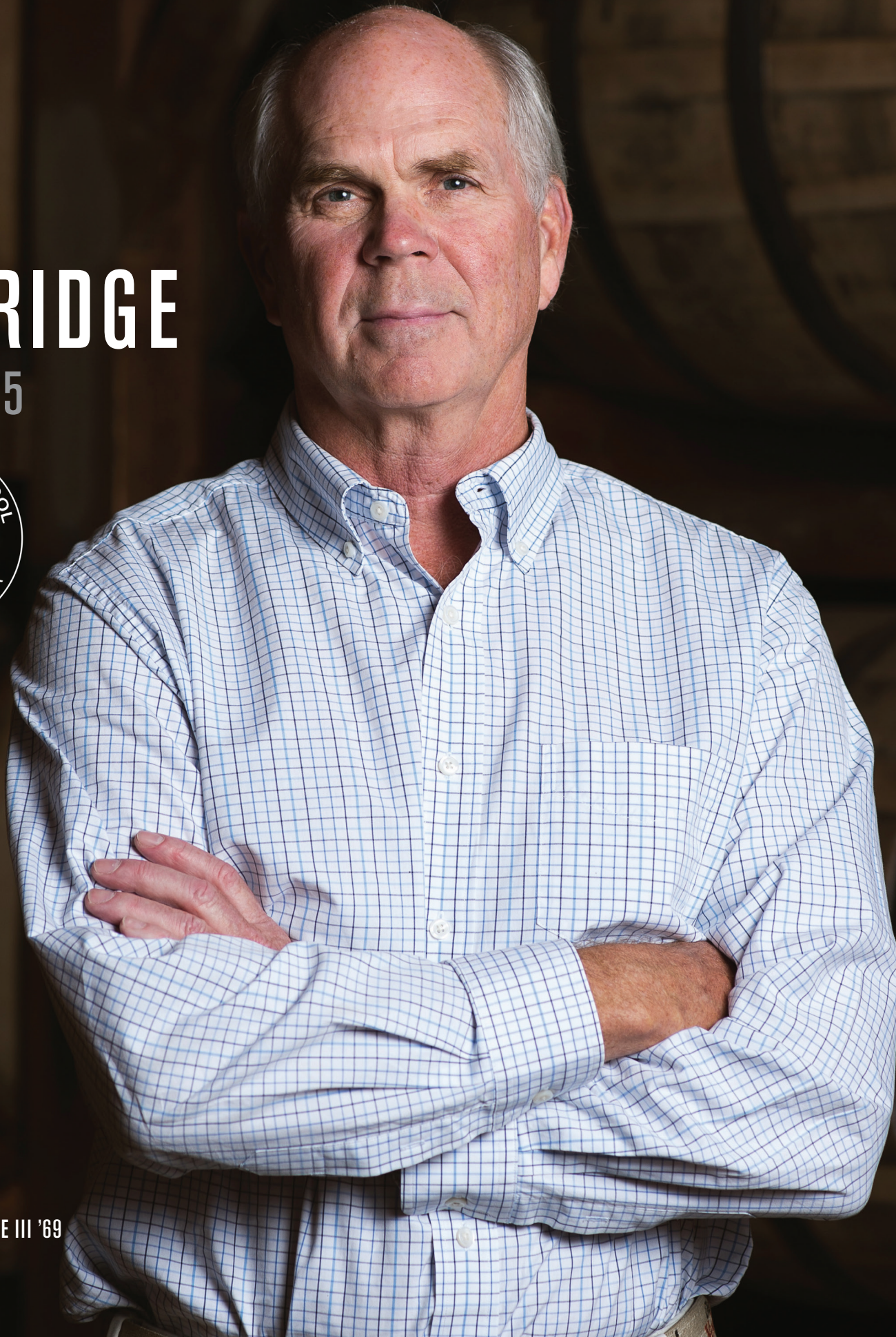


# THE RIDGE

FALL 2015



JULIAN VAN WINKLE III '69

# A BIG THANK YOU



I am grateful to the 153 individual donors who contributed to the Baron Athletic Complex to date. Phase One, the new track and field complex adjacent to Massey Gymnasium, is now complete (you'll see an aerial photo of the Complex on the back cover).

The new facility was ready for the start of the school year, and the boys' excitement at seeing the transformation offers an additional statement of our gratitude!

Phase Two, which includes major renovations to the grass fields, baseball diamond and golf training facility along Bacon Hollow Road, is our focus this year with a hopeful construction launch by the summer of 2016.

What a statement of support that so many individuals are responsible for bringing this Complex to life! Every constituency – alumni, faculty, parents, Trustees, friends, even current students – has participated thus far. The Baron Athletic Complex is the largest capital project for Blue Ridge School in over twenty years and I'm deeply honored that there was such widespread support.

As you'll read in this edition of *The Ridge*, sports such as lacrosse and football play a large role in the life of our School. Sports are part of the bigger picture of the Blue Ridge Character Curriculum through which our mission of helping boys reach their potential is fulfilled. Boys on this campus inculcate the values of integrity, teamwork and the courage to attempt new pursuits. Belief in self is formed here. A boy's confidence grows through successes born from hard work and trial and error.

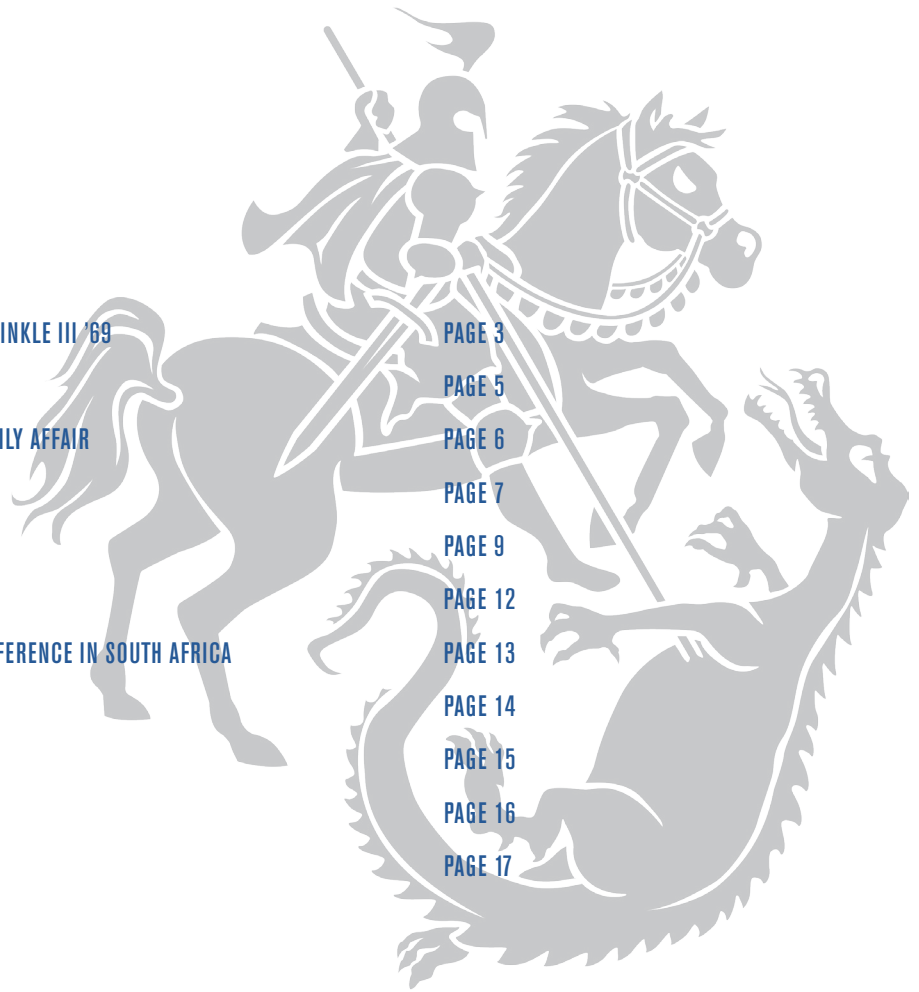
I was reminded of the significance of our mission when I read "Finding Self-Confidence at Blue Ridge," the article about Alumnus of the Year Julian Van Winkle III '69. Teachers and coaches pour themselves into their work with our boys, and lives are set onto positive trajectories. Mr. Van Winkle's successes offer a reminder of what is possible thereafter.

