

## Chemistry and the Copper Mines

By Jordan Fields, Chemistry Teacher, Dartmouth Graduate Student (Earth Sciences)

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

In our chemistry class this spring, seven intrepid students and I endeavored to translate natural phenomena into a common language. In this pursuit, we followed the arc of geologic time. On the first day of class I asked students to name the most important chemical equation in the world. The usual suspects emerged – photosynthesis, aerobic respiration – as well as some intriguing anthropic suggestions, such as the burning of fossil fuels. I argued that the most important chemical equation was the following:



Water and carbon dioxide combine to produce carbonic acid. In this suggestion I sent our class all the way back to the beginning – deep geologic time. The creation of carbonic acid, I argued, is more fundamental to life on earth than any other process as it is responsible for the weathering of rocks and the subsequent release of mineral nutrients essential to earth's first organisms 4 billion years ago. We are all products of ancient rocks, I concluded. Simple. Stunning. My class seemed less impressed.

And yet, I persisted. We traced these mineral nutrients through soils by studying cation exchange capacity with the help of the Mountain School's farm manager, Liana Horster, and through the atmosphere via the nitrogen cycle. We raced through geologic time, skipping a few billion years here and there, until we arrived on the doorstep of the common era: the Anthropocene. Geologic eras are named for dominant processes acting on the climate and the environment in that chapter of earth's history. Take, for example, the Cryogenian, a period approximately 700 million years ago when the earth is believed to have been entirely covered by glaciers. Hence the Ancient Greek name, cryo, 'cold', genesis, 'birth'. Thus,

the Anthropocene is so named because humans are now the dominant force acting on the climate and the environment.

Our class examined evidence of the Anthropocene by visiting two abandoned copper mines near the Mountain School: the Ely Mine in South Vershire and the Elizabeth Mine in South Strafford. The Elizabeth Mine, once the largest copper mine in America, is an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Superfund site. A twenty-year remediation of the site was wrapped up in 2020. The Ely Mine has yet to be remediated. By comparing the water chemistry at the two mines, our class sought to answer the questions: what is the lasting effect of mining on water quality? And, is there a possibility for restoration?

While it is true that the weathering of rocks is the progenitor of life on earth, it turns out there can be too much of a good thing. The weathering of iron and sulfur-rich minerals exposed by mining operations often result in acid mine drainage (AMD), acidic water filled with dangerous heavy metals sent downstream. To determine whether AMD was an issue at these long-abandoned Vermont mines, we recorded pH (acidity) levels and copper content at locations along the streams draining the sites. At the Ely Mine, we found extremely acidic water closest the mine: pH 2.8. To put that value in perspective, that is 10,000 times more acidic than water that comes out of your tap at home. At that site, the copper content was ~3.5 parts per million (ppm), seventeen times greater than the lethal limit for native Brook Trout of 0.2 ppm. As we walked downstream, the class documented steadily decreasing acidity and decreasing copper content, though when Ely Brook entered the larger Schoolhouse Brook, the water was still ~500 times more acidic than the water upstream of the confluence.



Jordan conducting stream research for his graduate work

continued on page 5



**Alden Smith**



# Letter from the D I R E C T O R

## Leaving the Island

On August 28, 2011, Hurricane Irene pounded Vermont, dropping eleven inches of rain in one day. For several hours on that Sunday, we were an island: flooded waterways blocked every route to and from our campus. All the students had safely arrived the previous day; even though we were isolated from the rest of the world, we were together.

It's rare for a disaster to cut us off like that, though it's happened a few times. In 2017 a line of straight-line thunderstorms toppled trees into every roadway around campus, making us (again) unreachable for a short while. Neighbors quickly cleared the roads. Something I'll miss about living in Vershire: lots of folks here know how to use chainsaws, run snowplows, even replace culverts.

These skills did not help in 2020, however, when COVID managed to cut us off again—in longer-lasting, impactful ways. Our four pandemic semester groups have gotten here and stayed here, but have been more isolated than ever. In fall 2020 and spring 2021, students could not leave and families could not visit. Even now that vaccination and COVID fatigue has made visiting possible, most stay away. Perhaps the long months of withdrawal have become habit.

Some alumni have started to trickle back in, and it's been like a tonic. In a semester school, where students arrive and leave after only a few months, graduates provide important continuity. Over my twenty-three years here, I've relied on reunions and other campus visitors to keep me steady. Given that this was our last year, Missy and I have especially appreciated those who have made it to campus lately.

In mid-March, exactly two years after the onset of the pandemic, Ellie and Steve Backer (f99, my first semester) traveled from Brooklyn to stay with us. The students had just left for spring break, and I had looked forward to this visit for months. Since last summer, the Backers have been navigating the kind of family loss that is impossible to endure, and yet they have been enduring. They had decided, after an invitation from us, to travel to Vermont and help us make maple syrup.

