

# AfterMath

Summer 2018



MAINE SCHOOL OF SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS

Welcome to the summer 2018 issue of AfterMath!

In this issue we have Luke's last dispatch from the great white north as Executive Director, a recap of the class of 1998's 20-year reunion (twenty years!), and an introductory letter from the new Executive Director, Mr. David Pearson. I had the chance to speak with David on the phone a few weeks ago, and I am excited about what he brings to the school and its future. As he says in his letter, please do feel free to reach out to him or drop by if you find yourself in the area.

Ella and Rachel are starting to think about this year's End of

the World party and would love to hear your suggestions – see their column on page 2.

This issue also has the first installment of "Ask and Alumni," a place for you to have your burning questions asked about life, the universe, and everything answered by fellow alums. 21 people responded to the survey, which isn't too shabby for a first foray, but I'd love to hear from more of you! So start thinking of questions you'd like asked (as general or specific as you like!) and send them my way (my email address is below) for the next round of questions, which will be posted in late

September/early October.

As always, if you have news to share, you can email me at [Gretchen@pineo.net](mailto:Gretchen@pineo.net) - please send your updates for the next issue, coming in December, by late November.

Yours,  
Gretchen Pineo, Editor  
Class of 1997

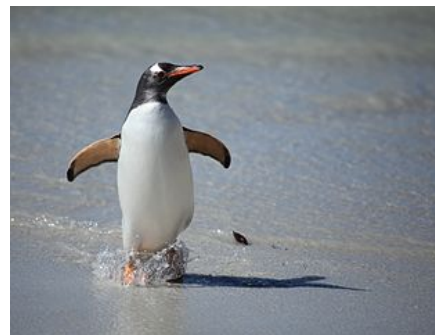


Photo by Liam Quinn.

## In this issue:

Page 2 – Luke's Last Dispatch, Alumni Association Update, and Reunion News

Page 3 – Ask An Alumni

Page 4 – Letter to Alumni from new Executive Director, David Pearson

## Luke's Last Dispatch



Hello and Goodbye,

What a long, strange, and wonderful trip it has been. I am so thankful for having had the opportunity to both teach at and lead our school for the last nine years.

I am looking forward to spending some more time with my wife Lisa ('99), my dog Bandit, my family, and the great outdoors that makes Maine such a special and awesome place. Though I am not sure what my next adventure will be for the long term, I know I will be in the Northern Penobscot region for the upcoming school year working in education and with Lee Academy. If you find yourself hiking around Mount Katahdin or visiting the new Woods and Waters National Monument, please do look me up.

I am very excited for the work that Mr. David Pearson will be accomplishing at MSSM in the coming years. He has the energy, the experience, and the love for MSSM and its students to see our school succeed in great and wonderful ways. Please join me in wishing him the best of success as he takes the helm of the nation's best public magnet school!

Finally, I would like to leave you with a haiku:

The north skies glow bright,  
Inspiration fills my soul,  
Our dreams continue.

May you manifest the world you wish to see. Come back to Maine, there is work to be done!

See you at the next adventure,  
Luke Shorty '98  
Shorty.luke\_alumnus@mssm.org

## Alumni Association Update

Happy July! The MSSM Alumni Association hopes everyone has been enjoying the beautiful summer. Ella Coffren (2004) was extra excited to run into Hunter Meyer (2005) at Reid State Park in July. This was a great reminder that too many of us aren't able to get together! We are looking for feedback for the best ways to create a gathering for all MSSM alumni (any graduation year). We would love to hear ideas, dates, etc. that folks are interested in.

With a new school year fast approaching, we also hope to continue serving you the best we are able. Do you have any pressing issues you'd like us to work on? Ideas that you want to reach the MSSM alumni community with? Please—reach out! We are here to help you and continue the prestige that MSSM has fostered for itself throughout the country. Please email Alumni Association Vice President Ella Coffren at [ella.coffren@gmail.com](mailto:ella.coffren@gmail.com) with any ideas, questions, or comments.

We look forward to hearing from you all!  
Rachel and Ella

## Reunion News

The class of 1998 held their 20-year reunion at the end of June in beautiful Harpswell, Maine, at Heather Merriman's parents' house. Members of the class of 1998, as well as a few folks from the class of 1997 gathered together on a sunny Saturday for grilling, downhill bocce (which went about as well as you'd expect) and heated Kubb and Cornhole games. The reunion continued into Sunday, with many people camping in the yard, enjoying seaside breezes and good company.



