

Silo Stories

By Alex Myers, Director

Let the daily tide leave some deposit on these pages, as it leaves sand and shells on the shore... This may be a calendar of the ebbs and flows of the soul; and on these sheets as a beach, the waves may cast up pearls and seaweed.

—Henry David Thoreau

When I sent out an email to alumni in early March announcing that the silo had to come down because it is structurally unsound and presents a safety issue, I ended the missive with a request for silo-related stories. I had no idea that I would receive such a vast and varied response! Alumni from the 1960/70s through the 2020s replied with short snippets and multi-page memories, many saying they hadn't thought about the silo for years, but the email jostled loose a vivid recollection. I was amused, delighted, and intrigued by all of these stories, and so thought I would share some of them with you as I – and all of us – grapple with what the silo has meant and what this moment of change might bring for the campus.

By far the most common memory was of screaming inside the silo. Several alumni recall this as a group event – a dorm, a class, a couple of friends would go inside and shout. Stress relief, emotional venting, anger management: the motivations varied, but many of you wrote in to say that the silo was a place of catharsis.

Dark, confined, concrete, your screams resounded and rebounded within that space. It was, as one alum put it, a place for “managing teenage angst.”

After screaming, music was the second most common response. Lots of memories of singing inside that space, but also playing guitar, playing saxophone, playing the violin, and one recollection of an entire band jamming inside there. A few folks recalled the silo as a spot where they could

sink into the silence and enjoy the feeling of enclosure, but most memories reveled in the acoustics and reverberation. Wrote one alum, the silo “amplified the sound and gave it a whole different dimension.”

Alongside these little snippets of memory, I received a couple of long-form submissions as well. One came in the form of a photocopy of an essay written for a Mountain School English class. Sent by an alum who hailed from an era before word processing, the pages were neatly hand-

written and described the process of bringing bags of trash from the dormitories and piling them up inside the silo. The essay gave rich detail to the pleasure of swinging the bags of garbage and letting them fly, as well as the worry about starting a trash avalanche that might bury you. It also described the subsequent chore of, when the silo got full, transferring all those bags into the back of a pick-up truck to be hauled off campus.

There were notes about murals painted on the inside. Midnight attempts to scale the concrete sides.

Even one full ascent and rope rappel from the top. Memories of sitting inside to have a private conversation with a friend, or to escape the full blast of the winter wind. And many, many thoughts about seeing the silo. Walking from a dorm and taking in that view, or driving onto campus for the first time and seeing the silo there. A benchmark, a sort



Watercolor created in 2023 by artist Tanya Libby from Chelsea, VT

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Alex Myers

Letter from the DIRECTOR

Spring Emergence

One of the delights of this first year as director has been getting to know the campus in all of its seasons – so much about the contours, access, and beauty of this place shifts depending on what is covered by leaves or snow, what is revealed by sun or dappled by shadow. Another delight is understanding the difference that these seasonal shifts have on the two semesters. Fall semester arrives on a campus bursting with growth – everything needs to be done, right now. Bring the crops in, get to the fields and hay, run up Garden Hill and drink in the autumn colors. And then, fall semester gets quiet – bare limbs and early dusk and cold nights that bring us inside, gather us together to savor each other’s company. Maybe, too, a first snow that dazzles, allows us a few zippy sled rides that bring on giddiness. A taste of winter before the season arrives in full force.

Spring semester, though, arrives to a campus thick with winter. The snow has already piled up and though the days are growing longer, they still feel gray and short. All the fields are blanketed and there’s a uniformity to the ground – one cannot tell where one pasture begins and another ends. The riotous wildflowers, the rock outcropping, the swampy patch – all the things that give this landscape texture and meaning – are hidden beneath the snow.

What I’m learning is how much the spring semester is about emergence. At the start of the term, we gave each student a map of campus, a little index-card sized thing. I watched them study it, find their dorms, the dining hall. After two weeks, almost all of them had explored the inner loop on skis or snowshoes. Climbed up Garden Hill. After three weeks, many of them had made it to the sugar house or clambered over the wall to the old town cemetery. But four weeks in, and I had a student ask me: Where is Derby Pond? With some surprise, I pointed. Right down there. And he replied, Where? I paused and took a moment to really look. I was pointing through the trees at a patch of snow that looked exactly the same as every other patch of snow. I knew there was a pond under that snow. The student had no idea.

The melt was gradual this spring – a slow March, with cold nights and some warm days, some fresh snowfall as well. Slowly, slowly, things began to emerge. Ledges shed their snow, the sunny slopes of Siberia revealed hunks of green-brown grass. Three flukish days early in April with temperatures in the 80s brought even the most towering plow drifts down to manageable size and, lo and behold,

Derby Pond emerged. First as a slushy spot, then as a gap of open water and finally, on the third hot day, only a little ice floe lingered.

