



# The Owlet

*Hoosac School's Source for Alumni News and Nonsense*

## Appreciating a Disciplined Approach

*Aleksandar Kirilov '17*

Growing up in a small town in Bulgaria and then moving to Hoosac felt unreal. At first I felt I was in a movie, and I couldn't comprehend the direction my life had taken until several months after I arrived at Hoosac. Even now as I write this, I don't fully understand how I was so blessed to be part of the Owls family. Like many young adults, I did not fully appreciate the opportunities I was given until much later. The whole Hoosac experience, including warm meals, cozy classrooms and dormitories, exceptional teaching and coaching staff, was an amazing part of my life for which I am extremely grateful.

My first impression of Hoosac was that it is a special place. I had never heard of that type of preparatory school and at first, I was in shock. It took me a while to realize the unique nature of Hoosac, and how it would change the trajectory of my life. The older I get the more I realize the opportunities Hoosac School presents to its students, and my perception of the school and my experience there has changed as

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Aleksandar Kirilov said the move from Bulgaria to Hoosac was something straight out of a movie.

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I've grown and matured. While I was initially very impressed with the school, now I fully realize how wonderful Hoosac has been to me, especially the sense of community I experienced while there. Students attend Hoosac for a variety of reasons and from a number of diverse places, but, in my experience, all students are made to feel welcome and appreciated, regardless of their background.

I think the end of junior/beginning of senior year was that

moment for me when I took my first SAT. That's when I realized that soon I would be in the "real world" and if I wanted to succeed, I had to step up. I think going into my second year as a senior and officially deciding to pursue a bachelor's degree at a U.S. institution was the turning point in my Hoosac experience. Instead of resenting the early breakfast check-ins, I began appreciating them because they gave me an

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*Back Row Coach Mike Ryan, Qi Yao “Rocket” Li, Joshua Moncrieffe, Elijah Edgehill, Deniz Demiryo, Hunter Eqing, Joey Grasso, Lara Tebet* *Front Row Aleksander Kirilov, Jiachen “Scott” Liu, Seung Jun “Eric” Pai, Vasili Vamvakitis, Victor Miao*

*‘Appreciating a Disciplined Approach’ continued from front page*

opportunity to wake up early and get more things done during the day. The same happened with the mandatory study hours, which I later incorporated into my college routine, and I believe this helped me succeed as a college student. Funnily enough, I also believe “Lights Out” benefited me, but I came to realize that only when I had college workouts at 5:45 am and had to set my own sleep schedule.

The list of people that touched my heart at Hoosac is a lengthy one. Due the size of Hoosac, it was almost impossible not to meet everyone and to have a personal story about everyone on campus – students, faculty or staff. A few notable people who really left a mark in my development as an adult from the faculty/staff are Mr. Robichaud, Mr. Uhl, Coach Vuckovic, Nurse Klein and the Ward family. All of them were there to help me and guide me with day-to-day life, but they also helped me achieve my long-term goals. I wish I had been more intentional about making lasting connections with more of my fellow students, but I’m glad I got to cross paths with Nikoloz Bulashvili, Jorai Bart, and Noah Hentley.

I believe the main thing that Hoosac taught was discipline. I had to push myself to abide by the rules of the school, but the rules and structure helped me to understand that I have

to be disciplined and motivated to achieve my goals. While at Hoosac, my goal was to get to college in the U.S. on an athletic scholarship and to earn a degree. I did both of those things and more, including landing a full-time job right after college and looking toward a Master’s degree, because of the work ethic and discipline Hoosac instilled in me.

The constant support and encouragement I received from Hoosac faculty and staff was phenomenal, and the education I received gave me the confidence I needed to be bold and pursue my goals. Even now, I am proud of my alma mater and look back on my years at Hoosac with appreciation. Hoosac prepared me to be successful in life, both personally and professionally, and for that I am grateful.

*Following graduation, Aleksander attended William Carey University in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. He was a member of the college’s track and field team and earned a bachelor’s degree in Business Administration with a concentration in Accounting and later adding a minor in Computer Information Systems. He served on the coaching staff of the tennis team to assist with fitness and conditioning. By May of last year, Alexander began working at William Carey University as an International Admissions Counselor. This May, he’ll be attending the University of Southern Mississippi in pursuit of a Master’s in Business Administration.*



## ALUMNI NEWS IN BRIEF



**Jorge Mendo Robles '21** celebrates with his team after winning the NCAA National Championship for Connecticut College this past December.



**Jade Barrett '78** poses with Michael Lefty Curran, American Hockey Hall of Fame inductee and board member, Silver Medal Goalie for the USA in Sapporo, 1972 in Hoosac #5 signed and ready to be sent "home."

**Kevin McGuire '76** escaped the rigors of acting and winter in New York this January for the sunny beaches of Rio de Janeiro.



**Timothy Revell '06** was an avid hockey player while at Hoosac. Today he is a scholar in art history, lecturing on the importance of viewing art through the context of the period in which it was created. He recently began working as an art historian with the National Gallery in London.





