



IN THE LIBRARY before graduation, vocal teacher Susan Nelson helped Rhiannon Davies (above) with her robe.

Superintendent Duane Dorshorst (below) moved the tassel on Jacob Larue's cap from one side to the other.

Class of 2011 says good-bye during Sunday graduation

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Twenty-five Decatur Community High seniors walked into the gym on Sunday afternoon as schoolmates and left as graduates.

The class of 2011 included 10 National Honor Society members and three Kansas Honors winners.

Valedictorian Jacob Helm, who will be attending the U.S. Air Force Academy next fall, asked his classmates just what a diploma meant to them.

He said he thought it meant a lot of memories, and he hoped the good ones will stay and the bad ones fade away.

The diploma is a key to the future, he said, "and it will all be because of that little piece of paper."

Although college isn't for everyone, Mr. Helm said, everyone should continue to learn and grow and make sure their friends, families and associates are proud of them.

"We won't let Decatur Community High School down," he said.

Salutatorian Carissa Wentz recalled some of the funny, scary and exciting times the class has gone through since the first grade.

She recalled that the class blew up model volcanoes together, lost a snake and scared a teacher with a fake mouse. And that was just in grade school.

"In high school, the class has supported each other in music, art and athletic events. We cheered our hearts out with the cheerleaders," she said.

And she recalled some sad times — classmates in the hospital or on crutches and the loss last year



BRET ASHLEY clapped during the graduation ceremony Sunday.

of elementary music teacher Jim Buchholz and then this year of high school speech and English teacher Leigh Davis.

With the help of the school staff, family and friends, she said, the class has come together through the ups and downs.

"Thanks to all of you," she said, "none of us fell off of the roller coaster. Now it's time to go for another ride."

Along with the usual presentation of roses to the parents, each senior put a white rose in a vase set up on a special table to honor Miss Davis, who was their class sponsor until her death in January.

Anthony Marshall read an essay on life from a book he said was found in Miss Davis' room just a few days ago.

Retiring high school Principal Charles Haag, who emceed the graduation, said the book contains poetry, prayers and musings by Miss

Davis. The essay Mr. Marshall read was written on March 10, 1976, when she was about 17, Mr. Haag said.

Mr. Haag also called for a round of applause for long-time accompanist Mary Jo Lohofener, who is retiring this year.

School board members Dan Wasson, Dan Nedland, Abby Hissong, Dan Grafel and Doug Brown handed out diplomas to:

