



Bang, bang: \$400,000 roof fix nearing completion

By Rachel Payne

We've all heard it – the sporadic bangs and spasmodic buzzing that hardly sounds a part of something productive. Yet, according to Martha Mellor, school business manager, the \$400,000 task of restoring Mount Greylock's aged roof will be finished in approximately two weeks.

Of course, one can hardly complain about the racket, for the result is intended to be a vast improvement over the ceiling's leaks so prevalent last year. The yellow stains that bedeck the upper-reaches of the cafeteria are persistent reminders of those innumerable, infinitely disruptive drip-drops.

There was no question of the necessity of roof repair. However, it was a difficult venture that cost the school a

little under \$400,000 – which will be paid back over 10 years via a borrowing.

The project's challenges did not end with finding a way to finance it. It seemed the elements opposed the roof's restoration from day one.

The prodigious rainfall in early summer delayed the scans meant to detect moisture in the structure. The consecutive dry days needed to complete the test did not come until July. At last, the thorough assessment was completed and the actual construction commenced.

It was meant to be finished by Thanksgiving, but rain, high winds, and the snowstorm pushed the date back an additional month. But, despite these frustrations, which have manifested in excessive complaint from students and

staff, only the trim remains undone. There is and end in sight – at least for this particular endeavor.

Mount Greylock's heating and ventilation systems, including the school boilers, are slated for repairs or improvements, but not for about two years, Mellor says. Once again, these undertakings will be costly, and paid off over as much as a decade.

Though such expenses are daunting, the Mount Greylock administration is committed to restoration almost to a point of newness. Previously, such large-scale spending has gone into the academic features of the high school, but the imminent accreditation and a seeming acceleration in the aging process of the building have caused a partial shift in focus.



Jammin' at Java Jive

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James O'Neill (above), jamming on his guitar for the first ever Java Jive coffeehouse (story page 5).

Cows, cider and Shakers -- Westchester gets a chance to experience the Berkshires

By Chris Densmore

Fifteen Mount Greylock RHS students in grades 9-12 had an opportunity to learn about and discuss the lifestyles, culture and environment of urban school teen-agers, with a visit earlier this month by 43 juniors from the Westchester [N.Y.] Magnet Academy to Williamstown.

"We've never even seen a cow before," said Westchester student Dennis Jones.

The session was the other half of an exchange which began last year with a visit by Mount Greylock students to Westchester, part of the Consortium for Excellence through Education Partnerships (CEEP). Music teacher Marlene Walt and history teacher Jeff Welch coordinate Greylock's consortium participation.

"We are trying to bring the Berkshires to them, from our

cider to our Shakers," said Mr. Welch. The students from Westchester visited Williams College the day before to learn about life here in Williamstown.

Westchester students arrived at 8:30 and the group was split up and given a tour around the school. After that Robin Lehleitner did a workshop about Shakers and the search for Utopian Society followed by a slideshow about architecture in Williamstown given by artist in residence, John D. Maziarz. The meeting was closed with the group singing a Shaker tune called *Simple Gifts*.

Students interviewed said they enjoyed the program, but think it should be more advanced and involve more students. "It's kind of an eye opener for us and them," said 10th grader Kejia Tang. "We love each other," said English teacher Mrs. Leslie from Westchester.

Prescriptions for team members follows whooping cough alert

Extra care urged to avoid open sneezing, sharing cups, lip balm

By Lucy White

A 30-member sports team was prescribed antibiotics and the school nurse urged students not to share cups or lip balm after pertussis (whooping cough) was confirmed last week at Mount Greylock RHS.

School officials said Dec. 10 there had been two confirmed cases of the bacteria-born illness among students at the school and that many other students and faculty could have been exposed. An undisclosed number of other students besides the team members were also put on antibiotics.

However, the school reported attendance close to normal. School physician Dr. Kathryn Wiseman told Mount Greylock administrators that the school would not need to be closed.

