

Looking Back

by Austin McGrath '84

Being at Hoosac recently, for the 2014 reunion and Margaret Towne's memorial, I saw how the school has touched so many lives. My recent visits leave me delighted with a future of the school that looks bright with plans of growth and continued improvements. There is something about Hoosac School that leaves the alumni with a rich indelible mark on our memories. We remember our experiences and often think back on the moments of our youth. These moments can sometimes make us laugh and sometimes make us cry, but they are the moments that shaped us into the people we are today.

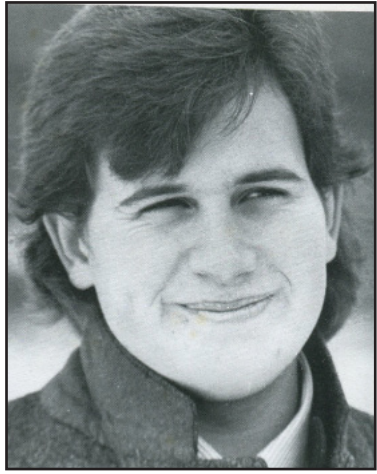
After thirty years should I begin this note with a funny story, give you

a history of my accomplishments and my failures while at Hoosac, or perhaps a "remember when?" The funny stories and the "remember whens" are so many I couldn't possibly choose, and the accomplishments and failures too personal to share in this forum. I will simply write an account. I knew the school and staff better than anyone in my day; I was there for five years and at least three summers working off tuition. I'm pretty sure I played every part in the Mummings play. The school was so small then that most of us had to play two sports a season so we could field a team. I do wish I had worked harder in English class; my first year in college I had to take "English as a Second Language," and I shudder to think where I would be without Google as I continue to stump the spell checker. I am truly sorry Mrs. Bugbee and Mrs. Cormier, I should have listened.

Thirty years ago the class of 1985 was comprised of nine students and was blessed to have Burgess Meredith '26 (arguably one of the most famous alum) as our speaker at graduation. I remember listening, but cannot recall exactly what he spoke about. I do remember feeling ready to take on the world, and when I turned to look back at the dining hall for what I thought was a final time, I saw Mr. Meredith give me a smile and a nod.

I have returned several times since graduating to see the Yule Log, and trust me when I say "it is never as good as when you were in it!" Apparently, I traumatized my son as I had him play a Sprite once. Every December I return to the Dining Hall in person, but more often in thought, looking to recapture the feeling of a carefree holiday. It seemed so silly back then, dressing in costumes and singing (even when I was repeatedly told to just mouth the words) how it becomes something embedded in you. Hoosac School and Yule Log week foster a true sense of camaraderie and unity in the community. There are the teachers who work so hard to really get through to us, the staff who make life so easy for us so we can develop our future paths, and the fellow students who help to shape our personalities. This combination of forces and the event are unparalleled.

This reflection reminds me how grateful I am to have experienced Hoosac School, and how the moments of my youth are embedded in a way unequalled to any other setting I have experienced. Although I am far from the path I had mapped out when leaving Hoosac, I have been graced with so much. My days at Hoosac truly shaped my life, and while writing this I discovered it was much more than just five years of my life.



1985

Fond Memories

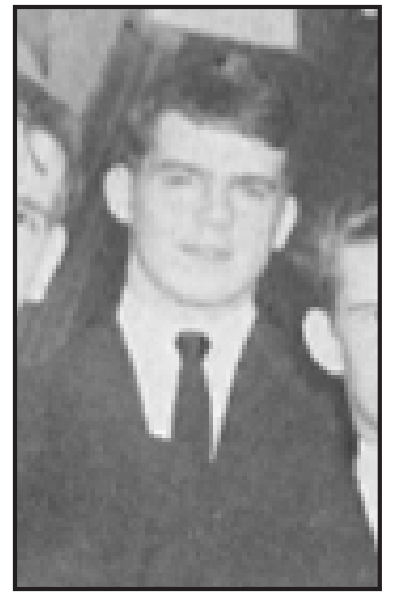
by Charles T. Barnes '65

One of my favorite memories is riding back to Hoosac from an away game with Father Blake in his red Daimler SP-250 on the Mass Pike. We had a nice conversation, but I noted that the speedometer was reading 105mph. I don't think Father Blake thought anything of it, but I was used to my family's 1959 Rambler station wagon which didn't do much over 75.



