

Be a 'geocacher': go on a treasure hunt with your GPS

By Anya Rosenberg and Hannah Warren

Our brows were damp from perspiration and our feet ached from a long day's hike. As we climbed around a peak we saw the hint we had read about, a tree encircled with moss. We circled the tree and hidden under brush and leaves was a small camouflaged canister. Inside the container were a logbook and a collection of treasures.

This canister is known as a "geocache" to the thousands of self-proclaimed geocachers, an online community of hikers who



Courtesy of Google

create and search out each other's placed treasures. Deep in the Leverett Woods, miles from any hint of society, we, Anya Rosenberg, '10, and Hannah Warren, '09, found the ultimate prize for any hiker: a geocache.

Geocaching is a high-tech game of treasure hunt, in which 'geocachers' search for hidden containers using a GPS unit. Geocaching.com is the link for geocachers around the world to create, find, and reflect on geocaching experiences.

"Basically members of the geocaching community hide various kinds of boxes and containers in both public and natural settings," said Julie Jones, an Amherst resident and avid geocacher. The website provides members with specific geographic locations that they plug into their GPS systems.

It is the geocacher's job to follow the GPS' directions to the cache, avoiding rivers, inclines,

and the like along the way. "Geocaching incorporates technology and love of the outdoors and adventure," said Ms. Jones.

"Being the first person to find a new geocache is very competitive and people have been known, myself included, to go out before the sun rises to compete for the bragging rights," said Ms. Jones.

While there are many different cache types, the traditional hidden cache typically contains a logbook, "which people sign with their secret code name which they establish when they join the website," said Ms. Jones. Geocachers fol-

low the rule of leaving "something of equal or better value" to what they take.

Geocaching has existed since 2000, when the U.S. Government unscrambled GPS for accurate civilian use.

On May 3, 2000, a man named Dave Ulmer celebrated the newly public Global Positioning System by hiding a bucket of trinkets and a logbook in the woods outside Portland, Oregon.

By September 2000, Jeremy Irish coined the activity "geocaching" and attempted to trademark the phrase. Irish was also webmaster of Geocaching.com and began to make a profit through advertising and paraphernalia.

Ms. Jones goes on hunts with her husband and daughter and has scouted the "nooks and crannies" of the area. "There are about 800,000 geocaches around the world, and close to 12,000 within 100 miles of Amherst," said Ms. Jones.

Students make plans to take on GCC

By Nina Paus - Weiler

After seeing the class of '09 leave the building for the last time, many students, particularly juniors, are discouraged by the next year in high school they will have to complete in order to get to the same point. Some, however, have opted to spend their next year at Greenfield Community College. GCC is a fully functioning college where students have less of a daily routine in each of their semesters. On any given day one student may have two or three classes while another student may have none. This kind of scheduling gives students much more freedom and flexibility than the average student at ARHS has.

This kind of environment seemed to be the most ap-

pealing thing to the students transferring there next year. Hendrix Berry, '10, said that she is looking forward to an absence of constant adult monitoring. "High school is great, but I'm ready to move on to somewhere less structured," said Berry.

Other transfer students are going to GCC for the increased variety of classes offered there and to further their education in a particular subject. Gordon Kaufman, '10, has taken all of the business and accounting classes offered at ARHS and wants to continue taking them at GCC.

Rachael Perkins, '10, was most excited about the new courses she will be taking, such as the study of human interactions.

GCC can be an alternative for ARHS students but it's not meant for everyone. One down side is that GCC requires tuition, up to \$2,770 per year, whereas ARHS is free and depends on tax money for its funds. GCC is also located about 19 miles away from ARHS and does not offer transportation for its students. Going to a community college is a big change and requires one to be more self-motivated; no detentions are given for too many absences and teachers don't go looking for their students when they haven't turned in their work.

While not everyone can or should go to GCC, but those transferring next year are looking forward to a new and exciting time.

Wind ensemble brings music to poetry

By Rebecca Clingman

On June 1, the sound of a lone piccolo rose up to the ceiling and out to the rapt audience at Buckley Recital Hall. The ARHS wind ensemble was performing *An Emily Dickinson Suite* in its world premier, as composer Christopher Marshall watched happily from the audience. The work is composed of nine short movements, which cost the wind ensemble \$10,000.

Marshall used eight poems that inspired him musically. Since the premier was in Amherst—home of Emily Dickinson—many of these poems were familiar to the audience. The music followed the syllables of the lines, and ranged in theme from joyful to darkly foreboding, reflecting the surprisingly complex world of Dickinson herself.

Ensemble member Nick Baskin, '10, was enthusiastic about how the project turned out. "I loved the chamber aspects, and how it was very

soloistic for instruments that aren't always featured [in other works]."

For band director Brian Messier, the piece represents his last project with this group, since he will not be returning next year (Messier will be completing a master's degree at UMass). It was clear that he found the commission process and the concert as a whole a rewarding experience—he was seen tearing up toward the end of the night.

Unlike orchestras, which have a wealth of classical music written for them, wind ensembles are relatively young innovations. "The oldest piece for wind band is only celebrating its 100 anniversary... but many orchestras have become catalogue societies—new music isn't as popular," said Messier.

Baskin believes commissions are important in order to keep the musical world fresh. "There are always new things to say; new emotional messag-

es. Commissions keep music alive."

The future of *An Emily Dickinson Suite* is not certain, but there is a good chance that it will find a place with other musical groups. Big names in the wind band world have expressed their interest in the piece, such as Frank Battisti, who has conducted at New England Conservatory, and Bill Rowell, who has conducted at UMass. For his part, Mr. Messier plans to try help Marshall get the piece published, and to encourage other wind bands around the country to perform it. He believes that this would most likely be at the collegiate level, "because the piece is very sophisticated."

As for the response of the audience members, they couldn't agree more. "I was very impressed that the wind ensemble could embody such an eloquent interpretation of poetry," said Hannah Tessler, '10.