

Coming Back

by Henry Perez '76

I was so nervous about coming back. Forty years is a lifetime. Although most of the memories of my time there are still amazing, some weren't. Probably one of my greatest regrets in life was not being able to attend my commencement service in 1976. I was suspended two weeks prior to it. Over the years, I've shared that story. Most people think, "No big deal," but if you're a part of the Hoosac community, you totally get it. Hoosac was more than just a school, it was family.

When I walked into Tibbits Hall, I was flooded with feelings that I had buried long ago. In that moment I realized the emotional bond I had with my alma mater. Hoosac was not

just good for me, it was good to me. When I think about my time there, I think about the wonderful people God allowed into my life.

Ashton Crosby was my Headmaster. He was both a friend and a father to me. When my older brother was murdered during my junior year he embraced me, time and time again. I cried when his name was read during the Memorial Service. He taught me how to "enunciate," tie a bow tie, and literally gave me the tuxedo off his back one night. He asked me to take it. He said I would need it someday. He was right! He saw things in me that I didn't see in myself. Coming from the inner city of New York,

I didn't have much. My Hoosac family adopted me, and generously gave me more than what I needed, and definitely more than what I deserved. I learned love, acceptance, and forgiveness there; qualities that would mark my life forever, and values that I would pass down to my children. I returned to Hoosac to open arms and warm embraces. My daughter, Hannah, who kept prodding me to come back, joined me on the trip. Our 3,000-mile road trip from Los Angeles was well worth it. I have her to thank for my remarkable journey back. We built a memory together that will last us a lifetime. Thank you to all the faculty and staff for who you are, and what you do.

Deus Regit!



1976



2016

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Middle photo: Henry Perez '76 and his daughter, Hannah. Below: Neal Irwin '96 with Henry.



If Not For Hoosac

by William "Neal" Irwin '96

It had been 20 years since I had visited Hoosac. Returning with my family for Reunion 2016 was an amazing experience. I cannot tell you how many times I had sat down with my children watching "Harry Potter" and said that my school resembled the movie. Needless to say, my wife took endless pictures of Tibbits Hall to show her coworkers how it resembled the movie. My daughter was a little disappointed that the staircases did not move, but she loved it.

For me, returning to Hoosac after 20 years meant a whole lot more. Many of you know me. I was born in Hoosick Falls, one of the least international towns in the world. It was at Hoosac that I met people from around the world who opened my eyes to new cultures. It was there that I developed my love of travel, style, and international cuisine (Korean noodles anyone?). It was at Hoosac that I learned to play lacrosse, soccer, and hockey. It was at Hoosac that I made my best friends (big shout out to Nick Johnson '96, Masayuki Nagira '94, Ben Murray '94). That's right, after 20 years we all still get together!



Neal Irwin with his family at the 2016 Reunion.

If it had not been for Hoosac, I would not have played lacrosse for the Citadel Military college in the SEC for three years. If it were not for Hoosac, I would not have been able to climb the corporate ladder at 84 Lumber to international sales. As the international sales rep I was able to work with companies like China Construction (one of the world's

largest leading construction companies. If I had not learned to accept cultural differences I would not have been able to marry the love of my life, Ayse Irwin (Ayse is from Turkey) Without her I would not have my most precious possessions - my children, Sena and Atilla Irwin.

I know many of us had quite different experiences but we all have so much in common too! I hope that at the next reunion I can see all of you once more. Let's get together by the bonfire, tell some stories, and watch our children run around carefree. You cannot imagine how happy it will make you feel. Hope to see you and your families at the next reunion!

Top: Neal at the Reunion with Nick Johnson '96, Ben Moss '85, Headmaster Dean Foster, and (in back) Seton Ijams '75.

1996



A Curmudgeon's Tale

by Andy Olmsted '52

The old school had an aroma of Pine-Sol, food, and soft coal. I met Fr. Wood and went up to my assigned room. Lynwood Bronson '51 was my first roommate. He had tacked up "Wanted" posters and an invitation to a debutant ball on the walls. My mother was horrified! Our rooms were monastic cells on the second floor of Boutin Hall. The old dining hall was where we had the pageant. The Kremlin (building) wasn't used – we were never allowed to go in there.

It was second semester when I enrolled so I didn't go through 'new boy' week then, but I did the next fall, because I was still considered a 'new boy.' The older students made 'new boys' do things like wear outlandish costumes and do their work for them - anything they could get away with. We worked – mopped floors mostly – or helped "Messy Bessy" in the kitchen. She was a nice lady - got a big buy on potatoes one time, and we ate potatoes for lunch and dinner for quite a while.

