

Awards Day

I would like to take the opportunity to share with you the experience of last weekend's graduation from my perspective as headmaster. It was truly amazing...perhaps the best in my 11 years at Eagle Hill. It started off innocently enough with a Friday full of phone calls and preparation for the weekend events—preparing speeches, fielding calls from trustees, and periodically calling Ms. Wynne to see if she had remembered this or that about the weekend's events—I don't even know why I even bother to check.

By 3PM a half a dozen senior parents had made their way to my office to reminisce and in some cases to shed a tear. Those meetings are always special—the common theme of all three conversations is: together, we did it. I have hundreds of those conversations and somehow they never get old. I'm a lucky person.

At 3:30 EHS underclassman Zach Shulman stopped by and asked if I wanted to play Frisbee golf. Although my head was saying “sorry Zach, I'm too busy,” out of my mouth actually came: “let go, and what are we playing for?” Despite the fact that I lost a soda, it felt so great to be out with the kids and enjoying the nice weather. After finishing a meeting with Dr. Riendeau and Mr. Harbert, I drove home in time to tuck my children into bed.

What was billed as a Saturday marathon felt like a leisurely walk in the park. Our final meeting of the year for the Eagle Hill School Board of Trustees began at 9:30 AM and ran uninterrupted until 5PM—it felt like only an hour had elapsed for everyone in the room. It was exciting, passionate, and productive. Our board of trustees is working hard and tirelessly to make sure that this school thrives and flourishes. They have charted a course that is equal parts possible, responsible, and bold. If you thought the last two years brought great changes to this school, I suggest you simply buckle your seatbelts and enjoy the ride.

Saturday night's baccalaureate dinner was truly touching. I watched with great pride as each senior had his or her time in the sun—receiving praise and awards for his or her tremendous individual efforts. I listened and learned as Mr. Stone addressed the class of '04, imparting one final lesson to live by. I shed a tear as Mr. Harbert read a letter from the Brian Vickers to the class of '04—the class that Brian was supposed to graduate with until he was stricken with cancer and forced to stay closer to home to receive treatments. And my emotions ran the gamut as I viewed the senior class slide show that closed out a special evening with the seniors.

As the sun rose on a spectacular Sunday morning, I should have known right then that graduation would make for a near perfect weekend. We all laughed as we all fiddled with our fancy graduation robes, and shared an immediate sense of anxiety as Mr. Lovejoy's bagpipes signaled the beginning of the ceremony. I felt a great sense of pride and purpose as I delivered my opening remarks—my poem honoring each senior that has become a tradition. I sat in amazement as senior class representative Gabbie Swords delivered a powerful and poignant message on behalf of her fellow graduates. I sat in

awe as I listened to the commencement speaker, Shamaya Gilo, effortlessly and elegantly share how in lessons from finger painting and Albert Einstein can be found the key to happiness and success. I became emotional as we conferred an honorary diploma to Brian Vickers, and we named one of our faculty homes after Bill Rouse—the father of one of our seniors who passed away almost a year ago to the day. With absolute pride I shook each seniors hand as they walked across the stage to receive their diploma. Then, with absolute respect, I fulfilled the faculty's vote to honor Jay Oppenheim and Kathryn Ellis with the Citizenship award and headmaster trophy, respectively. And finally, the wind that was taken out of my sails was used by Mr. Lovejoy to fill his bagpipes and mark the end of a very special bond. Our work was done...