The day after their arrival here, our campus was cut off again. The students had just left on spring break, thank goodness. The disaster this time? Mud. The roads always become muddy during

spring thaw, but no one in Vershire could remember a Mud Season this extreme. For four days, it was impossible to drive to and from campus. Our son's 11th birthday party was cancelled, and children living on dirt roads had to walk a mile or two to pavement to catch the bus to school. Steve, Ellie, and their daughter Mabel made it the last two miles to campus thanks to Jack Kruse and his truck. Steve didn't know Jack, who was on sabbatical in fall 1999. No matter. If you know Jack, you know this is true: he can't help but help people who need the help.

The roads worsened and soon became impassable even for Jack's truck. But the Smiths and Backers had everything we needed: good food, good company, good shelter. Hilary and Andy Dahlstrom, who taught here during Steve's semester, parked at the town center and walked the last mile and a half to campus to visit us all. We emptied all the buckets in the sugar house on a warm Saturday afternoon. We sat around telling stories as if we had all the time in the world.



**A memorable walk in the mud**

At the end of the Backer's long weekend getaway, the roads had not improved. So on the morning of March 21st, Sue and Jack Kruse, Ida Kruse, her husband Matt, and I carried the Backer's belongings down Vershire Center Road toward their car, which was parked on pavement. We had a blast. It was friends getting together, the village showing up in a time of need. It was everything I've loved about my two plus decades at the Mountain School. The hard truth is that there is probably no way to rescue Steve and Ellie from all they're going through this year. Still, it felt good to haul their suitcases and bags down Vershire Center Road. All I've wanted to do this year is lift them up and help them find their footing.

Graduates, please come back to campus. No matter what changes in personnel and infrastructure you find here over the years, I'm confident you will recognize the Mountain School. Garden Hill, Pine Top, the sugar bush, and Back Brook will remain. The faculty will change with time, and your own memories of the place will only improve with age.



## A Conversation with Alex Myers, the new Mountain School Director and Adra Raine, Co-Director of Curriculum and English Teacher

**Adra:** Alex, you are a dedicated and accomplished writer as well as educator: Can you tell us a bit about the relationship between these two careers? And/or why they are one and the same career!

**Alex:** I started writing because I was teaching writing... One summer, I spent a lot of time revising the way that I approached my practices in the classroom and that led me to consider whether the advice I was giving about writing was any good. So I started writing myself. At first, I was writing personal essays and then short stories and then novels (I still write the occasional essay). The more that I wrote, the more I thought about writing and reading and, really, just words. The more attention I paid to the ways in which the associations and connotations we have with words are deeply personal and emotional. The more I wrote, the more I thought about story and how each of us has ingested a lot of stories, digested some of them, and often haven't had the chance to create and generate our own stories. Realizing this made me want to get my students writing more, writing more personal stuff, writing more stories, and engaging with personal creation on the page. At the time, I worked at a school that was focused on "analytical writing" in the traditional mode of thesis and evidence. I'm not casting any shade on that; it's valuable. But it isn't the only thing.

**Adra:** I love that. I don't know if it's rare, or just not as frequently discussed, but I feel like that trajectory--a writing practice that emerges out of a teaching practice--is such a reversal of what I usually learn about writer-educators. I also love your articulation of how important stories are -- emphasis on the plural. To carry forward your metaphor, I am thinking now about how what we ingest affects our gut; and that, in turn, our gut affects how we digest; such that, as you empower students to write their own stories, from the gut, how the stories they've encountered affect what is possible in their own writing. Over the past couple of years, students and faculty at the Mountain School have made a deep dive into our small, browsing library catalog with the goal of making room on the shelves for new titles, guided by the idea that the unique texts students might ingest and digest during their four months on campus have transformative potential for the microbiomes of their imaginations (have I overextended this metaphor?). We've solicited recommendations from current students, faculty and Mountain School alumnx, and the results have been very exciting--as you'll soon see! If you could recommend three book titles that we should order right away, what would they be, and why?

**Alex:** I'm good with extending the digestion metaphor all the way to compost! One book I think would be neat to add (if you don't already have it) is *Charity and Sylvia* by Rachel Cleves. It's nonfiction, a neat little monograph about a same-sex couple in early America and how they negotiated their lives together. It takes place in Vermont and New Hampshire and tells the story of average folks - not extraordinary in any way. It's a quiet little piece that comments on gender, place, social customs, and how

to carve out a life for oneself. Another I'd suggest is *A Psalm for the Wild-Built* by Becky Chambers. She's a favorite author of mine; I'd recommend lots of hers. This one is the first in a series called *Monk & Robot* and it's about... a monk and a robot. Set on another planet, concerning topics of wilderness, society, construction of identity. It features a non-binary main character, charming technological innovations, new ideas on community structure and robots. Lastly, I'd put *Gordo* by Jaime Cortez on there. We are getting ready to have our ninth-grade students read this next year and it is so good. It's a short story collection that has body, gender, immigration, belonging at its heart. The voice is amazing.