This edition of *The Ridge* showcases a sampling of the great work that is going on these days at Blue Ridge School, daily accomplishments that are made all the more possible with your help. On behalf of our students and faculty, I reiterate our thanks.

**GO BARONS!**  
**TRIP DARRIN, HEADMASTER**

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## BLUE RIDGE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION:

- Mr. William Darrin III**, Headmaster
- Dr. Kevin Miller**, Associate Headmaster for Academics & Operations
- Mr. Franklin Daniels, Jr.**, Associate Headmaster for Advancement & Admissions
- Mr. Vinton Bruton**, Assistant Headmaster for Co-curricular Programs

## THE RIDGE:

- Ms. Hilde Keldermans**, Editor/Graphic Designer/Photographer
- Mr. Dan Dunsmore**, Principal Writer

## THE BLUE RIDGE SCHOOL MISSION:

We focus on helping boys reach their potential through personalized, structured, innovative learning practices in a college-preparatory, all-boarding community.

Blue Ridge School admits qualified young men of any race, color, national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the School. Blue Ridge School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admission policies, financial assistance and loan programs, athletic and other administered programs.

2016 ALUMNUS OF THE YEAR JULIAN VAN WINKLE III '69

# FINDING SELF-CONFIDENCE AT BLUE RIDGE

BY DAN DUNSMORE



Congratulations are in order for Julian Van Winkle III '69, who will receive Blue Ridge School's Alumnus of the Year Award during The New York Auxiliary Ball on Saturday, January 30, 2016. Julian is being recognized for his success in business and in life, as well as for his loyalty and generosity to BRS.

A Google search will bring any curious person to plenty of information about his family's bourbon business. The 20-year Old Pappy Van Winkle Family Reserve is one of the most highly sought after bourbons in the world. Less has been written about how he came to be a Blue Ridge Baron, the three years he attended the School, and his initial experiences before 1977.

Julian's first boarding school in Virginia was Woodberry Forest. His father Julian Van Winkle, Jr. was on the Board of Woodberry at the time. It soon became clear to everyone involved that Woodberry was not a good fit for Julian. This prompted a phone call from the elder Van Winkle to Blue Ridge School Headmaster Hatcher Williams. As they discussed the younger Van Winkle's struggles at Woodberry, they both became convinced that Blue Ridge was worth a try. Julian arrived on the campus in 1966 to begin his junior year.

Though he didn't know it at the time, Julian had ADD. It was the late sixties after all. The condition existed in many of us, but schools in those days were typically ill equipped to work with high schoolers who found it difficult to focus on their studies. Faculty members at Blue Ridge School, though, seemed to have an innate ability to challenge young men with ADD (even if not officially diagnosed) and help them find success. At least that was Julian's experience.

When asked which teachers had the greatest impact on him, Julian immediately mentions Mr. Jordan Churchill. "He was a history teacher who made learning history appealing.

## “WHAT I GAINED AT BLUE RIDGE MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE WAS CONFIDENCE IN MY OWN ABILITIES. I WAS CHALLENGED, THEN GIVEN OPPORTUNITIES TO PROVE MYSELF. WHO WOULD HAVE THOUGHT THAT I WOULD EVER HAVE A LEADERSHIP POSITION OR BE ON AN HONOR COUNCIL?”

I wasn't particularly interested in history, but attending his class every day was fun." Julian also mentions his geometry teacher Mr. Randy Ruffin, and fun isn't one of the words that he uses to describe that class. "He was tough, very tough. But he had this way of inspiring me to want to do well in his class." After the geometry final exam, Mr. Ruffin called Julian into his office. Julian was certain he must have failed the exam. Instead, Mr. Ruffin patted him on the back and informed him that he had scored a 99!

Academic success was not something that Julian had ever experienced before. This sort of success didn't come immediately at Blue Ridge either. Julian repeated his junior year just to be sure he would be ready for a challenging senior year. Eventually, he realized he could earn high grades through better organization and a willingness to change his study strategies. He was a different young man in that senior year than he had ever been before.

Julian had gained the respect of his classmates and his teachers by then. This led to his serving on the Honor Council and as a Prefect on his hall. "What I gained at Blue Ridge more than anything else was confidence in my own abilities. I was challenged, then given opportunities to prove myself. Who would have thought that I would ever have a leadership position or be on an Honor Council?"

Allen Bush '69, a fellow Kentuckian, was Julian's roommate all three years. In addition to being Prefects and Honor Council members together, they were also both on the football and track teams. Allen remembers that Julian managed to pole vault twelve feet during one track season. "That seemed frighteningly high to me!" Unfortunately, Julian hyper-extended his knee at one point, and this compromised his athleticism. Still, he recalls that Mr. John Parrott took him



The 1968-1969 Honor Council members (from left): Ted Bell, Michael Houston, Chairman Julian Van Winkle, Advisor Mr. Ruffin, James Smith, John Carlton and Allen Bush.

under his wing in both football and track and helped him find some success.

During one Thanksgiving Break, Allen and Julian and several other students remained on campus. He doesn't recall why. They were just there and were mostly unsupervised, which led to two memorable adventures. First, the group sneaked into Charlottesville one evening. One of Julian's friends knew a girl in town. They completely got away with that excursion.

Second, they decided to take the horses for a ride one late afternoon. (Yes, horseback riding was a frequent activity at Blue Ridge in the 60's and 70's.) They would have gotten away with that adventure, too, except for one significant mistake. They left the horses' feed bins open all night. Apparently, horses don't know when to stop eating grain. A visit the next morning to the stables by one of the adults revealed several sick horses. Parents were called, and the group of Thanksgiving Break students were reprimanded. Fortunately, the horses recovered.

Another memory of his Blue Ridge days has to do with abandoned cars – many of them...on the mountain that rises up behind the dorms. They made for perfect camouflage and were even somewhat comfortable locations for smoking. Julian figured these must have been 40's and 50's models that had been parked there by one of the locals who lived nearby. Students had their favorites, but there were plenty to go around when the mountain became crowded.

Blue Ridge students in the 60's and 70's were given responsibilities that they would not be given today. One of those responsibilities was driving other students into town on school buses. Julian has fond memories of riding along with older students such as Henry Morschheimer '67 and John Wellford '69. These older students were also allowed to drive trash to the local dump. "I liked to tag along on those trips, too. I'm not sure at what other school students would have been given those kinds of responsibilities. It's one of the reasons I've always thought so highly of Blue Ridge."



Mr. Jordan Churchill "... was a history teacher who made learning history appealing. I wasn't particularly interested in history, but attending his class every day was fun."

Julian's first stop after graduating from Blue Ridge was Randolph-Macon College in Ashland, Virginia. His initial major was economics, but he soon switched to psychology. He would eventually transfer to the University of Louisville. Julian was ready for one more big adventure, though, before entering the full-time work force. He and his brother-in-law traveled to Europe in 1972. One of their stops was Munich, West Germany, to watch another brother-in-law Monk Terry and the rest of the eight-man USA rowing team take Silver in the Summer Olympics.

Julian's first full-time paying gig was in a clothing store in Louisville, Kentucky. He enjoyed his position as a salesman, and he was good at it. In 1977, however, his father asked him if he might be interested in working with him at J. P. Van Winkle & Son, the sales company he had founded after having sold the family distillery

Stitzel-Weller in 1972. His father had bought back some barrels of whiskey he had previously made, and Julian would sell this whiskey under the new Old Rip Van Winkle brand.

Julian jumped at this great opportunity. When his father passed away in 1981, Julian became owner of the Old Rip Van Winkle brand. Today, that brand is renowned among bourbon enthusiasts thanks to Julian's savvy handling of the product and his marketing skills.

Julian is quick to add that he knows he owes a great deal of his success to a confidence in himself that he found while attending Blue Ridge School. "Everyone there believed in me. I found that I could actually learn something. I know now I had ADD in those days. I still have ADD. But Blue Ridge faculty helped me find a way to be successful, and I've carried those skills into my adult life."

