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SPOTSWOOD



Have you ever wondered what happens to our alumni after they graduate from Spotswood High School? Where they are? What they are doing? Were they prepared? Are they doing well? What memories do they have of High School? Well, wonder no more - *Graduate Gossip* is here! Each issue will highlight our graduates so that we can catch up with some of their adventures after high school.

On Wednesday, November 22, 2017, Samantha Adornati returned to Spotswood High School after being away for 6 years. A graduate of the Class of 2011, and a young woman of many talents and interests, Sam returned to talk about her most current endeavor - becoming a published author! Telling our students about her first book, *Higgins: The Pacificator*, that was penned under the pseudonym Sam Lyatt, Sam explained that it took her about a year and half to complete the project. After graduating from Stevens Institute of Technology, she had some time on her hands before she started her career and was looking for a book to read. As a young reader, books like *Eragon* and *Harry Potter* were among her favorites;

GRADUATE GOSSIP...

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BY GRAHAM PEABODY

Catcher in the Rye and *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* remain influential. However, unable to find that next book, she took matters into her own hands - she decided to write the book she was looking for! So instead of spending some well-deserved down time reading, she became dedicated to writing and when work started, her hour-long bus commute to and from the city gave her the time needed to finish the book.

During her visit, I had the opportunity to meet with Sam and catch up. As she was talking with me about all she has done since graduation, I could not help to think of Kai, the main character of her book, and his adventures. Reading Sam's senior quote, "You can never cross the ocean unless you have the courage to lose sight of the shore," I guess it should come as no surprise that, like Kai, she found her adventure.

After leaving high school, an environment that prepared her for college by broadening her horizons, providing rigorous coursework, fostering confidence, and teaching responsibility, she attended Stevens to study engineering. Whether as a child playing with Lincoln Logs or in her high school construction tech course building various projects, Sam always loved both the design and construction aspects of her prospective career. Enrolling to study civil engineering, she pursued her Master's in ocean engineering, a move that made sense since she also always loved the water. When she was younger, some of her



favorite memories are at the shore with sister Lauren (Class of 2008) or fishing with brother Nick (Class of 2007). This passion also led her to join her college sailing team, racing both 420 and FJ sailboats on the Hudson River and competing with other colleges up and down the East Coast. As an upperclassman, she was named Commodore, overseeing management aspects of the organization.

In her senior year of studies, she applied for the SMART Department of Defense Scholarship Program that was created to reduce the growing gap in STEM careers by recruiting and retaining our country's best candidates. She was accepted and selected the New York District Office of the Army Corp of Engineers. After a rotation of various job-related experiences, she is now working at Port Monmouth in Middletown, New Jersey as the only female engineer on staff spending half her time in the office and the other half in the field ensuring that all construction on various beach, flood wall, levy, and pump station projects match the intended and approved designs.



Her advice for seniors? While making a decision about what college to go to and what major to choose is huge, she reminds us that life is full of choices. Keep your mind open and don't give up on your passions. Just because you pick one door, it doesn't necessarily mean that all other doors close. But no matter what you choose, time is everything. Every minute counts so take advantage of your time.



If a story about one of our alumni has caught your attention or piqued your interest, be it a sibling,