

Caraco, Ostheimer lead

Community project: a 2006 graduation requirement?

By Carl Kubler

Up to one quarter of MGRHS’s senior class may spend 15 hours outside the classroom on an off-campus project designed to better connect the school with the community and give students a special sense of achievement in their final high-school months. The proposed Senior Project Pilot Program is being reviewed by the student council and is expected to be considered by the school committee next month. Teachers Mike Caraco and Tom Ostheimer, who initiated the experienced-based education idea, speak of it in part as a cure for “senioritis” – the tendency of seniors to coast in school once they have been admitted to college.

If the senior-project program is a success in the spring, it would be phased in over three years. In 2005, all seniors would be required to participate; in 2006 it would be a graduation requirement.

By 2006, in order to graduate, seniors would have to demonstrate with their project:

- Creative and practical problem solving.
- Thoughtful and effective communication.
- Collaborative and responsible community involvement.
- Self-directed learning.

Each self-selected topic will require fieldwork in the community, a project paper, and an oral presentation before a board of judges. According to the written proposal, the result would be a “culminating assessment for twelfth graders that will demonstrate their mastery of the school’s graduation proficiencies.”

Messrs. Caraco and Ostheimer believe a senior project will contribute greatly to the “Mount Greylock experience.” Students will benefit by further developing critical oral and organizational

skills, while the community at large will be enriched by the effects of the students’ projects. Some students, however, are skeptical when it comes to considering the proposal. “It really seems to put an unnecessary burden on students who are already being overwhelmed by all the other things they’re doing,” says sophomore Spencer Kowitz. “With all the sports, academics, and extracurricular activities that people are involved in, how are we supposed to find time for this extra assignment?”

Other students are also voicing their concerns: “What’s to prevent kids who don’t care from blowing this off as well?” says Logan Garrity, a sophomore. “People who have been coasting through high school for the past three years are not going to stop coasting just because of this project.”

Continued on Page 2



Gillian Jones photo / courtesy North Adams Transcript

Overcome

Members of the MGRHS chorus clap during presentations at Martin Luther King essay contest last week. The chorus sang, “We Shall Overcome” as part of the event. Another photo, story, Page 3.

Students differ on impact

Dean proposal appears headed to school board

By Carl Kubler

In the midst of a whooping cough epidemic, impending budget crisis, and sub-zero temperatures, the administration at Mount Greylock Regional High School is about to undergo drastic organizational changes. Not only has Principal Russell Norton announced that he will retire as of Aug. 31, but Supt. Mark Piechota is also vying for the superintendent position at Milton High School in the Boston suburbs; if chosen, Piechota would be leaving MGRHS for what is, in his words, a “larger, more diverse, more challenging” school district. Given these circumstances, the School Committee and other concerned parties are considering a variety of organizational options. A group of eight MGRHS teachers has proposed replacing the principal position with five deans who would share the diverse responsibilities presently handled by Principal Norton. The proposal was drafted by teachers Liza Barrett, Michael Caraco, Blair Dils, Mary MacDonald, Brian McCarthy, Tom Ostheimer, Tim Payne, and Bob Thistle.

Continued on Page 2

After Norton, students seek to still be respected -- and heard

By Kejia Tang

From speculations and suggestions of a new principal, of two vice principals and a superintendent, of this idea of deans, and even a possible search for a new superintendent, MGRHS students are puzzled. After five years as the principal of Mount Greylock RHS, Russell Norton is retiring. The search is on once more for a new principal. What do the students think? What do the students wish for in a new principal? Besides the jokingly requested “sex appeal,” and “a few less donuts in the belly,” two major responses surfaced. One is, unfortunately, “Why should I care? What has the principal done for me?” The other, however, is a sincere desire for a principal who would relate to students, listen to students, and have respect

for students. Accessibility and interaction are the keys, many students said. While many are worrying about what the new principal would be like, a new idea with no principal has already been proposed. A plan of having “deans” take care of pieces of a principal’s administrative duties is said to save around \$35,000. If the school committee decides to pursue the idea of “deans,” they will stop considering principal candidates’ applications and MGRHS will most likely not have a new principal at all. See article on administrative reorganization for more information on the proposed changes.

INSIDE:

MGRHS reorganization?

How is the administration of our school changing? How can communication be enhanced and money saved? How will you be affected? Pages 1-2

Also inside:

More on senior project Page 2
My Fair Lady Page 3
Doc. Science meets the blobs. . . . Page 3
Downhill girls’ drive for five. . . . Page 4

SPORTS ... Back Page 4

Reorganization

Continued from Page 1

“Now that the school committee seems to be interested, and we seem to have the enthusiasm of the school council, we will present formally to the faculty,” said Mrs. MacDonald, who has acted as spokesperson for the proposal. “If we gain their support, the school committee will determine if the plan should proceed. At that point I imagine representatives of the various constituencies will gather to carve out a formal proposal.”

