



## School faces \$1M deficit, Partners told

By Carl Kubler

Mount Greylock Regional High School faces a \$1 million budget shortfall next year, including an anticipated \$240,000 increase in health-insurance premiums for teachers and staff, a meeting of the Greylock Assistance Project (GAP) has been told by Supt. Mark Piechota.

Piechota has issued a plea to parents and the community to attend a Greylock Partners meeting on Monday, Dec. 1, at 7 p.m. at the school library to discuss the situation, and has even told the school-committee he understands his job may have to be combined with the principal position.

Meanwhile, Robert Petricca, school

board chairman, attended Saturday's first community potluck dinner at the school -- with about about 70 people -- and thanked parents for increasing involvement in the school's light. "I don't know at this point if we're going to need a [Proposition 2-1/2] override -- it looks that way," said Petricca. He said the school will start advertising for a new

principal soon to replace the retiring Russell Norton, even though the board may well decide to combine the position with superintendent. "We have to have the option [of hiring]," he said.

On Nov. 17, more than 40 parents and friends of the regional public high school in the Mount Greylock school

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### *Siphoning love, hatred, passion, energy*



Submitted photo

**Colin Gold, left, and Amanda Bell, in the Mount Greylock/Shakespeare & Co. production of, *Twelfth Night*. Review, more photos, Page 7.**

## Clark lab project advances; ties with MGRHS uncertain

Town officials have given key approvals for a Clark Art Institute-backed construction of a conservation laboratory and new campus on Phelps Knoll abutting Mount Greylock RHS. But the project is stalled, at least temporarily, while the Clark seeks a source of water for the new building, MGRHS officials say.

The high school draws water from two wells underneath parking areas. The Sweetwood and Sweet Brook complexes also have their own wells. But test borings on Phelps Knoll have not yet produced a suitable water source, the officials add.

Also pending, they say, are discussions with the Clark about the nature of proposed links between the school and new facility which might lead to new learning or exhibition opportunities for students.

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*JavaJive* coffeehouse goes live on Dec. 5

## Debut of new 'hangout' for region's teens

By the Echo Staff

MGRHS students will have a new entertainment option starting Friday evening, Dec. 5 -- JavaJive.

That's the name a steering committee of 12 teenagers have given to a coffee house which will debut that evening at the First Congregational Church in Williamstown. And organizers say they may seek a location in Lanesborough as well if JavaJive is a hit.

"Williamstown really doesn't have a place for teen-agers to hang out at night. That's one of the primary reasons for the coffeehouse. In addition, it gives talented kids a performance venue, and some business experience."

On sale starting at 7:30 p.m. will be coffee, tea, cocoa, cider, snacks, and desserts. On stage will be young people and friends, playing music, reading poems or writing, or performing in an "open-mike" format. Proceeds will benefit the Greylock Assistance Project ("GAP") Fund, or other programs targeted by the student managers.

The coffeehouse will run monthly, and there will be a cover charge at the door of between \$1 and \$3.

"Williamstown really doesn't have a place for teenagers to hang out at night," Burns says. "That's one of the primary reasons for the coffeehouse. In addition, it gives talented kids a performance venue, and some business experience."

She recalls that she attended a folk coffee house as a 13-year old. "It changed my life," she says. "I saw older kids playing guitar and singing and I wanted to do the same thing, and I did!"

The steering committee of teen-agers will run the coffeehouse with support from adults. The students will make decisions about what food and beverages to serve, how to organize the entertainment, and how to promote the coffeehouse. They'll also pitch in with food, decorations, cleanup and tech support. The adults will help with transportation and other logistics to make it happen.

To sign up to perform, contact Mollie Berman at [The\\_Red\\_Rose\\_House@sailormoon.com](mailto:The_Red_Rose_House@sailormoon.com). To volunteer, contact Burns at 458-0925.



# CLUB NEWS

## Should a teacher fan club be official? An interview with Mr. Dils admirers

EDITOR'S NOTE: *There's a new unofficial club at Mount Greylock . . . the "Mr. Dils Fan Club." It was initiated by sophomores Kyle Flynn-Kasuba, Colin MacDonald, and Simon Reinhardt, all of whom have English teacher Blair Dils in class. Classmate Logan Garrity interviews the founders, who speak with enthusiasm -- and . . . caution . . . candor!*

By Logan Garrity

### Who is Mr. Dils?

Colin: Mr. Dils is a teacher for several honors and AP English classes. He also coaches soccer . . .

Simon: . . . a very important part of his life.

**What do you hope to accomplish with this organization?**

Colin: Boost Dils's self-esteem.

Kyle: Have a field trip to his house.

Simon: Show appreciation.

Colin: Show love.

### Any difficulties in founding this club?

Colin: Mr. Payne has persecuted us by not allowing the club to be official.

Simon: A lot of discrimination is going on here. We can't meet in extended, but other clubs can.

Colin: We can't be in the yearbook.

Kyle: But we're working on it.

Colin: We have over fifty people signed up. If made official, the Mr. Dils Fan Club would be the second-largest student-run organization in the school.

Kyle: We need Dils T-shirts. . .

Colin: . . . already planned.

[Kyle laughs]

Simon: Some people don't want to join -- they must hate Dils.

### How did the idea for this club originate?

Colin: Talking in extended.



Kyle: Marveling at Dils's beauty.

Colin: I thought of it.

Simon: We decided to initiate the club. . .

Colin: . . . as we cheered his soccer team on to a 1-0 victory over the Hoosac Valley Hurricanes.

Kyle: Get this down -- what started as a joke grew to have the second-largest following in the school.

Simon: And to Mrs. Keeley: we're coming for your JCL. We'll be bigger and better!

Colin: Yeah, we'll kick her @\$\$.

**Do you think Mr. Payne has something against Mr. Dils?**

Simon: If we started a Mr. Payne fan club, I doubt we'd encounter such resistance.

