

LONG ISLAND / TOWNS

Garden City High School's unique graduation attire suits students



Valedictorian Steven Menelly and salutatorian Katherine McGannon outside Garden City High School on June 28, 2014, before the graduation ceremony. The class wears white instead of traditional robes. Photo Credit: Marlo Jappen

By Marlo Jappen

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Garden City High School principal Nanine McLaughlin remembers her initial feeling about the school's unique choice of graduation wardrobe when she arrived six years ago.

"Honestly, when I first came here, I thought it was odd," she said.

Seniors stray from the traditional -- graduation robes and mortar boards -- and wear all-white to receive their diplomas.. The boys wear white tuxedo jackets with red boutonnieres, and the girls wear white dresses and carry roses.



McLaughlin said she knew that the boys at Chaminade High School graduated in white tuxedos and the girls at Sacred Heart Academy of Hempstead wore white dresses, but she never heard of the custom at a public school.

McLaughlin said she grew to like the white attire because it allows the students to express themselves and stay cool while they sit through the outdoor ceremony.

Garden City High School celebrated its 80th commencement Saturday with 277 graduating students, but there have been changes since McLaughlin took over.

She shortened the ceremony by an hour, placed the faculty in robes and lined the field with flags.

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“Garden City is a very patriotic town,” she said.

“We truly appreciate those who serve.”

But, she has no plans of changing the all-white garb, which is a long time tradition of Garden City High school.

“It binds the community together throughout generations,” said Superintendent Robert Fiersen. “The children really enjoy it.”

Graduate Nina Dimaria also approves, although at first she preferred the traditional cap and gown

“Once I saw it I liked it,” she said. “It’s so different from other schools.”

By Marlo Jappen