Mount Greylock’s administrative tier currently consists of a superintendent, a principal, an assistant principal, a business manager, and a special-education director. The proposal suggests removing the position of principal and changing the title of the assistant principal to “dean of students.” In addition, it calls for a dean of middle school, a dean of school resources, a dean of community resources, a dean of curriculum assessment and instruction, and three instructional chairs.

Even with each dean being paid a small stipend for his or her administrative role, the reorganization would still save an estimated \$35,000, supporters say.

Divying it up -- where \$85K goes

<i>Principal’s salary = \$85,000 + a \$5,000 stipend for special projects</i>	
Dean of Students (0.2 teacher / 0.8 administrator)	current salary
Dean of Middle School (0.4 teacher / 0.6 administrator).....	\$9,000
Dean of Community Resources (0.6 teacher / 0.4 administrator).....	\$6,000
Dean of School Resources (0.6 teacher / 0.4 administrator).....	\$6,000
Deans of Curriculum, Instruction (0.6 teacher / 0.4 administrator)2 ...	@ \$9,000
Instructional Chairs (0.6 teacher / 0.4 administrator).....	3 @ \$2,000
Curriculum Leaders.....	6 @ \$600
Subtotal.....	\$46,000
Professional Development.....	\$6,400
Total.....	\$55,000
Approximate Savings.....	\$35,000

The teachers who drafted the proposal examined the budget crisis, mounting administrative needs, and weaknesses of the current system to formulate a plan designed to:

- a) efficiently and effectively distribute administrative responsibilities,
- b) enhance communication and accountability,
- c) tap internal resources,
- d) and save money.

Principal Norton himself is quoted as saying: “[The proposal] has a lot of merit. I can’t think of a better place to

to maintain a “fresh and exciting” experience.

There are those, however, who are worried about the proposal. Elisabeth Goodman, an attorney who has children at Mount Greylock and who has helped lead fund-raising for the GAP Fund, likes the idea of increased teacher-administration involvement. But in an initial news account, Ms. Goodman says she was “shocked” by the proposal because the new deans would have to teach fewer classes, and this would lead to an increase in average class sizes at the school.

In a followup email, she elaborated: “I am not opposed to a number of teachers serving as administrators. I was surprised to learn that the proposal caused a loss of instructional

hours. I am concerned only if there will be a loss of instructional time because I anticipate the possibility of losing teachers due to budget cutbacks. If the school loses some number of teachers this year, it may be difficult to also lose the instruction hours in this proposal. But I was reassured by the teacher’s and school committee reaction that this proposal has so much promise for a better school that the minor loss in instructional time should be accepted.”

Mount Greylock’s current administrative model is linear, with the superintendent at the top of the chain and a progression of responsibilities ranging down the model.

In the new system, however, all deans and other higher-ranked administrators would be branching off the superintendent directly. This would eliminate the tedious “chain of command” that is one of the concerns of many faculty.

This is not the first time the School Committee has considered drastic changes in the administration. As far back as the 1970s, concerned parties were trying to combine the superintendent positions at MGRHS and Williamstown Elementary School.

Senior Project

Continued from Page 1

Some students wonder whether “looking good” for the upcoming accreditation process may be the real motive behind the drive for the senior project.

Freshman Evan Dethier, however, presents a different viewpoint, saying that the senior project is a “brilliant idea.” Sophomore Simon Reinhardt

agrees: “I don’t see what everyone’s complaining about.”

Messrs. Caraco and Ostheimer believe students will come to care about the project and work diligently so they can be proud of the finished product. The Senior Project Program is designed, according to the written proposal, to be a “satisfying, memorable, and challenging experience that will cap a student’s career at Greylock.”

start something different than at Mount Greylock.”

The teachers behind the movement believe that, given the current fiscal and administrative dilemma, their proposal for administrative reorganization benefits the Mount Greylock community by:

- utilizing existing talent at the school.
- fostering broader, deeper commitment to MG by involving more people in management.
- helping administrators stay connected to students and teaching.
- creating structure to maintain focus on continued improvement.

