Letters from Graduating Students
Sarah Witten and Derek Stice

Miracles and Medical Physics
It’s actually quite a miracle that I came to Western in the first place. All through high school I swore up and down that I would never, ever, under any circumstances attend Western Kentucky University. My entire family before me (and I have a big extended family) had attended WKU, and by George, I was bound and determined to break the mold. I failed miserably. So here I am, 3 months before graduation, trying to figure out what I am going to do with my physics degree. Actually, that’s another miracle in itself. I had no intention whatsoever of majoring in physics. Somehow, though, by the mysteriously cunning ways of Dr. Gelderman, I was talked into being a physics major my second semester of Western. Of course, I am quite clever myself, and dropped my physics major my second semester of Western. But I could not win. Oh, no. I came back to the physics department my third semester and have given up the struggle since then. I’m a physics major and there is nothing I can do to change that now. Fortunately, though, I have figured out what I want to do with my degree. Do I want to be a professor? No. Do I want to get my Ph.D. and make some miraculous discovery and earn a Nobel Prize? Heck no. Do I want to use my knowledge for evil and take over the world? Ok, that was just a joke. I am going to go to Graduate School to study Medical Physics. Yep, that’s right. I get to help save people’s lives. I am sooooo excited. In fact, I received my first graduate school acceptance this week (yeah!). So wish me luck as I slowly find my path into the “real world.” –Sarah Witten

The Point of No Return
It’s almost over. It is strange how three words can generate such a mixed range of emotions. These three words can cause great joy at the prospective of graduation and leaving behind the stress of college, the excitement of going out into the real world, and the sadness of leaving the department that, although sometimes reluctantly, I have grown to cherish. Looking back over the last four years I’m amazed how my path has changed. When I entered WKU, I had never taken a physics course. A chemistry teacher in high school had introduced me to the topic and raised my interest, but I was determined to study mathematics. How much easier would my life have been if I had stayed with that mind set? However, being the curious soul, I had to take a physics course. I was hooked. At this point I thought, “Well, I need a minor.” But, I had already reached that event horizon, which would eventually suck me into the black hole called physics. As I went on, a “friend” finally convinced me to complete the major because, “it’s not that many more courses.” (He is now strictly a math major.) Now I have come full circle. In May, I will graduate with a degree in physics not math. All sarcasm aside, the ride has been great, although bumpy. I would not trade the time for anything. Next fall, I hope to have a job at one of the local high schools, so that I can stir other young minds toward the black hole. –Derek Stice

Sarah Witten SPS and Astronomy Club Homecoming Queen Candidate

Sarah Witten, a senior physics major and vice-president of SPS, represents the Society of Physics Students and Hilltopper Astronomy Club as a candidate for Homecoming Queen in the 2004 Homecoming Parade. Right: Amy Jo Ransdell and Derek Stice are pictured with the float entered into the 2004 WKU Homecoming Parade by the Society of Physics Students and Hilltopper Astronomy Club.