Another fond memory is the occasional Sunday afternoon ski trips to Prospect Mountain during the ski season.

Our favorite chaperone was the beloved coach Harry Dickie. He was one of the finest examples any young man could have possibly had and his good influence got many of us off to a good start.



Now & Then

Rich in Tradition - Old and New



This article was taken from the most recent issue of *Hoosac Today*, and is written by former Director of Development, Glenn W. Boynton.

Hoosac School's Owl Society was created in the summer of 2011. Newly installed Headmaster Dean Foster was, among his many tasks, creating a much stronger Annual Fund organization, and his staff and volunteers were busy seeking new ideas and strategies we might adopt for our own use. An idea which proved to be almost universal among schools and colleges was a leadership gift club which awarded special recognition and honor to donors who gave at the \$1,000 level and up. We learned that such clubs not only generated important sums of money, but also generated valuable advice and counsel. The main organizational problem was selecting a name which would be appreciated by the members and would relate to traditions of the school.

Luckily, Hoosac did not suffer this impediment! Our trusty Owl offered tradition, beauty, and a reminder of our "ancient" beginnings, our beautiful surroundings of the natural world, and perhaps a bit of mystery well suited to a new and important asset for Hoosac School. However, a surprise was in store for us! It seems everyone has his or her favorite breed of owl and there are many breeds. Many questioned why don't we choose a Great Horned or a Smokey or a Screech and on and on. We have a Barred Owl, very much a native of Hoosac (and Hoosick) as attested by the ornithology experts. In fact, we are told the first Dutch settlers saw the birds and asked their name from local Native Americans. Their reply was a deep throated "Hoosac" and so we became the "Valley of the Owls" and our names became forever linked.

May generous supporters continue to be as numerous as our owls. We honor and appreciate them!

- Glenn W. Boynton



Shown here is Mitchell Toro '07. Mitch is Hoosac's youngest member of the Owl Society, and also a member of the Board of Trustees.

Ambassador for Hoosac

by Francis Lavoie '10

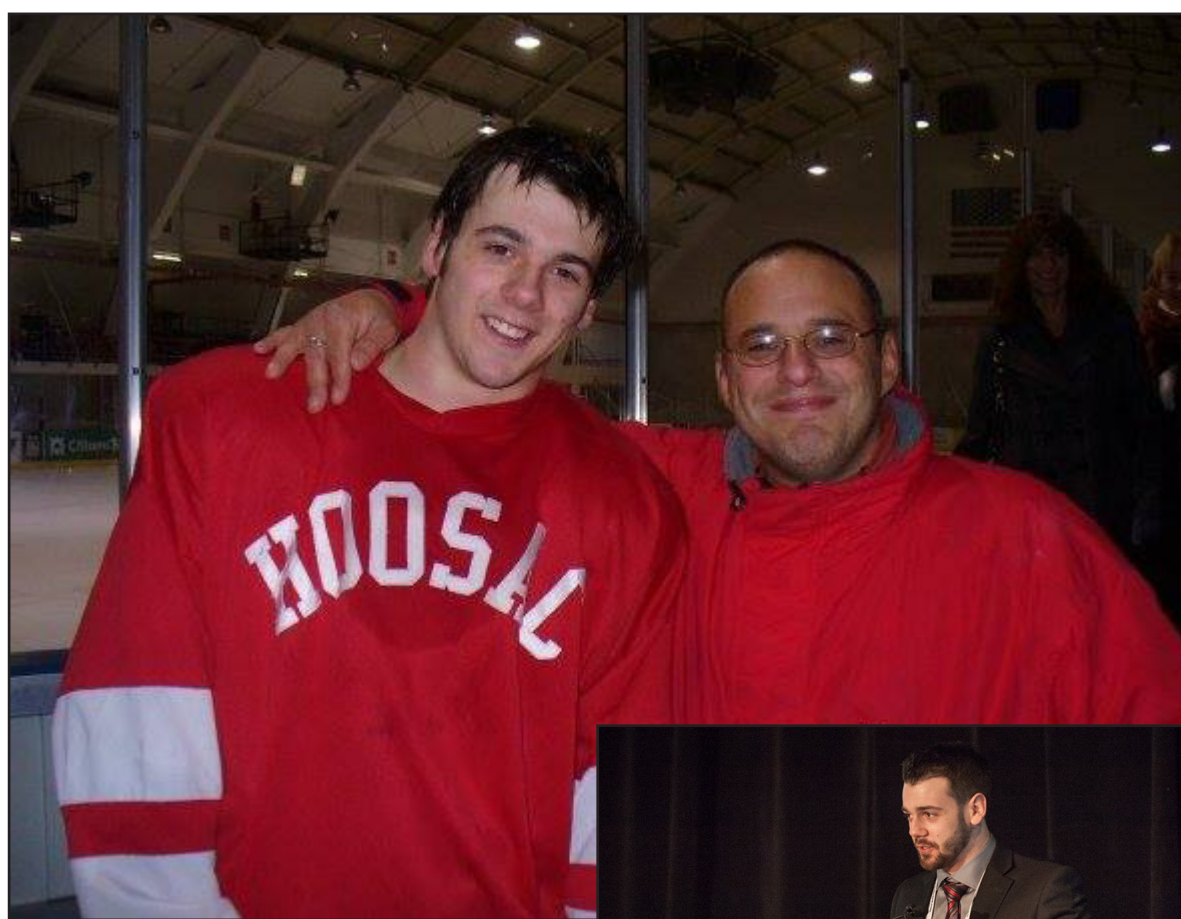
I was landing in Chicago for a business trip when I received a message from Mrs. Klein to ask me about my best memories from Hoosac. I was honored and touched but also a little bit confused on what should I write. I have so many memories - from my ethics class with Mr. Horne to all the hills Coach made us run during the two seasons I played hockey for the Varsity team.