Yule Log – I started out as Star of the East. The second year I made it into the big time and I was a torch-bearer /Elizabethan and in the sword dance. We had a guy named Frank Butcher who wrote most of the Yule Log music. He lived on campus, but worked at a bank in Troy and rode the bus back and forth every day. He used to be a choir master in England and prepared us for the Yule Log. We started practice right after Thanksgiving. Ivy garlands (yes, they were ivy) hung across the dining hall 'til Bleeze - some of the leaves would eventually fall off into our soup.

I was a Prefect during my second year, along with Frank Bulkley '53. Two prefects for 45 kids. Frank snuck one in on me my first year

when he said to me "Come on – let's go someplace – where'do ya want to go?" I replied "I sure would like to go see my girlfriend in Delmar." We hitchhiked 36 miles all the way to Delmar and I saw my girlfriend, but had to call my mother to get back to Hoosac – boy was she upset!

We had a student council – our job was to take care of certain guys, and it was tough because the first year we could smoke and the second year we couldn't, which was a problem, because most of those little scallions smoked! To conceal evidence of smoking they'd go so far as to put bleach on their fingers. We didn't wear knickers. We wore ties and jackets or sweaters. I learned to dress in 15 minutes. At graduation, somebody had a car – so we went to the Merry-Go-Round (a bar), which after that was closed for 90 days.

I was there three years – Vth Form, VIth Form, and a PG year because of math. I was co-captain of the soccer team with Keith Adams '54. Our arch-rival was Northfield Mt. Hermon School. If you could walk you played sports. My first year in baseball North Bennington beat us 89-2. I played center. The little guys all played - beating anybody back in those days was a big deal. We played Berkshire Farm, Albany Academy, Vanderheyden Hall, Buxton, Albany Home for Children. I got thrown out of one game for dangerous play, but we beat Albany Academy that day. We didn't have a gym. We practiced in the Armory and at Wood Flong (used to be a factory) in Hoosick Falls, and occasionally at the local high school.

I was married in All Saints Church by Fr. Wood. He came all the way from Boston, even though he was in the last stages of cancer.

He was quite a guy. He got all his old classmates to get together and buy the school a new station wagon. The only vehicle we had was an old truck, which we used for Saturday clean-up. The only one of us who could drive was Henry T.E. Coolidge '53.

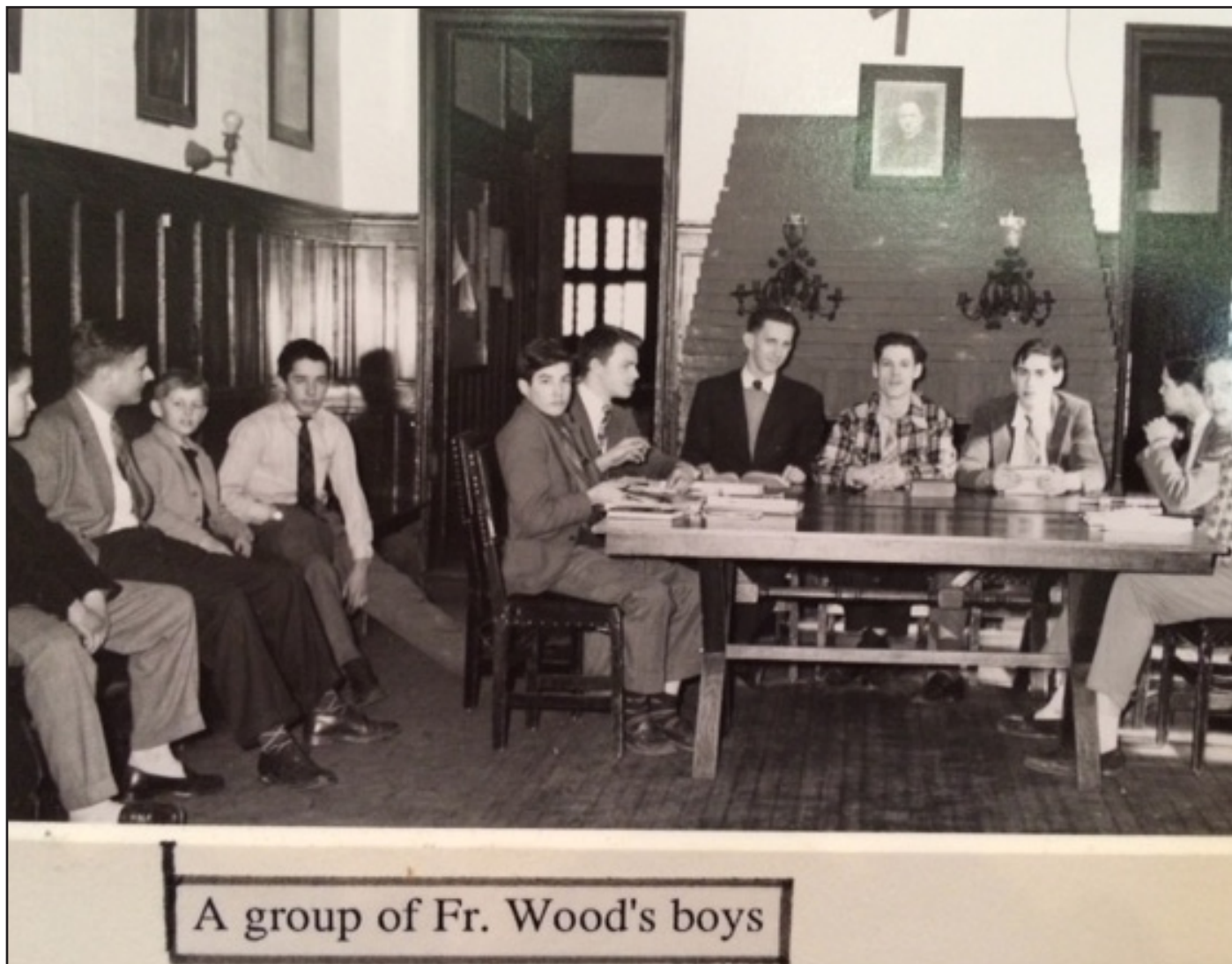
A few of us were moved to the 'new' campus location in the middle of the school year – so some kids lived there had to walk down to the 'old' campus and back. I didn't move up until my PG year – I had a private room in Wood Hall – it was great, and I was in charge of all the little kids. At that time the only buildings were the Tibbits Mansion, Wood Hall, Lewisohn by the pond, and the carriage house, which we used as a Chapel. Fr. Wood held mass at 7:00 a.m., Vespers at 5:00 p.m. All of us who were Episcopalian had to serve as altar boys. In this pic "A group of Wood boys" is Paul Nash '51, Dave Bliss '54, John Pulsifer '54. Oh yes I remember most everybody... John Austin '53, Burt Seller '52, Sid Cullingham '52, Danny Adams '51, Regnar Plesner '51, Huc Hauser '52, Henry T. E. Coolidge '53, who was my roommate when we moved up to the new school.