Alex Myers

**Adra:** How are your cats feeling about the move to Derby House?

**Alex:** We haven't told them yet. I am anticipating that one of them will be bouncing around making friends with anyone who enters and the other will spend two months under the bed.

**Adra:** We have a similar cat dynamic in our house. Well, we are all looking forward to meeting your cats - on their own terms and timelines. As I think about you settling into your new home on campus, that phrase "anyone who enters" catches my attention. One of the things I've learned being a teacher at the Mountain School is that students and faculty come to know each other more deeply in this village of ~75 individuals than they might in another educational context. I find joy (alongside the challenge) in this blurring between people's public and private personae. What do you imagine enjoying your students and colleagues coming to know about you that a larger, less immersive live-workplace might otherwise not open the space for? How do you imagine this blurring impacts student learning, i.e., what is compelling about this aspect of the Mountain School's educational model?

**Alex:** I've taught at both day and boarding schools and the reason I gravitate towards residential schools is for just these sort of "blurry" interactions. I enjoy the unexpected teaching moments (like showing a student how to iron a dress shirt) and how that can be totally reciprocal (I've gotten excellent culinary lessons from students who've joined me in the kitchen). The more we live together, the more we respect each other, learn to disagree with each other and still cohabit, figure out how to negotiate our own needs and boundaries within that community. The smaller the spaces are - and Derby house seems like a delightfully small size - the more necessary it is to be all together and also figure out how to be all together and still separate pieces. I'm never sure what the right term is ... community? Collective? Family? Neigh

borhood? Something needs to capture that we are all individuals and many of us have been raised in a culture that promotes/champions individuality but we also exist in systems. (Okay, that last thought is kind of tangential but it has really been on my mind lately)

**Adra:** In a recent conversation, we were talking about the high value of “place-based” education at the Mountain School, and you said something that I loved about how “place” can be conceived as not only a geographical location with which we interact, but also a description of something a group of people make together. Can you put that back into your words, and say more?!

**Alex:** I think of both “place” and “community” as verbs. Something that we do and make together. They have to be engaged with and inhabited in an active manner. Place isn’t just there. Community doesn’t simply exist. To use a personal anecdote: When I was a kid, I went to a summer camp that was near my house. I loved it. (I won’t bore you with stories of hikes and campfires and archery... but I loved it.) When I hit middle school, my mother declared that I needed to get a job, and so I ended up working for this camp - my first task was to open up all the cabins and clean them to get them ready for the campers to arrive. I remember going into the cabin that I’d lived in the previous summer (Robins!), the site of so many of my favorite memories with friends. I opened up the door and felt... just this vast emptiness. It wasn’t merely the piles of mouse turds, or the musty odor of a long winter. It was the lack, the void, the way this place existed in my mind as one of laughter and conversation and tears and song... and without that, it was a different place entirely. So I imagine something similar is true about the Mountain School; it’s got buildings and land and all that concrete “real” stuff, but that isn’t the true place at all.

**Adra:** Yes to all of that! I think the active verbing part of making the Mountain School a place and a community shows up in every part of the program and is shaped, too, by the different ways each student journeys through it alongside and with one another. Some students are drawn to the Mountain School primarily for the farming and food systems education, some for the outdoor experience and solo, some for the reputation of its academics and a different kind of classroom learning, some for the social experience of living in an interdependent community. Most students come to the Mountain School for some unique combination of all of the above (among other reasons). What is most exciting to me is when students draw connections across all these parts of our program. What lines of connection have you drawn across these areas of learning and experience in your own life?

**Alex:** Part of considering “verbs” is asking how this can be an active part of my life. There have been times when I’ve felt like place is very passive, particularly a natural place. Like the real business of my life occurs in some educational/business/constructed space and that I go to the woods for “release” (I think that’s Emerson or Thoreau or someone). But that’s not the dynamic I want, and I think that the Mountain School in its ideal form renders place active - that we don’t seek “solace” in nature but that we are in it. Engaged. That natural place is interactive and present - through farming, through eating, through forestry, through learning, through hiking and so on. There’s not “here” and “there.”

**Adra:** One more question, going big picture...Considering what you’ve articulated above about the dynamic kinds of learning and rendering you value, in your view, what makes the Mountain School program most relevant today, in both the wider context of education in the U.S. and the even wider context of the world crises young people are facing in their lifetimes?

**Alex:** In this pandemic moment, when we’ve been sequestered and quarantined and isolated, the chance to live in a small, intentional community - a place where you can’t avoid interaction with others - feels especially important. I think many of us need to relearn (learn) how to live with each other and with ourselves in the context of others. Speaking for myself, I’ve had so much time on the screen, so much time alone or only with immediate family in the past two years that stepping into community feels like exactly the sort of education I need and that many of the students I work with need: how do we do this together? What’s particular about the Mountain School as a place is not just the intimacy of living and studying together but also working together and figuring out why and how that work matters. At a lot of schools, it can feel transactional: going to this school to get good grades to make networks to go to college to succeed in business. The Mountain School is not about “next” - it’s about “now.” I write that and I also think, of course it is about “next” too, but next in the sense of how to I build on this, not what is this going to get me. The now of the Mountain School is food, is energy, is nature and how we nurture ourselves, each other, and these systems.