The students rushed down for a polar plunge after wood crew and farm crew – hopping off of rocks or wading slowly in with many yelps and screams. I stood on the shore and watched. Marveling at how quickly the seasons shift. Marveling, too, at how students get to know this place. How things emerge – slowly or quickly, in pieces or altogether. And not just the landscape, but the people as well. Those first days of awkward conversation, of forced “getting to know you” talk, give way to shared intellectual inquiry in classes, to bonding during a long hike, to easy-going reflections over a dinner table. In these spaces, our real selves emerge, unfeigned, sometimes awkward, all at once or gradually.

In the last couple of weeks, even the shady hollows have given up their snow and ice. Spring peepers create a merry racket every evening. The student who asked me where Derby Pond was has forgotten he ever didn’t know its exact location. That’s the miracle of emergence. What was once hidden is now revealed, and the truth of it strikes us as simple and profound all at once. It was always meant to be this way.

I haven’t reached the end of my first spring semester yet, but I can sense the path that it will take. The students are already planting the first spring crops – the leeks and the spinach. The earth is cold beneath their fingers and damp. The sun feels good as it beams down on them; their skin still remembers winter’s chill. They will plant and they will weed, and they will walk away from this place into summer’s heat. Trusting that the sprouts will emerge, the stalks will rise, the crops will be tended. And just as the world tilts again, another semester will arrive to harvest what has been waiting for them.

Mountain School Trip to the Dartmouth College 51st Powwow

By Gabe Dixon s23

When I first arrived at the Dartmouth Powwow on May 13, I didn't really know what to expect. "What are Regalia, Indian tacos, and medicine dancers?" I would ask myself. But when I got to the Dartmouth Green, the ceremony was more powerful than I ever could have expected. People of several indigenous nations gathered to take part in religious prayer, dance, and song. The sound of the drums mesmerized me, in a way—I couldn't stop listening. It was an unforgettable experience, and I would recommend it to anyone at least once in their lifetimes.

Powwows were originally a way for indigenous nations to get together and celebrate after a hunting season or harvest. They've always been important for building community and culture among indigenous nations. And, above all, they're a whole lot of fun. Just look at us!



My brother Aaron (s23) and I took part in the potato dance. Anyone that wants to participate gets on the green space with a partner and puts a potato in between their heads. Then they have to dance along with the beat of the drums and, if they drop the potato, they're out. They make dancers stand on one foot, squat down and perform other movements that can dislodge the potato. It gets harder as the dance goes on. The last pair of dancers with a potato that hasn't fallen to the ground wins a \$250 gift card. It was intense!



Arts and Literature



A Cappella Performance in March

By Karen Obydol-Alexandre, French Teacher and DEIJ Support Coordinator

On the 13th night of March 2023, the Mountain School was rocked by the voices of Yale University's Whim 'n Rhythm. The most exciting part was to see and hear Camilla Ledezma fi17, right in front of us. When our spring '23 students in-

quired why she sings, she cited the work songs she heard and sang at the Mountain School while doing farm work. What a testament to Commons Work, Farm Day, farm crew and our farmers!

Camilla's song, called "Lullaby of Birdland" by George Shearing, was beautifully delivered in front of a crowd happy to be entertained by a graduate. We are fortunate to have such talented members of the Mountain School community willing to share their art and skills with us years after they leave Ver-shire.



Thank you, Whim 'n Rhythm and Camilla. Come back soon.

Book Donation from Gedakina

By Lynn Murphy, Chemistry Teacher and Abenaki Weaver and Jewelry Maker

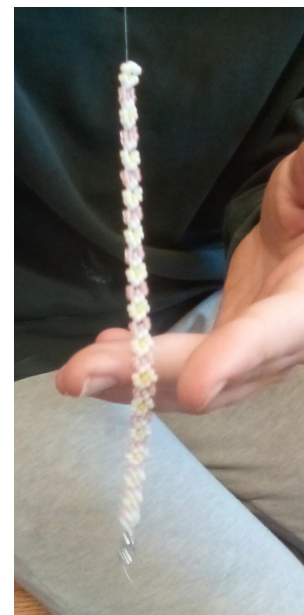


This semester we were gifted a book donation from an organization called Gedakina which is a non-profit organization here in Northern New England.

Gedakina provides resources and opportunities to Native American youth, women and their families across New England. Through their program called the One Shelf Project, they donate vetted books featuring Native American authors, culture and histories to schools who have an interest in providing cultural inclusivity to their students. These books will provide our students with a more expansive cultural exposure.

Weekend Workshops with Lynn Murphy

Following last semester's successful introduction of basket making with students, Lynn Murphy offered two days of workshops to teach market basket making. Lynn also offered jewelry making and bead weaving, with a few finished projects shown here.



Alumni in the Media

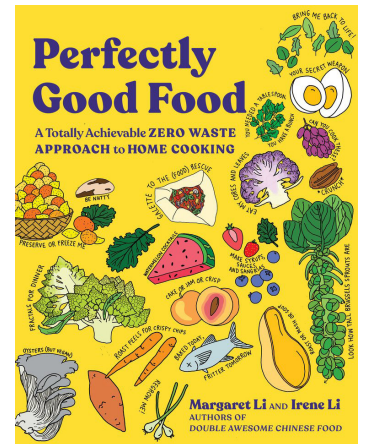
Perfectly Good Food

By Irene Li '07 and Margaret Li

Cook better. Save money.
Reduce Waste.

