

Meeting Saturday in Williamstown

Override seeks to avert 'amputation'

BLOOMIN' PLANS



Science teacher Howard Maturski, 58, will retire in June after 33 years at MGRHS. For the last four, he has managed the school's greenhouse.

As Maturski retires, will green thumb pass to Garden Club and students?

By Ananda Plunkett and Lucy White

As spring slowly thaws the wintry Williamstown, work on the Mount Greylock greenhouse is already under way. The flowers planted last fall by helpers at Workday are finally beginning to sprout, and crocuses, daffodils, and tulips can be seen in the Japanese garden, as well as around the perimeter of the school

Warmer weather brings better opportunities for a flourish-

ing greenhouse, and so other flowers will be planted no sooner than May, due to the risk of frost. Students can look forward to an even larger plant display in the months to come.

"Many students at Mount Greylock don't seem to know much about our greenhouse," says Elizabeth St. Clair, a part of a mother-son duo which is helping spearhead volunteer efforts to add more greens and flowers to the "campus".

Continued on Page 4

By the Echo Staff

Seeking to avert what school board member Tom McHugh has called an "amputation" of services should the effort fail, a key Student Council member is urging students to turn out on Saturday for an organizing meeting to seek a Proposition 2-1/2 override in Williamstown.

"If the Williamstown override fails, six more teachers will go," said Will Fogel, the studentcouncil leader. He was joined in his appeal by Gideon Bradburd, son of school-committee member Ralph Bradburd.

"Together for Williamstown", a ballot-question committee, is holding an informational and organizational meeting on Saturday, April 17, at 3 p.m. at the First Congregational Church in Williamstown, according to George T. "Sam" Crane, one of the organizers of last year's successful Proposition 2-1/2 override campaign. Crane said the first portion of the meeting will include brief presentations from the elementary and Mount Greylock school boards. Along with town officials, they will discuss the consequences should the current override effort fail.

Crane said the second portion of the meeting will allow those citizens who feel they can support the override to organize for a voter identification and get-out-the-vote effort.

Crane said he was working with override backers Debbie Dane, Deborah Burns and Pat Dunlavey, among others. He said the town is short \$185,000 and the elementary school needs \$119,000 because accumulated increases in costs for the past two years (especially health insurance coverage) cannot be absorbed into the budgets.

For the past three years, and particularly last year, the Greylock budget has been slashed. The school committee, this year, then decided to strive to return to the service level of 2002. To do this, the committee not only needed to add back the teachers and services that have been lost, but also take over the cost of 5.4 teachers and 2/3 the money for activities and athletics that GAP and Williams paid for last year. This budget amounted to \$1.2 million more than this current year.

"No one is happy with this situation," says Crane. "We do not want to do this again. We know it will be a hardship for some. Simply put, we have to. It must be done, or our town will be worse for it. The high school could sink."

The school committee cut \$743,000 out of its earlier "quality budget" -- which translates into a loss of about 12 teachers from the 2002 levels. This will mean average class sizes of 26 in the middle school and 25 in the high school and also delay updating school technology and a cut professional development, school officials told the Williamstown Finance Committee at an April 7 budget hearing.

Some parents seek to form PTO to 'enhance volunteer efforts'

A group of parents is starting to set up a parent-teacher organization ("PTO") for the Mount Greylock Middle School and High School, in part to establish a permanent structure for receiving and dispensing donations and grants.

"In order to obtain tax exempt status, we need to form a corporation," says Beth Goodman, of Williamstown, one of the organizers. "...[An] interim board would serve through the summer until the election of new officers and directors that we plan to have in September 2004."

Goodman, [ecg@waregoodmanlaw.com] an attorney, is working with another parent who is also a lawyer, Ann Hogeland [hogeland@adelphia.net], to set up the PTO and appy for tax-exempt status.

They expect to form a seven-director board with a president, secretary and treasurer. They are looking for volunteer parents to serve as officers or directors.

"A new PTO could enhance the many volunteer efforts already taking place at Mount Greylock," says Goodman.

"We could find out more about what each other is doing, provide needed support, and start new initiatives."

They expect to form a sevendirector board with a president, secretary and treasurer. They are looking for volunteer parents to serve as officers or directors of the non-profit PTO.