Photo courtesy Dan Fiore ('98).

Back row: Woody Anderson ('97), Tom Leahey ('97), Matthew Tardiff ('98), Garth Danielson ('98), Kayla Matthews, Clayton Matthews ('98), Ryan Shephard ('98).

Middle Row: Kate McCarthy ('98), Christine Voyer ('98), Jennifer Damon ('98), Morgan Witham Hiltz ('98), Gretchen (Perry) Pineo ('97), Holly Harps ('98), Jennica (Starrett) Nattress ('98), Dan Fiore ('98).

Front Row: Heather Merriman ('98), Luke Shorty ('98), Adrian Smith, Ruth Lyons ('98), Kelly Fiore.

## ASK AN ALUMNI

### *Why did you decide to/not to go to graduate school?*

- I wanted to teach at the college level, so I obtained a Ph.D. in chemistry. – Nick Colella (2005)
- I was burned out after undergrad, and terrified of being broke forever. I jumped at the chance to have virtually any paying job. Going to grad school is starting to sound a little more attractive after a good, long break from academia, but the motivations are certainly different than if I had jumped right from undergrad into graduate school. – Arya (2008)
- I decided to go to graduate school because I wanted the opportunity to ask and answer important questions about human evolution. – Devin L. Ward (2011)
- I went to grad school because I observed that the projects that folks with graduate degrees worked on were more fun. – Jon (1997)
- I had been working at an animal shelter for nine years and had a good understanding of the operations side of the industry but I wanted to learn more about the business side, so I went for my MBA with a non-profit management concentration. I took one class at a time for four years. Also, the industry is professionalizing rapidly and I wanted to be a part of that advancement, for myself, for my company, and for the industry as well. – Abby (1997)
- I wanted to go to graduate school right after undergrad to not lose the motivation of school. But the best advice I got in undergrad that I never followed was: Don't go to grad school unless you know you will need it for work. Don't do grad school just for the fun of it. – James Havu (2005)
- I thought I wanted to be a professor at the time, so I applied for my Ph.D. I realized I didn't LOVE math, I just REALLY REALLY LIKED math. So I got my MS instead. It was a great time. Lots of work, but a great time. – Luke (1998)

### *How did you get your first job?*

- I applied to dozens of jobs and landed an interview. For me it was a numbers game of just sending out applications and seeing what panned out. I still hate applying for jobs and don't know of anyone who likes it. – Kathe Todd-Brown (2000)

### *How did you find an apartment in a new city?*

(Editor's note: many people answered 'Craigslist').

- Before I even started looking, I started with a budget. Then I made an honest list of "must haves" and "nice to haves" before I took to Google. – Whiney Bouchard (2006)

### *What's the difference between a job and a career?*

- A job is how you make money. A career challenges you, rewards you, makes you feel fulfilled. – Andrea (2005)
- A career is the overall direction of your working life and the general category of your accumulated expertise. A job is the chunk of your career that you spend in a particular role or in a particular company. – Abby (1997)

### *What do you do professionally/unprofessionally?*

- Family and childrens services social worker. – Amanda (Harrop) Chambers (2009)
- Special Ed teacher in an autism classroom. – Andrea (2005)
- I teach. Currently doing what amounts to a 'teaching post-doc' while looking for asst. professor positions. Nick Colella (05)
- I am an intelligence weapons officer in the United States Air Force. – Whitney Bouchard (2006)
- Assistant Engineer for MaineDOT, Highway Management Group. – James Havu (2009)
- Program manager for Digital Pilots at Current, powered by GE. – Emily Lauren Martis (2000)
- Propulsion engineering, aka I get paid to play with rocket engines! – Kineo Wallace (2013)
- I am a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Toronto, studying Evolutionary Anthropology, and I am a varsity athlete competing on the Rowing and Nordic Skiing teams. – Devin L. Ward (2011)
- Registered nurse for a telehealth company. – Melissa Konieczka (1997)
- Business Analyst for Agile software development. – Anthony Allen (1998)
- Democratic Campaign operations. – Tyler Beaulieu (2009)
- Professionally I manage animal shelters. Unprofessionally I swear a lot. – Abby (1997)

Dear MSSM Alumni,

In the last issue of AfterMath, Luke Shorty noted that the MSSM Board of Trustees had embarked upon a national search for a new Executive Director to take over the reins following his seven-year tenure in that position. I am the result of that search!