# Chemistry Continued

At the restored Elizabeth Mine, the story was much different: the class recorded near-neutral (pH 7) water throughout the mine site. The success of the recovery was put in context when we compared our data collected this spring to pH and copper values collected annually since 2001 by Professor Xiahong Feng of Dartmouth College. Waters at the Elizabeth Mine were once as acidic as those documented at the Ely Mine.

So, was the remediation successful? I asked the students. Their response was a resounding, “Yes!”. All right, but was it necessary? I complicated the answer by reminding the students of our long geologic arc to this penultimate moment in our class. In the context of geologic time, the mine would have been naturally remediated: eventually the minerals weathering to produce acidic water would be used up. Hardy plant species would slowly return, filtering the water. Soils would grow deeper, further isolating the mine tailings (waste rock material) that cause acid mine drainage. Trout, or some future species like them, would return. Our most pressing challenges, like climate change, might be viewed in the same way – the earth will be ok, in the end.

Herein lay the ultimate lesson. No, not a descent into nihilism. Quite the opposite: the restoration was necessary because the act of remediation repairs our own broken relationships with the land. Through restoration, we are offered the opportunity to reconnect and re-engage with the land in a way that benefits not only the land itself, but our own spirit. We are the ultimate recipients of ecological restoration. These ideas come via Robin Wall-Kimmerer’s seminal work *Braiding Sweetgrass*, in which she writes:

*We restore the land and the land restores us.*

Chemistry is one language of the environment that we can use to understand the changes that have taken place throughout earth’s history. It is also a language that can be used in the present to direct actions that will dictate the future health of the land, and by small extension, ourselves. We are all products of ancient rocks, after all.



Jordan and his dog Wendell moving wood for a chemical reaction experiment involving fire on March 16



# SNOWSHOE-A-THON

By Karen Obydol-Alexandre, Co-Director of Justice, Equity, and Inclusion and French Teacher

When the Mountain School community was told about the possibility of participating in this year's March snowshoe-a-thon, there was a positive response. Let's be honest, students were excited to leave campus and see other faces. With Kit's and \*VerShare's help, students flagged the route. Mountain School provided some of the food: our famous chili and brownies served up by students to community participants.



Kathy Hooke, Pat Barnes and the faculty who were present and the more than dozen visiting graduates from Dartmouth, Williams, and Middlebury colleges.

Due to Covid, the course was a bit different than usual. It started at the Town Hall. The showshoers climbed a steep hill, stopped at a generous neighbor's yard for a cup of hot chocolate, and—here's the change—came back down the same way, arriving triumphantly where they departed, welcomed by a mixed team of current and recent Mountain Schoolers and community friends. This event was also a time to reconnect with local residents we hadn't seen in more than two years and refresh our traditional participation in this yearly fundraiser. Hopefully, next year, Covid will be behind us, and we will be able to repeat this important collaboration, and possibly see the return of face painting or photobooth stations.

Students who participated had one extra piece of clothing to pack: a stylish purple and white T-shirt courtesy of the Hookees that commemorates that day.

\*VerShare is a grassroots organization created in 1998 to enhance a spirit of community involvement, foster economic development, and contribute to projects benefitting the residents of Vershire.



On the day of the event, 40 students went down to Ver-shire Center. There were items from the MIV (Made in Vershire) shop for sale, a beautiful ice skating rink and different kinds of games for children. Vershire was hap-pe.ning! On top of all this fun, there was a mini Mountain School reunion on the side between





# Comprehensive Mental Health Curriculum Using the Model of Multi Tier Systems of Support

By Olivia Oona, Mental Health Counselor and Health Liaison

Before I dive into a more in-depth explanation of what comprehensive mental health at the Mountain School is turning into for next year, I want to stop and celebrate the work that we have done so far. In 2020 the action plan was created by students and educators as a way to address systemic injustice at the Mountain School and lay out a better foundation to create goals to meet in upcoming years. Part of this plan included a section on mental health. The school needed to hire someone to work full-time for the 2021-22 school year and this person would take on the advising system, assist with dorm assignments and dorm culture, and provide counseling services on campus. All of these things have happened and been actively worked on this year! Amazing work and many thanks to those involved in any and all parts of creating this position and activity working to keep this action plan on the forefront of the work we do here at the Mountain School.