She lists areas where the PTO could help as Friends of the Arts, fund-raising, web-site and electronic communication, grant writing, mini-courses, career services, buildings-and-grounds support, teacher-staff appreciation, special events, special-event programming, community service, hospitality, volunteer placement/job bank, publicity via bulletin boards and the Forum.

INSIDE:

Avoiding 'death spiral'

School board student representative Sarah Emmons describes why a Proposition 2-1/2 override is required to avoid a "death spiral" at Mount Greylock.

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\$9,000 for senior event

This year's after-the-promp party auction raised over \$9,000 to fund the traditional event.

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OPINION

Emmons: Override necessary to avoid 'death spiral'

By Sarah Emmons

For the past two years, we've been hearing the words "budget crisis," "override," and "GAP fund" mentioned over and over again. Their exact meanings are often unclear, but the underlying message shines through: Mount Greylock needs more money.

In the past two years, education funding has been slashed to below the bare minimum. Last year, the school committee, made up of community members, administrators, and students, was forced to adopt a

"Although the root of the problem is lack of state funding, we, as students, can more directly affect the passing of the override than the allotment of the state budget. I urge all students to convince parents and other adults of the importance of the override, and when it comes to time to vote, remind everyone you know over 18 years of age to vote for it. "

budget significantly smaller than previous years. In doing so, they were forced to cut science labs, teachers, athletics, and co-curricular activities. We all imagined the devastating effects these cuts would have on the school: ! What would we do without sports and theater, among other things? How would we deal with class sizes of 30-35 students?

In the end, we got some money from Williams College, the GAP fund helped us out through fundraisers which gave us our sports and many teachers back, and parents chipped in with participation fees for co-curricular activities. Through the exhausted efforts of the community, Mount Greylock was able to compensate for many of these cuts. Still, we saw the lack of labs in regular and honors science courses, the loss of teachers, parking fees established, and raised lunch prices.

This spring, the problem is coming back again. We still need money, and no one should assume that this year Williams will step in with a check, or that the GAP fund will be able to raise as much money as it did last year. Most of all, we are not sure this year if both the towns of Lanesborough and Williamstown will be able to pass an override to further fund education. An override will enable the town to raise assessments (taxes) by over 2.5% per year. It is an understandably difficult proposition to pass, because no one likes to pay more taxes, but passing the override is crucial to the continued excellence of the education offered at Mout Greylock.

As students, we would see the effects the most. If the override is not passed, we may see our class sizes rise from 20 to as many as 35 students, see our teachers laid off, and see some of our favorite classes and sports and co-curriculars not run. We may be stuck with old textbooks and not-so-state-of-the-art technology. We could lose our friendship with teachers as class size and teacher workload increases. From well-known individuals we'll become just another paper to grade.

Many believe that by not passing the override, the community (in the form of donations, the GAP fund, and Williams College) will again fill in the gap left by the lack of state funding. What we often forget is that Mount Greylock is a public school, and all of the money needed to provide students with an excellent education should be provided by the state. There should be no need for parents to pay for our education or for the GAP fund or Williams College to give us money. It is not their responsibility; it is the responsibility of the state. Since 2002, the state has cut more than \$600,000 in funding. Although it seems unfair to ask them, without our communities' support, we will be unable to maintain our status as an esteemed public school.

Although the root of the problem is lack of state funding, we, as students, can more directly affect the passing of the override than the allotment of the state budget. I urge all students to convince parents and other adults of the importance of the override, and when it

comes to time to vote, remind everyone you know over 18 years of age to vote for it.

In addition to that, it is important that we get to the root of the problem and try to sway our state representatives into putting more money into education

"If the override is not passed, we may see our class sizes rise from 20 to as many as 35 students, see our teachers laid off, and see some of our favorite classes and sports and co-curriculars not run. We may be stuck with old textbooks and not-so-state-of-the-art technology."

funding so that this type of situation is prevented in the future. You can express your views by writing to them or by attending meetings at which they are present. This is your opportunity to take action on something that affects you and the generations of students who will pass through Mount Greylock in the future. Your opinion matters and your efforts count!

For the past few years, several members of the Mount Greylock school community have been worried about the possibility of a "death spiral." In the so-called death spiral, a cut in school funding creates a drop in school quality, which leads fewer students to choose to attend Mount Greylock (through School Choice), which leads to less money coming in. And so on. The result is a school unable to offer a quality education. The only way to prevent the death spiral is to take action and fund a Mount Greylock of which we can be proud.