JOIN THE NEW YORK AUXILIARY OF BLUE RIDGE SCHOOL FOR AN EVENING OF SOUTHERN CHARM IN THE CITY AT THE 2016 BLUE AND WHITE BALL.

## THIS YEAR'S 2016 BALL FEATURES AN AUCTION OF VAN WINKLE WHISKEYS.

CHECK YOUR INBOX TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE WHISKEYS BEING AUCTIONED.



# THE OLDEST CHARITY EVENT IN NYC

BY HILDE KELDERMANS

Since 1909, the New York Auxiliary of Blue Ridge School has been committed to supporting the School's mission through scholarship support and enhancements to the School's educational environment. Among its many contributions, the Auxiliary has made it possible for many worthy young men from the New York City community to attend Blue Ridge while contributing to several significant capital building projects including the New York Auxiliary Student Center and the BRS Track. It is a point of pride for both BRS and the Auxiliary that many of these past scholarship recipients have achieved leadership positions within the School, including several class presidents.

The origins of the Auxiliary are truly unique, and its history is a proud one. In the early 20th century there were many southerners in NYC who had made their mark in industry and professions after the conclusion of the Civil War. Education in the South was a very important philanthropic focus for many of them. The NY Auxiliary of Blue Ridge School began in a New York drawing room when friends were invited to meet Mrs. Mayo and

learn of her husband's mission project in central Virginia.

2016 is the 107th consecutive year the Auxiliary has been a leadership donor to Blue Ridge. While 1924 was the first Charity Ball, the group's fund raising activities prior to 1924 were in the form of Silver Teas which were the fashionable way for ladies to raise money in that more refined era when women's activities outside of the home were more limited. Silver Teas were afternoon receptions held in private homes. Guests put their donations in a bowl as they entered and the proceeds went to the School. It was not until after WWI that charity balls became popular in NYC.

What makes the NYA the oldest continuous charity event in NYC is that other organizations suspended fund raising events during WWI, WWII and the depression, many never to revive. The Auxiliary's members are exceptionally proud of the fact that nothing in world events (wars, financial depressions or terrorist attacks) has interrupted their support for the School over its entire history.

## ALEXANDRA SMITH AND THE NEW YORK AUXILIARY

## A FAMILY AFFAIR

BY DAN DUNSMORE



Blue Ridge is pleased to announce the selection of Alexandra Gregg Smith as the New York Auxiliary's representative on the Board of Trustees. Alexandra is currently a Project Director in the Department of Pediatrics at The Bronx-Lebanon Hospital Center and a psychotherapist at a midtown Manhattan practice – both in New York. Her primary role as a social worker is positive youth development with a focus on violence prevention.

As a member of the Auxiliary for over twenty years, she has served as the Ball Chair for six years, and vice president and president, each for two terms. To understand how Alexandra arrived at this moment, it is important to know that her grandmother Mary Garland Allen Gregg was one of the founders of the Auxiliary and was significant in the School's early survival and eventual success. Mary Garland, or Golly as she was known to many, was a good friend to Headmaster Hatcher Williams and was one of the first two females to serve on the School's Board. Alexandra notes, "She made it clear from the beginning that women should be involved in the education of young men." Along with Hatcher and other school leaders, Golly was essential in the formation of the current School's mission.

Alexandra's mother Mary Allen Gregg Smith followed in her mother's footsteps as another active member of the Auxiliary as she served as treasurer and as Ball Chair. It was only natural that Alexandra would continue the family tradition.

Alexandra readily admits, "I have dyslexia," which furthers her commitment to the Blue Ridge School and its effective teaching methods. She appreciates what Blue Ridge offers students with learning differences. She points to the teachers who help students learn how to be successful in class sizes that allow for greater attention. She admires what Blue Ridge students are able to accomplish in what she calls a cozy, family-like atmosphere. "Blue Ridge instructors know that learning differences have nothing to do with a young man's intelligence."

Proud of her grandmother's involvement in the early establishment of the Auxiliary and Blue Ridge as well as her mother's longtime support of the School, she agrees with them that women are just as important to a boy's education as are men. "Boys need female teachers and role models, and they need to know that women play an important role in the life of young men." Through their many years of supporting Blue Ridge boys in various roles, three generations of Gregg females have walked the walk for our students.

Alexandra hopes she may be of help to Blue Ridge in her latest role as Board representative for the Auxiliary. She is confident that she will learn from Blue Ridge administrators and teachers and plans to incorporate their effective strategies in the work she does with youth in the New York area.

Blue Ridge is truly fortunate that Alexandra has agreed to play such a vital role in the education of young men. Her grandmother and mother would be particularly proud.



**Mary Garland Allen Gregg was one of the founders of the New York Auxiliary and was significant in the School's early survival and eventual success.**



Alexandra Gregg Smith and her husband Andrew Schonebaum at the 2015 NYA Ball

# BRS LACROSSE IN THE 70'S

BY DAN DUNSMORE



Uncaptioned picture from the cover of the March 8, 1974, issue of "The Blue Ridge Lancer" previewing spring sports.

They are among those thought-provoking questions that are asked often in sports. Could an athlete from the past outscore, outhit, outrun or out-defend a modern-day athlete? Could a team from the good old days beat a team from the 21<sup>st</sup> century? While the athletes themselves typically regard such questions as folly, we observers of sports over the years still enjoy pondering the what if's. Much has been made of the recent success of the Blue Ridge School lacrosse program – rightfully so. But there are some 1970's Baron lacrosse players and teams that deserve recognition, too. One can't help but wonder...

Lacrosse first arrived on the Blue Ridge campus in 1968 thanks, in part, to the generosity of the father of Charlie Edmunds '68. Coach Emory E. Jones led the team to an undefeated season that first year, and lacrosse would enjoy its first full varsity schedule in 1969. Coach Bob Knauff

then took over the lacrosse leadership in 1970. Having played lacrosse at Johns Hopkins, he brought with him a sound understanding of the game. John Young, who learned a thing or two about lacrosse as his assistant starting in 1971, remembers, "Bob loved the game, respected and honored the tradition of good sportsmanship (insisting upon it from every player) and proved to be a very even-tempered coach. He was admired and respected for his knowledge of lacrosse and his temperament. Bob had inherited a pretty rough and tumble set of guys who had won their games largely due to aggressiveness and determined abandon. Bob added disciplined play and skilled execution to their performance."

In the early 70's, Coach Knauff was already developing college-caliber lacrosse players. One of them was Chris Hupfeldt '73. Chris was captain of the team and earned all-league honors as an attackman before continuing his lacrosse

career at Washington College. John Young adds, "Chris was a remarkable school leader who also became an outstanding attackman under the guidance of Bob." The stage was now set for even greater success in the mid and late 70's.

Enter Rodney Rullman, who took over the program in 1976. Rodney was actually hired while he still had a few hours to complete at UVA in 1975. His responsibilities that first year included being a Health teacher, Upper East dorm parent, head varsity lacrosse coach, assistant football coach and athletic trainer. Rodney remembers that Coach Knauff and Coach Dick Glover had done a great job of bringing in some excellent athletes from Maryland and North Carolina as well as several from Virginia to play lacrosse and wrestle. He knew he was lucky to have inherited many quality players.



That team, in fact, had finished 11-1 the season before and had been awarded the State Championship since there was no tournament that year. In Rullman's first year as head coach in 1976, the Blue Ridge lacrosse players lost only to eventual Prep League Champ St. Christopher's and to Charlottesville High School in the TILT Final at Scott Stadium. Who were these athletes making waves in the lacrosse world? In addition to Chris mentioned above, names such as Billy Moore '75, Jimmy Moore '75, David Townsend '75, Vern Daniels '76, Lewis Scharff '76, Hunter Francis '77, Jonathan Green '77, Monty Hill '77 and Scott Parrish '77 emerge. Athletes such as Charlie Bailey '77, Gan Benedict '77, Jim Butterworth '77, Lee Duckett '77, Jonathan Green '77, Michael McGiffin '77, John Payette '77, Pat Randolph '77, Andy Weaver '77, John White '77, Gene Binda '78, Chip Chapman '78, Mark Pace '78, Dutch Swab '78 and Kyle Trent '78 were either additional starters or skilled relievers. In fact, Michael, all 6'3" and 190 lbs. of him, loved playing in the crease as a second-line guy.