Every time I look back on the two years I was at Hoosac, I can't help but smile. I remember every morning waking up, getting ready, walking down the hill from Pitt Mason to the dining room to get our "all you can eat" breakfast (students, you have no idea how much you will be missing that). Except for some mornings that I slept in too late, due to the late night watching TV or playing video games and eating way too much Bianca's pizza. Running down the slippery hill to get to chapel on time - I still remember today how nervous we were to be late, being so afraid to make the whole hockey team run hills.

At the end of the afternoon after a long day in class struggling with the language as an ESL student, I was finally on my way to

hockey practice. We would jump in the minibus with our equipment and drive for 45 minutes before getting to this very cold rink in the middle of nowhere. After a tough practice we would rush back to campus, making sure we were not late for dinner. After dinner, it was either homework or Xbox. . . you guys can guess what we did most of the time. I guess I would say my best memories were my day-to-day life on campus. My classmates, my teachers, and my teammates were like my family. I learned how to speak English, I travelled all over the country, including Europe, with my fellow teammates and so much more.

I was in a cab in Chicago on my way to a business meeting and I was thinking how grateful I am. I came to realize how much I owe to this great institution. How much my two years at Hoosac changed my life. Because of Hoosac School I learned a new language and made new friends that I learned so much from. Hoosac allowed me to get a higher education and an excellent job. I will be forever thankful. I hope each and every student will have the same experience I had and become great ambassadors for Hoosac.



Now & Then

What a close family we were, some 50 years ago

by Scott Von Stein '65

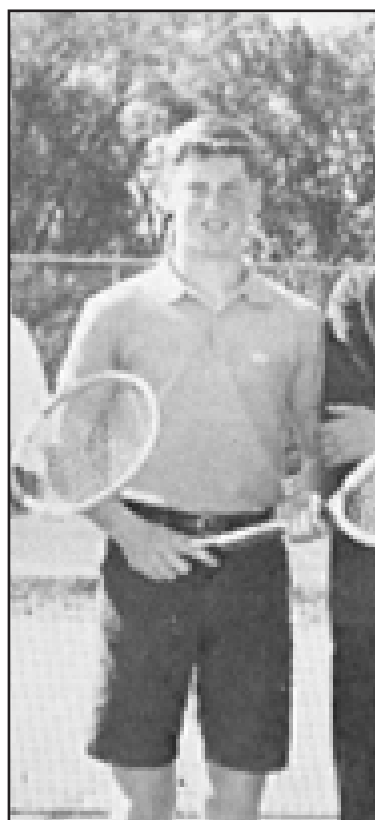
I attended Hoosac in 1962, graduating in 1965 – some 50 years ago today. I guess that makes me a true "time-traveler." After Hoosac, I graduated from the University of Colorado with a double major in International Relations & Skiing. My parents were "horrified, shocked" that I went west of the Hudson River! After Colorado, I earned an MBA and went further west – all the way to the 'left' coast, and settled in San Francisco.