Twelve calls were made to parents whose children had 10 or more hours a week of exposure to the two infected classmates, and also to students who exhibited symptoms of concern the school nurse, Mrs. Diane Dubendorf.

Pertussis spreads quickly and symptoms start a week to three weeks after the initial infection.

It is spread from one person to another by droplets spread into the air by sneezing or coughing, or by sharing personal items such as drinks with someone who is infected. Once a person is infected with pertussis, symptoms may include fits of coughing followed by vomiting, and a constant cough and cold.

"I coughed so often and violently that it drove me to the point of exhaustion," said one student victim, Evan Dethier.

Although a viral cold is different from whooping cough,

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Hearings on principal post set for Jan. 13 and 27; but 15-member search committee starts meeting

The Mount Greylock Regional School District Committee has set public hearings for Jan. 13 at the school and Jan. 27 in Lanesborough to receive public comment on whether to revamp its administration.

Committee Chairman Robert Petricca has said the district would study the possibility of merging the superintendent and principal posts, while simultaneously searching for a new principal.

Supt. Russell Norton announced Nov. 5 he would retire at the end of August. To make sure it will have candidates to fill the position if it remains independent of the superintendency, the district placed ads in *Education Week* and regional newspapers seeking applicants.

A 15-member Principal Search Committee was named last week by Supt. Mark Piechota and was to hold its first meeting on Dec. 18. And a Dec. 16 meeting with parents was scheduled to, according to Piechota, "seek faculty/staff input on qualities sought in a new principal." There is a Jan. 30 application deadline for principal candidates.

Search committee members include, besides Piechota and vice principal Tim Payne; four faculty (Rose Marie Pelletier, P.J. Pannesco, Bob Thistle and a fourth to be named); staffer Cheryl Yarter; parents Anne Hogeland, Stephen Sheppard and Patti Bishop; students Rachel Finan, Chris Densmore, Peterson Anderson; and school committee members Ralph Bradburd and Sally White.

NEWS



District winners were, from left including inset photo, Alex Bird (violin), Megan Bailey (violin), Libby Weimer (cello), Jonah Jonathan (bass), Yo Matsui (French horn), Kejia Tang (violin) and Sabrina Gogan (voice).

Seven of 13 MGRHS musicians get nod to play at January regional festival

By Kejia Tang

Thirteen students of Mount Greylock’s music department have auditioned for the Western Massachusetts Senior District Music Festival held in January. Of those who auditioned Nov. 15, seven were chosen to participate in the festival.

Much like WMASS in sports, the Senior District Festival draws upon the best musicians in Western Massachusetts. Half of the musicians who audition successfully then receive invitations to audition for the All-State festival.

The seven Mount Greylock students picked based on point scores to go to the January festival were Megan Bailey (violin), Alex Bird (violin), Kejia Tang (violin), Libby Weimer (cello), Jonah Jonathan (bass), Yo Matsui (horn), and Sabrina Gogan (voice).

Three of these students, Yo Matsui (horn), Sabrina Gogan (voice), and Kejia Tang (violin), also received recommendations to audition for the Massachusetts All-State Festival that will take place in March at Symphony Hall, Boston.

Saturday workshop opens effort to heal rifts among faculty, admin and board

Anonymous donor makes 30-person session possible

Giving up their Saturday in an effort to improve their school relationships, a group of 30 Mount Greylock RHS faculty, administrators, parents and school-board members launched an "organization-development project" with an all-day workshop on Dec. 6.

Top issues identified in the session, the school administration says, were "administrative structure and roles, communication and problem solving, accountability systems and creating a common vision."

Among key participants in the session were School Committee Chairman Robert Petricca, faculty-association President Rose-Marie Pelletier, Williamstown Selectman Jack Madden and Supt. Mark Piechota.

Consultant Martha Torrance of Seekonk, in eastern Massachusetts, was hired with private funds from an undisclosed source to conduct the all-day session.

The administration assembled the 30-person team from all segments of the school community, from the Mount Greylock Educators Association (MGEA) and among parents in an effort to resolve structural and communication issues previously voiced by various groups within the school community.