Sarah Emmons is a student representative to the Mount Greylock school board.

POETRY CORNER

The River in the Mist By Bobby Quinn

The ribbon of blue travels slowly through the evening mist

The water silently gurgles and bubbles as it passes over rocks The fading light throws shadows along

the bank and deep into the wood The soft sigh of the trees send ripples over the glassy surface

The seemingly never-ending flow twists and turns on its long course to the sea

The distant sound of thunder gently

warns of an oncoming storm
The last of the light winks out as the moon
and stars take the sun's place

The moon gleams from the surface, throwing milky white light on the trees The rain suddenly starts to create tiny ripples on the surface of the water The drops become more frequent as an ominous shadow passes overhead The quick flashes of lightning reflect off

the innocent body of water
The thunder in closer and louder,
resonating deep into the canyon walls
The high voltages of electricity suddenly

strike the still water
The level of water starts to slowly climb
the canyon walls

The storms ferocity increased and the water floods the banks

water floods the banks
The early morning brings a slight drizzle
with the passing of the storm

The sound of birds can be heard as they wake in the surrounding wood

The moon and stars start to fade as the sun rises to take its position in the sky

The animals wander down lazily from their dens to drink from the cold, refreshing

river
The deer drinks slowly, keeping an ear out
for any sudden dangers

The sediments that were stirred up in the storm start to settle back down to the riverbed

The ribbon of blue travels slowly through the morning mist

'Pepsi field': What do you think?

Should public schools permit advertising and corporate sponsorship of sports and events? The Mount Greylock School Committee will take up the subject at its May 4 meeting.

The committee is exploring whether corporate donations in exchange for visibility and recognition for the advertiser or sponsor might be one more way to raise money at a time when tax dollars are in short supply.

What do you think? The Echo invites letters and columns on the subject for the May 21 issue.

Behind My Smile

By Ananda Plunkett

The mirror shows the clock's reflection,
Time sits backwards for a while.
My fingers play with the cloth on the table,
My eyes fix on the kitchen tile.

Outside the winter melts to mud, And slowly gray moves into brown. Spring descends upon the hills, Sleep shakes itself from our small town.

Yet I'm still dreaming far within, Where neither sun nor snow appeal For I've learned simply to pretend And now can't distinguish fake from real.

It hurts, you know, to be confused When all around you know the score So easily, like breathing in But you're left dying to know more.

The mirror shows the clock's reflection, Time sits backwards for a while. There's so much I don't understand: Confusion lives behind my smile.

I want to wish upon a star By Jessica Vickery

Tell me what to do.

What am I supposed to do? How am I supposed to make things better?

I've dug myself into such a deep hole That I'll never be able to crawl out. I'll never be able to make this life bearable.

It's like a constant throb of a wound that will heal

But that leaves a scar,

Always reminding me of my past. Always bringing back the memories of the times that hurt so badly. Times that I've tried to forget, but that will never be erased from my soul.

I want to wish on a star and make it all go away,

I want to feel like I can breathe again So that things can get better. So that I don't have to lie to myself anymore.

I want to be able to trust in who I am
And know that I can be whoever I want
to be instead of hiding behind this fake
smile.

I wish that someday, wishing on stars could get me to this point,
The point called Impossible.

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. The next staff meeting is Wed., April 28, at 2:30 p.m. in Room N-31. Next publication date: May 21.

Mount Greylock Echo Room N-31 Mount Greylock Regional High School 1781 Cold Spring Road Williamstown MA 01267 (413) 458-9582 all submissions: echo@newshare.com

Recruitment Meeting

Wed., April 28 2:30 p.m. Room N-31

(middle school corridor)

The Echo needs:

A graphics designer, advertising manager, club correspondents, photographers, columnists, reporters and copyeditors. An editor for the 2004-2005 school year will be elected at a May meeting.

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NEWS/CLUBS



Martha Elpern accepts flowers after she was cited April 3 at a Williams Inn auction dinner for her 11 years of volunteer efforts on the After the Prom Party event.

Silent auction raises \$9,000 for senior after-prom event

Parents of Mount Greylock seniors and other supporters raised an estimated \$9,000 on April 3 to ensure that there will be an after-the-prom party this year at Eastover Resort in Lenox. The money was raised through the "silent" auction of more than 112 donated items which took place at a dinner event a the Williams Inn.