What was it like some 50 years ago?

The 60s were tumultuous times. The Vietnam War was never-ending, and hugely unpopular. President Kennedy was assassinated. The Civil Rights movement as led by Martin Luther King and others, was gaining in importance and significance. Bob Dylan sang "The Times They Are-a-Changing" – we had no idea how right on he was. We all started to question everything. It was the start of the "Dawn of Aquarius" and the Protest Movement of the 60s. Making a huge social impact were musical groups like the Beatles, Rolling Stones, Supremes, Beach Boys – to name a few. The first three James Bond movies were released and the Ford Motor Company introduced "the Mustang" – everybody wanted one. And why not? Gas was only \$.30 a gallon!

Hoosac was half the size it is today. Father Blake and William Reifsnnyder were Headmaster and Assistant Headmaster respectively. Both in word and deed, they were impressive and memorable. I sang in the Choir, and in the Boar's Head. I was always Good King Wenceslas. The Dining Hall was completed I think in 1964. It seemed cavernous at the time and now it's getting a little small! What a close family we were. Every year we had a dance or two with girls' schools like Emma Willard & St. Agnes. I recall with laughter how they would blindly pair us off by age, grade, and I think, height. Believe me, it led to some very amusing "pairings." There was one pay phone for students in the back of Tibbits Hall (computers, internet or cell phones had yet to be invented!). On Saturday nights, Mr. Reifsnnyder rented movie classics like "On the Waterfront" with Marlon Brando, using a big mechanical projector and screen. We studied all of Shakespeare's works and memorized many famous sonnets. We had a strong choir, great music – we sang almost every day.

(Scott's story of his inspiring teacher, Mr. Reifsnnyder, will appear in the next Hoosac Today)



1965



2015

ALUMNI EDITION OWLET STAFF

Sherri Klein Nancy LaPorte

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Charles T. Barnes '65

W. Seton Ijams '75

Francis Lavoie '10

Girma Mamo '75

Austin McGrath '84

Andrew Sherman '93

Scott von Stein '65

Moving On

by Andrew Sherman '93

After graduating from Hoosac, I spent a summer at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts studying Shakespearean acting. This was followed by my return to Australia to enter university where I studied psychology and resumed formal Okinawan karate training with my original teacher. I had been studying with him and on my own, depending on my location, since I was 10 years old.

Karate was foundational in the formation of my thinking philosophically, spiritually, and later, as it pertained to my studies in psychology. It also played a causal role in my choice to study it and has remained a lens through which I filter other systems of thought, and am thereby able to more effectively apply them to my life.

After college, I became the

head instructor for a security company in Australia which specialized in licensing for close personal protection and threat assessment for large venues. I wrote and taught my own course in conflict management and resolution, and control and restraint techniques.

I took time off from this line of work to return to school to study medical lab science which had become an interest for me, and at the same time, and beyond, also spent many years as a teacher of English as a Second Language which eventually took me to Korea where I taught in English academies and in private homes. I returned to the US when my father, a college professor in Manhattan at the time, took ill and I had to come and care for him.