In a statement, Piechota's office said Torrance's "first task was to gather and assess data which she did by conducting focus groups and one-on-one interviews with faculty and staff, administrators, school committee members, parents" and the Mount Greylock Educators Association (MGEA).

"The focus of Saturday's full-day work session was on articulating and prioritizing issues identified in the assessment process," Piechota's statement added. "[And] then prioritizing the issues and beginning the process of developing solutions and action plans."

The next meeting of the organizational development team is scheduled for Jan. 24.

Up to 200 citrus crates are unloaded in GAP fund-raiser

A dozen volunteer parents joined by Mount Greylock’s superintendent and principal executed a rendezvous on Tuesday night with a semi-tractor from Florida carrying nearly 200 crates of citrus fruit bound for families in the school community.

The first-annual grapefruit-and-orange sale was organized by parent Carol Stein-Payne as a fund-raiser for the Greylock Assistance Project (GAP) Fund.

Stein-Payne took orders for 25-pound

boxes at \$19.95 each with close to half of the cost of each box donated to the GAP fund.

Parents stacked the boxes in a hallway outside the principal’s office, where they were to be parceled out to purchasers on Wednesday. The fruit came from Mixon Fruit Farm in Bradenton, Fla.

By their Tuesday arrival, the fruit was guaranteed by the farm to have been picked from the trees on Thursday before their journey northward.



Carol Stein-Payne poses with citrus.

Whooping cough

Continued from Page 1

it can turn into pertussis if the bacteria is introduced to the already sick person.

Because of the high alert at the school, students were advised to talk to their doctor if they suffered a cold or cough for a week and were not beginning to feel better. Even if there are no symptoms, students who have had close contact with a confirmed case may be advised to take either Erythromycin or Bactrim antibiotics.

Pertussis can only be confirmed by a blood test. However, the blood test may show a false negative, and a person could go untreated.

At this point, physicians are deciding

case-by-case who to put on the antibiotics. Once a student begins taking the medicine, he or she must stay out of school and away from public activities for five days.

Since the outbreak, there have been many students who have been placed on antibiotics (in addition to the 30 odd children on the sports team). Mrs. Dubendorf, would like to remind students to cover their mouths when coughing, and not to share drinks and lip balm to prevent any further spreading of pertussis. For further information contact Mrs. Dubendorf, at 458-9582 ext. 154, or visit this web site: www.cdc.gov.

BUDGET BEAT

What’s certain, and not, in FY2005 outlook?

(First of a series on the school budget)

As the Mount Greylock’s school board and the district’s taxpayers begin looking at the next fiscal picture at least three questions loom large.

How much money may come from the state? And since that represents almost a quarter of the district’s annual revenues, it’s a big uncertainty.

Another big uncertainty — will taxpayers be willing to support higher property taxes?

And the third uncertainty -- how will this all affect the quality of education which Greylock students receive?

While these uncertainties are probably not going to be answered for at least a couple of months, there are some basic certainties:

- Without more tax dollars, there are virtually certain to be fewer teachers at Mount Greylock in fiscal 2005 than in the current fiscal year 2004. The only way to avoid layoffs would be draconian salary cuts, or elimination of some non-teaching staffers.
- Teacher salaries will continue a five-year trend of becoming a smaller and smaller percentage of the Mount Greylock budget. That’s because benefits — especially retirement funding — are escalating. For example, in fiscal 2000, instructional salaries were 61% of total district expenditures, and benefits were 15%. This year, the figures are 55% and 22%.
- There is a cost to layoffs, as well, in a huge hike in what the district must pay into the state’s unemployment compensation fund. That category alone rose \$124,400 in 2004 over 2003.

The biggest uncertainty is how much money may come from the state. And since that represents almost a quarter of the district’s annual revenues, it’s a big uncertainty. The other big uncertainty — will taxpayers be willing to support higher property taxes?

To provide context for the school board’s deliberations, here are some basic facts about the current Mount Greylock budget in the fiscal year which began July 1, 2003 – called “Fiscal 2004.”