Coach Rullman recalls his first interactions with Monty, Lewis and Hunter. "My assistant coach was Rick Beach, a former teammate of mine at Virginia. He was in charge of the offense, and I coached the goalies and defense. However, I noticed on the first day of practice in my rookie year at Blue Ridge that a blond-haired, baby-faced midfielder by the name of Monty and a very, very quick attackman by the name of Lewis should probably change positions. Rick fortunately agreed with me. Monty eventually became an All American attackman at UNC, and Lewis became an All American Middie at Salisbury State. Then there was this big, tall goalie by the name of Hunter. He was a dream athlete for me. He learned very quickly and became a remarkably successful high school goalie. He went on to a fabulous career at UNC."

Hunter remembers that the 1977 squad was still the team to beat. That team tied for the Prep League Championship with both Woodberry Forest and St. Christopher's. On graduation day that year, Hunter recalls hustling from the ceremony to restring both goals for the TILT semi-final championship against St. Anne's.

"We handled STAB fairly easily that day. In fact, we never lost to STAB while I was at Blue Ridge, but it was obvious that they were building a program that would last." That 1977 squad lost to a very tough Albemarle High School team the following day in a championship game that was inadvertently televised by ABC's Wide World of Sports.

So...were these lacrosse athletes from the 70's really that good? To the extent that playing at the next level is an indication of athletic prowess, one must admit that they were.

Billy Moore played at Maryland, Jimmy Moore at NC State, David Townsend at Randolph-Macon (sixth in the country his sophomore year in average goals per game, co-captain his junior and senior years), Vern Daniels at Virginia, Lewis Scharff at Salisbury (named D3 Middie of the Year twice), Hunter Francis at UNC, Jonathan Green at Washington College, Monty Hill at UNC and Scott Parrish at LeHigh. Gan Benedict, Michael McGiffin and Andy Weaver went on to play club lacrosse at Elon College.

Rodney recalls fondly, "I had a wonderful experience with the lacrosse program and the Blue Ridge community as a whole. From time to time, I run into a player or two or even play against them in adult tournaments. When I see them, I simply scratch my head and remember how young I was when I first arrived on campus." Michael McGiffin, adds, "Coach Rullman took a bunch of young men of various skill levels and taught us the game we all loved. His great sense of humor always kept us laughing during study hall or class." Perhaps Hunter Francis sums up BRS 70's lacrosse the best. "Monty Hill and I were very proud of the experience we had and the legacy we left behind. To this day, I run into old

page 3

THE LACROSSE

*First Winning Season*

**V. Lacrosse Record Is 7-3**

by Bob Moran

Still in contention for the Prep League title, the Varsity Lacrosse team has posted an impressive 7-3 record with only three games remaining on their schedule. The Barons are assured of their first winning season since lacrosse became a varsity sport some five years ago.

In their first outing of the season against Lane High School, the Barons came out on

top 5-3. Attackmen Chris Hupfeldt and Martin Fenwick combined for five goals and three assists. Baron's goaltender Steve Parker turned aside 10 shots and engineered the clears with sharp passes.

Eleven goals in the second half punched the Barons to an impressive come from behind victory over A.M.A. With only 3 practice sessions before hand, Blue Ridge was rusty in the first half and consequently found

themselves behind 4-0. Stepping in to the goal for the Barons was sophomore Powell Serverin, a standout from last year's J.V.'s. Severin who turned aside 12 shots replaced the then ailing Steve Parker.

Severin was the story of the game in the Barons first prep league confrontation against Woodberry Forest as he stopped 16 shots, some of them from pointblank range. Hupfeldt scored three times with mid-fielder Mark Utkov and Ray Hodges rounding out the scoring with one goal a piece. The final score was 5-3.

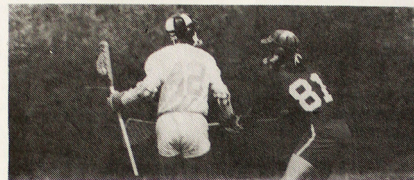
The Rock Hill School provided little opposition as the Barons coasted to a 12-1 victory. The third midfield made up of Tom Craddock, Kelly Robinson, and Zack Dunn drew praise from Coach Knuaff as they provided unexpected scoring power.

In the rematch against Lane the Barons suffered their first loss of the season by the score of 3-2. A lack of movement on offense and poor clearing accounted for the defeat.

Rebounding from adversity the Barons handily defeated A.M.A. 9-1. Hupfeldt had a good day as did attackmen Bruce Gotthardt and Jon Barach. The latter pair combined for 3 goals and one assist.

On a warm Saturday afternoon the Barons received their second Prep League victory over St. Christopher's 5-3. Parker -- back in the nets after his bout with mononucleosis, -- turned aside 10 shots. Jimmy Nuckols, Bob Dubose and Jack Fernan delighted the crowd with aggressive defense.

Hard hitting was the name of the game as Blue Ridge entertained Fork Union. Hupfeldt scored five times while Fenwick scored twice. Jim Grieves, Ray Hodges and Zack Dunn also figured in the scoring.



ATTACKMAN CHRIS HUPFELDT MANEUVERS FOR A GOAL AGAINST ST. CHRISTOPHERS. THE BARONS WON THIS GAME 5-3.

Woodberry Forest, Episcopal, St. Chris and Norfolk Academy players who comment that our teams were a pain in the butt to play, that we were sooooo good and very physical. I always take these comments as compliments."

Though the lacrosse players from the 70's and their counterparts from more recent years might deflect comparisons, wouldn't it be wonderful to see such a game played. Just how would David Townsend '75 stack up against Tyler Pace '13? No doubt they would both give it their all and shake hands afterwards as proud graduates of the School. As the lacrosse program at Blue Ridge moves forward, it will certainly continue to appreciate those athletes in the early days of the School as well as more recent alumni who have laid an impressive foundation of tenacity and success.

THE RIDGE, FALL 2015

## SAWTOOTH WILDERNESS EPIC IDAHO ADVENTURE

BY DAN DUNSMORE

“When I looked, I knew I might never again see so much of the earth so beautiful, the beautiful being something you know added to something you see, in a whole that is different from the sum of its parts.”

- Norman Maclean in *A River Runs Through It*



**W**hy would two Blue Ridge faculty members and seven students spend eight days and nights backpacking over fifty miles and fly-fishing during the dog days of summer? Assistant Headmaster for Co-Curricular Programs Vinton Bruton's elusive response was, "If you have to ask, you'd never understand the answer." It is likely that Mr. Bruton was still under the influence of having read *A River Runs Through It* as he explained why he and Assistant Director of Outdoor Education Programs Cory Woods met Michael Gerry '15, Spencer Ammen '16, Jason Hess '16, Connor Morgan '16, RoRo Rymer '17, Jack Cline '18 and Ballard Earley '18 in Boise, Idaho, on Monday, July 20, to begin a trek they wouldn't soon forget.

In addition to the hiking and fly fishing, everyone would read Norman Maclean's novella over the eight nights in the wilderness. One of the novella's major themes – am I my brother's keeper – was put to the test numerous times during the journey. The group's first night was spent at the Grandjean Trailhead about two hours north of Boise. The comforts of home were left behind at that point as the men of various ages filled their backpacks and discussed how the next seven days would go.

**JULY 21:** Bright and early that morning, the nine began what was probably their most challenging day of hiking – nine miles with full packs and a 4,000 foot gain in elevation. The group meant to stay together, but distancing was inevitable as some strides and energy levels were greater than others. Vinton and Cory were proud of how each boy pushed through the challenge. Once they arrived at Sawtooth Lake campsite, everyone cast their lines for the first time. The experienced, such as RoRo Rymer and Ballard Earley, helped the inexperienced, such as Connor Morgan. Several of them managed to catch Eastern Brook Trout in a small lake that day.