Here's a guide that will help you rescue everything in your fridge while getting a delicious dinner on the table quickly and easily. You'll be inspired to never waste good food again.

Perfectly Good Food combines professional know-how with the make-it-work approach of a home cook feeding a busy family. Irene and Margaret also wrote *Double Awesome Chinese Food*. (W.W. Norton & Company 2023)



Visit to the Ely Mine with Ed Hathaway of the EPA

In mid-April, Lynn and her five chemistry students went on a field trip for water testing at the old Ely Mine in West Fairlee.



Lynn Murphy with Katherine Herring, Lilli Means, Kiran Park, Paula Snyder, and Mattea Pipestem

Silo Stories Continued

of Vermont equivalent of a lighthouse, a beacon.

In gathering all of these memories, it strikes me that, in none of them does the silo play an agricultural role. Yet in our logo – and perhaps in our first encounter with the sight of the silo – we are inclined to think that it stands for farm. There's something entirely suitable and appropriate in that repurposing, something that is very quintessentially Mountain School. Adjusted, amended, reconfigured... used and loved and used again. So much that is here was something else before. I think that goes well with the personal experience of the Mountain School as well. The sense of transformation that so many students experience, the sense of coming as one thing, believing ourselves to be made for a certain mode, only to discover that we can contain something else entirely.

From the outside the silo seems so monolithic, built for a single purpose. Yet over the years this school has turned it into a multi-purpose vessel. What will take its place? For the time being, nothing. And that, too, seems suitable and right. A gap to mourn its passing, a gap to consider the possibilities.

Bear Selfies on a Motion Activated Camera



Lindsay Young '02 is a park ranger in Boulder, Colorado and the wildlife camera she set up for her work this November

ended up in a national news story in late January. Approximately 400 “bear selfies” were recorded after a curious black bear started investigating the camera. Of the 580 photos captured, about 400 were of one bear. “A black bear discovered a wildlife camera that we use to monitor wildlife across #Boulder open space,” wrote the park system. The social media posts Lindsay shared at work went viral and the curious bear became famous. NPR, the BBC, *The Colbert Report*, and *Saturday Night Live* mentioned the story. Information from the cameras help park staff, including fellow '02 grad Vijay Viswanathan, learn about wildlife behavior and protect crucial areas of their habitat.

Mountain School Llamas – Desmond and Nicki

By Gwynne Durham, Livestock Manager

On an especially hot day in August, as we were moving the sheep into the barn for sorting, Desmond sat down at the base of the final hill. No amount of coaxing could get him back on his feet, which was when I knew for sure that something was wrong. On the advice of his vet, we doused him with water (true to form, Desmond was highly offended!) and left food and water within easy reach, and around dusk, he felt well enough to stand and graze for a few hours. Then he sat back down and didn't get up again.

The next day the entire farm crew gathered around Desmond and carried him the final forty feet to the barn. For the next ten days a dedicated team of farmers, farm crew, and reunion attendees turned him every few hours, exercised his legs, and fed him as much of his special mash as he could eat. (In 2019, Desmond's health required having several teeth pulled; and while he lived the next three years pain-free, he also struggled to maintain weight, especially on pasture.)

I was in the DC airport waiting for a connecting flight back to Boston when Liana sent pictures that made it clear it was time to call the vet. I had been in Georgia visiting my father, who was in the final weeks of his own life, and whose care routine was remarkably similar to Desmond's. My flight back to Logan felt like the end of an era on every level.

Desmond was surrounded by well-wishers and wearing a crown of flowers when the vet came to ease him into the next world. But aside from everyone's sadness over his passing, there was the practical question of how to keep the sheep safe from coyotes until we could find a new guard llama. We made drastic changes to the rotational grazing plan, keeping the sheep out of Siberia entirely and maximizing the amount of time they spent grazing around central campus.

The Mountain School has bought a new guard llama twice before: once in the mid-nineties, when Gerry Coleman purchased Jeeter (swapped out a few years later for Nigel, who didn't have the bad habit of sitting on the lambs), and once in 2014, when we acquired Desmond. When Gerry found Jeeter and Nigel, owning a llama was all the rage; and even in 2014, when Desmond came to the Mountain School, it was still possible to find llamas for sale within a two- or three-hour drive from Vershire.

This time the search felt very different. Llama farms we knew and had used in the past were no longer in business. Others advertised llamas that were born in 1999 or 2000 (llamas in this climate typically live about 20 years), a pretty good indication that they were also no longer in operation. Google searches for "llamas for sale [insert state name]"



yielded mostly links to farms that may or may not once have had alpacas but that certainly didn't have llamas in 2022/23.

I was beginning to look as far away as Pennsylvania when an otherwise dead-end inquiry yielded the name of Matt Mason, a New Hampshire vet with connections to the llama breeding world who sometimes had llamas for sale himself. When I contacted Matt, he confirmed that llamas are exceedingly hard to find just now; and for that reason, he had already sold all the llamas he was planning to have available for the season. If we were interested in a female guardian, however, he might be willing to part with Nicki, an alert and personable 2.5-year-old who didn't

seem to be pregnant after breeding in October.