Top: All Saints Church in Hoosick, NY.

Middle: Andrew Lee Olmsted, Class of 1952

Below: A group of Fr. Wood's boys, listed above by Andy.

1952



Above: At the 125th celebration, Andy threw out the first pitch at the Antonian/Graftonian softball game with Headmaster Dean Foster.

Keep the Owl Pride in Your Heart

2016 Missionary Service Speech by Peter Bouchie '07

Good evening, For those of you don't know me my name is Peter Bouchie (class of 2007), and I used to be the king of this school.

I am honored and extremely grateful to the Hoosac Community in letting me speak to you today.

Every time I get the opportunity to come up to Hoosac I am overwhelmed with the memories and friends that I made here.

I remember my first day like it was yesterday. I was unpacking in my room when my roommate showed up. I had never met him before. All I knew was that he was from outside Boston, and was a goalie on the hockey team. Little did I know, this roommate would be the biggest character I had ever met in my life, and his Boston accent put mine to shame. That man's name was Blake Boyer ('07). The second person I met was a kid from Prince Edward Island, Canada, whose family farmed potatoes. His name was Andrew Stewart ('07). Andrew was the first of three Stewart brothers to graduate from Hoosac, the last one being William who will graduate tomorrow.

As many of you know Friday night dinner has a strict dress code, one that I was not aware of before walking to the Dining Hall. On the first Friday night I was approached by Mr. Ryan who asked me where my Hoosac blazer was. I told him I didn't have one yet. Sensing that I was bit nervous, he said, "Hold on," and ran to his car. He came back a few seconds later and handed me a blazer with the Hoosac insignia on it. "Here, try this one on." It was four sizes too big, but it didn't matter to me, I just wanted to fit in. Thanks to Mr. Ryan, he made sure my first Friday night dinner went smoothly. So, Ry guy, thanks for the jacket, bud, it's still too big, but it's still in my closet.

I learned many lessons throughout my year at Hoosac, one of them being discipline. I grew up very Catholic, going to church before school everyday with my family. It was certainly not my favorite activity to start the day. I was excited

at the thought of having a year away from my family, and getting to sleep in little bit longer in the morning before school. That all changed when I was awakened by the sound of the bell, and Mr Thompson banging on my door yelling at us to get up for Chapel. "Chapel?," I kept asking. I thought I got away from going to church when I came here - boy was I wrong! Every morning that bell would ring, and I would run into the shower, then run back to my room, getting dressed as fast as I could, and race down Pitt hill while trying to tie my tie - hoping I had shaved my face!

Another great lesson Hoosac taught was independence, I had never really left the city of Boston unless my father was driving to hockey games all throughout the East Coast. I had certainly never lived away from my family for a long period of time. Many students at Hoosac come from far away places. I realized when I got here that I lived the closest to home, and that it was three and a half hours away by car, certainly not an 18-hour plane ride.