Here we are at the end of the first year that the Mountain School has provided professional mental health support on campus. In many ways, this year was a huge learning experience for me of navigating what the Mountain School is and how mental health support is structured at a semester school. There was no blueprint for me to look at. It was a lot of trial and error and doing my best to meet the students where they were at at any given moment. Having a background in social work has allowed me to bring a systemic perspective to this work. Questions I have asked myself include, how do we move more effectively towards a preventative model of mental health and away from crisis management? There is always going to be some need for crisis management, but how do we provide wrap-around support that offers some form of prevention when it comes to mental health?

My thoughts on this include a combination of a mental health curriculum and something called Multi Tiered systems of Support (MTSS). MTSS is a scaffolded, 3 tier approach to address student support. Tier 1 refers to evidence-informed, schoolwide prevention programs and practices that teach positive behaviors, promote social emotional development, and ensure a school climate conducive to learning. Tier 2 refers to the use of evidence-informed, small group, and short-term interventions focused on improving early academic and social-emotional engagement. Tier 3 interventions involve intensive individualized strategies that are implemented for extended periods of time.

So how would this look within the context of the Mountain School? Creating a mental health curriculum that weaves itself into the flow of the semester and is provided to all students

would serve as Tier 1. This includes a way to teach students about consent, boundaries, tools that increase mental wellness/self-regulation, and how this fits into the Mountain School and beyond. Tier 2 offers a space for students to work in collaboration in small groups or for short periods of time 1:1 to get a bit more of a tailored support that builds off of the things taught in tier 1. Tier 3 is for direct counseling services provided by me.

The cool part of this model is that in a lot of ways this is the direction we are already going, and I am just putting a formal name to it (MTSS). There is an opportunity here to think about mental health in the context of education. Mental health and wellness can be taught just like any other thing we teach in education, like math, science, and languages. The Mountain School has so many opportunities to do this as an added bonus to what we already do here. This curriculum can reach all students if implemented through morning meeting, Friday night activities, office hours, and Wednesday school meeting. This is how I will provide wraparound services as a form of Tier 1. Tier 2 was happening even before I got here through affinity spaces, advisor groups, and dorm groups. These are small group spaces that are more focused and tailored to the support needed. I hope to think of other affinity groups for next year and of a more thoughtful way of approaching the advising system, perhaps through an advising block provided in the weekly schedule. Hiring a mental health person has automatically given the opportunity for Tier

3 intervention and 1:1 support for students who come here needing it or deciding they want counseling at TMS. This also happens through the 1:1 weekly advisor meetings.

I am excited by the work I have been doing and the improvements we can make. There is a theme that I have picked up on when I talk to past alumni and that is transformation. Personally, this year has been transformative. What a gift to work in a space that offers self-growth and a place that allows me to be creative while working within my passion of social work. I can't wait to see what next year brings and to meet all the new people!



Guest speaker Deja Foxx with Students on May 6



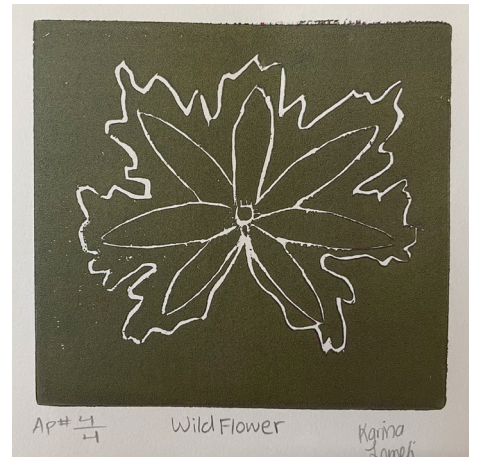
# Selections from Art Class: Spring 2022



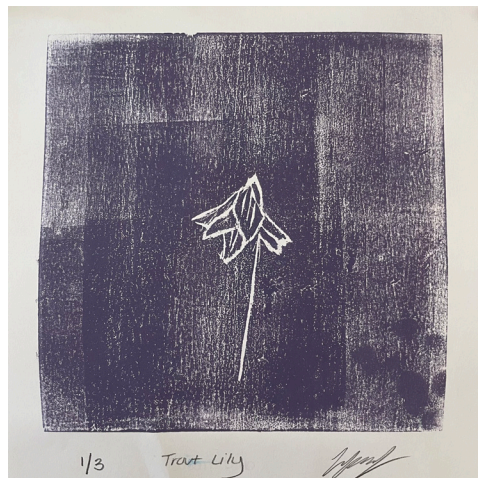
Clockwise from left: Tess Lawlor, Karina Lomeli, Susan Leibovitz, Karina Lomeli, Tess Lawlor, Susan Leibovitz, Gabriel Johnson, Gabi Gomez



Gabi Gomez s22 Four Emotions: excited, angry, gloomy, flustered (Left to right, top, bottom)