Ballard recalls that his first-day dropping of food did not deter him from eating. "My bagels were

covered with honey. I was so hungry. When they slipped out of my hands, I had no choice but to pick them up, brush as much sand and dirt out of the honey as possible and eat them. I definitely took in some grit from the ground, but it was worth it." A violent but brief thunderstorm later that afternoon nearly collapsed several tents, but all the gear dried fairly quickly. This would not be the last thunderstorm the group would encounter.

That night, they held their first discussion of *A River Runs Through It*. No one would reveal the details of these nightly discussions except to say that they were interesting and thought-provoking. Perhaps they all agreed with Vinton that no one would understand. Maybe on this first night they talked about how they might become better fly fisherman if they "did not spend so much time watching and waiting for the world to become perfect."

**JULY 22:** On this second day, they descended seven miles to Baron Creek. They stopped at one point long enough for what Vinton called a precarious-lunch-on-a-cliff activity. Cory quips, "Vinton wanted to spice things up early just to make the kids value their lives that much more." Again, no additional comments have been forthcoming about this activity.

**JULY 23:** As the sun rose on this Thursday morning, each participant by now surely felt that at sunrise "everything is luminous but not clear." This day's journey began uneventfully enough with a gentle climb with incredible views from Baron Creek to a campsite between Upper and Middle Baron Lakes. The evening ended, however, with another ferocious thunderstorm, this one lasting longer than the one experienced on their first day. Michael, Jason and Connor were forced out of their completely flooded tent, which meant they had to cram into the remaining tents. This made for a cozier-than-normal night's sleep and led to good-humored comments about their shared reading for the rest of the trip. "A river ran through my tent," Connor would say. "A river ran through my backpack," Jack was heard to exclaim.



Every evening the backpackers read from Norman Maclean's *A River Runs Through It*.

Both Connor and Ballard would admit at this point that they had not brought proper clothing. They were somewhat prepared for the 90 degree days, but they had no idea that temps would drop into the 30's at night. The terrain caught them off guard as well. They agreed, "We thought it would be all desert, but it was a combination of desert, rocks and jungle."

**JULY 24:** The day began with a tough climb up from Baron Lakes, but the boys made it seem easy. After ascending Baron Pass, the group descended most of the day until reaching Redfish Lake Creek. They saw their first mule deer at this campsite. The creek was full of fish, though they were mainly small brookies and cutthroat trout. The water was clearer than tap water and near-freezing, so it was a nearly perfect trout stream.

Ballard, an experienced fly-fisherman in East Coast waters, wanted to experience fly-fishing in western waters. He found it challenging and fascinating to change his technique between lakes and streams. He and RoRo proved to be invaluable help to Connor, who had never fly-fished before. By the end of the trip, Connor rose from "a beginner to not so bad." He gives kudos to Ballard and RoRo for sharing their expertise. By this point in the trip, Ballard and RoRo were

Pictured from left are: Connor Morgan '16, Michael Gerry '15, Jason Hess '16, Jack Cline '18, RoRo Rymer '17, Ballard Earley '18, Spencer Ammen '16 and Mr. Vinton Burton.



likely paraphrasing Maclean's reflection on fishing, "all existence fades to a being with my soul and memories and the sounds of the Big Blackfoot River and a four-count rhythm and the hope that a fish will rise."

**JULY 25:** This day proved to rival the hiking on day one. They climbed much of the day. At times that climbing was steep. At other times, it was even steeper. Their early start enabled them to stop for a couple of hours at lunch to fish at Cramer Lakes. Everyone caught at least one fish there. Celebrations were certainly uttered, and each man's unspoken thought was, "Poets talk about spots of time, but it is really fishermen who experience eternity compressed into a moment."

After that long break, the afternoon was a crusher as they ascended Cramer Pass. Threatening clouds lent a sense of urgency as they zigzagged their way up the 2,000 foot ascent in the shadow of Cathedral Rock. The possibility of yet another thunderstorm dampening their hike kept their pace steady. The last two hours of hiking were easier, though, as they descended into a beautiful valley to Hidden Lake. Each hiker was surely thinking in his own way, "When I looked, I knew I might never again see so much of the earth so beautiful, the beautiful being something you know added to something you see, in a whole that is different from the sum of its parts."

This lake provided excellent fishing in addition to the remarkable views. As this day was Michael Gerry's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, they cooked and ate a couple of fish they'd caught to celebrate. It was

also a celebration of the new camaraderie they now all felt.

**JULY 26:** The group had made it to Sunday morning. It's fitting, maybe, that it turned out to be one of their easiest days of hiking. From Hidden Lake, they traveled downhill 4.5 miles to Smith Falls on the South Fork of the Payette River. Another beautiful natural sight awaited them as they took in the 30-foot falls. The boys caught several more trout as they spread out in groups of three to four along a mile of the river. Brother's Keeper and Prodigal Son were the central topics of the evening discussions, which were this time described as fascinating and insightful.

**JULY 27:** Another relatively easy day of hiking involved trekking six miles mostly downhill. Rainbow trout awaited the group in the South Fork of the Payette River. Rainbow trout are tough fighters, which involve a lot of jumping, but the now-experienced fly-fishermen were up to the task. Everyone finished reading *A River Runs Through It*, too. The boys could now sense that the trip was about to end so they convinced Vinton and Cory to let them cook summer sausage, which was to be tomorrow's lunch, as a late-night snack. They were banking on an early finish the next day and lunch in a restaurant.

**JULY 28:** The group awoke to ice on the ground and freezing temps on their last morning. Once again, the boys were reminded that they should have packed a few pieces of warm clothing, and they made quick work of the last four miles of hiking. They even sang made-up hiking songs along the way. Having now

completed the reading of the novella, each may have thought to himself, "...life every now and then becomes literature—not for long, of course, but long enough to be what we best remember, and often enough so that what we eventually come to mean by life are those moments when life, instead of going sideways, backwards, forward, or nowhere at all, lines out straight, tense and inevitable, with a complication, climax, and, given some luck, a purgation, as if life had been made and not happened."

They did, in fact, eat lunch at The Sourdough Inn, a favorite among the locals. They then dropped by the Gerry's, who were very hospitable, then feasted at a Japanese Steak House in Boise to celebrate the week's adventure. A grand time was had by all, but especially by Ballard who was enthralled by the chef's antics.

**JULY 29:** The day of departure back to civilization had arrived. While waiting on their flights in the Boise, Idaho, airport, Cory fortunately was in the right place at the right time when a stranger fell in need of CPR. Cory essentially saved the guy's life. It's not too great a stretch to declare that nine lives had been enhanced during the past eight days and nights.

Everyone then flew out of Boise and likely slept all the way to their respective homes. It is also likely that each individual now felt a little closer to nature and a little closer to one another. Trips such as this one have a way of bonding people. In fact, such adventures lead the participants to believe that "eventually, all things merge into one." They had overcome the challenges presented to them by the Sawtooth Wilderness of Idaho, and they knew better than ever before that their roles should involve being their brother's keeper.

## IN MEMORY OF EDGAR TURLEY "TREY" HIGGINS III CLASS OF 1986

February 23, 1967 - June 26, 2015

The Blue Ridge School community mourns the passing of Edgar Turley "Trey" Higgins III. Trey is the son of E. Turley Higgins, Jr. former Vice-Chairman of the BRS Board of Trustees and an Emeritus Trustee.

From the moment that Trey Higgins first stepped foot on the Blue Ridge School campus in the fall of 1984, he began leaving an impact on his fellow students. There was something about him – his passion for life, his unbridled spirit, his interest in others – that caught everyone's ear and eye. This was especially true for George Allman '86. Trey and George had come to Blue Ridge for the same reason, to bolster their academics. It would work out very well for both of them.

George happened to move into their dorm room first and was still feeling a little nervous. When Trey arrived later, he immediately put George at ease with his friendly introduction. George had attended Orange High School in Orange, Virginia, and Trey had been at Charlotte Latin in Charlotte, North Carolina. What impressed George the most about Trey on that first day was that "he was completely focused on me when we were talking. I saw pretty quickly that he was that way with everybody. He really made you feel good about yourself."