**Michelle Garakian '98** married Antonio Guerroero this past November 19th in a private ceremony at Los Angeles City Hall. The couple's ceremony was conducted by the Honorable Eric Garcetti, Mayor of Los Angeles.

*Congratulations*



Romance was in the air at the Boar's Head & Yule Log pageant, when former faculty member **Vanessa Lewis** proposed to current faculty member **Taylor Purvis**.



**Kyle Hardy '07** and Katie MacLeod welcomed Hayden Rose Hardy into the world this winter.



**Steve Heinzerling '72** is looking forward to the All Class Reunion this June. He writes:

I've been contacting my classmates who will all be celebrating our 50th anniversary this year. Almost everyone has responded positively that they will likely attend. We'd like to give a shout out to the class of 71' who didn't get a reunion last year. This could turn out to be a very memorable event.

Looking forward to seeing many of you then,  
*Steve "Heinz"*

## Earn your wings!

The Owl Wings have arrived and are flying out to our Owl Society members! Gifts of \$1,000 or more over the course of a fiscal year enroll you automatically in our Owl Society. Wear your pin proudly and know your name will be included on a plaque adorning our Giving Wall at Tibbits Hall.



SAVE THE DATE • JUNE 10-12, 2022

Join us this June 10th thru the 12th for our Alumni Reunion weekend in the Valley of the Owl! See old friends, greet former and current faculty, and join our Board of Trustees in showcasing our progress over the past few years. We look forward to seeing you there!

**RSVP** visit [hoosac.org/alumni/reunion](http://hoosac.org/alumni/reunion)  
email us at [info@hoosac.org](mailto:info@hoosac.org)  
or call (518) 686-7331

*Please feel welcome to call with questions.*



**John Koier '63** on the left and **John Connell '65** on the right pose in front of the Underhill Post Office in Vermont, where they are working on a community project to inspire joy in others. See their story in the upcoming Spring edition of *Hoosac Today*.



# Transported back in time



Chris and Edith Wrzenski, parents of **Wanda Wrzenski Williams '84** and **Ward Wrzenski '86** wrote to Hoosac after watching the Boar's Head & Yule Log Pagaent this December online:

Tonight we watched the Yule Log Pageant live, on our big screen TV in our house in Mesa AZ. We were transported back to December 1983 and December 1985 when our children Wanda and Ward were part of the pageant in their senior years. The songs were the same and had us trying to sing them again.

The pageant took us back 38 years to the wonderful days of our growing family. We remember those days with tears of joy, as we give thanks to the then headmaster Sam Greene, and all the faculty that made such a difference in our children's lives. A few of those faculty and staff names we can still recall: Sam Greene, Maggie Towne, Ann Cormier, Anne Bugbee, Rick Taylor, Father Dugger, William, Hahn, Michael Bartosick, Christopher Cook, Mary Smith, Eva Burns, just to name a few.

It was the environment of Hoosac, more than the academic rigors, that shaped our children and their future. As a member of the local public school board and working for the Public School District at the time, it was a hard decision to send our children to Hoosac. We did it after meeting with Headmaster Sam Greene who felt their education at Hoosac, where the class sizes were under 20 students, would be a much better family-type educational experience than the local public schools. It was true!

It's good to know that Hoosac is still there affording a great education which teaches values integrity and honesty in addition to academic knowledge.

1984 Day Students



Seth Wickes, Wanda Wrzenski, Sue-Ellen Wright, Heather McGrath, Holly McGrath, Pamela Pedler, Roy Headwell, Austin McGrath, John Dooley. (Missing from this photo were Ward Wrzenski, Derrick Pierce, David Marker, and Matt Russell.)

1986 Sixth Formers



Front row from left Stephanie Zillessen, Leon Henry, Courtney Robinson; Second row from left Ward Wrzenski, Bryan Green, Kenji Nariai, Rob Neuman, Larry Waldman, Omar Warren; Back row from left Paul Peterson, Bill Goldstein, Sean Boles, John Dooley. (Missing from photo is Sean Brookins.)

# HOOSAC TODAY



## CELEBRATING OUR GLOBAL COMMUNITY

Faculty members Patricia Gomes Carneiro and Virginia Gilroy initiated a biweekly celebration of the cultures of Hoosac. Every other week a group of students representing one country will share in the food and cultural traditions, with dance, story, music and more! The most recent was the presentation of Brazil.

The menu and music provided was as close to being in Brazil as can be matched here in the United States. Feijoada and steak were key items as was the playing of traditional songs. Students presented to the whole school information about many of the various traditions and history of the country as well as their own personal favorite customs.



**Cecília Gurgel '25** is a currently enrolled student from Brazil. Her interests in environmentalism and sustainability have grown to include a newly established environmental club on campus as well as activism. "I am part of a project called Planta Natal, in which our main goal is to plant 20,000 trees in the next four years so we can help fight climate change. In addition, I am co-founder of a non-profit organization "Recycling for a Future" whose main objective is to help different companies in my city to adopt the idea of recycling." We celebrate Cecilia and her efforts in making a positive change in our local and global community.

The end of the Jester's rein was celebrated with the annual burning of the greens following the Breeze Banquet. Colton Foster represented the role well during this holiday season.

