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In a dark time the eye begins to see.
- Theodore Roethke



LUBA LUKOVA

OUT INTO THE WORLD

BY MINDY NYBERG

Mindy Nyberg is valedictorian of the 1992 Warrenton High School Senior Class. She gave the following speech at her class graduation on June 5.

Carpe Diem. This phrase meaning seize the day was very popular a couple of years ago. But there is something crucially wrong with it. Nowhere is the idea that you have to be prepared for when that day comes. History is littered with people who were presented with great opportunities but failed to take advantage of them because they were not prepared.

The people on this stage before you are going to be the people making a significant impact on your society. I say your society because until now we have been ignored. Young people were thought to have neither the experience nor the ability to make a difference. Lack of experience is a valid criticism to some extent. Most of us have not had the opportunity to see much of the world. Lack of ability, however, is not. Our teachers have made sure of that.

Graduation should be marked as a joy and a celebration. Our years of study and work have brought triumph, which rewards us, honors our teachers, and brings pride to our families. Without their help we would not be here tonight.

We are not the first to graduate. Generations of mothers, fathers, sons and daughters have been here before us. We, the class of '92, are the total of their experiences and quests, as the future will be ours. In this century alone we have had two world wars, the Depression, Hiroshima, the Titanic, the Holocaust, and the Hindenburg. Things were invented that we now take for granted, such as telephones, TV, computers, rockets, nuclear energy, and cars. We have also had many things that are new to us but that were developed by the last generation. We now deal with AIDS, cocaine, and global warming to name a few. In the last four years we have dealt with the deaths of friends, pressures concerning drugs and sex, having people that we care about move, and others replacing them, babies being born, and the world threatening. The world outside is not

waiting to welcome us with open arms. The economic climate is bad and the psychological one is worse.

I am here to tell you that we truly live in a global village. What we do here one day affects people elsewhere the next. The knowledge that we have acquired must not stay locked within our brains. We owe it to society to do something with it, whether it be college, career, or just taking a stand on an issue. We must better ourselves and our world. We must return what we know to others. Knowledge belongs to everybody. It does not exclude race, ethnic group, or religious belief. The teachings of Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. do not just apply to Indians and African-Americans. We all learn from the same masters. In other words, education must bring people together.

Just because something is different, don't label it wrong. Everybody is going to be different and hold different beliefs. That is what keeps us from all being clones. It is what makes us individuals, the class of '92's favorite thing to be. To accomplish this we must agree to disagree. If we keep an open mind and learn to listen to each other, even if we still disagree, we can improve ourselves by increasing our own knowledge. If we quit judging people, we may just attain peace. Look at Israel. If people could accept that there are differences without one of them being wrong the PLO and the Muslims would not have been at war so long. They would not have lost so many lives. Ignorance breeds racism and mass hatred.

The test that will be the hardest is the one that I hope the class of '92 will pass with flying colors. The test is to keep an open mind, to accept people as they are, with all their differences. The test is to increase their knowledge, not ignorance. As Rodney King said, "Why can't we all just get along?" I hope that the class of '92 will be ready for the opportunity of peace; to learn it, to live it, and then to challenge the rest of the world to do the same.

The class of '92 sits before you as the future. We stand with the friends that we have made, with our pasts trailing behind us, with arms open to accept it. We hope that you will do the same.