Over the next two years, they became best friends. On graduation day in the spring of 1986, another good friend of Trey's from Charlotte had come up with Trey's parents to see him graduate. In those days, graduation was held in the Gibson Chapel. As George, Trey and Trey's friend walked down the Chapel steps, Trey suddenly bolted toward the lake. No words were spoken as George and his friend ran after him. All three jumped into the lake in a spontaneous

graduation celebration that they were told had not been seen before. Today, the jump into the lake is a graduation tradition.

The friendship between Trey and George continued to grow over the next twenty-nine years. It doesn't take long to hear the emotion in George's voice when he talks about Trey. They became Baron Brothers while at Blue Ridge, and that bond never wavered. While George becomes too emotional to put into precise words just how he felt about Trey, perhaps it's how Trey made him feel that best captures what was special about him. "Whenever we were together, whenever we talked on the phone, I knew he loved me."

The news of Trey's tragic passing on June 26, 2015, was a hard blow for the entire Blue Ridge community, and no one felt that punch in the heart more than George. That Trey was hang gliding when the horrible accident occurred was not surprising at all to George, though. "Trey had an adventurous spirit, and he obviously never lost that spirit. This was just one of the reasons he was so much fun to be around."

For this particular adventure, Trey had chosen Slide Mountain, a 9,702-foot peak in the Carson Range near both Lake Tahoe, California, and Reno, Nevada, and not too far north of Gardnerville, Nevada, where he was living at the time. According to the United States Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association, Trey had "launched in light southeast winds and was observed scratching over a spine before going out of view around the corner."

Another classmate Willie Nelson '86 remembers being on the cross country team with Trey. "He was our Iron Man as the captain of the cross



*The dream has come to life.  
I graduated number one in  
my class . . . . I got jets.*

*Love  
Trey*

country and spring track teams during both our junior and senior years. He was also one of our class leaders since he was a Prefect and on the Honor Council." Willie claims that Trey could have used a U-Haul on graduation day to take home all of the awards he earned through his commitment to what Blue Ridge had to offer. These honors included the Scholarship Award for having the highest GPA, the English, Science and History awards, the Frank Pendleton Award for athletic excellence and the Headmaster's Award.

Willie's strongest memory, though, is of Trey's friendship. He is saddened by his too-early passing but comforted to know that Trey was doing what he loved. Willie is also honored to have served as the Alumni Council representative on the Board along with Trey's father. "My heart goes out to Trey's dad and mom."

Bryan Wood '86 recalls that Trey learned new concepts in the classroom quickly. "I figured he just really wanted to prove something to himself and others." Bryan was a drummer in those days, and Trey was an excellent guitarist. That first led to their instant connection. Trey would occasionally take his guitar to Bryan's room at the end of study hall. He'd play Stevie Ray Vaughan, and they would talk about the styles of various musicians.

Continued on page 16

# LESSONS FROM MADIBA



BY DAN DUNSMORE

The theme for the 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual International Boys' School Coalition Conference held in Cape Town, South Africa, was "Lessons from Madiba." Madiba literally means "father" and is a term of endearment that many now use to refer to former President of South Africa Nelson Mandela. The world certainly has much to learn from what Mandela accomplished through his words and actions as he fought to end racism, poverty and inequality.

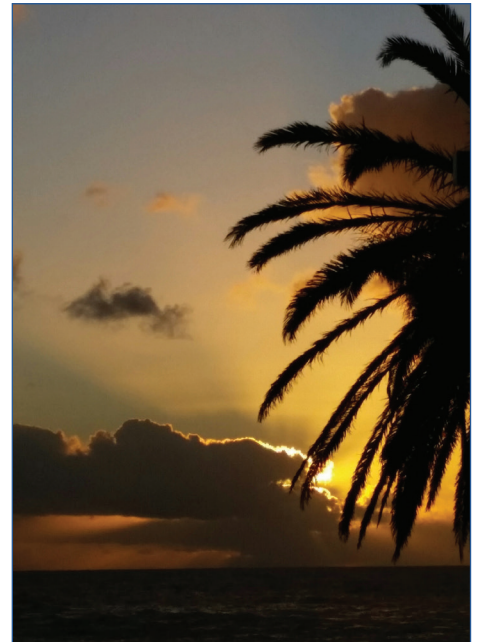
Blue Ridge School could not have sent a better representative to this conference than Mr. Paul Fehlner. For years, he has raised sensitivity to world issues with his students through his Environmental Science course. He leapt at the opportunity to travel to Cape Town, and his wife Gail also considered it a chance to explore a part of the world that neither had seen before.

The conference began in earnest on July 5, at Bishops' College, an independent day and boarding high school for boys, with two days of training in groups of approximately ten each. The purpose of this training was to determine how to accomplish action research as each individual created a project that he or she would institute back home. This project was to be tied to one of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) that the United Nations had previously established and were to be fulfilled by 2015. These goals address such world concerns as poverty, women's rights and AIDS. As Paul has a particular interest in poverty and hunger, he chose a project that would not only raise greater

awareness of this issue but also create empathy among the students for those who struggle every day to meet basic needs.

This will be a tall order, especially the empathy aspect, but Paul is determined to accomplish his goal. Blue Ridge students are already involved in several valuable activities each year that serve the hungry both locally and worldwide. "My goal," Paul explains, "is that our students will develop greater compassion for those they serve so that they will continue to see the value in helping the needy in their local communities as well as the world community after leaving Blue Ridge."

The first plenary speaker of the Conference arrived on July 7. He was none other than the Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu. Tutu was followed by such plenary speakers as Professor Khalil Osiris, an educator and pastor who spent 20 years in an American prison; Judge Edwin Cameron, a human rights lawyer during apartheid; Suzie Nkambule, a champion of improving infrastructure efficacy in sub-Saharan Africa; Dr. Wilhelm Verwoerd, member of the white, Afrikaner family who had set apartheid in motion (Verwoerd would eventually understand the systematic dehumanization of this segregated political system); and Rory Steyn, who once considered Mandela a terrorist but then became his head of security. Each of these impressive individuals spoke from different perspectives about the importance of global unity.



Inspired by the lessons of Madiba as well as the wisdom of Desmond Tutu and others, Paul hopes to find a way for students at Blue Ridge to have the chance to get to know someone in an indigent situation so that they will gain greater empathy for those less fortunate. In June of 2016, he will have the opportunity to speak at the next IBSC conference in Vancouver, Canada. He looks forward to sharing the success of his Blue Ridge project with others at that time.

Paul and Gail agree that their two-week experience was well worth the trip. In fact, both remark, "The conference itself and the sightseeing we were able to do before and after far exceeded our expectations."

# THE KINGS IN KIGALI RWANDA



BY DAN DUNSMORE

Five years ago, a young Rwandan filmmaker set out to tell a story of radical forgiveness - *Imbabazi*. He wrote and shot a film script following the friendship of two boys from different ethnic groups growing up in an increasingly divided Rwanda. This is the story line that drew Blue Ridge School's Director of Performing Arts Jerry King and Registrar and Financial Aid Coordinator Laura King back to Rwanda this summer. The filmmaker Joel Karekezi was willing to work with them to see if the story of the film could translate successfully to the live musical theater stage.

Parallel to this project, the Kings were asked to assist in launching Rwanda's first-ever Ubumuntu Arts Festival. Last spring, Laura had made contact with Hope Azeda, Executive Director of Mashirika Performing Arts and Media Company, who extended the invitation to come be part of the Festival team.

Azeda's *Bridge of Roses* had first been performed in July of 2014 at the Kigali Genocide Memorial Amphitheater. The multi-media piece tells the stories of three Rwandans' lives post-genocide. Jerry would direct a restaging of *Bridge of Roses*, and Laura would put her administrative skills and costuming expertise to use to assist the efforts.

As Jerry rehearsed both *Imbabazi* and *Bridge of Roses* with the various actors in the weeks leading up to the Festival, he gained a deep respect for each of them. "They were talented, skilled and committed, but they were also utterly unpretentious, genuine and appreciative. And they laughed easily and frequently. For many of them, their creative life was their avocation, squeezed in around day jobs."

After a full month of auditions, costume assembling, theme song composing, set building with Irishman Matt Deely and one intense rehearsal after another, the First Annual Ubumuntu Arts Festival came to fruition on Saturday and Sunday, July 11 and 12, at the Kigali Genocide Memorial Amphitheater.