In the past, supporters of the plan say, teachers have often felt disconnected from the administrative process. The new proposal allows interested faculty members to become directly involved in decision-making at Mount Greylock, they say. It also recommends rotating teacher-administrators every two years

The Greylock Echo

Recruitment Meeting

Wed., Jan. 28,
2:30 p.m.
Room 60
(behind library)
Join The Echo Staff

By working with The Echo Team:

We need:

Sports Editor
Advertising Manager
Club correspondents
Photographers
Columnists
Reporters
Copy Editors

- 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

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 Carl Kubler. The next issue will be published Friday, Feb. 13, 2004; story deadline is Thurs., Feb. 5; February issue editor is Simon Reinhardt. March issue editor will be Chris Densmore. Staffers or contributors for this issue included Charles Cochran, Mary DeMatteo, Danielle Desanty, Sarah Emmons, Rachel Finan, Sabrian Gogan, Carl Kubler, Colin MacDonald, Ananda Plunkett, Simon Reinhardt, Hannah Rinehart, Devin Rock, Kejia Tang, and Sarah Whateley.

Next meeting -- Wed., Jan. 28

The next staff meeting will be Wednesday, Jan. 28, 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



Colin Gold

Promised land vision earns Colin Gold a \$200 savings bond

Original thoughts about the "the Promised Land" earned four Mount Greylock RHS students rewards and recognition last week at the fifth-annual Martin Luther King Jr. Public Speaking Contest. An estimated 200 students and participations attended a Jan. 15 presentation and judged the spoken essays of their fellow students.

"To me, the Promised Land is not a land completely free of hate, for hate is part of what defines us as human beings," said Colin Gold, the top-scoring essayist. "Instead, it will be a land where that does not govern out actions." Other speakers envisioned a land free of discrimination based on sexual preference, free of racism, or a utopia where only good resides.

The event included original poetry readings and a chorus singing of "We Shall Overcome." Students were judged by faculty, staff, and community members for delivery, organization, content and originality.

First-place Gold, received a \$200 savings bond from Williamstown Savings Bank. Other winners were Hannah Tool, Ryan O'Connor and Carl Kubler.

Amid homework and concern for budget, “Fair Lady” rehearses

By Charles Cochran

The March 5-7 MGRHS winter musical is probably the best-known and most-loved theatrical performance of the year. Directed by celebrated history teacher Jeffrey Welch, the exhibition usually has its ample share of wit and buffoonery. Music teacher Marlene Walt conducts the pit orchestra and its constituents, driving her talented young musicians to play their best.

Although there is a great deal of fun involved in the making of the production, there are always those brief times of stress. And although Williams College generously hoisted the theater program out of a financial ditch, there appear still to be problems with money. It seems that Mr. Welch winces every time he discusses with the cast the issue of acquiring costumes and other props.

Actors are told again and again that if we lose our scripts it will be off with our heads.

The musical to be performed this winter is *My Fair Lady*, one of my personal favorites. With the all-important addition of the chorus, the cast is much larger and more diverse than it is in the other two plays of the year. As a result, the cast is extremely difficult to control, so many of us who want to talk or do homework simply do so.

My *Fair Lady* will be performed March 5, 6 and 7. It's the story of a London flower girl transformed into a lady by a bet between two distinguished professors.

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

POETRY CORNER

Waiting

By Sabrina Gogan

I'm lost without you here
So I shall wait for your return
I don't want you to forget me,
The flame continues to burn

And my heart chills and I'm torn
When I reach that distant road,
The one you took the day you were lost
The one you haven't returned from

Still, I am waiting here
On the dark and rainy nights
Its here I will wait for your return
Alone...
In the distant roar of thunder

RAIN

By Ananda Plunkett

The rain slaps against the windshield
Like the rubber band shot
From my sister's finger-gun,
Stinging as it strikes
My tender and exposed skin.

What once began as an
April shower soon
Leapt, full speed into a
Race of raindrops now intent
On hitting our car.

My mother is silent
And I am thinking of the days
When life meant dolls
And tricycles instead of
This overbearing sense of change.

The pulsing rain awakens
The quite fears in my mind.

Forget-Me-Not

By Sabrina Gogan

If I were to leave today,
Miles and miles away
Would I be remembered?

Or just shattered like glass?
Would you remember all our memories from the past?

I have a simple request
Please just try your best

Don't walk away with anger
Don't feel hurt, but hide the feeling
Just remember how everyone's life has a meaning

Think twice before you speak
For the future is unclear
And what you lost today
Tomorrow, may not be here

Poetry submissions may be emailed to
echo@newshare.com



The Greylock Echo

SPORTS

Downhill girls now driving for five

By Hannah Rinehart

Mount Greylock’s girls’ downhill ski team – aiming to maintain a five-year streak of first-place state finishes, is off to a good start, finishing first overall at a Jan. 12 meet at Jiminy Peak.

