izumi

HARTE Scholarship Mariaisabel Saravia

Howard Munson Award of Huntington Fire Department
 Adam Johnson

Huntington Manor Volunteer Fire Department
Keyana McQueen, Mariaisabel Saravia

Italian Award Kristen Giani

James Doty Memorial Scholarship Laura Titus

James Loebell ScholarshipChristina Essopos and
 Justine Kelly-Fierro

Jane Sullivan AwardNicole Sviba

Jared Bifulco Memorial ScholarshipMichael D'Addio
 and Michael Malusa

Joan Jorgensen Scholarship Georgianna Reilly

Joel H. & Selma D. Cohen Scholarship Adam Johnson

John Philip Sousa AwardChristopher Strub

Josten's Recognition Award Jason Busby and
 Stephanie Gollobin

Kurt Schaefer Memorial Award Jessica Sloan

Leap Frog Graphics AwardTimothy Bayon

Linda Shoemaker Blue Devil Band Scholarship
Daniel Kapner

Lions Club Scholarship Veronica Hernandez

Long Island Blood Services ScholarshipGregory Re

Louis Armstrong Jazz AwardThomas Cumming

Marty Schnittman Memorial Scholarship ... Adam Baltutis

Men's Chorus Scholarship Heather Martilla

National Orchestra AwardSuzanne Ayres and
 Caitlin Yarsky

NYS Lottery Leaders of Tomorrow Alicia Parada

Orchestra Parents Scholarship Denielle Balsari and
 Taemi Izumi

Patrick Gilmore Band Award Alison Howard

Political Action Committee Christina Essopos

Principal's AwardBrandon Logigian, Jeneva Mitchell

PTSA Scholarship

Ralph Thompson ScholarshipSarah Friedman

Reibe's Art Award of Merit Caitlin Yarsky

Rensselaer Science MedalJacqueline Bogan

Robert JR Buchanan Award Allison Barone

Robert K. Toaz Memorial PrizeDenielle Balsari

Rotary Club ScholarshipDenielle Balsari,
 Becky Bindrim and Jeneva Mitchell

Sammis English Prize Jessica Sloan

SCMEA Music ScholarshipTalar Ardzivian

Senior Orchestra AwardNicholas Grenier, Laura Titus
 and Jonathan Widawsky

Senior Photography Award Suzanne Ayres

SEPTA Scholarship for ExcellenceAdam Johnson and
 Christina Whitfield

Sons of the American Revolution Jacqueline Bogan

Sons of Italy Italian Award Rosanna Caramanica

Spanish Award Jeneva Mitchell and
 Mariaisabel Saravia

T. Christopher Pettit Memorial Scholarship ... Dan Kapner
 and Kathryn Lee

Technology Department Award Rosanna Russo

Tracy Cogswell Memorial Award Meredith Anderson
 and John Wheeler

Tri M Music Leadership Award Laura Titus

Triple C – Attorney General's Award John Wheeler
 and Stephanie Gollobin

U.S. Marine Corps Scholastic Excellence Award
 Jeneva Mitchell

U.S. Marine Corps "Semper Paratus" Award
 Justine Kelly-Fierro

William Baker Memorial Scholarship Jonathan Feustel

Woody Herman Jazz AwardDaniel Wolf

York Iguchi ScholarshipLaura Titus

Senior Athletic Awards

Booster Club Female Scholar Athlete Kathryn Lee

Booster Club Male Scholar Athlete Peter Malone

William Class Memorial Scholarship Kathryn Lee

David Cordes AwardKathryn Lee

Fred Cambria AwardJohn Fulton

Ray Deren Memorial Scholarship
 Brandon Logigian and Kathleen Macari

For news, articles and information about the
 Huntington School District log on to :
www.hufsd.edu

Class of 2003 College Acceptances

Adelphi University American University Bates College Bennington College Berklee College of Music
Boston College Boston University Brandeis University Brigham Young University Colorado
Christian University Connecticut College Coppin State University Cornell University Cornish College
of the Arts Dowling College East Stroudsburg University Eastern Connecticut State University
Fairfield University Fairleigh Dickinson University Fashion Institute of Technology Georgia Tech
George Mason University George Washington University Georgetown University Gettysburg College
Harvard University Hofstra University Indiana University Iona College Johnson & Wales Katherine
Gibbs Keene State College Laboratory Institute of Merchandising Long Island University C.W. Post
Loyola University Lynchburg College Lynn University Manhattan College Marist College
Mary Washington College Nassau Community College New School University New York Institute of
Technology New York University Northwestern University Ohio University Ohio Wesleyan
Penn State University Providence College Purdue University Queens College Quinnipiac College
Rhode Island College Rochester Institute of Technology Rutgers University Sacred Heart University
St. John's University St. Joseph's College Salisbury State University Savannah College of Arts and
Design School of Visual Arts Smith College Suffolk Community College SUNY Albany SUNY
Alfred SUNY Binghamton SUNY Buffalo SUNY Cobleskill SUNY Cortland SUNY
Farmingdale SUNY Fredonia SUNY Geneseo SUNY Maritime SUNY Morrisville SUNY New Paltz
SUNY Old Westbury SUNY Oneonta SUNY Oswego SUNY Plattsburgh SUNY Purchase
SUNY Stony Brook SUNY Plattsburgh Syracuse University Teikyo Post University Towson State
University Trinity College Tulane University University of Bridgeport University of California at
Santa Barbara University of Delaware University of Dubuque University of Hartford University of
Massachusetts University of Miami University of New Hampshire University of North Carolina at
Chapel Hill University of North Carolina at Charlotte University of Rhode Island University of Rochester
University of South Florida University of Vermont Virginia Tech University Wellesley College

Huntington Union Free School District
P.O. Box 1500
Huntington, NY 11743

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