AP# 4/4 Wild Flower Karina Lomeli



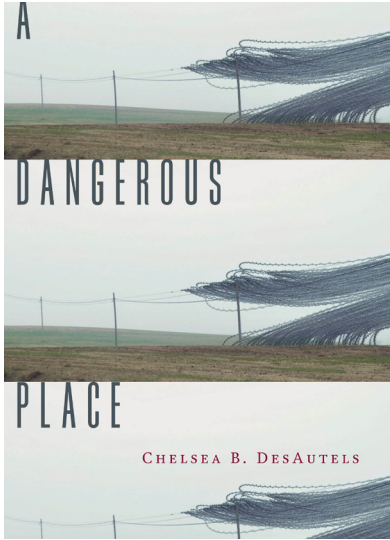
1/3 Trout Lily



4/5 Early Meadow Rue Tess Lawlor



## Books By Alumni



### **A Dangerous Place**

By *Chelsea B. DesAutels* 500

This is the story of a woman with two swellings in her belly: a nascent baby, and a cancerous tumor. The poet could focus on the particulars of the medical case, using language from a traditional illness narrative. Instead she gives us the basics, then gathers up surprising and

expansive material from various landscapes—the Black Hills, the prairies of Texas, the mountains, switchgrass, and, especially, the neighboring buffalo, to which she feels a profound connection. DesAutels’s metaphors strike home; they are counterpoints, balm to the uncertainty and grief that make us uncomfortable. The book moves elegantly from its dark beginnings to a transcendent thankfulness.

(Sarabande Books 2021)

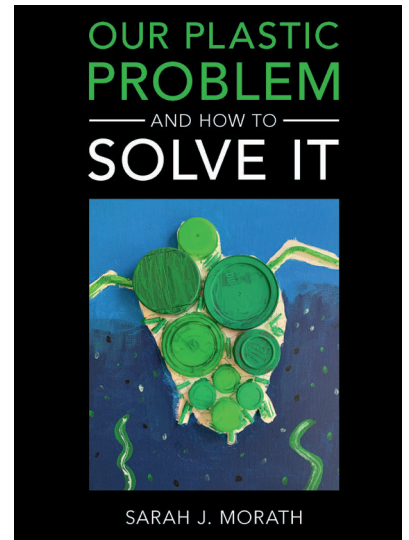
### **Our Plastic Problem and How To Solve It**

By *Sarah J. Morath* 593

Plastic pollution is a global problem that defies a singular solution. *Our Plastic Problem and How to Solve It* considers plastic’s harm to the environment, from its production to its disposal, and offers a spectrum of solutions that require action by local and federal governments,

businesses and non-profits, and individuals. Using specific examples and case studies, the book describes the history and chemistry of plastic, illustrates its harms, and points toward specific legislation and policies to offer concrete solutions. Plastic pollution is ubiquitous and has impacts on soil, food, air, and water. To solve our plastic problem, collaboration across disciplines will be critical; innovations in science, law, and design will be essential. The book demonstrates the need to approach environmental problems from an interdisciplinary lens and will benefit anyone interested in learning more about the harms and solutions associated with plastic pollution.

(Cambridge University Press 2022)

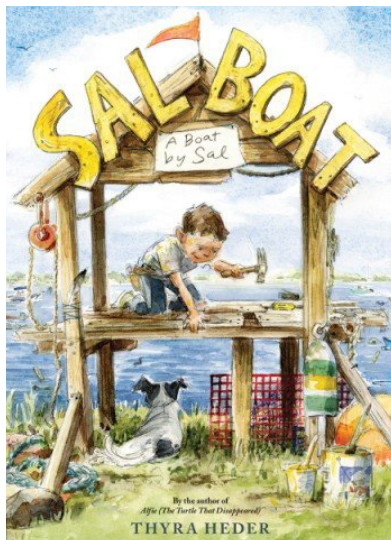


### **Sal Boat: (A Boat by Sal)**

By *Thyra Heder* 501

Sal loves the water. All day, he thinks about it: being out there, just him and the waves, alone. More than anything else, he wants a boat. And he knows just what it would look like. So he decides to build it himself. It isn’t long before everyone in town starts sharing advice. But Sal doesn’t need their help. He knows just what he’s building. And he does it! Except . . . he forgets one crucial detail—that no project, big or small, can be launched without a little help. Thyra’s latest book delivers a clever and heartfelt tale about creativity and collaboration.

(Abrams Books for Young Readers August 2022)





## Reggie Brown, Class of 1975, Recollects About His Time At The Conard-Era Mountain School

It has been several decades, since I walked the halls at the Mountain School. The connections that were made there became incredibly special. And many of us remain in contact with each other to this day.

My journey to the Mountain School began in Exeter, NH. I was sitting across from the admissions officer at Phillips Exeter Academy. He began the conversation by congratulating me and saying that Phillips Exeter would be delighted to offer me a place at the school. He continued to describe all the benefits of being enrolled at Phillips Exeter. He also stated that the school was academically challenging and that I would be meeting students from all over the world.

He also stated that income would not be a barrier for me to obtain an Exeter education. Everything was going quite well, up to this point.