The girls beat out the second-place team by a margin of seven seconds. Three girls finished among the top 10 racers, taking first, third, and tenth; all placed in the top 15. So what does this mean for not only the regular season meets, but also States? Let’s just say... it looks pretty good for a team which sometimes feels overshadowed.

The football team has won two high-school “superbowl” championships. Cross-country running and Nordic skiers hold numerous individual championships. Boys’ and girls’ soccer teams have state titles.

But one of the smallest and yet highest-achieving teams is greatly overlooked. The girls on the Mount Greylock Downhill Ski Team have been working their hardest to obtain their fifth-straight state championship.

Of course, not all the girls on the team have been through all five championships. In fact, the girls’ team is composed of two juniors, two sophomores and five alternates ranging from 8th through 10th grade. With the

graduation of distinguished skiers Jen Barrenger and Mary Cella, the team is under pressure to preserve its legacy of excellence.

Co-captains Jodi Dias, Ashley Dufor, and Julia Real, along with sophomore Libbie Weimer, are leading the team toward that fifth state title.

The anticipation for the first race Jan. 12 was intense. Each Tuesday and Thursday at practice on the slopes of Jiminy Peak, the mood is relaxed while a spirited bunch of girls train diligently. But on the minds of all skiers is the crucial question, “How will we do?”



Girls varsity in action on Monday night against Pittsfield.

Girls’ hoopsters recovered from whooping cough and shooting strong

By Mary DeMatteo,
Danielle Desanty,
Rachel Finan, and Sarah
Whateley

Although the Mount Greylock Girls’ basketball team experienced a slow start to its season, the Mounties’ future looks promising.

Senior captains Colleen Farley, Sarah Miller, Jen Morganson, and Crista Moriarty have made huge

contributions so far this season. Miller’s boards, Morganson’s boxouts, Farley’s speed, and Moriarty’s shots have served the team well.

The Mounties also boast their fair share of returning varsity players. The juniors hold it down with good skills and greaaaat looks! Sarah Whateley, Rachel Finan, Mary DeMatteo, Danielle Desanty, and Ashliegh Dow all create a huge presence on and off the court.

Returning varsity player Mandy Moriarty (sophomore), accompanied by newcomers Mackenzie Haig, Liz Martin, Sarah Manners and Lindley Bell, round out the team’s solid performers.

With players recovered from their whooping-cough experiences, MGRHS’s girls’ basketball has high hopes for the rest of the season.

Boys bball reaching for the ‘top of mountain’

By Devin Rock

The Mount Greylock Boys’ Varsity Basketball Team just recorded its fifth win this season, standing with a 5-1 record at the top of both the Southern Division and Berkshire County. The team endures many grueling practices, continually striving to be the hardest-working basketball team in Berkshire County.

With an intense training schedule and the phenomenal coaching of Jack Racette and Chris Conroy, the team hopes to win not only the Southern Division, but also, in the words of the coaches, reach “the top of the mountain.”

Nordic racers -- ready to step it up a bit

By Sarah Emmons

The racing season has begun for the girl’s Nordic ski team!

In the team’s first race at the end of December, we had a strong finish with six girls in the top 20. Although rivals Mohawk and Lenox slipped past us to finish first and second, respectively, Mount Greylock placed third out of the 10 competing teams.

These results led the team to realize that the bar was set high for the season and that all skiers needed to step it up to the next level to beat out the Mohawk and Lenox girls in our individual waves.

Wrestling lineup is seen as the ‘strongest in years’

By Colin MacDonald

Going into last weekend’s annual Essex Classic in Essex, Vt., the Mount Greylock Wrestling Team appeared in excellent shape to win its sixth-consecutive Berkshire County title and third Western Mass. championship of the last five years.

Losing only two seniors from last

year’s squad, this year’s team is left with a very solid and still relatively young lineup.

The lineup is as follows: Luke Wine-Martin (103 lbs.), Nikki Darrow (112), Jon Girard (Captain, 119), Matt Clement (125), Dan Onorato (130), Kevin O’Connor (Captain, 135), Jeff Brodeur (140), Colin MacDonald (145),

Rick Trombley (152), Justin Rancourt (160), Shane Miro (Captain, 171), Tony Quagliano (Captain, 189), Ryan O’Connor (215), and Mike Williams (275).

Darrow, Girard, Onorato, O’Connor, Brodeur, MacDonald, Miro, Quagliano, and Williams are all former place-winners at Western Mass., with Wine-

Martin, Brodeur, and Quagliano all being favored to win their respective weight classes this year.

Overall, this year’s wrestling team is one of the most talented group Mount Greylock has seen in years and possesses an excellent chance to make many strong showings in both the Western Mass. and State competitions.