Hoosac is a place where you learn to grow academically, and athletically, and gain a newly developed sense of independence for the future. When I moved on to college after my year at Hoosac, I saw many kids struggle with being on their own and taking the reigns of their independence as an adult. Hoosac helped me bridge the gap between high school and college in more ways than one.

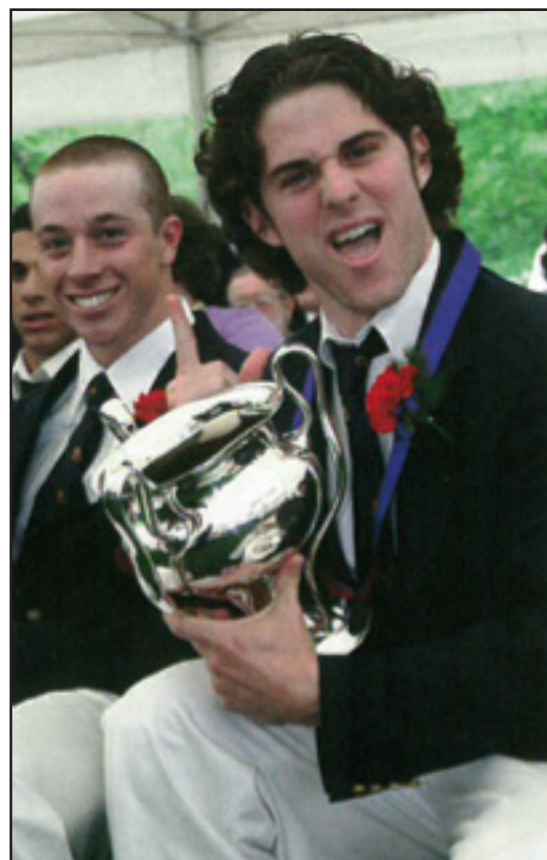
This is a special night here at Hoosac School. It's a night to reflect on a great year, and to be grateful for what you've accomplished, and the memories you've made. It's a night to appreciate all the hard work you did, and the early morning chapel services you attended, even if you were late a time or two like myself.

The friends you've made at Hoosac are from around the world and will last a lifetime, because the bond you make here is stronger than any bond I have come across in my life.

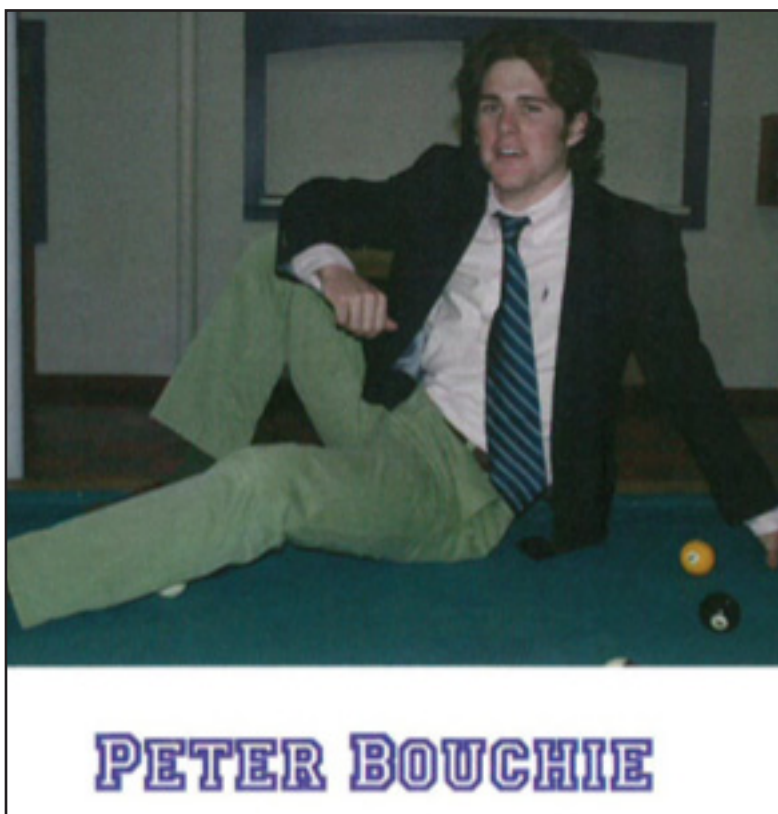
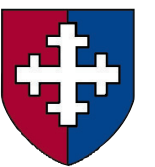
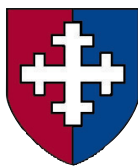
Keep the Owl pride in your heart forever. I know it has never left mine. Congratulations to the class of 2016. DEUS REGIT!



Blake delivering his Missionary Service speech to the class of 2016



Awards at Prize Day 2007!



Pete with his roommate, Blake Boyer '07 at graduation