### Do you have any other remarks?

Colin: Yeah. We learn from Dils and if we want to start a fan club, we can. Dils also looks like a cute, cuddly koala.

Kyle: Some more ideas:

- Mascot: koala

- Music: by punk rock band *Dils*, off album. . .

All: *Dils, Dils, Dils*

Simon: If you haven't joined yet, listen to this: I got an A- last quarter, and what did you get? Now do you want to join?

### What about your leadership abilities?

Simon: We are wicked sexy. . .

Colin: . . . and so is Mr. Dils.

[laughter]

Simon: Shut up! Stop making fun of me.

Colin: We will be the largest club.

Simon: We never pressured anyone into joining.

**Are there any other supporters of the organization?**

Colin: Will Fogel may be a guest speaker.

Kyle: We will contact Mrs. Dils to see what she says about his life at home.

### What about Dils's grading policy?

Simon: It is unpopular, but Dils does what he can to make us better English students.

Kyle: Not just better students, but better people -- write that down!

Colin: No comment.

**Kyle Jolin says we should hug Dils a lot. Is this true?**

Colin: Yes, Dils is a cuddly koala bear. Every koala needs to be hugged.

Editor: Koalas are awesome.

## JCL team wins in two catapult categories; staffs booth at 'Words'

By Mollie Berman

The Mount Greylock Junior Classical League's intermediate certamen team placed first in its division and the advanced team finished second at a recent Classics Day statewide competition. Club members also ran a booth at the "Words Are Wonderful" celebration held at Williamstown Elementary School.

The "Words are Wonderful" booth promoted Latin by offering numerous exciting activities to the elementary school kids. The booth included face-painting, coloring, word-searches, and many other stations. The idea was to encourage younger children to take an early interest in Latin and the classics.

At the catapult contest, points earned from these contests contribute to Mount Greylock's score at the State Convention. A number of students won in the art competitions, oral and dramatic interpretation contests, and the costume contest.

## K-Glick energetic, commanding

Violinist Lilo Kantorowicz-Glick and pianist James Goldsworthy gave a concert on Sunday, Nov. 23 at the Williamstown elementary school benefiting the Mt. Greylock Regional High School arts programs. The

concert opened with an energetic Suite in A Major by Antonio Vivaldi and moved on to pieces such as the haunting Serenade by Anton Arnesky and the folk-like Two Mazurkas by Henri Wieniawski.

Kantorowicz-Glick, already in her early 80s, is as energetic and commanding as ever. Her bow and fingers moving like any young musician, she brought life to both the fast and playful and the haunting and melancholy.

Kantorowicz-Glick has taught at Bennington College, Mannes College of Music, and Queens College. She has performed around the world at such places as Carnegie Hall and the Shanghai Conservatory. Goldsworthy is a faculty member of the Westminster Choir College of Rider University. And has also toured throughout Europe and North America as accompanist, soloist, and chamber musician.

## Dec. 19 deadline set for MLK speech entries; prizes are offered

A deadline of Dec. 19 has been set for submissions to the fifth annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. speech contest. Any Mount Greylock RHS student is eligible to enter. Submitting student authors of short speeches on topics inspired by the civil-rights leader's legacy will compete for U.S. Savings Bonds and gift certificates.

Speeches, approximately two to three pages in length, need to be submitted to History teacher Tom Ostheimer (Room No. 52) by the Dec. 19 deadline. Authors will deliver their speeches during a ceremony on Thurs., Jan. 15, at the school.

King was assassinated in April 1968 outside his Memphis, Tenn., motel room. The night before, he delivered his prophetic speech "I Have Been to the Mountaintop." He spoke: "I don't know what will happen now. We've got some difficult days ahead. But it doesn't matter with me now. Because I've been to the mountaintop. And I don't mind. Like anybody, I would like to live a long life. . . . But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will. And he's allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over. And I've seen the Promised Land."

Mount Greylock students inspired by King's words should imagine for their topic that they have, like King, "reached the mountain top and looked over and seen the Promised Land," said Ostheimer. The speech assignment, according to Ostheimer: "Describes your vision of this world."

## BSO, dancer may visit school with Friends of Arts help

Visits by members of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and an Afro-Caribbean dancer are being planned by the Mount Greylock Friends of the Arts. And on Wed., Dec. 3, the BSO has paid for two buses to take high-schoolers to an open rehearsal at Symphony Hall in Boston with Wynton Marsalis.

The dancer will visit gym classes and offer dance lessons for about two weeks. The BSO members are tentatively scheduled to conduct master classes for some of the school's more accomplished musicians. The Friends are also working with the administration to organize nonacademic enrichment programs in local museums.

## TEAM ECHO

The Mount Greylock Echo is the student newspaper of Mount Greylock Regional High School in Williamstown, Mass. It is published once per month during the academic year. Each issue is developed and edited by a team of "issue editors" and writers. Any Mount Greylock student may join the staff, attend meetings and submit articles. A year-to-year governance structure for The Echo is under development.

### Issue editors, contributors

This month's issue editor was Carl Kubler. The next issue will be published Thurs., Dec. 18; story deadline is Dec. 11; December editors are Connor Casey and Kejia Tang. Staffers or contributors for this issue included: Sam Baldwin, Paul Bergmann, Mollie Berman, Naima Brown, Charles Cochran, Logan Garrity, Carl Kubler, Heather Murtagh, Jason Silberstein, and Lucy White.

### Next meeting -- Thurs. Dec. 4

The next staff meeting, Thurs., Dec. 4, at 2:30 p.m., in Room 60 (back of library). All are welcome.

Mount Greylock Echo

Room 60

Mount Greylock Regional High School

1781 Cold Spring Road

Williamstown MA 01267

(413) 458-9582

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echo@newshare.com



# Students asked to donate for Central American childrens' books

A Williamstown-based group of adults and students is circulating collection envelopes at Mount Greylock Regional High School to help buy Spanish-language children's books for Central American libraries.