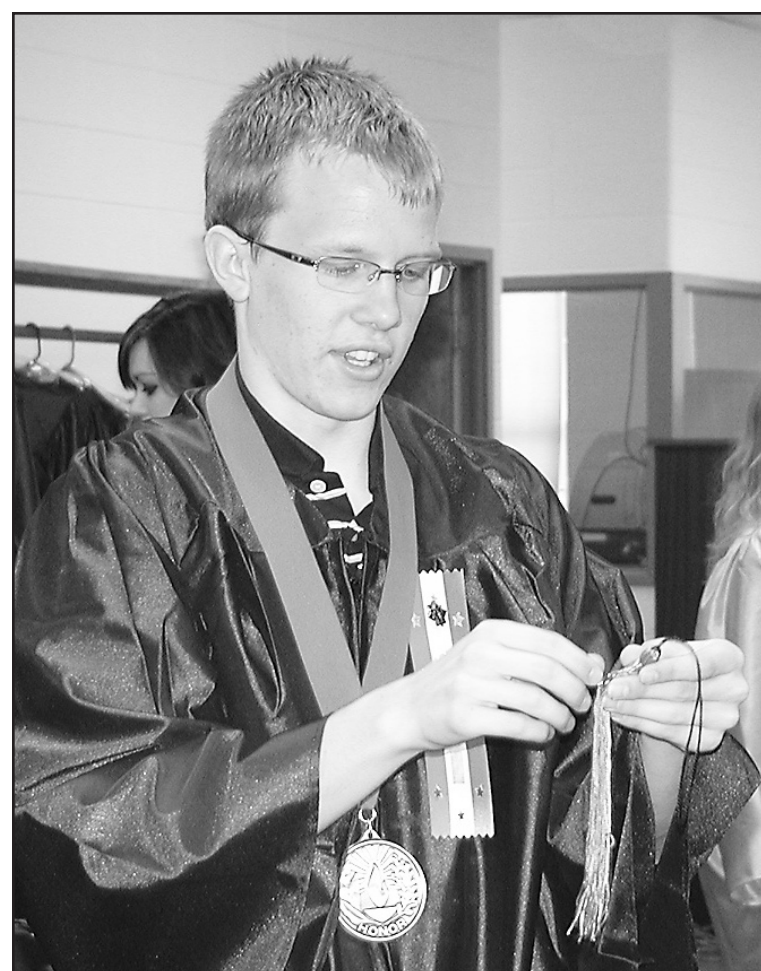
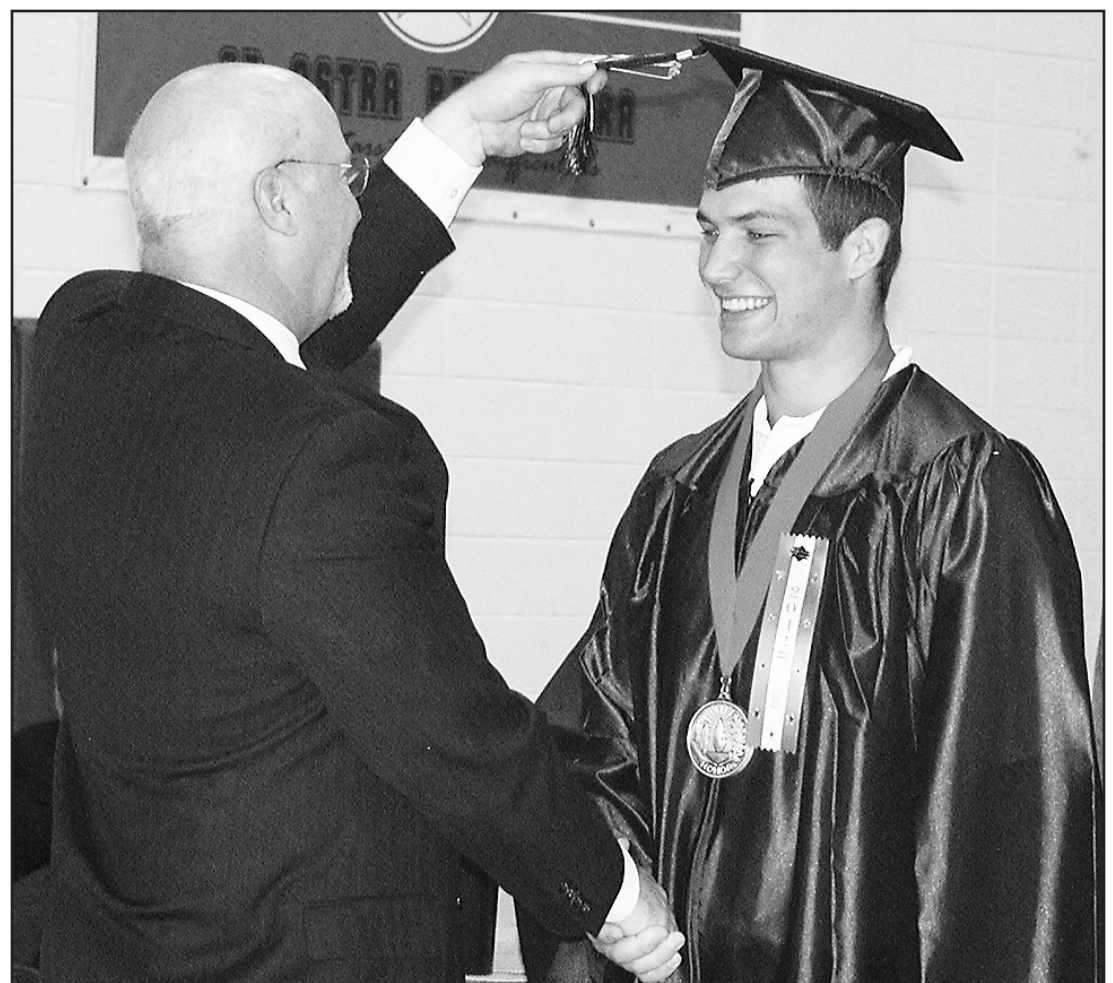
Tiffany Anderson, Bret Ashley, Nikta Bose, Rhiannon Davies, Jori Diederich, Dalton Dolan, Jordan Dreher, Zachary Farr, Keithen Fortin, Katie Glading, Mr. Helm, Joseph Hirsch, Erin Jeffry, Sara Kyte, Timothy Larson, Jacob Larue, Christifer Lines, Laysha Medina, Lacy Misek, Nolan Peters, Joshua Ritter, Jonathan Samson, Rachelle Scott, Dakota Soderlund and Miss Wentz.

Juniors Amanda Marshall and Dalton Jones were marching ushers and Tyler Shields, Samantha Anderson, Nolan Henningson, Tracy Hoppal, Brent Juenemann and Megan Wentz were door ushers.

Music was provided by the high school brass ensemble and saxophone quartet, Nolan Henningson and Caleb Koerperich on keyboards, the DCHS Singers, the high school choir and the favorite recorded music of the class.

Superintendent Duane Dorshorst congratulated each graduate and supervised the transfer of tassels.

After Mr. Haag announced the end of the ceremony, all the graduates tossed their hats into the air and filed out of the gym to the cheers and applause of their families, friends and former classmates.



VALEDICTORIAN JACOB HELM (above) got ready for graduation Sunday afternoon. White roses (left) were set next to the picture of Leigh Davis as a tribute.