The local-tax share of operating the school is born about two thirds by Williamstown and one third by Lanesborough. That’s because that’s the approximately ratio of enrollment from the two towns.

The fiscal 2004 budget totals around \$8.2 million – 0.2% decrease from the previous year. The school board began last year’s budget process hoping to finance a \$9.2 million budget, because of increases of \$390,000 in salaries, wages and benefits; \$328,000 for roof repairs and special-educational expenses.

But then came news that Gov. Mitt Romney and the Legislature would ultimately chop about \$2 million from what the school had been expecting in Chapter 70 aid. In the end, the loss was “only” \$408,900 – but after years of level or increasing state aid, it was a shock. At the same, the school ended up losing 43% of the state’s former aid to cover bus services – another \$127,292 cut.

Realizing that it couldn’t increase spending 11.8% and make Williamstown and Lanesborough taxpayers pay for all of the increase through property taxes, the board increased planned revenues by \$94,000, but made spending cuts to cover the gap. The new revenue came from increasing lunch prices \$1, increasing building and grounds fees, the price of game tickets, and instituting a \$50-a-semester parking charge.

The cuts include a near-total elimination of funds for teachers to attend seminars and conferences, a 50% cut in supplies, textbook acquisition, other equipment and computers, and nearly 70% cuts in student activity and athletic-team budgets. Finally, three staff and 10.8 faculty positions were eliminated.

Through private fund-raising of what has today reached \$170,000, sports and student activities have been largely saved from elimination. But for most, there are now fees (See related story, below).

Survey finds Greylock fees in mid range

By Carl Kubler

A survey of participation fees shows Mount Greylock Regional School District is in the middle of the pack when it comes to finding ways to offset a dramatic drop in tax revenues.

In part, the school avoided higher fees as it managed last year’s dramatic shortfalls by incorporating the effect of over \$170,000 raised and contributed by the Mount Greylock Partners Greylock Assistance Project Fund (GAP Fund). But one problem seen by volunteer fundraisers is that money isn’t always pledged in the exact proportions as the need. As a result, students are wondering if some team sports, such as softball, may be imperiled.

For example, received over \$5,000 in direct donations, about \$1,500 from participation fees, and an estimated \$7,000 through GAP and district funding. Softball, on the other hand, fared much worse. With an operational budget about the same size as skiing (\$10,466 as opposed to \$10,394), this team received only \$505 in direct donations, an estimated \$750 in participation fees, and the same GAP and district funding as the cross country ski team. Softball is therefore short by several thousand dollars and the program must find more support before the spring season to prevent cancellation.

With the ever-present fiscal dilemma in mind, the GAP Fund is currently examining how other schools around the state are coping with the crisis. Their initial findings encompass the following:

Mount Greylock’s sport participation fees for all sports is currently \$30, and extracurricular after-school activities are either \$10 or \$30.	
Nearly one third of the 290 school districts around the state have also adopted bus-transportation fees to offset lost tax revenues. Mount Greylock has yet to adopt this approach. Typical fees range from a low of \$50 per student in Rockport to a high of \$325 per student in Belmont.	
According to co-organizer Denise Spencer, Mount Greylock Partners is a foundation “built on a partnership between parents, staff, students, and community members that values public education and supports causes to improve the school and enrich students’ lives.”	
Here is how much money was raised prior to a recent \$4,000 surge that has not been broken down in detail:	
Source	Amount
Private donors	\$159,054
Fundraising events	\$6,073
Booster clubs	\$1,000
TOTAL	\$166,127

School	Fee plan
Natick	\$125/sport
Brookline	\$85-\$125/sport
Arlington	\$175 all sports
Oakmont	\$550/first; \$300 add’l
Ashburnham	Up to \$1,000

Although many generous donations were made, fundraisers were disappointed by the low rate of participation from MGRHS families.