The envelopes were being circulated Thursday, Friday and Monday, Nov. 20, 21 and 24, according to

organizer Sue O'Riley, who is herself a teacher at the Williamstown Elementary School.

The bookdrive for this winter's trip is sponsored by the Mt. Greylock Spanish Club and the Language Department.

The Rural Literacy Project has developed two small libraries, the first in Honduras and the most recent in Guatemala, O'Riley says. Both libraries are in very poor areas. Prior to these libraries children lived without access to the world of books. Books purchased with funds from the MGRHS drive will be taken to Guatemala over the holidays by O'Riley, two college students, and by Zoe Remillard, a MGRHS student who is also O'Riley's daughter.

"A library was established this summer with materials from money raised at Williamstown Elementary School, the Beach Party Dance at the First Congrega-

tional Church, and other local fundraising events," said O'Riley. "We plan on expanding this small library with the purchase of environmental books and readers for older children."

Former Mt. Greylock students Sarah Heslip, Mollie Remillard, Emily Mastellone-Synder, Erica O'Neill, as well as band members Nate Fowle, Keegan Shelling and Brian Thompson from "Subject To Change" and Ben Jaffe, Chris Parkinson, Nick Jandl from "The Villians" all worked to make the summer trip possible, O'Riley said.

Donations can be made directly to the Rural Literacy Project and sent to O'Riley, 46 Maple St., Williamstown MA 01267. O'Riley is also seeking volunteers to assist. Contact her via email at [sue.oriley@verizon.net](mailto:sue.oriley@verizon.net).

## \$1M deficit?

**Continued from Page 1**

library to review the anticipated district budget for the 2004-2005 school year, the future of the GAP Fund, and the status of activity and athletic participation fees, according to Beth Goodman, one of the GAP organizers. School committee members, administrators, and representatives of the GAP Fund committee provided information and answered budget questions.

In spite of a 2/3 across the board cut in funding for athletics and activities, the GAP Fund has enabled all fall clubs, teams, and arts programs to go forward. Funding continues for winter and spring activities and athletics, with a strong likelihood that nothing will have to be cut, GAP organizer Lisa Hiley said before the meeting.

"But the budget outlook for the 2004-05 school year looks even grimmer than before," said Hiley, urging students to get involved in finding ways to close the funding gap.

Here is an account of the Nov. 17 meeting, as written by organizers, including Gary and Denise Spencer:

Volunteer organizers reported Nov. 17 that the GAP Fund has so far raised just over \$166,000 (\$26,000 for teachers, the rest for athletics and activities or A/A). Most teams and clubs are fully funded, with money carrying forward to next year. A few very large gifts made up the bulk of the fundraising.

At the Nov. 17 meeting, according to those present, several parents said the school committee should restore funding to sports and activities and should at least put the full cost of funding those items back into the budget so that cuts reflect the true loss of opportunities. It was suggested that the school commit to funding at least 50 percent of the activities to relieve the fundraising burden. School committee members present responded, it was reported, that in a choice between laying off teachers and curtailing academic programs, extracurricular activities have to take second priority.

"The need for ongoing fundraising was acknowledged, with the GAP committee being quite clear about needing a lot more help to make this work again," GAP meeting organizers Denise and Gary Spencer wrote in an email account of the Nov. 17 meeting. They added: "There was some discussion of political solutions, the possibility of passing another override, and the need to keep pressure on our legislators, as well as the idea for a consortium of schools across the county to address these issues."

The Spencers reported that much of the discussion centered on participation fees, which they said are being charged by 7 of the 11 high schools in Berkshire County (most at \$100). While a couple of people felt that the current fee of \$30 should be maintained, most were heard by the Spencers to feel that a fee of \$50 or even \$100 was not unreasonable, as long as ways were found to provide funds for those in need and to alleviate the costs for families with several children participating in several activities each.

"The agreement for the need for fees was unanimous, with a number of people saying that we could not continue to rely on some parents to make large donations while others paid nothing," the Spencers wrote in their account.

The Spencers said the following suggestions for revising a fair fee schedule were proposed:

a) having an initial charge for the first sport/activity; less for the second; even less for the third; and more than three is free

b) having a family maximum or maximum per individual student

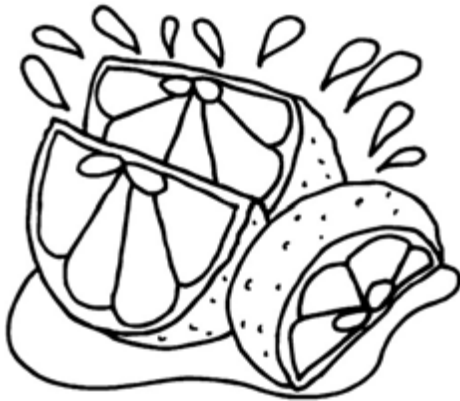
c) charging reduced fees for middle school students

d) encouraging kids to try new activities by having a reduced fee for first timers or having a trial period before collecting money

e) set up a matching fund from the GAP for kids who want to work to pay their fees and helping organize opportunities to earn money (babysitting, yard work, etc.).

# Great fruit Great cause!

## ... Order deadline Wed. Dec. 3



It's the first-every great GAP citrus sale. Order premium seedless navel oranges, sweet red grapefruit or a combination of the two. All profits will go to benefit theater arts at Mount Greylock Regional High School. Order by Dec. 3 for delivery by approx. Dec. 15 direct from Mixon Fruit Farm in Bradenton, Fla.