What Matt didn't know was that I had been looking for a female llama as far back as 2014, when Desmond came along with several years of guarding experience that changed the game. I drove to Salisbury, NH to meet Nicki,



who had grown up with sheep and already paced the perimeter of each new paddock they entered. She was healthy, curious, halter trained, and used to being handled. In short, she seemed like a perfect fit for the Mountain School farm.

Nicki arrived in Vershire on the same day as our first lambs. It's still early, of course, but all indications are that she's adjusting beautifully. She peers inquisitively into the faces of visitors to the barn and is unusually tolerant of attempts to pet her. Midway through lambing season she

jumped the divider that kept her and the pregnant ewes separated from the kindergarten area, and she's shown admirable patience with the lambs who clamber onto her back and jump off for fun. At the same time she's been stern with dogs who come into the barn, laser focused on the fox she spotted near the cemetery, and not above chasing off sheep who get overly familiar or try to steal her food.

At two and a half years old, Nicki still has a couple of years before she is full grown. I'm excited to see how she handles her first grazing season and relieved to know that—for now, at least—her dental health is excellent.



Photos opposite page-Desmond
Above - Desmond, on right- Nicki

Health and Wellness Update

By Olivia Oona LMSW, Mountain School Social Worker

There is some exciting news to share about the development of the health and wellness department here at the Mountain School. It is actually starting to feel like a full department with the addition of its newest member, a school nurse. We have hired this nurse to consult with us on some projects starting May 1 through summer 2023. Upon welcoming the fall '23 semester, the nurse will be full-time at TMS. This will allow a broader range of health services on campus offered to students. An additional benefit is the opportunity for better health training for faculty. I am also pleased to share that we, (the nurse and myself), will be collaborating to develop a comprehensive health and wellness curriculum for all students starting with fall 2023.

The work I do as a school social worker has a few guiding principles: develop preventative support structures, teach students how to care for themselves and advocate for their needs, and work in collaboration with adults to create environments that meet the needs of the whole adolescent. Over the last year and a half, a lot of my work has been focused on systems work; structuring the advisor program, creating and implementing the student support team (SST), working on how the Multi Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) framework looks and works at TMS, training faculty, and direct 1:1 work with students. It has been rewarding to be able to essentially build a health and wellness program from the ground up.

I am looking forward to now shifting my focus towards more direct work and time with students. Now that there will be a full-time nurse at TMS, they will take on the direct health needs of students, and I will be able to provide more mental wellness/mental health support for all students, and not just students in need/crisis. Within the traditional health curriculum there will be education around consent within all relationships, how to identify and manage stress/anxiety, healthy eating, personal tech hygiene for your mental health, healthy sleep habits, building relationships with yourself and others within a community, connecting to our many identities, and much more. The driving idea around this health curriculum is: teaching students to learn to know the mind, body, and their connection and to help build a better sense of self to guide how we live within communities. Collaborating with a school nurse on this is going to offer students a really rich curriculum that they can hopefully take with them after their time at the Mountain School.

If any of this work is resonating with you and you would like to become a part of this, please let me know at olivia.oona@mountainschool.org. I am always looking to network/make connections, offer guest speakers to students, or provide extra training to faculty.

School Nurse Helena Turner

Hi folks! I'm Helena Turner, NP. I'll be the school nurse at the Mountain School this coming academic year. I have visited a couple times in April and May and am excited to continue organizing and clarifying policies and procedures. I will also be identifying and developing necessary faculty trainings before school starts, in order to serve as a resource to coordinate medical care for students. I am really looking forward to co-teaching a Health & Wellness class with school social worker Olivia Oona.

After getting my undergrad degree at Bates College in neuroscience, I worked in character and outdoor education in mid-coast Maine for a couple of years before pursuing a nursing career. After nearly 7 years in Boston as a primary care provider at Fenway Health, I am delighted for this new opportunity to return to a woodsy environment and to contribute to and engage with deliberate community.

News From The TMS Kitchen



Snack-N-Dinners!

By Chef Jocelyn Hard
The running joke for the spring 2023 semester is that students can bake with me in the kitchen as long as they do not play “Hamilton”. Of course they find a way to get back at me by playing the

soundtrack to “Frozen.” At the highest volume.