When it comes to athletics, some sports are much better funded than others. The cross country ski team,

The Ashburnham-Westminster fees are so high that many teams have been eliminated as a result of low participation rates.		
Surveying Berkshire County high schools, six have fees higher than Mount Greylock and four have yet to impose participation fees, as follows:		
School	Location	Fee
Hoosac Valley HS	Adams	\$100
Pittsfield High School	Pittsfield	\$100
Waconah High School	Dalton	\$100
Taconic High School	Pittsfield	\$100
St. Joseph’s HS (private)	Pittsfield	\$50
Lee High School	Lee	\$50
Mt. Greylock RHS	Williamstown	\$30
Lenox HS	Lenox	\$0
Drury High School	North Adams	\$0
Mount Everett HS	Sheffield	\$0
Lenox High School	Lenox	\$0

Parent support crops up as budget woes mount

As Mount Greylock RHS grapples with severe budget problems, at least two new parent groups have cropped up in the last two years to help. They join existing groups that have helped arts, prom and athletic activities for years. To help sort out the roles of the four main groups, Friends of the Arts coordinator John MacDonald of Williamstown solicited descriptions of each group. They are printed below for reference.

Mount Greylock Partners

“The Mount Greylock Partners foundation is built on a partnership between parents, staff, students and community members. We value public education and support causes to improve our school and enrich our students lives.

“We sponsored an extremely successful work beautification day in October, where over 300 participants spruced up the school by planting donated bulbs and shrubs, painted and cleaned. We also recently hosted a pot luck dinner and wacky, tacky gift exchange in the newly painted cafeteria for over 75 people.

“We welcome your input, energy and ideas to improve our school community! Sign up for the Partner list serve at: mtgreylockpartners@greylockcommunity.org. For more information, contact: Denise Spencer at 458-1830 or Anne Hogeland at 458-5966.”

The Gap Fund

“The Greylock Assistance Project (GAP Fund) was set up as an ad hoc committee by a group of concerned parents

Two new parent groups have are raising funds for school activities. They join existing groups that have helped arts, prom and atheletic activities for years.

in response to a funding crisis. For the 2003-04 school year, a large budget shortfall was partially met by a generous gift from Williams College, an override assed by the citizens of Williamstown, and the efforts of the GAP Fund.

“While the school still felt the pinch (losing 5 teachers), the potential was far worse. Fundraising efforts by parents, students, and community members resulted in the restoration of all sports and activities, which had been cut by two thirds. Raffles, car washes, a cabaret, a citrus sale and a celebrity basketball game were among the creative ideas that brought in nearly \$170,000.

“For the upcoming year, the funding picture remains bleak and money will have to be raised to support basic programming at the high school. The GAP Fund will continue to encourage participation by the whole community by soliciting donations, running fundraisers and facilitating discussion of important issues such as student

fees. For more information, contact: Lisa Hiley at 458-3077 or Beth Goodman at 458-2851.”

Friends of the Arts

“The Friends of the Arts is a dedicated group of parents and faculty whose mission is to promote and advocate for the arts at Mount Greylock.

“We raise and distribute funds and organize support for field trips, visiting artists, theater productions, and a variety of special arts events. We act as a link between the Mount Greylock community and the broader arts environment of Berkshire County, encouraging the Mount Greylock faculty, in all subject areas, to use the many local arts resources to enhance their curriculum.

“We believe that a serious exposure to and thorough exploration of the arts is an irreplaceable part of the education of our daughters and sons.

“If you would like to be on the FoA mailing list, send your email address to jhm21857@bcn.net, with “Subscribe to FoA list” in the Subject line. For more information, contact: John MacDonald at 458-0151 or Mary Lou Dewitt at 458-4644.”

After the Prom Committee

“We are a group of parents of Juniors and Seniors who work toward an all-night, substance safe, substance free celebration for the graduating Senior class and their guests. The After Prom is held directly after the Senior Prom in June. We welcome all parent s who would like to volunteer towards making this year’s event successful and memorable. For more information, contact: Cara Miller at 458-5863.”

OPINION

Gay marriage: Just making a family legal for everyone?

