

## Hoosac Lessons

— By Ryan Shin '04 —



My name is Ryan Sunjae Shin, class of 2004. I spent the last two and 1/2 years in South Korea doing my military service. Now I am back in the States studying at Northwestern University, expecting to graduate in 2011.

My experience at Hoosac has given me a strong work ethic and trained me to learn new things quickly. I feel that the outstanding faculty has equipped me with the knowledge necessary to perform my best in my college career.

I especially enjoyed ESL class with Mr. Martin. With his extra care and tutoring, my confidence in pur-

suing further academics in the United States grew as my English improved exponentially each trimester.

In addition, Hoosac taught me "time management." Today I perform best under pressure, juggling numerous projects that must be completed within a set period of time. Playing on the Varsity soccer team, Varsity lacrosse, serving as a prefect, publishing the newspaper biweekly, editing the yearbook, participating in drama club, acting as a big brother, volunteering on weekends as a Reality Check leader, advising other students, and acting as a captain of the Graftonians, all while taking a full course load, has taught me to handle multiple commitments and will hopefully prove helpful in my future career.

Hoosac has helped me to possess willingness to learn, contain motivation to advance, manage time, and speak English. I wish to continue to demonstrate my academic potential and expand my intellectual horizons with the skill sets acquired from Hoosac.

— By Tommy Kim '07 —

My name is Jin Woo (Tommy) Kim, class of 2007. Hoosac was more than just a high school to me. I had teachers who did a lot more than just teach. Because there were only about 100 students, the relationship of students and teachers was more than I expected. We were like family. One little piece of advice from a teacher had a similar effect as that of my own parents. Having numbers of teenagers on campus always generated large and small issues. Some were good ones and some were bad ones, and there were always teach-

ers who tried to lead students to the right way. I saw sacrifice, love, and happiness in helping others. Consequently, my principle of life was settled based upon what I learned from those teachers. Hoosac made me a person who really wants to help others in all kinds of ways. Sacrifice and an attempt to understand others makes human society happy. This is a valuable lesson that I got from the mentors who worked for Hoosac.

— By Lisa Hughes '75 —

In the mid-70's, I spent two years at Hoosac, one of four "day" girls when the school was primarily a boys boarding school. During my time there I saw Dizzy Gillespie perform, heard Frank Capra talk about his movies, survived Operation Disaster, and sang Vivaldi's "Gloria." I held my own when I was the only girl in my class and on the recreational hockey rink. I discov-

ered that learning can be fun and I was taught everything from history to how to drive a tractor by Coach Dickie. I have become friends with schoolmates, teachers, and alumni from before and after my time at Hoosac, and with folks in the wide circle of friends of Hoosac. I am part of the Hoosac community, and the Hoosac community is part of me. Thanks, Hoosac.

## Passing of the Torch

— By Greg Banks '92—

Anyone who has had any past or current involvement with Hoosac would agree that some of the moments of most important learning did not happen in the classroom. When I was asked to write an article for the Owllet newsletter back in March, I pondered to myself about what I would share with the community as one of my best-learned moments at Hoosac.

I remember that when I became a Dining Hall Steward I learned my tasks from the current acting steward. When my time as steward was up, I, too, passed this information on to the next generation that was tak-

ing my place in the Dining Hall. I strongly believe in the gift of taking something that is learned and giving it back to the next generation. Today in my current life, I take this same principle and apply it to the graduate students that I teach, or when I instruct police officers on how to cope with the stress of an overwhelming traumatic event. Label it as passing the torch, or giving back, but either way I am a strong believer that we should take knowledge that we have and share it with another person. So I ask you to think about the person or the people that you have passed the torch to while being at Hoosac.



Each of us have taken part in this process and we encourage the current students at Hoosac to continue this tradition.

## What Hoosac Meant to Me

— By Jan Hadwen Hubbell '74 —



To say it was an exciting time, to be one of the first four girls at Hoosac School, wouldn't explain it by half. Not that any of us were boy crazy, it was just that things were changing, and it felt very much like we (the girls) were in the thick of it.

Hoosac opened so many doors for me that had previously been closed. I auditioned for and was awarded the female lead in many plays. With this new-found love and with the inspiration of Ashton Crosby, I then joined a summer stock theater company fresh out of Hoosac and was awarded the lead in many plays in college. During my adult life I have become part of theater companies and continued my interest in acting.

I was the editor of the Owllet newspaper, and the Owl yearbook, both jobs and interests that springboarded me into writing for the college newspaper and a writing career that spanned graduate school and ten years on Wall Street as a business writer. To this day, I am at work on my second novel and am a member of the Aspen Poet's Society. My poetry appears in the local newspaper. My two favorite teachers were my English instructors, Dan Verdery and Mr. Gilbert. It was in their classes that I became even more in-

trigued with writing and literature. I am now an English Professor at Colorado Mountain College in Aspen, and I often wonder how to make my classes as interesting as Dan did his while teaching "Huck Finn."

