

ALUMNI *in the spotlight*

MIKE GORRA, CLASS OF 1988

Mike Gorra graduated from Shepaug in 1988, going on to Colby College where he graduated with a BA in 1992. Mike earned his DVM from Cornell College of Veterinary Medicine in 1997, and he currently has his own veterinary practice, Aspetuck Animal Hospital, in New Preston.

"The science department and Mr. Dave Werkhoven, in particular, pushed me to double up on my sciences and take the more challenging classes," Mike explained. He stated that this push gave him the confidence to continue challenging himself once he entered college. According to Mike, his biology teacher, Mr. Emil Gavenas, had a "very dry sense of humor" that helped when the going got tough both in the classroom and on the soccer field.

Mike has many fond memories of Shepaug. One in particular was winning the state doubles tennis title in 1987 while his classmates simultaneously won the state title in baseball. Another of Mike's fond memories was acting and singing in the musical Pippin during his sophomore year. Mike was thrilled to be invited back to participate with other theater alumni in Doug Winkel's last production, Our Town, this past spring. He was one of several parents who sang alongside the high school chorus members in the spring concert.

Mike's Shepaug experience was instrumental in getting him to where he is today. He's equally sure that his classmates were influenced and guided to success as well. "I am continually impressed with many of the teachers and administrators who work tirelessly to improve and adjust to the times and changing challenges they are faced with." He continued, "When asked by new families to the Region where I attended school, I am always proud to say that

I attended Region 12 schools from kindergarten through Grade 12. I'm even prouder to say that both my daughters started kindergarten at WPS and will soon graduate from Shepaug."

Mike is still connected to Shepaug in many ways. Mike and his wife, Michelle, coached the girls middle school soccer team when their daughters were in sixth and eighth grades. In addition, Michelle has served for the last thirteen years as a member of the Region 12 Board of Education. Mike coaches the Shepaug co-op hockey team, serving as the head coach for the last eight years. As a true Shepaug Alum from Washington, he said " I live across the street from Ted Alex field in Washington Depot and watch as many home baseball games as my work schedule will allow."

Mike also gives back to Shepaug as a senior project technical advisor, a participant in several Shepaug career days, and as a member of the advisory board for the AgSTEM project, a board that is made up of area professionals in AgSTEM. He is a true alum!