Joking aside, students have been busy with many cooking projects. Some of my fondest memories include: In March, Eliza made a salty and sweet gluten- and dairy-free snack with rice cakes and chocolate. In April, Aaron experimented with garlic as he created a yummy tangy bbq sauce which topped Chef Billy’s meatloaf. Natalie, Tara, Alex, and Phoebe made Haitian Patties for the BIPOC dinner. They had the physically arduous task of rolling and laminating approximately 16 cups of flour and butter for the patty dough. They then stuffed each patty by hand with beef and cabbage. Katrina, one of our faculty, worked alongside them as she fried three hours worth of plantains. For Remy’s 17th birthday, she made flaky biscuits for strawberry shortcakes. Topped with whipped cream, of course! Also in April, Ian, Claire, Anna, Annie, Riley, Tara, and Alex made Chinese dumplings within only a few hours. They learned why the thinness of the dough matters, in addition to eating their delicious efforts afterward! In May, for Cinco de Mayo, Sasha and Daniela made two delicious salsas, Remy and Lili made Horchata, Millie chopped onions and shredded pork for carnitas, and Natalie made basmati rice and roasted sweet potatoes. Eliza made quick pickles from the spring cucumbers from TMS! I must not forget to mention Alex and Tara’s kimchi and rice noodle cooking and Natatie’s consistent assistance in the kitchen! I also want to thank the chef and dish crews for their hard work, team effort, spirit, and good conversations.



It has been a joy having everyone involved this semester.
- Chef Joss

Students as Motivators *By Chef Billy Brigtsen*

After wrapping up a kitchen project with Millie recently, I asked her what she wanted to cook or bake next, was there something that she always wanted to make but never had the space nor resources in the Mountain School kitchen to do it properly?

Maybe because it was too broad of a question, she deferred it to me: What have you been wanting to make? I replied with caneles, those little cakes baked in fluted molds lined with beeswax and butter that produce a crispy, almost brûlée-like exterior while maintaining an aerated, custardy interior. Canele de Bordeaux, the peasants’ rich reward! A most singular and resolute dessert! I continued my rambling: The custard is made two days in advance for the batter to develop and absorb the oils from the orange rind. The rum and vanilla flavors fit in like old friends and the beeswax imparts a delicate honey flavor. Millie was on board, and we made our plans of production and collaboration. Having recently bought the copper tin-lined molds (\$\$) but with no immediate plans to actually use them, motivation struck like lightning, thanks to Millie. The caneles came out better than I expected, and we agreed to make them again before the term ends.



Flippin’ eggs! *By Chef Matt Severson*

We strive to bring students into the kitchen to familiarize themselves with our day-to-day operations, with the hopes of them acquiring some new skills to bring back out into their world. It’s quite intentional on our part, and even sweeter when it’s student initiated. This semester I was interested in offering eggs cooked to order once a week on a day with “rolling” breakfast: get up and get after it or roll out of bed later and grab some granola quick. My idea was multifaceted: perhaps give them a reason to get up early (eggs only cooked until 9 AM!), have an opportunity to get to know them through their dietary choices (“Hmm! I wouldn’t have pegged you for a sunny side upper!”), and selfishly to dip my toe in the short order chef world for an hour and no longer!



Soon a few students came in asking to help flip eggs and take orders, and we began to work together. After a few weeks I found myself with more and more time on my hands during this shift. Not due to lack of enthusiasm for eggs your way, but because my volunteers took ownership of the meal and became competent filling everyone’s orders..... I was no longer needed! They have even developed that slightly abrasive-yet-loving sass that one might expect from their local diner. What a privilege to have an idea that you are excited about, let it loose and have others jump on board and see your vision out! Thanks, Natalie and Kal!

Community Service This Semester

Alex Myers, Director

After a few years of pandemic hiatus, one of the delights of spring semester has been the rejuvenation of community engagement. Early in the spring semester, the Mountain School co-sponsored the Snow-Shoe-A-Thon, which helped raise funds for Vershire's free summer camp for local kids. Mountain School students enjoyed helping set the course, cheering on participants, and serving food at the post-snowshoe celebration.



Invigorated by this experience, Mountain School students have been active in a couple of Westshire Elementary School classrooms this spring, helping with outdoor education, puzzles, board games, and recess activities as well as taking time to read and talk with the classes. Getting off campus for a little while gives Mountain Schoolers some welcome perspective and the chance to understand life in rural Vermont.



Later in the semester, we were able to welcome about forty local elementary school students to campus and bring them down to the sugar house to participate in maple sugaring. It was a wonderful day of Mountain School students hiking on the inner loop with the children, explaining the sugar making process, and getting to show the campus to the visitors.

In late May, Office Manager Holly Shore arranged for students to serve as umpires in some local little league baseball games. Students were eager to volunteer even though many professed to not knowing the rules of the game. They were assured this wouldn't be an impediment.



These experiences have truly added to this semester's understanding of what it means to know and care for a place.

Saying Goodbye to the TMS Silo

By Reggie Brown, Class of 1975, Conard Years

Most of you by now have heard that the silo at the Mountain School is being demolished due to its structural condition beyond repair and safety concerns. The silo isn't being utilized anymore. However, there was a day when this architectural monument was central to farm operations.

Since most of the recent semesters' students probably never had the joy of working a silo like so many of the Conard Years alumni, I'd like to share what little I know about silos in general, and memories of this silo specifically.

What is a silo?

In a general sense, a silo is a tall, cylindrical tower or pit used for storing grain, cement, or other bulk materials.

What is silage?