It was at Hoosac as a member of the boy's tennis team that my interest in tennis really took off and it became and has remained a huge part of my life. I played competitive tennis for many years, traveling weekly all over the state of New Jersey where I played in USTA leagues and won both singles and doubles tournaments for many years until retiring several years ago. As a member of the boys ski team I was able to advance my love of the sport. When I went to college, I raced in Division I, skiing both alpine and cross country events. Recently I completed my second season as a ski instructor in Aspen, CO. Hoosac was the beginning and nourished so many life-long loves that I owe a debt of gratitude which I will never forget.

## Looking Back

— By Kyle Shearer-Hardy '07 —

It seems like just yesterday when I was being dropped off at Hoosac and moving my bags into Pitt Mason Hall. I was in a new school, a completely different environment, and even a new country, and it all seemed very foreign to me. I was a little worried about being away from home for the first time, but little did I know I had three incredible years ahead of me at this little place in Hoosick, NY. A place that I came to love and cherish.

I realized very quickly that this was the first time in my life where I felt like my peers, my teachers, and my teammates were all a part of my family. The Hoosac community was a family away from home and this was evident in the classroom, in the dorms, and especially in the ice arena. Before I got to Hoosac there was always such a definitive barrier between my social/academic life and my hockey career, but the Hoosac "way of life" changed my outlook on both aspects and intertwined them into one. This was what allowed me to become the athlete I am today.

Not only was I competing for my teammates and coaches, but I quickly developed a sense of pride for the Hoosac community as a whole, which forced me to compete for my school. This is where and when I learned how badly I wanted to win and succeed. Every time I stepped on the ice I was playing for Hoosac and that is what turned every competition into a constant battle with a lot of pride on the line.

No longer was it my mother, father and siblings cheering me on in the stands, it was now the Hoosac community made up of students, teachers, alumnus, and staff who were all a part of my family. Every time I competed I felt it was my duty to represent my fellow Owls in the stands, as well as those from both past and future generations. These people were people I could rely on and trust in virtually all aspects of my life. This is what made Hoosac my home.

Now that we have all moved on with the knowledge and lessons we gained from our experiences at Hoo-



Kyle skating for the Hoosac Hockey Team.

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Francis Whitcomb '41



# The Gym Fire

— By Francis Whitcomb '41 —



Francis Whitcomb at Yule Log.

1934 was the year when the country hit the “depths of the Depression,” according to the older folks who lived thru it. By the fall of that year, Hoosac was struggling with its nose just above water. Thirty-eight boys came to Hoosac that fall, the lowest enrollment ever. The fact that income was not going to cover expenses became apparent to Fr. Whitcomb and the Board of Trustees. Changes in our school life became obvious to us that year. The varsity football squad had twelve players - total. That meant they played all season with one substitute. Many boys had to double up on work jobs, many of us had to practice at least three parts for the Yule Log, noise level was way down, and small classes were a plus.

Early in November, the days cool and nights nippy, the teachers had been paid twice, but money for November’s salary check did not exist. Other bills were coming due and the closing of the school looked imminent for the second time since 1930.

It was a Saturday at Hoosac. A beautiful day for hikes and a football game, and the Trustees were present for an afternoon meeting to decide whether to close Hoosac at Christmas time. As the meeting broke up, William Pitt Mason, the School treasurer, looked out the window at the gym building across the drive from Fr. Whitcomb’s study and said something like, “You know, we’re still paying for \$10,000 worth of insurance on the gym and we’re not using it.” They all filed into the dining room for supper as darkness fell.

Thirty minutes later, boys sitting at the table next to the window that looked out at the gym noticed a red glow in one of the gym windows. A boy quickly walked to the head table and said, “Father, we think the gym is on fire.”

Fr. Whitcomb said, “The whole school may very well go.” It almost did. The fire burned hot and fast. No saving the gym. Water was scarce, so it was used by the fire trucks to hose down the main buildings whenever a blaze or smoke appeared, and they did on Bouton Hall’s roof and on the side of the Squealery. Large, red paint blisters appeared on the building sides, but with buckets of water thrown by the older boys and faculty, and hosing by the firemen, the main building was saved. By 7 p.m., the roof and sides of the gym had collapsed in a great booming of sparks - burned to the ground, as school boys, faculty wives, and village people watched.

We hardly slept at all that night. Faculty and prefects took turns patrolling the buildings and ground with the night watchman until morning, as the smoking embers gradually cooled. In the morning, the ruins were still hot, smoking and covered by warped metal roofing.

During the Sunday Eucharist that morning, many prayers of thanksgiving were offered. The Trustees met later to decide that the school would continue. The \$10,000 insurance money saved Hoosac to live, thrive, and meet the challenges of future years.