Jerry and Matt conducted a tag-team workshop on "The Basics of Set Design" during one of the workshop sessions. Each participant had to think of a simple storyline they already knew, then pull one visual element from the story to analyze for shape, color, texture, movement, function, idea-association, etc. Another session was a panel discussion on the topic "What About the Post-genocide Generation?" This proved to be profound, important, genuine and hopeful.

The two evening performance sets on Saturday and Sunday were engaging, challenging, sometimes riveting and sometimes delightful.

**"When you step outside [your] world calluses are peeled back, scales fall from your eyes, realities seen and unseen snap into sharper focus. Fears and limitations come to the fore, but so do passions, strengths, gifts and calling." - Jerry King**

All of the chaotic preparation had definitely paid off as the performers depicted some stunningly jarring realities, past and present, that would prompt a viewer discretion advisory in the States.

The highlight of the festival for Jerry and Laura was the staged reading of the seven Act I scenes of *Imbabazi*. Even though the performers held scripts, they also learned that physical acting told the story even better. In fact, many audience members - both Rwandans and non-Rwandans - were transfixed and deeply touched by the reading and the movement.

Though it would be impossible to capture the full impact this experience had on Jerry and Laura, Jerry attempts to summarize when he says, "When you step outside the world as you've come to know it, calluses are peeled back, scales fall from your eyes, realities seen and unseen snap into sharper focus. Fears and limitations come to the fore, but so do passions, strengths, gifts and calling. We highly recommend it."

# FIRST ALUMNI GOLF CLASSIC



AN EXCERPT FROM AN UPCOMING BOOK ABOUT BLUE RIDGE SCHOOL  
BY MR. PETER HOLLAND '66



Ben Hiatt '71 and Jimmy Crocker '72

The Blue Ridge School Alumni Golf Classic was first played at Wintergreen Resort's Stoney Creek golf course in September of 1991. The tournament was the brainchild of two loyal alums who have to this day maintained a friendship that began at BRS in the fall of 1969. Ben Hiatt '71 and Jimmy Crocker '72 started an event that has brought Baron alums back together each fall during Homecoming weekend for the past twenty-five years.

Here is how it all began. Ben and Jimmy would always go to various BRS alumni phonathons together that were considered the "go to" to raise money for the School. They would be sure to sit near one another so that they could laugh and joke while also asking the guy on the other end of the phone for a donation. Afterwards, the two would go somewhere for a couple of post-phonathon beverages. In 1990 or early 1991, Ben and Jimmy were planning to take part in an alumni phonathon in the Washington, DC, area — probably in Mclean, Virginia, at the insurance office of George Moore '80. Both of them had experienced horrendous days at work and really didn't feel like chatting it up with classmates before asking them for money. They stopped at a watering hole to call George (pre cell-phone days) to tell him they had to back out.

Ben and Jimmy felt rather bad about not honoring their commitment to take part in the phonathon. Several days later Ben called Jimmy and suggested they begin an alumni golf tournament to provide them an excuse not to participate in these annual phonathons. Jimmy agreed, and the rest is history. Having played in several

charity and company golf tournaments, they thought just maybe something like this would work for the Blue Ridge alums. Jimmy is an avid golfer and a good one at that. With Ben in the hospitality business, it was a natural fit. Their plan to make the proposed golf tournament profitable was to ask each of the School's vendors to sponsor a hole on the course. It just seemed fair that, since these vendors were profiting from doing business with Blue Ridge, they should give a little back to the School. Also, as with all the other golf tournaments in which Ben and Jimmy had played, there should be an auction of prizes donated either by generous alums or the same vendors.

They decided that the golf event should coincide with the annual BRS Homecoming each fall. Since the Homecoming football game is always on Saturday, it made sense to hold the golf tournament on the Friday of that weekend. Wintergreen seemed like a good location, a relatively close resort that both Ben and Jimmy frequently visited. It had two great golf courses, one in the valley and one on top of Wintergreen Mountain. Plus, the wives could take advantage of Wintergreen's services by having a massage, hiking, playing tennis, shopping or taking it easy in a beautiful and scenic mountain location as they admired the fall foliage.

Soon Crocker and Hiatt mapped out their plan. They retained a graphic artist, developed a logo consistent with their view of the mountains associated with Blue Ridge, had it embroidered on a shirt. They then approached Assistant Headmaster Ed McFarlane in 1991 about the idea of

an event that they thought would bring the Blue Ridge family together during Homecoming each year and raise some much needed funds for the Alumni Council. Ed loved the idea and presented it to the administration. The plan was for Ben and Jimmy to spread the word to the alums and to ask the School's vendors for hole sponsorships. Alumni Director Troy Newbraugh was also important in helping secure sponsors and managing the tournament. Wintergreen Resorts and their head golf pro were really excited for the September event. Ben and Jimmy convinced Wintergreen to reserve discounted rooms and US Airways to provide discounted flights. The 1st Alumni Golf Classic attracted around thirty to thirty-five golfers, and a few wives joined in at the dinner and auction that chilly Friday night.

Suffice it to say, the first golf tournament was the start of something that would only become better with time. More importantly, it continues to promote friendship among alumni and brings them back to a school-related event that encourages them to become more involved with the School.

At present the annual Alumni Golf Classic attracts about sixty golfers each year. This includes wives, parents of alums and current students. Twenty-five years later, the dinner and auction at Wintergreen include more than eighty enthusiastic golfers, their family members and friends, who enjoy the camaraderie while raising money for Blue Ridge. Thanks to Ben Hiatt and Jimmy Crocker for their ongoing loyalty, for strengthening bonds and for establishing an event that has raised more than \$250,000 to date for School programs and activities.



## IN MEMORY OF TREY HIGGINS '86

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

**As George, Trey and Trey's friend walked down the Chapel steps [on graduation day in 1986], Trey suddenly bolted toward the lake. No words were spoken as George and his friend ran after him. All three jumped into the lake in a spontaneous graduation celebration that they were told had not been seen before. Today, the jump into the lake is a graduation tradition.**

Bryan was also impressed with how Trey conducted himself as a fellow Prefect and Honor Council member as well as a cross country runner. This prompted Bryan to pull out his 1986 yearbook. There on a page about the cross country team, the quotation reads that Trey "set a very positive tone for all of his teammates." Bryan would go so far as to say that Trey set that same positive tone for the entire school.

A memorial service for Trey was held at his family's farm in Georgia on July 18. His Blue Ridge advisor Brandon Deane attended the service. He and Trey had developed a close relationship during Trey's two years at the School as Brandon also taught him math and physics. In addition, Trey and his roommate George became reliable babysitters for the Deanes. Enjoying the Cokes and a pizza that the Deanes would leave in the fridge as well as a pile of VCR tapes by the TV, the duo would keep the Deanes' children entertained all evening. At bedtime, they would play their guitars and sing Beatles songs. Brandon's children are now in their 30's and still love those tunes.

Trey confessed to Brandon during his junior year that he was no good at math but that he had to learn it because he wanted to fly jets. Brandon saw him through Algebra II that junior year, then pre-calculus and physics his senior year and was constantly amazed at Trey's commitment to his goal of flying for the US Navy. Trey even coined a phrase that is often used these days but had not

been heard by Brandon in the 80's. Whenever he'd face a bump in the road, he would assure Brandon and himself, "No worries, man."

During his training for that career, Trey traveled from Oceana, Virginia, to Gordonsville, Virginia, one afternoon to see George. He was far enough along in his training that he was able to make the trip in a Beechcraft T34 Bravo. George had his pilot's license, too, but had never been inside a T34. A few of Trey's flight maneuvers that afternoon while he as pilot and George as backseat passenger surveyed central Virginia will remain confidential. George is willing to admit, though, that Trey buzzed just above the tree tops as they passed over the Blue Ridge campus so that they might take a closer look at their alma mater.

That was Lt. Cmdr. Edgar Turley "Trey" Higgins III. He eventually became a US Navy Strike Fighter Tactics instructor as part of the Top Gun program in Nevada. He would often fly foreign-made aircraft to simulate dog fighting with his trainees. Yes, he loved adventure. He also loved his family and his country. He loved Blue Ridge and the friends he made here.