Silage is a type of animal feed that is made from green forage crops, such as grass, corn, or alfalfa, that are chopped and stored in airtight conditions to allow for fermentation. The fermentation process helps to preserve the forage and increase its nutritional value, making it a valuable source of feed for livestock, particularly cows and sheep.

This assumes that you have cows and sheep and the like and are feeding them from the silo rather than buying feed from the local feed store, co-op or Amazon.com.

To make silage, the forage crops are harvested at their optimal stage of growth and chopped into small pieces. The chopped forage is then packed tightly into a storage unit, such as a silo or bunker, and covered with a plastic sheet to prevent air from entering. The anaerobic conditions created by the airtight storage environment promote the growth of lactic acid bacteria, which



ferment the sugars in the forage and lower its pH, preserving it and reducing the growth of harmful bacteria.

Silage is a popular feed for livestock farmers because it is relatively easy and cost-effective to produce, has a long shelf life, and is highly nutritious. It is often used as a supplement to grazing, particularly during the winter months when fresh forage is scarce, and can help to maintain animal health and productivity.

The smells of the inside of a silo

The inside of a silo typically has a distinct smell that can vary depending on its contents and condition. If the silo is empty or has been recently cleaned, it may have a neutral odor. However, if it has been used to store grains or other agricultural products, the smell may be quite different.

The smell of the inside of a silo used to store grains can be earthy (that's being a bit too kind!), dusty, and slightly sweet. The scent can also be described as musty, with a hint of fermenting grains. This aroma is a result of the natural processes that occur when grains are stored for extended periods of time.

In addition to the natural scent of the stored grains, the inside of a silo may also have a hint of mold or mildew if the environment is humid or if the grains have been exposed to moisture. The odor of mold or mildew is typically unpleasant and can be described as damp, musty, and sometimes slightly sour.



Saying Goodbye to the TMS Silo - Continued

Overall, the inside of a silo has a unique smell that is closely associated with the storage of agricultural products, particularly grains.

In other words, the inside of the silo smelled like fecal matter!

How the silo became a special memory

The silo became a special memory for a variety of reasons. Here are some factors that may have contributed to this:

Personal experiences: The primary reason why the silo became a special memory is because of the personal experiences associated with it. My roommate and I used to play music inside there. He played guitar, and me, the harmonica. We used to meditate inside there as well. Some of the students threatened to jump from the top.

Emotional connections: Sometimes, a place becomes special because of the emotional connections you have with it. For example, the inside of the silo smelled a lot like my laundry basket, and maybe that is why I developed such an attachment to it.

Nostalgia: Nostalgia is a powerful emotion that can make places from the past feel special. People often associate happy memories with certain times or periods in their lives, and revisiting a place from that era can trigger nostalgia. The silo triggers great memories of the past, including the many hours that were spent inside and about the silo.

Unique characteristics: A place may become a special memory because of its unique characteristics, such as its natural beauty or architectural design.

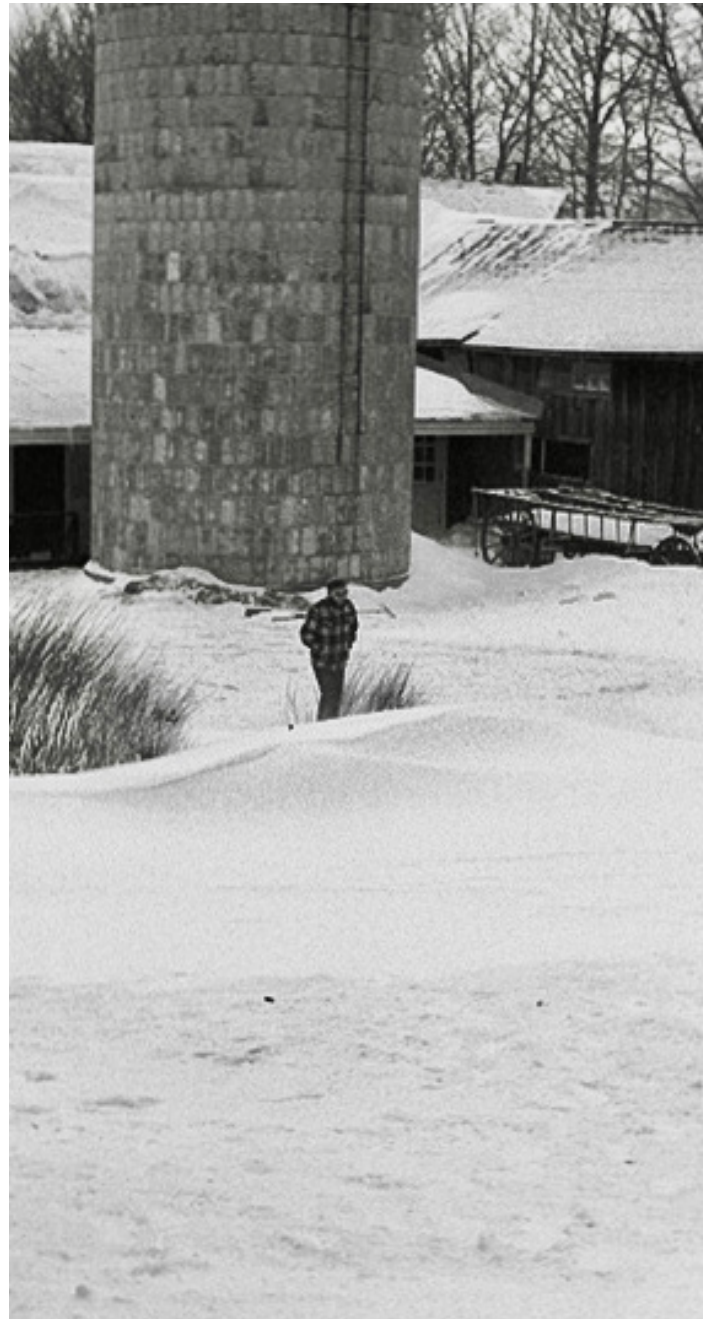
The design of a silo depends on its intended use and the type of material it will store. Generally speaking, silos are designed to safely store and protect materials such as grain, cement, coal, and other bulk solids.