**Yes, sign me up!**

# of boxes	Description	Price Per box	Ext. Price
	Gift box, navel oranges (25 lb.)	\$19.99	
	Gift box, sweet red grapefruit	\$19.99	
	Gift box, oranges & grapefruit (25 lbs.)	\$19.99	
		<b>ORDER TOTAL:</b>	
Fruit recipient			
Street Address			
Town			
Contact telephone			

You must check ONE box:

- I will pickup my fruit box(es) at MGRHS when notified by phone
- Please deliver (all deliveries must be to towns served by MGRHS)

Clip this order, attach you check to "MGRHS Friends of the Arts", and return by hand or in person to the MGRHS Superintendent's Office, or U.S. mail to:

Carol Stein-Payne / 110 Ballou Lane / Williamstown MA 01267-2273  
458-8197 (email: [cpayne@adelphia.net](mailto:cpayne@adelphia.net))

## Don't miss out – order today!



## NORTON INTERVIEWED:

*Angst of layoffs, camaraderie of cooking, and 'leaving the dishes done'*

**EDITOR'S NOTE** – On Nov. 6, the principal of Mount Greylock Regional High School for the last five years, Russell Norton, announced he will retire on Aug. 31, 2004. Two weeks ago, he agreed to be interviewed by Carl Kubler, this month's Echo "issue editor". The following is a condensed transcript of the interview. In this interview, Norton talks about his love of math, Alaska, the emotional suffering of layoffs, the importance of teaching career skills, the draining task of justifying education spending, making goals, putting off dreams, 50 years going to school, the camaraderie of cooking and "leaving the dishes done" for his successor.

**KUBLER:** So, to start off, what made you opt for the position of principal at Mt. Greylock when you came here five years ago?

**NORTON:** I was assistant principal at another school. It had grown from basically 500 kids in the high school to well over a thousand, and it was going to continue to grow. I found myself doing more managing of the building than working with students and doing the things that I like. [I] looked around for smaller schools, and this one met my qualifications as a smaller school, but it was also in an area that I love and that my wife is from, so we decided to come out here.

**KUBLER:** ...We've all heard about your interest in mathematics and how you used to be a math teacher. So, could you please elaborate on your educational background and teaching experience?

**NORTON:** Oh, sure. Came out of high school, went to the University of Michigan for two years as an engineer. Disliked engineering, and then decided to come home, and went to Westfield State College...I had always had good relationships with children. I'd been able to work with them and motivate them to do things. And I took that into account and I love math...and I decided to major in mathematics and education. I looked at all of my math teachers...but I didn't really have a good math teacher, and I decided to be a math teacher in opposition to all the bad math teachers that I had had over the years...So I went through the rest of college in Westfield and I had the joy also at Westfield to play varsity soccer...And then I got my first job.

The more I taught math, the more fun it became. For me, the great thing to figure out was how to get students to understand math, because it doesn't happen naturally...I found out that the learning of math really has to come from playing with math, and when I say playing, it isn't playing with numbers, it's playing with blocks of wood, or it's playing cribbage, it's playing a game, even Stratego. What I started to see was everything had math in it. And if you figured it out...you really understood the numbers and the theories with the numbers. You started to understand geometry. And my teaching style would emphasize a lot of that. I've always enjoyed teaching high-powered mathematics to struggling students...I still enjoy helping a student

or tutoring somebody...Last year I did a couple of Mr. Belouin's classes. I just enjoy it...

**KUBLER:** On a slightly different note, could you possibly explain why you're retiring at this particular time?

**NORTON:** Well, it has a lot to do with my age, my number of years in education, and they happen to work out perfectly to maximize my retirement. And part of the reason that it works out is I started teaching right out of college. This is my thirty-fourth year in education. And I'm still



I have laid off now a lot of teachers over my last 10 years as a principal. You hire these people. You work with them. You make connections with them. You then have to turn around and let them go, and they're really good people, and you know they're doing a good job for the students, and they're making your school move forward. You suffer emotionally.

young, so I looked at it...and I have a gazillion hobbies! And a lot of it I've always put on the back burner when I've been a principal...I garden, I woodwork, I build, I read, I travel. I like to problem-solve...I also work at the farm, at the family farm, you know, I tap trees, I've grown corn, I've done just about anything you like to do. And you reach a time in your life when you look around and you say, "OK, I've done what I wanted to do, pretty much, but I have a lot of personal goals left."

I know that to reach those personal goals, one of them being able to go to Alaska for a long time, I now need to retire. You can't go to Alaska for three months and return to do this job. I want to build another house. I built one house all by myself, I want to build another house. I can't do that while doing this job. So I looked at it all, and the offer was there from the state to retire.

I'm basically retiring early. I had to look at it and then I had to figure out when is the best time and that was all figured around the accreditation process which I looked at very carefully: When would be the best time to leave the school?...I looked at each month and said when was the best time to leave...I write goals for myself every year: "this is what I'm going to try to accomplish," and it's usually what I'm going to try to accomplish for the school or for myself.

I have some personal goals. Don't always make them, by the way! But they're

all this data, here's what it seems to mean. And now I've got to build a new plan." A principal shouldn't be coming in to do somebody else's plan. They should be coming in to do their plan...And I also wanted to make sure that....

I didn't want to leave the school without making sure that there was a schedule and place for everybody, that they were getting to the best of my ability what they needed, to make sure that the teachers were hired, to make sure that everything was in a nice neat package. I would hate to leave the dishes undone, if you know what I mean. I mean you've got to finish the job and make sure the school is in the best place it can be when you leave. And so that's how I picked August 31. It took a lot of talking and thinking, quite honestly, and that's what I did most of August with my family, discussing it.

**KUBLER:** So what do you feel in these five years has been your most significant contribution to Mt. Greylock?

**NORTON:** Oh, I don't know...I would hope that the contributions I made — I don't know whether it was significant or not — was to work with student government, to get it doing things in the governing end of the building, rather than the social end. I also think I tried to bring a spirit here of...let's work together, and let's at least listen to each other. They're in things I can't measure, possibly, but as I discussed in my little retirement speech, it's the enjoyment that I've had from the camaraderie of the faculty and the camaraderie of the students....