Martha Eplern, a parent volunteer who has been part of the annual auction for more than 10 years, received a special citation and flowers during the dinner.

The featured auction item -- a week at a Caribbean villa residence offered by owners Karen and Hank Gold of Lanesborough, was sold to one of the auction's organizers -- Karen P. Jolin.

Other auctioned items included dozens from business, restaurants and individuals including trips, services, merchandise, handmade quilts, scarfs and pottery and artwork.

It took alot of volunteers working together to bring it all together," said volunteer Beth Parker-O'Brien. "And the fun continues as we now move on to planning the actual afterprom."

The following e-mail address is from the auction website, and links to a complete overview of the afterprom http://www.mgrhsafterprom.com.

Middle school auditions set April 28 for 'Alice in Wonderland' show

Middle School students will stage a performance of "Alice in Wonderland," a kooky story full of crazy characters and silly songs.

Directed by Kathy O'Mara and David Librizzi, who run Minerva Stage drama camp in the summer and also started a film camp for kids last year, the play will take place on June 11-12. Deborah Burns will be musical director, as she was for last year's smash hit "Bye Bye Birdie"

Auditions are Wed., April 28 after school in the chorus room. Everyone who is interested will get a part. If you're not into acting and singing,

students are also needed to build sets, work backstage, and do makeup. Rehearsals will be after school Wed.-Fri., with the first cast meeting taking place on Thurs., April 29 in the chorus room. Parts will be announced and the first blocking will take place.

Last year organizers had a great time pulling together the show, and they predict this year will be just as much fun. Everyone is encouraged to join in the craziness, the hard work, and the satisfaction of bringing a production to life. Questions: Kathy O'Mara 441-6120, Deborah Burns 458-0925, or Marge Chamberlain 458-9177.

Middle School parents are starting newsletter

Responding to a perception that better school-community communication is needed, at least two middle-school parents are planning to start a newsletter.

Deb Dane and Beth Stomberg say their intention os to create a communication vehicle for middle-school teachers, students, coaches, adminstrators, parents and clubs to share scheduling information, wish lists, and items which may miss the deadline for the school's monthly "official" newsletter, The Forum.

They say the newsletter will come out every Friday, and will be a single sheet photocopied on boht sides. there will be copies of the same information on the school website, they say, and the whole thing will be parent-produced and funded, with distribution help from teachers.

The newsletter oculd be used to publish schedules, announce concerts, reminders, project details and due dates, they say.

"We have already met with [Principal] Russ Norton," Dane and Stomberg said in a note announcing the newsletter, adding, "everyone is enthusiastically supportive "

For more information contact either Dane, at 458-0168 [debbydane@aol.com], or Stomberg, at 458-1749 [bstomber@williams.edu].

Survey of school air quality underway

Foreign language teacher Allison Glover is conducting an information survey about air quality at Mount Greylock. In a query circulated to faculty and staff mailboxes, Glover asked for an "expressions of concern" and sought responses by March 30.

D.C. 'close up' smaller, but still offers exchange of perspectives

Six Mount Greylock juniors spent a week in Washington, D.C., last month, part of the school's long-running involvement with the Close Up program under advisor Tim Murray. The group was smaller than other years.

The students shared dormitory rooms, and perspectives with other juniors from states including Texas, Illinois, Maine, Oregon, and North Dakota. They toured the capital's monuments and other sites, and participated in seminars and evening discussions.

The Greylock group's experience included a two-hour aircraft equipment delay and some hassles with security leaving the Albany, N.Y., airport. But the of the week went smoothly, said participant Sarah Emmons - including 6:45 a.m. wakeups and 8:15 a.m. workshops followed by tours of such things as the Washington, Jefferson and Lincoln memorials.

"It is one thing to read about Lincoln's accomplishments from your history book, but a quite different thing to stand next to a humongous statue of him surrounded with

NBCC distributes 'safe homes' guide at teen-drink meeting

A "town meeting" to talk about teen drinking was set for Thursday, April 15, at Mount Greylock, with a discussion led by members of the Northern Berkshire Community Coalition (NBCC). Youth, parents, and all other concerned citizens of Williamstown were invited to attend.

The NBCC called the meeting to guide its Communities Mobilizing for Change on Alcohol project, led by a team of youth and adult residents of Williamstown. The NBCC also distributed copies of the 2003-04 Safe Homes Parent Resource Guide.