He continued by saying that there was an extremely strict dress code at the school. He asked me how I would feel about cutting my hair. At that time, I was sporting an Angela Davis style Afro. This is the moment that I knew that Exeter was not for me. I am not sure exactly what I said to him, but I remember how I felt. Very soon, the conversation ceased. And I exited the room.

I did not enroll at Exeter. A few months later I received a letter from the Mountain School offering me a scholarship valued at \$4,500. This was a bunch of money back then, so I figured this school would be awesome. It would be a school with many buildings, a great cafeteria, several sports fields, luxury dorms, and much more! I had never heard of the Mountain School. I had never been to Vermont, but I was encouraged to pursue the offer. The scholarship was funded by the Boston-based A Better Chance (ABC).

My three-year studies at the Mountain School began in September of 1972. I met Doris and Mac Conard in Hanover, NH. Two other ABC students accompanied me on the trip from Hanover to Vershire. It was cool to have two others who were also first-time Vermonters in the car with me. Bill was from North Carolina and Curtis was from Tennessee. We really were not paying too much attention to the changes in the landscape until we were about 10 miles away from the campus. I began to ask some questions of the Conards. "So, are there any malls close by?" "No," they replied. "Once a month we travel to Hanover to shop." "Are there any movie theaters in the area?" "No," they replied. "But there is a post office in town." I started to worry a bit about how this city boy was going to cope in this country town.

It did not take long for me to adapt to the country life. In fact, I found it to be very therapeutic in many ways. Even though there appeared to be truly little to do in the country, I was always busy it seemed. I was homesick for a while, but I soon became amazingly comfortable in my new surroundings.



The four-year program at TMS, as you might imagine, was quite different to the semester program that exists today. Some of the same activities that were offered back then are still on offer now, though a few were specific to our era.

The annual fall camping trip to the Adirondacks was one of my favorites. A small group of us, around 8 to 10, accompanied by Mac Conard, went camping in the Adirondacks. The canoes were tied down to the trailer, and we climbed into the SUV and traveled to the Essex ferry on Lake Champlain. Once in Ticonderoga, NY, we traveled to a spot where we parked and portaged along the Adirondack trail until we found a suitable lean-to where we would

spend the next several days.

The Adirondacks is a place of dreams, especially the lakes region which we came to each year. We hiked, did some canoeing, and quite a lot of fishing. I remember being one of the first to arise and getting into a canoe and paddling through the mist that settled on the water, which appeared as glass. As the sun rose, the mist began to dissipate. We took turns keeping the fire going the whole weekend. We cooked all our meals on the fire and enjoyed gathering around it in the evenings as well. There was something very magical about this. At the end of the trip, we were very tired, but extremely satisfied. This was one of the experiences that contributed to the sense of community at the Mountain School.

We were also assigned daily chores, which at first seemed like chores, but eventually became enjoyable. On Sunday evenings, it was the students' turn to cook the meal for the entire school. This was one of my favorite activities. And who can forget the sugaring we did, and the snow cone parties we would have which included pouring warm maple syrup over snow which we gathered from nearby.

There would be many similar activities where we would learn to appreciate each other and the unique contributions each of us possessed. I have looked back over the years and still hold that my years at the Mountain School contributed the most to who I am today.



# News from the Alumni Office

By Annie Janeway, Director of Alumni Relations

Events and in-person and Zoom visits with graduates added considerable zest to this spring for those coming together. While we were sad not to be able to hold yet another Sugaring Reunion due to Covid spikes, a good number of graduates returned on their own time to connect with faculty, friends, and siblings. Hosting a vibrant reunion in June for the first time since 2019 was especially meaningful and appreciated. More than 90 graduates and their partners and spouses dug through time capsule and semester specific memorabilia, shared stories, chopped and stacked wood, weeded, hiked, Zumba danced, and played basketball. They also arranged themselves creatively on one of the tractors at Library Hill for combined semester, 5, 10, and 15-year reunion photos. The reunion's success was a true team effort and a special shout-out goes to Richard Otis s13, Cole Nesselson f20, and Tov Vitols f21 for their invaluable assistance on the ground.



Those not able to attend, you were remembered and missed, and we hope to see you soon.

During the semester, April 17, three leading alum climate, voting, and anti-gun violence activists convened virtually

for a panel. Audrey Lin s18, Katie Eder f16, and Jeremy Ornstein s17 explained to the student audience how they got involved as youth climate change leaders and shared their experiences since the Mountain School to inspire S22 to fight



for increased environmental measures and justice.

A week before completing the semester, students also had the good fortune to hear from and learn about another exceptional graduate's work, that of

Sian Heder f93. At the end of March, Sian and her team accepted Oscar awards for the CODA film she adapted and produced about a deaf family and their teenage hearing daughter. A huge thank you and congratulations to Sian for this personal look via Zoom into her filmmaking, the topic of deafness and sign language, and an explanation of the decisions and questions brought up in the writing, planning and production. If you haven't seen CODA (Child of Deaf Adults), be sure to check it out on Apple TV+.