It is perhaps therefore appropriate in this, my first contribution to AfterMath, that I introduce myself to you all, and at the same time provide a 'look forward' brief on some of the challenges and many opportunities that MSSM will navigate in the years ahead, for I am completely committed to open, transparent, and all informed communication as a priority. But before this, I would like to again thank Luke for his stewardship and adroit leadership of what is undoubtedly the finest school in Maine, and on a more personal level for his many kindnesses in making the leadership transition essentially smooth and seamless to the benefit of the faculty and staff, the wider MSSM community, and especially the current student body.

Some of you will have read that I am an eighteen-year veteran of boarding school education having served variously and often simultaneously as a teacher, athletic coach, department chair, academic dean, assistant headmaster, and head of school. In all of these roles, the one constant was that I always taught students, and I will continue to do so here at MSSM - this year Advanced Placement European History. By the by, in the past I also taught AP U.S. History - because you all know that you just have to have a Brit teaching this subject in order to really get it right :) Actually, I have dual nationality - British and American - so it's not quite as bad as it sounds! But a simple guiding faith is that in a school, everything we do is orientated toward providing the very best educational experience for students, and within this quality teaching is very much the point of the spear - so it makes sense that I also share in this mission-critical endeavor, and of course there is nothing better than being with students and sharing in their intellectual curiosity and growth.

Before becoming a teacher, I was a British Army Infantry Officer and graduate of both the Army Staff College and Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. This first career saw global deployments and duties from platoon commander through to staff officer, and itself was consequent upon undergraduate studies at Aberystwyth University and graduate degrees from Cambridge, Aberdeen, and Cheltenham Universities in the field of international politics and strategic studies. And I think in large part, it was this strategic training both at college and within the military that appealed to the MSSM Board of Trustees in appointing me as the new Executive Director, for a clear Board priority is to create an MSSM Strategic Plan in order to shape and take control of our own destiny in a very complex global environment. The timing for this undertaking is good, with a twenty-fifth anniversary just two years out at which time we want to appropriately and inclusively celebrate our wonderful past and unveil our plans for the future.

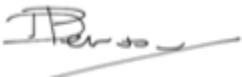


This effectively gives us a two-year window of opportunity in which to seriously strategize, and the approach of choice will be that of Operational Design (OD). In outline, OD is a continuous integrated methodology for applying critical and creative thinking to understand, visualize, and describe an environment, and identify problems, that should lead to prioritized approaches to agreed solutions. Ideally, this undertaking will involve all of our constituents - alumni, parents, faculty and staff, students, trustees, friends of the school, and will kick off this August with the faculty and staff, followed in September with a Board of Trustees planning retreat, and throughout the school year with deliberately planned activities that will include current students. As we gather momentum and codify our timeline, please watch out for alumni inclusion opportunities, because your viewpoints and opinions are very important to this process - which will itself be ongoing and embedded in the routine life of MSSM for modern planning must be continuous ... as John F. Kennedy said, "For time and the world do not stand still. Change is the law of life and those who look only to the past and the present are certain to miss the future."

As we plan forward, our strengths are legend and were articulated in my community letter of 14 June; but are worth repeating: an amazing faculty and staff who deliver division one academics in the service of exceptional students. But our challenges are real and also worth repeating: our dormitory is at capacity; our program resides in an old and tired facility which we rent; our communications need to improve (and the irony of this alumni publication being produced outside of MSSM has not escaped me); and our data integration is woefully inadequate.

We will build upon our strengths and address our existing challenges, although I am sure that others will emerge in the course of our deliberations. Concurrently, we will marshal and deploy our generational talents; and over the next few years create a bright, relevant, and sustainable future for this gem of a school. This is an ambitious undertaking and will require enormous and unceasing energy and effort; but it is an undertaking that is absolutely necessary as MSSM reaches a tipping point in its history. In anticipation of your help in this important work, I wholeheartedly thank you in advance, and want you all to know that my door is always open, and that a personal priority is developing deep and lasting MSSM alumni connections and relationships so that we remain an MSSM community for all time in all places.

Very sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "D. Pearson", with a horizontal line extending to the right.

David Pearson

CC: BOT.