By Rachel Payne

A historic civil-rights ruling has recently been made by the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court. The court ruled there is no part of our Constitution that can prevent gay marriage.

This decision represents a tremendous victory in the struggle for homosexual rights, as it gives the ability to create a family. Not only will the ruling allow gays to legitimize their relationships in the eyes of society, but it also allow them to visit their partners in the hospital with the recognition of a committed “significant other” as a part of the family.

With the marriage, their chance to become insured and the crucial factor in stabilizing a family after a death is now extended to them. Perhaps the most precious right of all, though, is the right to adoption. At last, same-sex couples will be able to raise the children that have been wished for and show that their abilities to love and support are equal to those of heterosexuals.

The government’s primary purpose for existence is to protect the governed; that they may raise families in peace. Too long has this government not only failed to protect, but also actively or passively prevented gay marriage and stripped these citizens of this most basic familial right. Finally, state leaders are beginning to change, and perhaps they will stir the rest of the nation into the advancement of universal civil rights.

The battle however, is far from over. In these crucial coming months, the Legislature must change

Those opposing equal rights are drowning us out with their message of “morality”, which is based upon the assumption that one human may judge the actions of another, contradicting the acceptance at the core of the Bible they cling to.

Massachusetts state law to coincide with the state high court’s assessment of the Constitution, and the process will be watched intently from across the nation.

Changing the law will be gravely difficult under our current conservative administration; an administration which expressed its belief that homosexuality is a sin and which threatens to amend the Constitution so as to prevent gay marriage. The administration holds this fundamentalist agenda in an attempt to court the favor of the conservative majority, win more votes, and ultimately, more power.

Even liberals who claim to be pro-civil rights fear to take action in the gay cause, for they believe to do so

would offend more moderate Democratic voters and so lose the 2004 election. We must prove them wrong. Show these politicians that we, as a state and as a nation, will support those leaders who bring America close to equality.

Those opposing equal rights are drowning us out with their message of “morality”, which is based upon the assumption that one human may judge the actions of another, contradicting the acceptance at the core of the Bible they cling to. Until our voices for change utterly overwhelm this presumptuous, unsympathetic opposition, there will be no real change.

So, write to your representatives! Write to you senators! Flood them with letters and prove that the American public will back the campaign for civil rights. Bring Massachusetts back to the forefront of societal and political progress. Contact any of the three addresses below and defend the universal right to create a family.

Senate President Robert Travaglini
Senate House, Room 330
Boston MA 02133

The Honorable Andrea F. Nuciforo, Jr.
74 North Street, Suite 604
Pittsfield MA 01201

The Honorable Daniel E. Bosely
3 Elmwood Avenue
North Adams, MA 01247

POETRY CORNER

Unwanted

By Ananda Plunkett

Laughter from upstairs
is leaking through the floor.
I’m not allowed to be
a part of it anymore.

A puppy in the street,
lost without a home,
knows nothing compared with
this feeling of alone.

It hurts the most, I’ve found,
When surrounded by your friends,
No one knows you’re down,
it’s like no one comprehends

That this water is your tears,
that these poems speak your heart,
that the solitude of everyday
is tearing you apart.

Still Life


By Kajia Tang

Thin light streams between heavy curtains
Darkness settles like dust
Air lies stale and unmoving

Silent laugh
Voiceless cry
Shadows flicker like long-past candlelight
Tired and sluggish;

A fading apple
A skeletal pear
Rotting on neglected tables and chairs
Vanishing from life and memory;

Stillness
Quiet
No one’s here.




Holiday Open Mic Night

Friday, December 19th, 2003



@ Appalachian Bean Cafe
67 Main St., North Adams
6:30 PM - 8:30 PM
\$3 Admission

Featuring the bands
Ragged Company, Alcott’s Fig Tree, & solo musicians and poets putting their spin on the holiday season.
Call Shannon Barsotti @ 663-7588 to perform.