According to a 1997 report from the Secretary of Health and Human Services, alcohol kills six times more youth in this country than all other illegal drugs combined. It is a leading cause of death among teenagers, contributing to auto accidents, homicides, and suicides. Use of alcohol during the teenage years also leads to an increased risk of problems with alcohol abuse in adulthood.

According to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, young people who begin drinking before age 17 are more than twice as likely to develop alcoholism than those who begin drinking at age 21. Young people who begin drinking before age 15 are four times more likely to develop alcoholism.

For more information, contact Erica Schmitz, prevention-services coordinator, at (413) 663-7588 or email eschmitz@nbccoalition.org.

his speeches and discuss those very same accomplishments," said Emmons.

Evening activities sometimes took the form of "topicals" -- groups in which students discussed a single controversial topic facing America, or listening to a Democrat and Republican debate such topics as gay marriage, flag burning, and the legalization of marijuana.

"These experiences helped us to examine and strengthen our views and for the first time, for some of us, fight with girls from Texas over our support of George Bush," said Emmons.

On the final night, said Emmons, a student from another Massachusetts high school gave a banquet speech in which he described meeting and interacting with students from other parts of the country as his favorite aspect of the program.

"Close-Up really was an amazing experience, teaching us not only about government and Washington and how politics work, but also about each other," she said.

The five participating juniors, besides Emmons, were:

Problem solvers bring home a 3rd-place citation

Qualifying teams from the Mount Greylock Future Problem Solving program trekked eastward to Newton, near Boston, in April 3 to compete in the State Problem Solving Bowl.

The day's first, and most important, event was a two-hour team competition. In this competition, four-person teams identify and attempt to solve challenges in a fictional future setting. Following the team competition was the action-plan presentation, in which teams attempted to convey the final solution they came up with during the previous session.

At the end of the day, when the evaluators have had enough time to grade each of the team booklets, an awards ceremony took place. Awards are given for Scenario Writing and Community Problem Solving in addition to the Team Competition and Action Plan Presentation awards.

In the Senior division, Carl Kubler took home the 3rd place Scenario Writing plaque, and his team (Carl, Seth Kelley, Ben Just, and Simon Reinhardt) took 3rd place in the Team Competition, narrowly edged out by the rookie Senior Team led by Kejia Tang (Kejia, Jesse MacDonald, Jason Silberstein, and Nick Edwards), who took 2nd in both the Team Competition and Action Plan Presentation categories.



A profile . . .

Teens forming a new community -- a primer on Greylock ABC

By Theodore Davidson

The Greylock ABC is a local chapter of the national program of A Better Chance Inc. Since the founding of A Better Chance in 1963, its mission has rested on a single goal: to substantially increase the number of well-educated minority youth capable of assuming positions of responsibility and leadership in American society. Through a range of programs, A Better Chance works with students of color-from the sixth grade through college-to help them access expanded educational and career opportuni-

In Williamstown, Greylock ABC students live in a program-owned residential home on Hoxsey Street, near the Williams College campus. "We have a great time with each other, and we try to find the time to just be ourselves," says ABC student Emily Garcia.

The Better Chance mission consists of

-- To provide educational opportunities to students of color with the talent and potential to excel academically through their recruitment and placement into some of the nation's most outstanding secondary schools;

Community Days: parents can visit

Mount Greylock parents will have a chance April 27-30 to visit classrooms and get to know the school during "community days" from 9 a.m.

Parents who want to participate should call the principal's office by April 22, at 458-9582.

-- To provide assistance and guidance to the schools, students and families to ensure the best possible learning experi-

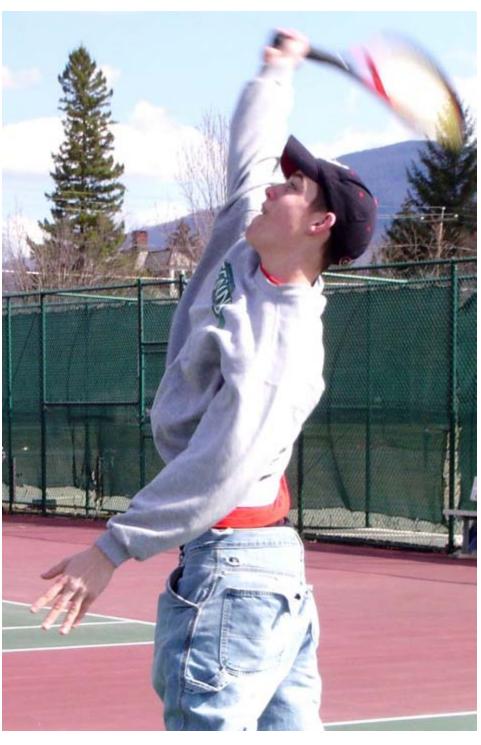
- -- To provide direct academic and career development assistance, and to generate opportunities and support for these students in the corporate and public sectors;
- -- To expand the universe of students served by A Better Chance, and to develop and nurture their potential; and
- -- To advocate for our students and for our educational viewpoints and strategies.