I sure have enjoyed being with the students in this school. I've had some of the greatest conversations with students over 34 years, some of the best have been here in this school. In terms of education, in terms of how do we work with each other, how do we help each other, and a lot of them have been just "What do I do now, Mr. Norton?", you know, or "How do I either (a) get out of trouble, or (b) how do I get where I want to go?" ....

The other contribution that I think that I have done, behind the scenes, that probably a lot of people don't realize, is really worked at data-driven decision making. I try not to make any decision without having some kind of data behind it. That's probably my math background sticking out. In other words, after I formulate a question, I try to find the data that either supports it or doesn't support it, and then, to interpret the data, and then make a change, and see where that change leads....

I think the student handbook is in better shape, it has a better process. I think a lot of processes have changed. I've tried to streamline them, force them to be accountable...One thing I take pride in is that Japanese garden, and working with Mr. Gerard when he was here, getting it all developed, and Mr. Caraco, but I don't think of that necessarily as a contribution. It's something nice to look at, and it's a nice peaceful place to be. And I think the other contribution is that...the good traditions of Mt. Greylock, I hope I haven't destroyed. I think I've tried to keep what's best about the school, and change what people didn't like.

good to write down and reflect on. As I was writing the ones for the school this year, with the accreditation process, I realized that the process of self-evaluation would be pretty much done by the end of the year, and that if I stayed on till the visiting committee came, that I would probably be in the process of writing the new 10-year plan, and then I said to myself, "Oops! If you're writing the plan, maybe you ought to stick around to do some of it and make sure it works. And as I followed that logical process, I said, "Wow, I can end up working five or six more years, because of who I am. Once you put a plan in effect, you like to make sure that it works and that it gets going....

What I want to do here is finish the self-evaluation because I will have been here five years, get all the critical data together that you need to look at yourself, and then hopefully leave it to the next principal to come in and say, "OK, I have



I've reflected a lot about when I came here for the interview...I feel that if those students who talked to me that day five years ago would look at the school now, they would see that what they asked to be changed was changed. I think with the teachers, my biggest contribution is...to give them food for thought, things to think about, how to make themselves a stronger and better teacher.

**KUBLER: Thanks. So, what, if anything, do you think you could have done better these past five years?**

NORTON: Oh, you can do lots of things better! I would have liked...to have seen a different schedule for the students in terms of a bell schedule. I would say my other big contribution is...the break. I mean, I believed for a long time in education there should be a break, and then having a school finally that could work the break and effectively work it.

You know, to get that break you have to have cooperation from just about everybody in the school, and we've had it now for three, maybe four years. Fabulous! ... I would have liked to have done more things to tinker with the schedule, so the kids could go through what I consider a respectful day, not a factory-mandated bell schedule. The other thing I would have liked to have worked on more was bringing more hands-on courses to Mt. Greylock, but the budget has kind of stymied that.

I would have liked to have seen a graphics program here for students. My biggest disappointment is that — and this was just my own self-goal — was to bring an animation program to the school. Because I think that students would...have loved it. This school has a lot of kids who have got very incredible artistic talents. And I always look at the schools as supposed to be developing you not only academically and in math, but it's to develop you so that you're ready to do a job out in the real world. And I happen to believe that animation, working with computers, is something we should be focusing students on, because students can go directly from high school to those jobs.

And, you know, we don't all go to college, and we don't all make it through college, so we've got to have something that allows us to make a living. And...this could be a very valuable skill. If not in the Berkshires, then it would be at least in the rest of the country. My disappointment is we didn't get that far... Other than that, I don't have a lot of disappointments, because I'm pretty much a realist and a pragmatist. You do what you've got to do, and you get as far as you can do.

**KUBLER: Thanks. So you mentioned the budget being a hindrance to some of the things you would have liked to have done.**

NORTON: Oh, yeah. Budget has always been a hindrance for people. I think that probably was the thing that tipped the scales whether or not I wanted to work another five years, because I have been a principal since 1992...and in that time, it seems like I've had to do an awful lot of budget battles with communities, about what they have to pay for their education. And I just wasn't ready to go through another battle like I thought we went through last year. Having to justify every single penny to a community... "Why are they spending it on education?" "Why did they need to do this?" "Why did they need

to have new textbooks?" "Why do you need to have phys ed?" You know, "Why?" "Why?" You answer those questions, and I've done it now for a lot of years. I found myself, actually, getting almost sarcastic about it, because I've done it so many times. And why weren't people listening? Why haven't people figured out that good education costs money? The logic of the average citizen about what he's paying for in school...is beyond me... I was brought up with parents who very much...I had a father who didn't graduate out of high school. I had a mother who just graduated out of high school. I'm the first of my whole family to ever go to col-



lege. They treasured education...So when we get into these budget battles, everybody has their individual focus...And I just see that those battles are going to continue for three to four years....

I have laid off now a lot of teachers over the last 10 years as a principal. You hire these people. You work with them. You make connections with them. You then have to turn around and let them go, and they're really good people, and you know they're doing a good job for the students, and they're making your school move forward. You suffer emotionally. Something people don't talk about, but I really don't want to do more of that. That's the unhappiness...you do it, and you do it to the best of your ability, but I don't need to do that again for the next five years...But if those things weren't there and if...I'll tell you, when I first came here the school was in very good shape financially, I thought, in very good shape...we would have probably stuck around a few more years.

You know, I'm going to retire at basically 57 years old, which is young. I could have worked till 62, but the joy is that I had, you know, I had the number of years. The other thing that's come to me, the enormity about why am I even thinking about retirement. I went to school in 1953. I have been continuously, never missing a year, in school since 1953. That's 50 years! That's incredible! 50 years...going to school! Whether as a teacher or a student. And I said to myself, "Wow, I mean, 50 years I've listened to the bell ring!"