During this time, I was unable

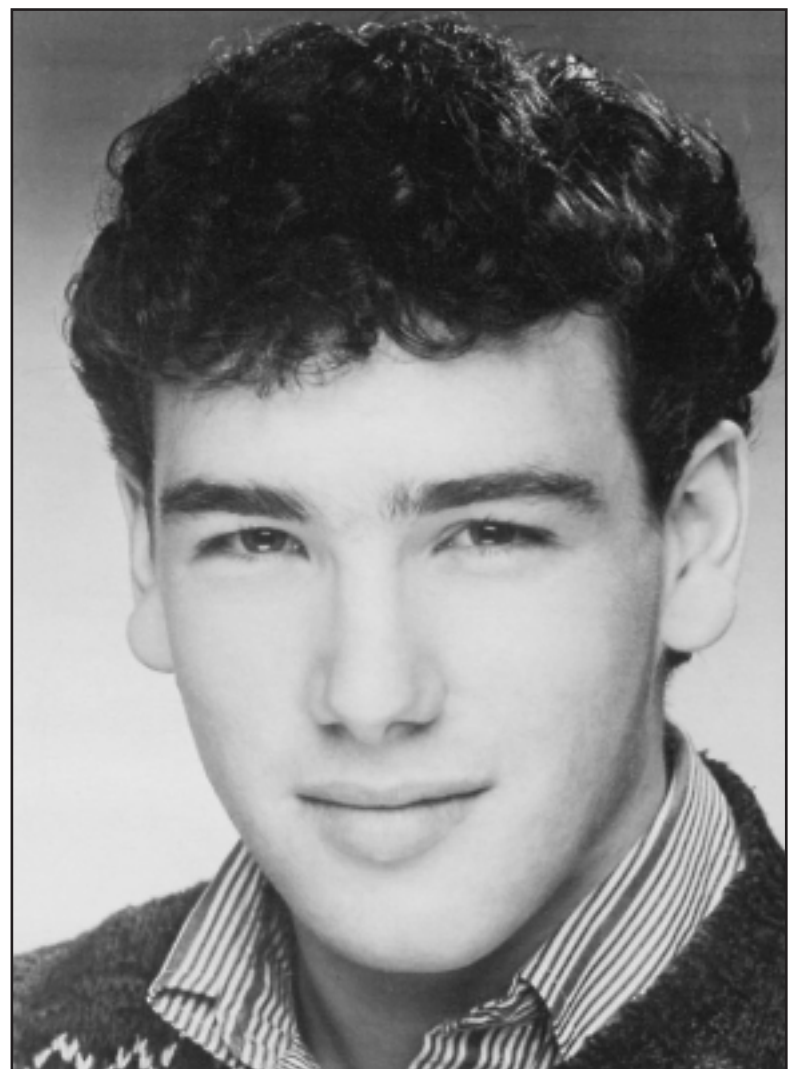
to work much of the time while caring for him, and so took a job as an EMT with the local rescue squad and worked in hospice in and around Bennington.

I am now ready to leave the US to return to Australia to study for my master's in Psych, and to forge a career as a psychologist there.

By far, my first love, though, has been my career as a Freemason. It has provided me with unparalleled learning, both as a student of philosophy and esoteric thought, and as one called upon to speak on such matters for those interested in learning about the deeper mysteries contained therein.



2015



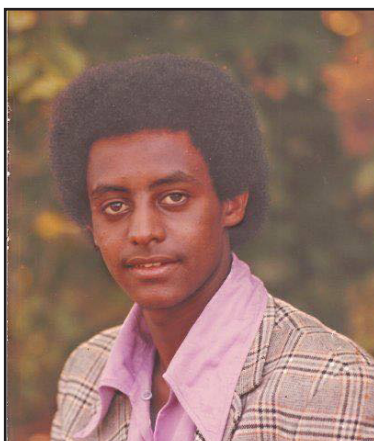
1993

40 Years

Girma Mamo '75 writes, "I live outside Boston, MA in a town called Randolph with my wife, Edwidge, of thirty-seven years. We have two kids; Jeremiah, age 30, and Grace, age 25. I work with Choice Hotels as an Auditor. I also volunteer to help out once a week at a local monastery.

My hobbies are film, music, sports, art, and photography.

I thank God, Almighty, for keeping me healthy and well, and if I get a chance, I will try to visit Hoosac. I hope all is going well there.



2014 &
1975

Happy 40th Class of '75

by W. Seton Ijams '75

I will always remember when the great Hollywood Director, Frank Capra, came to Hoosac during my senior year. I believe there is a picture somewhere of him lecturing in Lowenfisch Auditorium. Most people know of him from his iconic holiday film, "It's a Wonderful Life," with Jimmy Stewart. At Hoosac, we viewed "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington," also with Jimmy Stewart, who as a new Senator finds and fights corruption. Mr. Capra lectured bit and then we had a Q&A session after the film. Imagine having met such a legendary man at little Hoosac!

6TH FORM