Currently in the school there are eight ABC students all from different communities and states. In the house there is Elianny Camilo from uptown Manhattan and Theodore Davidson from Brooklyn (freshmen), Earl Edwards from Boston and Jadeene Gabay from Brooklyn (sophmores), Damaris Bailey from the Bronx and Emily Garcia also from the Bronx (juniors), finallly Angel Claudio from Connecticut and Cynthia Degros also from Brooklyn (se-

All participating in activities such as Spanish club, dance team, and also The Greylock Echo. "We have a great time with each other, and we try to find the time to just be ourselves," says ABC student Emily

To place it in a nutshell for you, The Greylock ABC is a program where gifted youths are taken out their communities, and are placed in a academically challenging community. They are asked to be able to take care of themselves at the same time, obtain a B- average throughout the school year. It is a challenging experience for these youngsters, but they have adjusted quickly to this community and have a lot in store for the future.

SPORTS



MGRHS tennis team member Clayton Johnson warms up on the Williams College courts last week.

GARDEN

Continued from Page 1

"Everyone did such a great job at workday last fall -- which was an extraordinary start. But now it's important to keep our grounds and gardens looking their best," says junior Paul St. Clair, the other half of the mother-son duo.

Inside the greenhouse, Williamstown Garden Club volunteers Suki Williams and Harlan Smith have planted lots of annual seeds in trays in the greenhouse.

And as part of a unit exploring Latin in Botany, students in Ms. Blood's 7th and 8th grade Latin will be designing large-scale plant markers in Latin for the school gardens and/or creating small herb gardens labeled with the Latin plant names.

Students interested in gardening and those who would like to help out with the burgeoning greenhouse in the months to come can call Paul St.

had a tiny greenhouse within a corner of the existing buildings. But when Williams College constructed new science facilities, it donated a rooftop greenhouse structure to the high school -- if the school would disassemble and move it. Howard Maturski,

Claire at 458-9243.

an environmental-science teacher, rose to

Maturski, 58, who is retiring at the end of this school year, re-assembed the metal greenhouse strut by strut and has made it his personal mission for the last few years to grow things inside and use the facility for science projects -- often starting work at 6:15 a.m. to do so. In the far corners are little artifical vernal pools with water plants inside. With Maturski's retirement, it is unclear who will take charge of the green

Later this spring, the St. Claire's are hopoutdoor groundswork after school -- general cleanup & maintainence of the gardens and other misc. small projects, all under the direction of volunteers from the Garden Club. They will work with the student volunteers to figure out what projects need to be done (weeding, raking, trimming, etc). Then, when the time is right, they will help students plant the flowers that are growing in the greenhouse.

Students interested in gardening and those who would like to help out with the burgeoning greenhouse in the months to come can call Paul St. Claire at 458-9243.

Mrs. St. Claire says crocuses & daffodils & tulips (red & white) planted at last fall's workday are starting to sprout. Places to look for them, she says, are at the sign at the front of the school, where the driveway splits when you come in the driveway from Rt. 7, across the front of the building (including a huge mass of red & white tulips in the garden in the front courtyard); in the Japanese garden and in the yard to the side of the lunchroom where the picnic tables

The Greylock Echo

Join The Echo Staff

Recruitment Meeting

Wed., April 28 2:30 p.m. Room N-31

(middle school corridor)

We need:

By working with The Echo Team:

Graphics designer Advertising Manager

Club Correspondents Columnists

•Reporters Сору **Editors**

Help make the school a better place

Spend time with committed colleagues Practice clear,

Photographers simple, fast writing Learn how to interview and obtain

> information Find out about all aspects of the

school ■ Be eligible for

field trips, meetings, and talks