The Groove teen-led, substance-free concert initiative is a project of UNITY supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

TEAM ECHO

The Mount Greylock Echo is the student newspaper of Mount Greylock Regional High School in Williams-town, 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 Grey-lock 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 Kejia Tang. The next issue will be published Thurs., Jan. 15; story deadline is Jan. 11; January issue editor is Carl Kubler. February issue editor will be Simon Reinhardt. Staffers or contributors for this issue included: Chris Densmore, Lucy White, Rachel Payne, Ananda Plunkett, Carl Kubler, Jason Silberstein, Paul Bergmann, William Fogel and Joshua Weiner.

Next meeting -- Mon., Jan. 5

The next staff meeting will be Mon., Jan. 5, 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
all submissions:
echo@newshare.com

ARTS

First Java Jive features spontaneity and \$400 for GAP

By Ananda Plunkett

The first “Java Jive” coffeehouse raised \$417.35 -- and provided a remarkably spontaneous night of entertainment for at least 60-100 teens and parents who attended. A substantial portion of the amount raised will be going to the GAP Fund/Theatre while the rest will help fund the next coffeehouse, though exact amounts will be determined by the students who run it.

The Dec. 5 debut of the monthly coffeehouse run by Mount Greylock RHS students was staged in the basement of the First Congregational Church in Williamstown. The money came from admission fees and refreshments sold at 50 cents each.

The night started off at 7:30 p.m. when Molly Berman, the MC for the night, welcomed the growing crowd by thanking the many contributors who helped make the coffeehouse possible. She then introduced the first act of the evening, a poetry reading by Theodore Davidson.

Other scheduled performers included Sabrina Gogan, Katie-Rose Decandia, Carl Kubler, David Payne, Ananda Plunkett, and a band consisting of Jonah Jonathan, David Payne, and David Rosenthal.

The acts unexpectedly finished at around 8:30, an hour and a half before the estimated closing time of 10 p.m., so the performance schedule was turned over to an Open Mic Sign-Up that anyone in which any audience member could participate.

Many signed-up, and their spontaneous acts were greatly enjoyed by the packed room of which peaked at about 60 people.

After an eventful evening of poetry, music, Chinese yo-yo, and comedic monologues, the first ever JavaJive Coffeehouse came to a close with a reminder of next month’s Jan. 9 event.

Those interested in performing next month should contact Molly Berman at The_Rose_Red_House@SailorMoon.com, and others who would simply like to help out at future coffeehouses can contact Deb Burns at deb.burns@storey.com.



Submitted photo

Article author Ananda Plunkett performs one of her own songs at the Dec. 5 Java Jive Coffeehouse. Acts included music, readings, and comedy audience participation.

Boston road trip may be prelude to BSO relationship

By Kejia Tang

Taking advantage of a grant from the Boston Symphony Orchestra, about 80 Mount Greylock RHS students boarded buses at 5:45 a.m. on Dec. 3 for a day trip to Boston and a chance to hear and talk with Wynton Marsalis and members of the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra.

The bus trip to Boston’s Symphony Hall kicked off what the music department and Friends of the Arts hopes will be a new relationship with the BSO, a world-

renown orchestra that is right in our “back yard!”

The band, chrous and orchestra students arrived in Boston at 9 o’clock along with students from many other schools in Massachusetts. They attended a Q&A session with the BSO and the jazz orchestra from New York City led by Marsalis, who is perhaps the world’s most eminent living jazz musician.

From 10:30 a.m. until 1:15 p.m., the students sat in on a rehearsal of both the BSO and the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra playing side by side and featuring an all-

original, jazz and spirituals program written by Marsalis himself! A chorus with soprano, alto, tenor, and baritone soloists sang alongside too. The department is hoping that members of BSO will also come early next year to Mount Greylock to perform, play with students, and coach master classes. Founded in 1881, the BSO has maintained an active education program since 1959, with the start of the BSO Youth Concerts. Programs reach some 60,000 students annually throughout New England, working with children ages 7-18.