Some common types of silo designs include concrete, steel, and wooden silos. Concrete and steel silos are often used for industrial applications where large quantities of material need to be stored for extended periods. Wooden silos were more commonly used in the past for agricultural purposes.

Regardless of the specific design, a silo typically consists of a cylindrical or rectangular structure with a hopper or cone-shaped bottom. The material is loaded into the top of the silo, where it is stored until it is needed. The design of the silo ensures that the stored material remains stable and does not settle or collapse, even under the weight of the material itself.

Historical significance: A place may become a special memory because of its historical significance. Certainly, this silo is a heritage site in my mind.

In summary, it will be a sad day to see the silo come down, but change is good. Looking at old photos of the silo will evoke memories and emotions that you may have forgotten. Take some time to look through old photo albums or digital files to help you remember significant TMS silo moments.



News from the Alumni Office-continued



More than 70 members of the Mountain School community attended Sunday brunch at Nido's Backyard in Oakland on April 30. Graduates from the first semester of fall 1984 all the way to newly accepted students for fall 2023 and spring 2024 were represented. The Alumni Committee, chaired by **Scott Kerns f95**, and Alex Myers, Annie Janeway, and Kareen Obydol-Alexandre from the Mountain School, were delighted to connect with the families and individuals demonstrating abundant appreciation for the Mountain School across the country.



Five members of the Alumni Committee spent that weekend in April in Oakland for the spring meeting. All four new members of the Committee participated, three on a remote platform – **Lily Zhou f03**, **Rob Johnston f93**, and **Lucia Perez f08**, along with **Alix Wozniak s09** in person. **Michael Glassman f03**, of Oakland, was a terrific host for the group, providing a blend of discussion, presentation, hiking, and social connection. Alex Myers shared his thoughts and plans with the group and Lucretia Witte provided an enrollment report via Zoom.



Key topics covered in Saturday's meeting were communication needs, a proposal for greater committee engagement in school governance, admissions, and fundraising outreach. The 40th anniversary of the school in 2024 was signaled as a significant milestone to rally around. Once-a-semester alumni Zoom sessions with Alex Myers will begin in the fall to increase communication from the school.

Washington, DC was the latest metropolitan area to feature an Alumni Committee and Mountain School hosted event for 50 people at Immigrant Food on May 24.

Resuming these regional gatherings has been a true highlight as we emerge from the pandemic and have the chance to introduce Alex Myers to the graduates, families, and new students who comprise our dynamic community.

We're happy to have established more connection, deepened interest, and updated contact information with the Conard era alumni, including identifying some volunteer leaders. As you will see in this edition of *Pearls and Seaweed*, we have some news from graduates in the earlier years of the Mountain School and an article by Reggie Brown, class of 1975.

Alumni parents of spring semester 2023 students, along with former faculty Jack and Sue Kruse and Kevin and Kristi Mattingly, enjoyed a great evening together at David and Nancy Grant's home in Strafford the night before graduation.



Left to right: **Josh Davis s91**, **Nancy Grant**, **Dave Park s91**, **Cale Jaffe s90**, **Rob Grant f01**, **Kristi Mattingly**, **David Grant**, **Molly Rauch s89**, **Ben Longstreth s88**, **Alex Grossman s91**, **Michael Malik f87**, **Sue Kruse**, **Jack Kruse**, **Tara Kini s91**, **Jess McDaniel f91**, **Heidi Ellis s89**, **Kevin Mattingly**. Missing – **Ratanak Srey f92**.



From the Admissions Desk

By Lucretia Witte, Director of Admissions

I'm writing on April 24, looking out on a rainy hilltop behind the English classroom, hoping the weather dries out before I join the students for three nights at the new property on Solo two days from now. As you know, no one at the Mountain School has just one job, and it's been my pleasure to serve the school as admissions director for the past nine months, and also as a member of the Outdoor Program team, coordinator of the Social Media chore, and occasional Friday night reflection leader, when I'm on duty.