I still do get excited about school. The opening of school, I probably get just as excited about as I probably did when I was a kid. Because it's a fresh start, a new

group is going to come in, you have new sets of things that you can do. And they know they're going to see new teachers and new people, and we're going to do things differently. And the only place that happens, by the way, is in school. There's a start and a stop, and it's every year. And I love that, and I'm going to miss it. Because I have been in that routine for so many years!...

**KUBLER: Do you have any suggestions for the next principal?**

NORTON: I would hope that the next principal, whoever they be, very quickly reaches out to the students. If they don't, I think it would be a mistake...I would

the animals I see, would like to see a musk ox, and a polar bear, and a few other animals that I haven't seen. I've been there cross-country once, but I did it through Canada. Saw a lot. But I would like to also see the whales...when you look at the pictures of Alaska they look huge. I want to see what that hugeness is all about.

So the dream to go to Alaska is to not just go to a spot in Alaska but to cover the state in all its regions, meet the people, not necessarily to live there, but to visit there, but visit there thoroughly...And then from there, I've got some other goals in my life...probably going to stay in the area, even though I have a house on the Cape which I built myself. I'm going to try to keep a foot in two places for a while until I can decide where I want to end up. I've always been flexible.

You know, I mean, I'm pretty happy wherever I'm at, but...life changes...I can make all these plans and talk to you today, and I know enough that tomorrow something could happen in my life where I'm requested to do something and I go off and do it. Because you have family obligations, you just do it. That just pushes your dream or your goal back a little bit, but it doesn't mean it's unachievable....

**KUBLER: Thanks. Lastly, we all know about your culinary prowess. So, do you intend to continue cooking meals during your retirement?**

NORTON: Oh! ...I hope so. That's something that started with me, oh, 20-25 years ago, and it's continued as one of my ways of...whether it's giving back to a community, because I did it for the Lions Club for a number of years. I will find ways to celebrate with large groups of people and...I love preparing food for them...I love preparing and having everybody sit down because it's...there's something about a meal, when you sit down and eat it, and you didn't prepare it, that you relax and conversation takes place, and I happen to believe that when people are relaxed and conversation takes place, progress happens.

And so if my role in that is to make sure that it happens, yeah, I'll continue to do it...I mean it isn't so much my being able to cook, it's being able quickly to put together a meal for a large number of people, it's the organization of it that's the thrill, getting the things for a reasonable...and then saying, "OK, do you like this? Do you like that?" It's been fun! In fact, I was very happy, SMILE came in to me the other day and said, "We want to offer a raffle to bring food in for Thanksgiving to give to the unfortunate," and he says to me, "Would you serve breakfast to the winner?"...and I said, "Absolutely!"

You see, to me that's cooking for a purpose that's a higher purpose than just cooking...I'll use it somewhere, make somebody happy somewhere. My wife doesn't even let me do all the cooking, my wife is a better cook than I am, astounding. She's a way better baker. I'm not a good baker. She can make bread like you wouldn't believe. And I can even work at the farm, cooking, during maple season.

**KUBLER: Well, thank you so much for your time and patience.**

NORTON: You're welcome. I enjoyed it.

also tell them to listen to their school council. I have a great school council, they're a really good sounding board. I'd tell them to get to know the community...But I would hope that whoever is the principal comes with the need to improve, to keep building.

I would tell them the status quo isn't good enough. Of course, it's never been. I'm just somebody that doesn't believe in the status quo. Often I tell people, you know, one of the beautiful parts about education, it's constantly changing. People say, you know, they want the old days but, you know, we should change, the whole national experience I think is to improve. And so I think whoever comes in ought to think about how they are going to improve it, they'll do their part to improve it, somebody else will do their part to improve it, and you're constantly relearning.

It's very similar to building a car. Look at a Model T and then look at the cars today. If the Model T was such a beautiful car, why don't we keep building it? There's a reason why. And I would tell you this school should not be the same school, whoever comes in. That they should...they're going to change it. What I would hope that they would use in that change is the students and the teachers, because they're really good people.

**KUBLER: Thanks. So, as you said, you intend to move to Alaska for a while?**

NORTON: No, I'm not going to move, I'm going to travel in Alaska. I would like to go up there and do from summer right through till almost winter just to see the sights...Want to go north of the Arctic Circle. When I travel I keep track of all



# OPINION

## If Swift favors education reform, why not in other areas, too?

By Carl Kubler

When former Gov. Jane Swift made an appearance at Mount Greylock Regional High School on Thursday, October 30, not all factions of the high school body received her with welcome hands.

Swift, who served as acting governor from April 2001 to January 2003, was one of the politicians primarily responsible for instituting the MCAS examination throughout the Massachusetts school system. The MCAS is designed to evaluate students' verbal and math skills. Asked by one student whether the standardized tests were a valid assessment of acquired knowledge, Swift rashly replied that she believed "these tests are the best in the nation, a significant step towards maintaining educational excellence."

But what about the tens of millions of dollars that are being poured into the exam every year? Given the state's enormous cuts in education, could the money being spent on the MCAS not be more effectively used to maintain learning standards in the classroom? If schools are struggling just to sustain their short supply of teachers, how can the needy students taught by these teachers be expected to perform well on a test that is forcing them to use outdated books in packed classrooms of thirty kids or more?

Considering that students are allowed to take the MCAS *seven times* before graduation, why does Massachusetts not first ensure that these students are attending good schools with good teachers and ample educational resources before evaluating students on what they are supposed to have learned?

The institution of an examination similar to the MCAS is by no means a "horrible" idea, but educators at the state level may wish to reconsider how and when

such an examination is to be implemented. A single test is unlikely to produce the "educational revolution" that politicians may envision. Only by analyzing the educational systems of individual schools and providing need-based aid will administrators of the MCAS be able to take a "significant step towards maintaining educational excellence."

When asked how budget cuts will affect the educational standards she strove to maintain while in office, Swift refused to express her opinion: "I don't offer backseat-driving advice to the current administration."