Who’s the fairest lady of them all? Find out in March

By Paul Bergmann

Rehearsals began this week for the Mount Greylock RHS production of “My Fair Lady,” to be performed March 5, 6 and 7.

“It’s a show Mrs. Walt and I have always wanted to do.” Says Jeff Welch, who has shared for years with Marlene Walt co-directing of school musicals. “It’s a very challenging show, but we have a strong cast,” Welch added.

Auditions for the musical were held Dec. 8, the singing auditions, and Dec. 9, the reading auditions.

My Fair Lady is the story of a London flower girl transformed into a lady by a bet between two distinguished professors.

The cast is comprised of upper and lowerclassmen alike to create a diverse and interesting show. Cast, crew, and students are all looking forward to this musical masterpiece. Welch concludes, “It’s [My Fair Lady] an American classic, so the public should be pleased with it as well.”

The female lead Eliza Doolittle will be played by Amanda Bell. The male lead, Professor Higgins is Alex Kopynec. Other important characters include: Mrs. Pierce - Kelsey Schelling, Colonel Pickering - Charles Cochran, Mr. Doolittle - Jesse MacDonald, and Freddie - Paul Bergmann.



Submitted photo

History teacher Jeff Welch, co-director of “My Fair Lady” production

*Nordic skiers
appeal for help --
tongues in cheek*

By Will Fogel, Ben Kolesar,
Scott Beattie, and Zach Ogden

Numbers and experience have always driven the Mount Greylock Nordic ski team. This year should be no exception as the team—led by the tireless tandem Hiram and Hilary Greene—seeks its fourth state title in five years.

Captains Zach Ogden, Will Fogel, Scot Beattie, and Ben Kolesar head an enormous team of 90 skiers. With their stunning good looks and youthful charm, these are the best captains the team has had in years. Some younger kids are cool, too, but they can only aspire to be as half as cool as their captains. Not only are these captains suave, but they are incredibly fast and thrive on natural ability. Captain Ben Kolesar summed it up best: “I think the only downside to [my amazing sexual appeal] is the [throngs of women that block my path] on the course.”

Last year, Hoosac Valley had the edge in speed, winning the state title, but they failed to match Greylock’s characteristic allure. However, rising skiers such as Mathias “Kaiser Kool” Bartels, Evan “Weightless Wonder” Detheir, Sean “Air Jordan” Condron, and Ryan “I really hate Nordic skiing, but I have to stay in shape for the track season” Flynn-Kasuba shine rays of hope on the new year. So, if you want to try skiing or just want a cool nickname, join us after school. Hope to see you there.

Girls XC skiing
is back in action

by Sarah Emmons

The girls’ cross country skiing season is off to a great start! With the first race looming on Dec. 31, the team has been training hard to prepare for the competitive season.

With captains Heather Murtagh and Erin Beattie leading the pack, the girls are looking forward to battling it out on the ski trails against Mohawk and Lenox high schools, which both have a reputation for exemplary performance.

Along with Erin and Heather leading the way for the Mountie girls are Kiersten Bell, Emily Stinson, Sasha Piatczyc, Sarah Emmons and other upcoming prospects.

The girls are looking forward to a hard but fun-filled season of pasta parties, ski dances, and, o yah, getting up at six o’clock every Saturday morning to race!

So watch for some Greylock headlines in the daily newspapers!

Season Passes

Available for Mount Greylock athletic events.
Now through Jan. 9:

Family of 4	\$100
Adult	\$50
Student/Senior	\$30

Buy season tickets at any home
basketball, hockey or wrestling event.

The Greylock Echo

Recruitment Meeting

Monday, Jan. 5, 2:30 p.m.
Room 60 (behind library)

Join The Echo Staff

We need:

Sports Editor
Advertising Manager
Club correspondents
Photographers
Columnists
Reporters
Copy Editors
Computer graphics experts

By working with The Echo Team:

- Help make the school a better place
- Spend time with committed colleagues
- Practice clear, simple, fast writing
- Learn how to interview and obtain information
- Find out about all aspects of the school
- Be eligible for field trips, meetings, talks

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