Summer activities for certain semester and regional groups of graduates include a second annual Battery Conservancy alumni volunteer day on Saturday, June 25 in NYC, and a 20 and 25-year reunion on August 5-7.

In the meantime, the Alumni Committee looks forward to more offerings in the 2022-2023 year. They met recently at school to strategize on graduate involvement going forward with Alex Myers.

Over the weekend of May 14, Alumni Committee enjoyed an unseasonably hot weather visit to the Vershire area and campus connection time. Two new members of the committee, Martha Roberts f97 and Tiffany Shumate s03, joined Scott Kerns f95 for the in-person and Zoom meeting at Nancy and David Grants, nearby in Strafford. In addition to conversations with current faculty at school and departing director Alden Smith, committee members had an opportunity to speak with new director of school Alex Myers, members of the Advisory Board, and several current students. The overall impression was excitement for the future of the school and the opening of productive dialogue as the school begins its next chapter.

Pictured below: Kristen Butterfield and Tiffany Shumate f03, Martha Roberts f97, Alex Myers, Scott Kerns f95, and Annie Janeway.

Over the course of the spring, the Alumni Committee and Alumni Relations assembled graduates' gratitudes in the form of



tribute books and videos to share appreciation for those who have given a decade or more of their professional lives to make the Mountain School the unique place

we all treasure. Thank you to those alums who stepped up to send in 250 written recollections and a combined 2 ½ hours of personal video greetings. Three of the tribute books were presented at the June reunion, honoring Jack, Sue, Alden, and Missy.

The Alumni Committee wishes to extend its thanks to all the departing faculty for their work and dedication over the years.





# Spring 2022 Garden Hill Fund Recipients

**Hannah Meszaros Martin f03 - \$3,000, *La Tierra Proscrita (The Outlawed Earth): A documentary film project - Cranston, RI***

With the support from the Garden Hill Fund, I will make the next chapter of our three-part documentary that focuses on the aerial fumigation of illicit crops with the herbicide glyphosate in Colombia. Fumigation is a brutal form of forced eradication used since the 1970s in the US-led 'War on Drugs'. Drawing on existing research, I tell the story of how the use of herbicides in war has impacted the lives of thousands in Colombia and transformed small-scale agriculture.



ing the Native Village of Eyak's annual potlatch in Cordova. Gifts likely will come in the form of a dried seasoning, akin to furikake. This project promotes healthy eating, the kelp industry, and participation in the giving tradition of the tribal community. Our business is part of a growing movement of new ocean farmers in Southcentral Alaska who seek to grow kelp for its' many benefits to the environment, as well as for the promise that the mariculture industry offers towards building food security, Native subsistence, and sustainable rural economies. As an Alaska Native family venture, AILLC is delighted to include Rebecca's affinity for seaweed (and her Taiwanese roots) as cornerstones for this project. Quyanaa! For more about our kelp collective, see <https://bluewavefutures.com/>.

**Reggie Brown 1975 - \$4,000, *Timour Hall Open Space - Capetown, South Africa***

This project is situated in Plumstead, Western Cape Province in South Africa. The Timour Hall Open Space (THOS) Project involves converting an under-utilized park into a space that can be used to serve Wyatt Early Childhood Development (ECD) Center, a facility established by the Wyatt's Down Syndrome Foundation and the public at large. Wyatt's primary mission is to ease the burdens placed on families who are raising children with special needs. There are no public facilities in South Africa that cater for these children. This will be the first. THOS will provide the space necessary to conduct many of the capacity building activities. The mini grant received from the Garden Hill Fund in 2021 permitted the removal of large rocks and concrete rubble and the pruning and care of one large blue gum tree.



**Irene Li and Aaron Freedman s07 - \$4,000, *Prepshift - Brighton, MA***

Prepshift is a people-management and employee engagement tool for restaurant owners and operators. Too often, restaurant workplaces are chaotic, unstable, and even abusive, leading to 75% average annual turnover. Our mission

is to address turnover by increasing job quality and satisfaction through intentional relationship building and information sharing. Crucially, we envision restaurants of the future as diverse, equitable, and empowering for all, so the GHF will be put toward holding focus groups with restaurant operators and workers, especially ESOL demographics. Since these stakeholders are less likely to have transportation access and free time, we look forward to using our grant in large part to cover their focus group related expenses and to compensate them for the industry knowledge and perspectives

**Rebecca Mair Andersen s93 - \$2,000, *Kelp Forage to Farm for Native Food Security - Cordova, AK***

A heartfelt thanks goes to the TMS community for choosing to fund this ocean farm's flagship project. Preparing to grow kelp in Prince William Sound, Alaska, Andersen Island LLC looks forward to an exciting wild harvest while gathering seed stock this summer 2022. This GHF mini grant allows us to extend our foraging efforts, and to offer the bounty to elders and others dur-

