

Donald Jones, Director, Office of Minority Procurement, University of Virginia, Charlottesville; Women in Business Advocate of the Year—Claire Gastañaga, Principal, CG2 Consulting, Richmond; Young Entrepreneur of the Year—Bryce Lee Robertson, LowTechWeb.com, Mechanicsville and Entrepreneurial Success of the Year—Dennis Gilbert, President, Tesoro Corporation, Virginia Beach.

ESSAY BY DANIEL ZAJDA

**HON. RANDY "DUKE" CUNNINGHAM**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 25, 2003*

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to read the essay of Daniel Zajda, a member of the Valley Center Teenage Republican Club.

"As a T.A.R.S. member, I have worked hard for the Republican Party and have accepted the Republican values. These values have affected me in many ways and believe that they will stay positive in the future. For the past three years I have been an active supporter and beneficiary of the Teen Age Republicans at Valley Center High School. I have held many positions of office, including being a main contributor in the efforts of gaining an official club charter. As a Vice president in my sophomore year, I helped moderate the agenda and served as a stand in for the President, however, I didn't know much about the difference between conservatives and liberals, but all that eventually changed when I got the privilege to attend the Republican Advocacy Workshop in our state capitol. This particular journey opened my eyes to many of the problems that our state has burdened itself with, due to the incompetence of our governing office. After experience first hand what goes on at the capitol building, I realized the power of politics and eventually realized that I would lead a moral and conservative life as a Republican Party member.

The following year I was elected as President of the T.A.R.S. club and donated much of my time to the development and expansion of our organization. I can recall spending countless hours in hope of registering voters and urging people to get out and vote.

But now our country is dealing with different issues and right now is a great time for our nation to show their support and back our President. And that's exactly what the Republican Party is doing and I am proud to be a part of it."

COMMENDING THE FIRST GRADUATING CLASS OF THE CONNECTICUT INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE ACADEMY

**HON. JOHN B. LARSON**

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 25, 2003*

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a group of young

constituents of mine in the First Congressional District. They are the first graduating class of the Connecticut International Baccalaureate Academy in my hometown of East Hartford. I would also like to specifically recognize one of the graduates, Alix Prinstil, for the extraordinary speech he gave at the graduation exercises, which I also had the honor of attending. Alix's words and the sentiments he expressed are of lasting value to the school and indeed to our entire education system in Connecticut. I am proud to insert his remarks into the RECORD today and again offer my sincerest congratulations to the Class of 2003.

GRADUATION EXERCISES  
(Oration by Alix Prinstil)

So we've finally arrived at this day: Our High School Graduation Ceremony. Since I was in about 3rd grade, I dreamed about what it would be like at my high school graduation. This speech, as a matter of fact, was for the most part written in my mind for the past . . . let's see, 12th grade—4th grade = 8 years! I always pictured what the audience's reaction would be when I'd start off with:

"Many graduation speeches begin with, Graduation, Webster's Dictionary defines it as—the award or acceptance of an academic degree or diploma. But you won't hear such a definition in this speech."

In light of what this program has brought to our attention, however, this definition that was probably established centuries ago barely skims the threshold of what "graduation" really means, especially for this C.I.B.A. class.

Ever since we were freshmen, I don't have to remind us how we've constantly been asked by not only friends, but parents and even strangers, the question: "What is I.B.?" But how many of us, except maybe Mr. Abelon, can even now give a detailed (or even correct) answer? If, at this point though, we were asked: What does IB do for a student? I think we could all give an appropriate response. To make a long explanation short, I'll partially quote the words of Mr. Abelon almost 4 years ago: "It's a rigorous program established to produce a well-rounded-out individual." Well when he said "rigorous" that day, not only did I not know what I was in for, but I apparently didn't know what "rigorous" really meant.

We all walked in the first day with our middle school work ethic, bags that we'd soon discover weren't big enough, and among the presence of a group of approximately 50 people, most we never seen in our lives, and probably never would have. Never did I think that someone my age from towns like Marlborough and Ellington would be in the same classroom. It was through this school that every single one of us was able to see and experience diverse personalities and people from various towns of Connecticut. This diverse group of young people is one of the things within the Academy that I'll probably remember the most. And we've all grown along the way, now looking forward to this summer so we can catch up on the sleep we've lost.

But we can't just think about what we the students went through. Let me remind you, the audience: this is the first school in New England governed by the International Baccalaureate Organization. Our teachers were just as new and in for a treat just as much as we were. Those countless hours of home-

work that we received every night was put right back into the hands of our teachers who would sometimes experience countless hours of grading, whether it be watching our Chinese characters develop as we got older, reading how students explained why a dog isn't a cat, or grading a couple of derivative and integral problems. At this point, I'd really like to give a round of applause to the teachers who have gone through this alongside their students for the first 4 years of this school's establishment, to those who we've recently had, and to those we have had and lost.

Now after all of this reminiscing, we must examine what this graduation really means for us now and what it will mean for us in the future. When we go home this evening (whatever time that may be), what will we all think about? Parents: is the first thing that occurs to you going to be what color your child's room will be painted for that office or gym you always wanted after they go to college? Graduates: will you be wondering what you're going to do for fun tomorrow . . . if we can wake up for tomorrow? With 4 years of such great education behind us, I think we should all go home and take some time to reflect on the advantages we have gained over the majority of students in this state; country; and even the world.

Now for the backbone of this delivery; what I've been trying to lead into for the past 687 words . . .

I need to refer back to the beginning of this speech when I said that graduation means more than just receiving a diploma; more than just moving a tassel from one side of our hat to the other and officially ending the part of our lives as high school students. Graduation is what you make of it. And after experiencing life under the wings of the IBO, I should be correct when I say that the lives of each and every one of us will be successful ones, no matter where we go. When we have our 5 or 10-year reunion, or whenever Allison wants to organize it, I strongly doubt that my statement will be false. After 4 years of seeing the same exact faces everyday all day, we're finally each going our separate ways. College life is going to be much different from what we have had. Let's not forget exactly where we came from. We've put up with each other for what seemed forever. But I have to say something I realized just two days ago and that I got a little emotional when typing this: friends aren't always people you talk to everyday. There are a lot of people in the world that you may call a friend and could be one of the worst individuals to be involved with. But being with you guys for 4 years has showed me that there's greatness in every single one of you, things unmentionable to the mind's recollection, and that I really have to say I love you all. There was apparently apart in my heart that was being saved to be filled by a group of people, and I realized that the 21 of you, in each of your own ways, filled that void with a better feeling that I've had in a long time. The feeling I'll have for you next year is beyond the word "miss". I just hope the person I've been will be imprinted into your hearts as well. Please remember that this isn't goodbye, it's just "see you later."

Once again, I would like to thank Mr. Abelon for being patient with this class, the Governing Committee, the East Hartford Board of Education, Mr. Jordan, especially Dr. Fallon, our Guidance Counselor Mr.