Elizabeth Walsh was unable to attend the Honors Day awards ceremony at PCCC last April. She was taking her exams at Columbia University where she has been a student since January. “I’m thrilled to be attending an Ivy League university,” said Liz who officially completed her course of study at PCCC last December and will march in this week’s 39th commencement ceremonies. “Coming from a community college, I was surprised to be accepted to Columbia,” she added.

Home-schooled during her high school years, Liz entered PCCC at age 16 and earned her Associate in Arts in Liberal Arts degree with a concentration in English. She is a member of Phi Theta Kappa (PTK), the national honor society for two-year colleges and was named to the All-State Academic Team for Community and Junior Colleges.

“I feel I was very well prepared by PCCC to attend an Ivy League university,” said Liz. The 19-year-old admits to being overwhelmed at first by the sheer size of Columbia’s New York campus, but said she has adjusted. Though she considers the university’s workload to be somewhat heavier than PCCC’s, Liz did not find the content of the courses to be much more difficult. “I received an excellent education at PCCC,” she said.

A strong writer and accomplished horseback rider, Liz writes freelance articles for Barrel Horse News, an industry publication about a form of horseback racing. She started out there as a youth correspondent and recently won a writing contest sponsored by the publication. She also competes at the amateur level in barrel racing.

A volunteer at New York’s Museum of Natural History where she gives tours to school groups. the talented young woman is considering a career in the field of socio-cultural anthropology. “But writing will always be a major part of my life,” she insisted.

Liz commutes to Columbia’s New York campus from the West Milford farm where she continues to live with her parents, twin brother, and four horses. “We are very proud of Liz,” said her mother, Ramona Walsh. “PCCC was wonderful for her, and I would advise any parent to consider community college for their children,” she said. “It can open a lot of doors and get you into a top-notch college.”

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