Cause of the fire? Whoever started the fire in the gym furnace forgot to close the draft and the furnace and chimney got too hot. Surely that person was an instrument of the Lord; Hoosac had to continue to do His work in the world.

Other bills were coming due and the closing of the school looked imminent for the second time since 1930.

# The First ASADO

— By Francis Whitcomb '41 —

According to notes written in the log book by Fr. Whitcomb, “Owl Spring,” so named in 1933, is a large spring in Breese Hollow, some four miles by road from Hoosick, or about two miles by hiking over Walberg Hill, which is east of the Hoosick cemetery. It was deeded to Hoosac or Dr. Tibbits around 1900. The intention at the time was to bring the water to Hoosac School and the Village of Hoosick by a pipeline over Walberg. This was surveyed, the cost estimated, and money was raised for the purpose, but it never came about.

The spring is one of five in the vicinity delivering an inexhaustible supply of water. The water is soft, and not very cold. Owl Spring is one of the largest and most picturesque of them all.

It wasn’t until the early 30’s that Fr. Whitcomb had the idea of making the spring and land area into a retreat and recreational camp for the school and community. During the 30’s and early 40’s many groups of boys, teachers, parents, alumni, and friends spent day and many nights at the campu picnicking, trout fishing in the brook that flowed thru Breese Hollow, and hiking up Skipper Mountain. There were visits to the neighboring Cipperly Farm of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Cipperly and their 16 children who shared the waters of Owl Spring and where you could buy a quart of milk for supper for 5 cents, or, in the early spring make a visit to George Knapp’s up the road to buy big maple sugar cakes for 10 cents, and most of the time, learn the basics of camping and cooking, always glorying in the joyful appreciation of woods, hills, and streams.

On Mat 13, 1934 the first year of ASADO was held at Owl Spring. “Hicks” Graves officiated at the Argentine custom, when whole lambs are trussed up on sapling poles before an open fire. The very first one had been cooked the year before at the School campus.

It was Ascension Sunday. The whole school came for the feast. Most hiked over Walberg, a few had camped the night before. It was a beautiful day for devouring lamb, salad, rolls, pie, and cocoa. A tradition was established.



ASADO 2010 - Tug of War, egg toss and The Pyramid

# 1930 Style Discipline

— By Francis Whitcomb '41 —

The study hall was crowded with lower school boys, mostly, who were still on a “first day” high; not much homework to do, and just itching to misbehave. We waited, noisily, for a proctor to appear, but it soon became apparent that the VIth Former or teacher scheduled to keep us in order had forgotten, as none appeared. Whispering, giggling, and shuffling was increasing in decibels when SPLAT! A spitball hit the wall. More spitballs followed as teeth and saliva shaped strips of paper into missiles aimed at ducking, laughing targets. Noise increased as spitball combat was rising in intensity, when those by the door heard feet pounding up the stairs coming fast. Great

shushing and position readjustments were in process when the Senior Prefect burst thru the door. Breathing stopped - hearts kept pumping at combat intensity - all eyes watched as the Senior Prefect gazed at the mushy missiles on the floor, then into the eyes of many guilty boys.

“All right,” he said, in a voice booming with authority, “anyone who threw a spitball, raise your hand. You know who you are and so does everyone else, so own up!” He quickly wrote the names of those whose hands were raised, mine included. What’s going to happen? Here I was in trouble on my first day in school. What was Daddy going to say? Mom? The Rector’s son in

trouble already. The enormity of it made me squirm in my seat.

Authority acted swiftly. After our noon dinner, the Rector rang his bell for quiet, arose and announced that “the following students will report to the library in the Hollydome building, as soon as you are dismissed from the dining hall.” He then proceeded to read a long list of names, mine included. Being his son did not get my name excised from the list. I really didn’t expect it, but in my desperate, childish state, I cherished some sort of privileged reprieve. But no, a lesson had to be learned.

We went to the library in a straggling procession. Shortly, we heard

the prefects go by the door to a small classroom nearby. Quick glances meeting other eyes, fidgeting, scuffling of shoes on the floor. A prefect appeared at the doorway and called a name - top of the alphabet was first - I had a long wait.

In the silence of the library we could hear muffled voices coming from the classroom - a pause - WHACK! WHACK! WHACK! A paddle had made contact three times. Now we knew, punishment was to be swift and uncompromising.

The prefects worked thru the list of names. We who waited heard cries of ‘OW’ at times! Then it was my turn.

Soon, however, I caught on. I increased in wisdom and stature to eventually become a prefect. In my VIth Form I was appointed Senior Prefect and the paddle got passed into my hands to administer justice.

I don’t know when it was last used at Hoosac, but it had been a custom for years, instituted, I presume, by Dr. Tibbits. It was accepted by students, faculty, and parents. When I had the power to paddle, I did not enjoy it, but I never questioned its part in the system. There is no question that the fear of being paddled was a very effective deterrent.