The assembly concluded with a few questions concerning Swift's standpoint on gay rights. Although the former governor does support gay rights, she is opposed to gay marriage. This seemingly paradoxical political belief may have its roots in the Judeo-Christian religious tradition which gave rise to the U.S. Constitution, wherein marriage is seen as not only a legal union, but also a spiritual one. Therefore, gay marriage seems unethical to many religious Americans.

What is preventing our country from changing? In her prepared remarks, Swift delivered a lengthy speech on the necessity for society to change its perspective on female politicians. In her closing remarks, Swift repeatedly emphasized the need for educational reform. So why is she unwilling to endorse change in other areas as well? Is it the American reverence for this country's "holy Constitution?" Regardless of Swift's reasons for her views, many students understandably departed from the auditorium with disgruntled looks on their faces.

*Sophomore Carl Kubler is this month's Echo issue editor and a member of student council.*

## Mission statement, four subcommittees guide student council

By Amanda Bell, Naima Brown and Heather Murtagh

Members of the Mount Greylock RHS Student Council were disturbed to read an editorial of complaint in last month's issue of the *Echo*. We felt it was our responsibility to address the concerns which the student brought up.

This fall, the Student Council spent three and a half hours discussing its purpose in the school and outlining its goals for the future. We created a mission statement for the Student Council, which is to act in the interest of the student body regarding the administration of Mount Greylock.

The 24 members of the Student Council are now organized into four subcommittees to better accommodate our multifaceted roles.

The Handbook Committee is reviewing the Student Handbook in order to propose changes to policies that students have expressed concern about: the dress code, Student Faculty Review Board, and the bus policy, among others.

The Round Table Committee is in the process of writing new questions that incorporate these concerns for upcoming roundtable discussions – meetings run by the Student Council at which randomly chosen high school students have the opportunity to voice their problems.

The Budget Committee is reviewing this year's budget in an effort to propose suggestions for future funding (i.e., which areas of Mount Greylock students feel need more or less money) to the School Committee.

The Organizational Committee is responsible for the Student Council's other commitments – organizing our community service activities, designating tasks for Open House, preparing Recognition Night, and maintaining the Student Council's new "Live Suggestion Box," a table at high-school lunch where students can communicate easily and informally with Student Council representatives.

In order for the Student Council to properly serve as a liaison between the administration and the student body, we need to hear your concerns. We invite students to attend our open meetings and forums so that we can address the issues that the *student body*, not the *Student Council*, sees as vital. We are *not* asking students to attend our meetings so that they can do our job for us. We ask them to come to us when they have concerns so that we can incorporate these concerns in action.

In previous years, we have taken students' concerns and advocated for their implementation. The midmorning break is one example of a student council-facilitated scheduling adjustment based on the wishes of the student body. Obstacles have sometimes prevented us, however, from carrying through on all our ideas.

We realize that we have not always communicated our successes and failures to the student body. We are working hard to improve as a Student Council. Remember, our meetings are open for your concerns every Tuesday and Friday during Extended Learning in Ms. Slocik's room.

*The authors are seniors and student-council members.*

## CARTOON CORNER

By Paul Bergmann





# ARTS

## 'Doing' Shakespeare – it siphons love, hatred, passion, energy

**Opinion by Charles Cochran**

We all know our school. We all know the sports, the clubs, the organizations. We all know about the school musical, put on stunningly by Mr. Welch and Mrs. Walt. We all know about our spring play, put on by Mr. Ostheimer and the seniors.

Even if you are not involved with theater productions, you know who directs, you know where the play is, and sometimes you even know what it's about. Yet, that *Shakespeare* play, perhaps one of the best-performed plays in the entire year, is barely known.

Shakespeare and Company. Sure, you have heard the name, you have heard snippets of conversation about it, you have perhaps even been urged by a friend to attend the Friday-night performance in November. But...who directs it? Where the heck do these people come from? Two, maybe three performances go by in November, then these nameless, faceless directors disappear for another whole year.

First off, if you think that Shakespeare is some pansy way of getting into college, or if you think that Shakespeare is a weird groupie thing to do after school, you are dead wrong. William Shakespeare wrote plays to entertain – to make money, yes – but really to entertain. Shakespeare & Co., based in Lenox, maintains that legacy, but not just for the audience.

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Tell me, are you allowed to stand on a table during a SMILE meeting with a sword in hand and cry with all your malice at your enemy: "Come, sir! Your passado!"?

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I had more fun being in a Shakespeare production than watching all three *Matrix* movies back to back (with lots of chips and soda). You might think Shakespeare a tremendous waste of precious time, memorizing pages and pages of "Doth thou speak unto me?" stuff, but it is not all words.

Tell me, are you allowed to stand on a table during a SMILE meeting with a sword in hand and cry with all your malice at your enemy: "Come, sir! Your passado!"?

Tell me, are you allowed in that touch down run to stop and dance and make the crowd holler with joyous laughter and cheer to how much people love you (not that they would not do that anyway when you are going in for a touch down – so maybe you should not dance, just make the touch down instead)?

The Shakespeare directors siphon your love, your hatred, your passion, and broil it up into your fingers, eyes, ears; the energy they bring makes your blood rocket through your veins. (No, I am not talking about drugs.)

The Shakespeare directors let you act the way the character would act, they help you over the rough edges and goad you towards glory and immense happiness under the spotlight. I am not kidding. I would not want to be any one place in the world save the stage when Shakespeare & Co. is directing.

