

CITY & REGION

Filmmaker David Lynch gives MUM commencement address

Physicist John Hagelin named new president as Bevan Morris steps down.

By **BOB SAAR**
for *The Hawk Eye*

FAIRFIELD — The 41st commencement ceremony at Maharishi University of Management in Fairfield began with hundreds of graduates and their family and friends filling the Golden Dome with “America, the Beautiful” backed by the Metropolitan Brass Quintet of Des Moines.

The fact people from 53 countries were in the room participating gives one hope the mission of MUM and its representatives could be viable: world peace.

“If there’s anyplace on this globe where nations are truly united, that place is here,” said MUM executive vice president Craig Pearson.

Among the 366 students receiving degrees Saturday, 42 Ethiopians and 41 Chinese were outnumbered only by American

students.

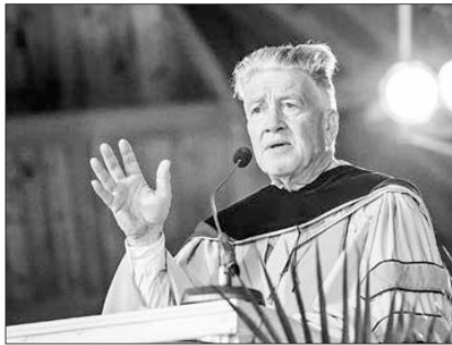
Nepal, Egypt and Bangladesh had hefty handfuls of graduates as well, including a father-and-son pair of co-grads from Cambodia.

Retiring MUM president Bevan Morris, along with his named successor, world-renowned physicist John Hagelin, presented keynote speaker and filmmaker David Lynch with an honorary Doctorate of Peace for his life work seeking to unite people around the world.

Morris listed many of Lynch’s accolades, including four Academy Award nominations, four Golden Globe nominations, Best Director award from seven film societies, the Golden Palm at the Cannes Film Festival in France — the list goes on.

Lynch’s landmark ABC-TV series that ran 1990-91, “Twin Peaks,” garnered 18 Emmy nominations in its first two — and only — seasons.

And, of course, someone’s cellphone clariioned during Lynch’s introduction. No one minded it any more than they minded the



Cody Weberl for *The Hawk Eye*

Filmmaker David Lynch speaks Saturday at Maharishi University of Management in Fairfield. Lynch was featured and feted at the 41st commencement ceremony with graduates from 53 countries in attendance.

small flock of children chirping at the back of the Dome, having fun on the bouncy meditational mattresses that replaced stiff, rigid stacking chairs.

Lynch, with a hard-earned

reputation for quirkiness and individual thought, dispensed with a speech in favor of a question-and-answer session with four graduating students who joined him on stage.

“I did not do all those things they mentioned earlier,” Lynch quipped.

Q: *How do we reconcile having a job without a purpose in life?*

Lynch: Chances are you will find work you love.

Q: *What’s one thing you learned on your film sets?*

Lynch: Always have the final cut.

Asked to tell an anecdote about the Maharishi, whom Lynch met or tele-conversed many times, Lynch called the leader of Transcendental Meditation “the greatest master who ever walked the earth.”

Q: *Can you tell us a moment when you fell in love with an idea?*

Lynch likened ideas to fish: “We don’t make the fish, we catch the fish.”

Asked to define consciousness — he is the founder and chairman of the David Lynch Foundation for Consciousness-based Education and World Peace — he said: “Without consciousness

we couldn’t exist, and if we didn’t exist, we wouldn’t know it.”

His definition of a good leader was “someone who inspires others” and asked to define peace, he said, “Real peace is not just the absence of war; it’s the absence of all negativity.”

And so it went, but just as his commencement Q&A was coming to a close, Lynch talked about long ago when he was in school: “I hated school,” he told the graduates. “I hated almost every minute in school. It was so boring. I don’t think I learned anything.”

Ah, but the people in the Golden Dome did not agree, and David Lynch took his seat to a standing ovation.

Andrew Rushing, valedictorian, summed up the collective consciousness of the people in the room when he said, “David Lynch is the king of cool.”

The students who received diplomas Saturday not only know they exist, they know what they’re going to do next.

Whatever they do, it’s going to be good.