

Valedictorian Speech, '05

Heather Millman

In thinking about what to say tonight, I recalled this year in Sean's Writer's Craft class, trying to figure out something to write that would be profound and meaningful, and yet not trite. Most importantly, I remembered Sean's most passionate piece of "constructive criticism" of to always avoid cliché. What could I possibly say tonight that hasn't been said a thousand times before? I know that many conversations have taken place between us grads, over how much we are going to miss Freemont. For those of us who are graduating, next year will be anything but familiar. And I'm sure that all of us are at least a little apprehensive as to what life has in store for us. On Freemont's annual Montreal trip this year, Sean asked me, "What is the point of high school?" He also said, "Don't say it's just to get into university." At the time, I couldn't answer the question. I thought about it for so long and couldn't think of a thing to say. The question has stuck with me nevertheless. Finally, I've come up with an answer that satisfies me. I believe that the point of high school is to figure out where we stand in this world. Too many people on this earth are indifferent, and stand on the sidelines, watching as the world dangles on a very precarious edge. I'm sure many of us recall being in Human Rights class, and learning some very disturbing facts about the world. It's too easy for us to decide that someone else will fix things for us, and right all the wrongs. But no one is going to do this for us. We're the ones who are inheriting the world, and it's up to our generation to take sides; to take a stand for once. What are people going to remember you for? If Freemont has taught me anything, it's to believe in something; find a cause that means something to you and act on it. We're always being told that it's possible for us to change the world. I think it's about time that we did. We've had enough of watching the world turning around us. So I want to take this opportunity to thank those of you who've taught me, studied with me, laughed with me, and even argued with me. I appreciate it more than you know. And Sean, you must be thanked especially; there's no getting around it. You've prepared us to take the first steps on this very long road. You've put so much time and effort and care in for us, and we are all infinitely grateful. And now, at the end of our high school days and at the start of a new road that lies before us, I would like to congratulate the class of 2005.