*Charles Cochran is a sophomore at MGRHS. He played Sebastian in this year's production of Twelfth Night.*



Mount Greylock is among nine high schools that stage Shakespeare plays each fall, culminating with last weekend's "Fall Festival" at Shakespeare & Co.'s campus in Lenox. Shown in scenes from MGRHS's *Twelfth Night* production Nov. 14 are, TOP: Gideon Bradburd and Topiaries; MIDDLE: Amy Mendes and Gentlewomen; BOTTOM (left to right): Tess McHugh and Charles Cochran. (Photos courtesy Henry Gold)





# Soccer girls end as second fiddle to Belchertown

*But strong field will return in fall*

By Sam Baldwin

Key members of the Mount Greylock varsity girls' soccer team will be returning next fall, raising hopes for another strong season after the Mountie girls finished second in the Western Massachusetts tournament against Belchertown High School. Overall, the team ended the regular season with a strong 10-3-2 record.

And as a consolation, the team led by coaches Kim Chapman, Dave Holmgren, and Phil Paul, was awarded the Division II State Sportsmanship Award.

After dominating the field throughout the first half of the Belchertown game, a referee's call swung the momentum of the play away from Greylock and in favor of the Belchertown players. The eighth-seeded Mounties continued to fight on, but couldn't recover.

Mount Greylock's path to the finals progressed through a relatively easy game against Greenfield in the first round. The Mounties concentrated mostly on passing and good positional ball movement so as not to appear unsportsmanlike. The game nevertheless

ended in a 7-0 victory for the girls, leading Greylock to play first-seeded Hampshire. All 80 minutes of this matchup were played hard by both sides, but Greylock eventually triumphed 3-2.

In their semifinal game against Monument Mountain, it seemed that the Mounties would win with ease — they were maintaining a 2-0 lead with only five minutes remaining in the game. Monument created a few opportunities, however, and suddenly tied up the score. After 20 minutes of overtime play without any goals, the decision was brought down to a closely-contested shootout from which Greylock eventually emerged victorious.

Senior defenders Nicole Kasuba, Sara Miller, and Lauren Quinn stood strong throughout the entire season. Assisted by seniors Krista Moriarty and Nicole Poulin, who became ill and injured as the season progressed, midfield seniors Colleen Farley and Kirsten Holmgren helped lead the team to victory with their foot speed and intensity of play.

Junior sweeper Rachel Finan was well recognized for her outstanding hard work and leadership.

Sophomore Mackenzie Haig and Junior Emily Mason were also a tremendous help to the senior defense. Midfielders Mary DeMatteo, Mandy Moriarty, and Emily Stinson greatly contributed to the Mounties' successes. The team's junior star line of strikers Jodi Dias, Carly Mason, Zoe Remillard, Sarah Whateley, and Liz Windover worked cooperatively to score a total of 43 goals this season. All will return next year.

Midfielders and defenders also worked together to score a total of 16 goals this season. Rookie goalkeeper Sam Baldwin worked hard and made 88 season saves. Backup keepers Liz Martin and Pattie Shartrand had 10 saves combined. Rookies Alysha Apkin, Annie Connolly, Allison Hall-Jordan, and Libbie Weimer supported the team tremendously and will make even greater contributions next year.

Team manager Maranda Cooke has the Mounties' gratitude for her constant encouragement. Although many outstanding players will be graduating, Kim Chapman, Dave Holmgren, Phil Paul, and newly-appointed 2004 captains Rachel Finan and Zoe Remillard look forward to another victorious season for the Mount Greylock team next year.

## Dils calls 5-1 Wahconah loss a 'tough pill' for boys soccer

By Jason Silberstein

As Boys' Soccer Head Coach Blair Dils puts it, Greylock's lopsided 5-1 loss to Wahconah that crushed the Mounties' Western Massachusetts title hopes was a "tough pill to swallow." The slick conditions, questionable refereeing ("no, no, I can't call any fouls because it's wet outside"), and lack of fire on Greylock's part, combined with the Warriors' foot speed, led to a disappointing end to the season. However, it was only the final game in what was otherwise a two-month period that far exceeded expectations.

Fall 2003 was supposed to be a "rebuilding" time for Greylock Boys' Soccer, but the Red and White instead maintained their reputation as one of the toughest teams in Berkshire County. They finished second in the division behind Wahconah, a team which the Mounties had destroyed and tied during regular season games.

Departing seniors this year include Captain Scot Beattie, Captain Chris Folan, Jason Groth, Brady Haig, Zack Ogden, and Justin Quinn. They were the core of the team and will be sorely missed next year. Sophomore standout Joe Jacobson will also be leaving the team as he and his family move to Texas.

In other news, soccer coaches around Berkshire County have picked their All-Northern Division and All-Southern Division teams. Representing Mount Greylock on the Northern team are Justin Quinn as goalie and Jason Groth as fullback.



The MGRHS girls' cross-country team is shown after receiving its plaque for winning the county-wide title.

## Seven runners make All-Berkshire as girls finish regular season undefeated

By Heather Murtagh

Not only did the Mount Greylock Girls Cross Country Team have a successful regular season, but the runners' post season races were just as remarkable. The Mounties were undefeated in the league, claiming seven spots on the All-Berkshire Team. They went into Individuals, Western Mass., and States with high hopes. Although Mount Greylock rested its top seven runners at Individuals, the team still placed eighth overall. Freshman Anna Hogeland finished 26<sup>th</sup> in the varsity race, leading her teammates to a strong finish.

The Saturday following Individuals, the Mounties traveled to Northfield Mountain to compete in the Western Massachusetts Cross Country Running Championships. All our girls placed in the top thirty,

giving Greylock a combined score of 75 points and clinching the second place title for Division II. Middle school runners Lindley Bell and Jackie Lemme led the Mounties by placing 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>.

Other racers at Western Mass. included Lauren Clement, Heather Murtagh, Alex Peacock, and Katherine Wadsworth. A large contingent of the Cross Country team accompanied them to provide moral support and cheer on the runners. Mount Greylock's second place finish earned it an invitation to the State Championships the following weekend.

The Mounties finished 7<sup>th</sup> in Division II with a score of 191, just one point behind the 6<sup>th</sup> place team. Such results at the state level look promising for next year's runners and are a nice closing to a great season!