On Brandon's classroom desk is a photograph of Trey standing in front of a plane in which he completed his flight training. His handwritten note to Brandon, dated February 22, 1991, reads, "The dream has come to life. I graduated number one in my class . . . I got jets."

## WELCOME, SAM!



Sam Fosdick '05 has joined the Blue Ridge staff as the new Director of Annual Giving and Alumni Relations. He is a graduate of the University of Missouri where he received a B.A. in U.S. History and a minor in Rural Sociology. Sam is also a graduate of the Republican National Committee's campaign management college.

Following graduation, Sam was drawn to a career in politics - specifically political campaigns, where he specialized in grassroots strategy, targeting and campaign management. He has worked on congressional, senatorial and gubernatorial campaigns for the last three political cycles in five different states. Most recently, Sam served as the campaign manager and finance director for a U.S. Congressional campaign in the 5th District of Oklahoma. In this role, he directed a team that raised over a million dollars in both PAC and individual contributions. This and other experiences have helped Sam develop strong skills that enable him to bring communities together and create persuasive messages.

Outside of the political arena, Sam has been a strong alumni advocate for Blue Ridge. He created and helps organize the Alumni Lacrosse Game, which is now in its sixth year. He was honored with the Blue Ridge School Young Alum of the Year award in 2010.

In his free time Sam enjoys playing lacrosse, hiking, fishing and being a ski instructor in Teton Valley, Idaho.

# IN THE BAND UPDATE

BY DAN DUNSMORE



**SIDE A** FIELD OF DAISIES, NO NEVER, WALKMAN, KICKED OUT  
**SIDE BEEF** ARTSY BOY, COME BACK/FIRE



In School Suspension Band, 2014 - Standing from left: Jae Won Park '14, Nariman Muldashev '15, Jonah Werner '16, Tom Wang '16, Ken Cen '15, Spencer Scrubbs '14, Zach Temin '16, Eric Moon '15 and Desean Bonner '15. Seated from left: Hale Holback '14, E.J. de la Torre and Jimmy Fleck '14.

It was the summer of 2008. Jon Baker, current Blue Ridge librarian, and I were wrapping up a story about alumni who had played in various BRS bands throughout the years. I knew as we put the final touches on the story that it really wasn't final. There just had to be more Blue Ridge bands out there. Speed ahead to the winter of 2014. Jon brought me a recording of six songs by a BRS group called Beef People. My interest was once again immediately sparked. Accompany that with having heard the musical sounds of Blue Ridge School's 2013-2014 band called In-School Suspension, and I was ready to write a follow-up to the 2008 story.

4 and Apogee in the early 80's. Once it was announced to BRS alumni that I was writing a follow-up story, I heard from members of Beef People from the mid-80's, Plasmatic Funk and Gnome Without a Home from the mid-90's, and Blue Ridge's band In-School Suspension.

Many aspects of life at Blue Ridge School are bonding experiences for the students. Being in a band, I have learned, is one of the strongest.

## BEEF PEOPLE 1984-1985:

Brian Childers, vocals; Rob Buckingham, guitar; Willy MacLean '86, bass; Jack Massey '85, drums; Michael Dean, guitar

Willy came to Blue Ridge School in 1982 from Louisville, Kentucky, and was assigned a roommate by the name

of Rob Buckingham from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Rob was a funny guy who was a great guitar player from the Eddie Van Halen school. Willy had come with an armful of punk/hardcore records, his Fender-size bass and a Traynor bloc amp with the intention of forming a band. Rob and he and occasionally others began meeting in an attic space in the main academic building to play music by other artists. Around 1984 they began playing their own songs. At about this same time, after trying G.N.P. (Gross National Product) and S.I.N. (Safety In Numbers), they settled on the name Beef People, which came from an advertising slogan that southern grocery store chain Winn-Dixie once used.

Rob, Brian and Willy found themselves in a tight spot one weekend in D.C. thanks

to Rob's friendliness with a young lady at a concert. A brawl was about to happen until they narrowly escaped. They slept on the rainy sidewalk under a movie marquee that night. It was highly Punk Roc. They had their cred. Unfortunately, Rob left Blue Ridge soon after that. The band replaced him with a guy named Michael Dean, who wasn't even a Blue Ridge student. Michael commuted from Charlottesville for practices.

The Beef People EP called "Music for Men" was recorded during Spring Break in DC at Inner Ear Studios, which was the preferred studio for the DC hardcore punk scene. Jack remembers that the owner's studio doubled as his daughter's playroom. "During record level checks, he didn't like my kick sound. He walked into the studio, grabbed a Raggedy Ann doll from his daughter's stack of stuffed toys and muffled my kick drum with it!"

From the session came 12 originals and a cover of 'Fire' by Jimi Hendrix. Of the 12, the band chose half for a 7" EP; 'Field of Daisies', 'No Never', 'Walkman', 'Kicked Out', 'Artsy Boy' and the 'Come Back/Fire' continuum. The EP was released on the Catch Trout label. John Beers also sent the Beef People material to T.P.O.S., a tape label who put the songs "No Never," "Pavlov's Dog" and "Artsy Boy" on the "South" tape of a 'War Between the States' two-tape set (TPOS 041) to get the name of the band out there. The EP was produced by John Beers, who ran the record label Catch Trout in Charlottesville.

There was a follow-up EP released that includes all of the previously unreleased songs from that Inner Ear session as well as some boombox recordings they made

in the attic. It's called "Pavlov's Dog" on Artcore records out of England.

John also played their amateur recordings on his radio show at WTJU. Eric Ruoss, the Head of School at that time, gave them permission to play in-town gigs at places such as Trax, Mulrooney's and a few parties. Michael remembers one gig the band played for about 30 people in a place that held 800. Everyone was in the back of the room, and it felt like they were playing to the Grand Canyon. After a couple songs, Michael said over the mic, "I'm not playing another note until everyone in this room joins us on stage." They all did. The stage suddenly became the whole concert, people were only a few feet away, and it got really intimate and fun. Brian had some electric hair trimmers and gave 25 cent haircuts to about a third of the audience between songs. He also shaved Michael's head while he was doing a guitar solo.

With Brian's and Jack's graduation, the band dissolved. Willy attended the University of Colorado-Boulder for one year where his interests morphed into Grateful Dead-head-ism and eventually back into the independent scene of the early nineties. Since 1993, he has played with the Drag City band King Kong and also with a band called Anomoanon. He recently started a "ground-based" aerial photography business called Birds-Eye Elevated Photography and lives back in Louisville.

Brian went on to sing for a New York hardcore band called Crawlppy while living in Red Hook in Brooklyn. He had been a field operative helping with the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and was working as an American Red Cross

warehouse supervisor in Washington, DC, when he passed away on November 17, 2007.

Jack played in the rock band Storm Orphans, country punk band The Inlaws, and ska band The Halftones. He has toured the United States but has never seen any major label record deals — only independent releases. He currently writes and records with a songwriting collective and plays in several cover bands in Atlanta, Georgia. Michael moved to San Francisco, then eventually to Los Angeles, and now lives in Casper, Wyoming, where he writes books, makes films and hosts a radio show called The Freedom Feens.

### PLASMATIC FUNK 1993:

Billy Groves '95, drums; Pete Hansen '95, vocals; Matt Wolfe '95, guitar; David Hallum '94, bass

Pete attended summer school at Blue Ridge in 1992 and met Matt, a real deal on guitar. He played speed metal and was very talented. Pete was a bass player and was still in the early stages of learning the instrument. They decided to start working out some tunes and putting Plasmatic Funk together in the fall.

Pete's role in the band changed drastically after Christmas at which time a new kid named David came to school. He was a bass-playing phenom from Nashville, Tennessee. In order to stay in the band, Pete became the vocalist.

READ THE ENTIRE STORY ONLINE AT  
[HTTP://WWW.BLUERIDGESCHOOL.COM/  
 ABOUT-US/NEWS-DETAIL/IN-THE-BAND-  
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Aerial photo by Harry Buchanan '16

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