Joining TMS this past summer, I was eager to understand what the Mountain School is from those who have lived it. My two siblings attended the Island School and I taught for a semester at Swiss Semester, so I understand how transformative a semester program can be. But what sets the Mountain School apart, I wondered, from the many wonderful experiences that can be had around the world if you are an academically motivated and well-informed sophomore?

To answer this question, I started by immersing myself in student life on campus, learning from our fall '22 students about where they came from, why they chose to come here, and what was resonating with them most about their experiences. Then, I began reaching out to alumni, learning from the Alumni Committee about their experiences and why they volunteer, and connecting with fall '21 and spring '22 students about how the experience impacted them in not-too-distant hindsight. Their input helped me develop a basic understanding of the TMS student: a bright, thoughtful person who wants to live in community with others. A person who loves nature, who cares about reflecting, sharing, and listening on issues of identity, who wants to know a place and take care of it, who wants to reach beyond the self to the common good.

In what seemed like no time at all, it was time to begin the annual ritual of admissions visits. During COVID, many visits had to shift to online and there was a lot of turnover of faculty at some sending schools we've worked with. So, I began by reaching out to all TMS alumni in education, and then all the schools we visited last year, and finally, all the schools who had a returned alum attending their senior year. In all, we did 70 school-based info sessions across the country and 26 online info sessions. A little shoutout to all the recent alums who helped me:

Fall '21 Alums: Miles Urban, Abram Litvak, Jade Pierce, Minelle Jeddy, Oliver Carneal, Ruby Melroy, Samantha Pelayo, Amalia Guzman, Ronan O'Flaherty
Spring '22 Alums: Lucy Baker, Angelina Ochoa, Andres Martinez, Jaiden-Sage Reyes-Yanogacio, Eleanor Keohane, Cameron O'Rourke, Sebastian Wolff Urzua, Jacob Mulliken, Karina Lomeli

Given the unpredictability of admissions and enrollment during COVID, we weren't really sure what to expect from this year. In July of 2022 we had 39 students enrolled for fall, and were able to accept one more, bringing our total number to 40. For spring, we had 35 students enrolled, and were able to accept 8 more, bringing our total to 43. Though 100 students had been accepted back in March of 2022, there was a lower-than-typical yield, with a number of students feeling like they wanted to see out their high

school experience at home after missing some of it during COVID, and stiffer competition from other semester programs and early college options. While in many ways it was nice to have a little more space on campus, we knew that for the overall sustainability of the school, it was important to get the message out and fill our classes.

All in all, we received 430 inquiries this year, followed by 190 completed applications. We had 19 faculty members volunteer to be members of the admissions committee, reading applications and rating each one on a rubric that included academic preparedness, sense of identity, desire to know a place and take care of it, and desire to reach beyond the self toward the common good. I read all 190 applications, and met with each admissions reader to compare notes. We used our reviews to generate a list of students to whom we wanted to extend an offer.

On the financial aid side, I worked with previous director of admissions Katrina Monzón and business manager Aron Michalski. We used parent financial statements generated from Blackbaud Financial services to determine a need-based scholarship for each family who applied. Families were notified of their admissions decisions and financial aid packages on March 3, 2023. We accepted 113 students, expecting a yield of about 75%. Instead, our yield rate was 85%, and we have 48 students coming both semesters next year. In all, we had about \$1m of demonstrated need in our applicant pool, \$850k of that within our accepted students pool, and we were able to offer about \$700k in need-based scholarships.

Our class composition is, as in the past, significantly female and significantly from the northeast. Here's a little snapshot of our incoming students' composition:

- 40 non-white, 56 white
- 65 female, 25 male, 6 non-binary
- 69 full pay, 11 full scholarship, 16 partial scholarship
- 44 public school, 52 private school
- 3 international, 7 midwest, 52 northeast, 15 south, 21 west coast

We intend to see how this slightly larger class size works with our campus and our program, knowing that more students won't necessarily require more teachers and can potentially extend this experience to a few more students each year.

Now that we've enrolled our fall '23 and spring '24 class, we are focused on preparing our incoming students for a successful experience once they arrive. We hosted an online meet and greet for each semester, followed by an info session on course selection with Emily Cass, Math Coordinator, teachers and two student panelists, a session on advising, health and wellness with school social worker Olivia Oona. We'll take a brief pause for Solo and then continue our orientation series with conversations about Housing and Packing (starring Gwynne and Bruce), Inclusion (starring Kareen, Gwynne and Olivia) and a Student Panel (starring five of our current students.) We also held an on-campus discussion of admissions-related topics in the Action Plan, to discuss where progress has been made and where the work needs to continue.

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Going forward for next year, we intend to continue our outreach to schools who have sent students in recent years, focusing on our returned alumni to be the spokespeople for TMS. We intend to continue building new relationships in the south, midwest and mountain regions, where we historically have had very few applicants. We will revise our application a bit to really give students a chance to speak to our mission, and we will pilot alumni interviews (reach out to admissions@mountainschool.org if you would like to be an interviewer!)

Feel free to reach out with any comments or suggestions. I can't wait to hear from you!

