

## crime gallery



Photo by Roseanna Zarza

Artist Reza Pike's exhibition of criminal portraits displayed in the art corridor gallery

## Council may be asked to survey elective interests

By Gina Iantelli

The Mount Greylock Student Council may be getting a request from administrators to conduct an informal survey of student interest in specific elective courses, Vice Principal Timothy Payne said.

Curriculum administrators have begun looking into the process by which courses will be approved to appear in the Mount Greylock Program of Studies for 2006-2007.

Mr. Payne, who attended a Jan. 10 meeting, said they discussed two topics -- the first being whether there is sufficient rationale for offering specific electives, and the second being the number of electives that should be offered so that students don't run out by their senior year. One of the challenges that exists for the curriculum leaders and the administration is to approve a program of studies that successfully fulfills the mission statement.

When it comes to the topic of electives for next year, it is unclear to the student body where these electives come from and who selects the list that makes it onto the course registration forms. Also, students want to know why some new elective choices are added and some popular ones are dropped.

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## Water well construction to begin in spring, complete within year

By Flora Lim

The Mount Greylock Water Committee has been making some positive progress lately with the water-line situation. At its November meeting, the water committee decided to construct a well about 1,000 feet west of the school building.

Mt. Greylock now has an engineer and money from a Massachusetts Department of Education grant to pursue construction, which is scheduled to begin this spring.

The perchlorate contamination of the school water supply, which started about 20 months ago, has been both a financial and physical burden for the school.

In addition to the extra money that the school has to spend for bottled water, the cafeteria staff has to do additional work sealing food to prevent contaminated water steam from getting into the food. They

are also obliged to lift heavy bottles to wash and cook ingredients.

Since the problem of contaminated water occurred, the water committee has done its best to seek a solution, but the complexity of the situation has dampened progress.

While the Greylock well provided a more permanent solution than the Sweetwood well, it was hard to accomplish because it required expensive pump tests. But now with the financial support of the Massachusetts Department of Education, it should be easier to pursue the goal.

With the financial difficulty relieved, there will still be many advantages and disadvantages to this plan. David P. Dethier, professor of geology and mineralogy at Williams College and a member of the water committee, said: "Advantages are that the well and its area of influence are on MGRHS land, so long-

term control is assured. A disadvantage might be that the school is responsible for providing its own water and testing it. I am not sure if this is really a disadvantage, unless you are comparing to something else."

With luck the project will cost about \$250,000. Professor Dethier said that construction will not begin until the spring when the ground is drier.

A narrow ditch (for a water pipe and electrical line) will need to be dug from the well to a water tank which will be buried somewhere near the school. Many connections will need to be made, and the system should be carefully tested, while students are gone for the summer.

Although it will take some more time to actually complete the project, now that the plan of construction is being finalized, it seems that the long awaited goal for a fresh water supply from the ground instead of from bottles will become a reality within a year.

## Pelletier, O'Brien each reflect discontent with a new two-year contract for teachers

By Rachel Payne

After 22 months of fruitless negotiation and bartering, the Mount Greylock faculty has a new contract. After threatening to resort to job action if an agreement was not reached, the Faculty Association, headed by President Rose Marie Pelletier, signed a contract that will affect the salaries and health benefits of all Mount Greylock employees. In signing, they agreed to pay for a greater share of their health coverage: teachers now pay for 20 percent while the district pays for 80 percent where it had formerly it had paid 90. In exchange, however, they will receive a 12-percent raise over four years. If the Association had rejected the contract proposal, many members would have gone with no raise for the second year in a row.

While the very existence of a new contract is a great relief to some, members of the Association and the School Committee alike have expressed great disappointment with this new contract. In order for the contract to pass, both groups had to vote to approve it

and in both cases, the contract passed by a very narrow margin.

Rose Marie Pelletier called the contract "a hard pill to swallow for teachers." What appears to be an attractive deal for teachers -- a 12-percent raise -- she believes to be misleading; that 12 percent amounts to only a three percent raise each year for four years. To make matters worse, that raise is not compounded, and so does not build over time. And though coverage of 80 percent of health-insurance premiums is far higher than most professionals receive, Pelletier said that "there is a handful of teachers this year for whom the extra they have to pay in health benefits is not offset by the raise, so they're actually taking a loss in pay this year . . . that's how bad this contract is."

Another concern among association members is the welfare of retired faculty members, whose health

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# NEWS

## Building findings described as 'alarming'

By Rachel Payne and Isa St. Clair

A series of public meetings on the future of Mount Greylock's 45-year-old building got underway Jan. 10 with another meeting set for Tuesday. The building and site assessment meeting that occurred on January 10 yielded some alarming findings about the high-school building. Dore and Whittier architects, hired by a building committee of the school-district board, discovered many flaws in the building, some of which might appear to pose hazards to the students.

The most disturbing failings of the Greylock campus fall into the category of "life safety." Fire-safety features, such as a fire suppression sprinkler system and fire separation walls for assembly areas are absent. Also, the fire alarm system is reportedly not operating, and door widths -- legal when the building was built -- do not meet new fire-safety standards.

"The Mt. Greylock Regional School has served our community well for the last 45 years," the building

committee says in a Jan. 11 document summarizing the Dore & Whittier findings. "However, other than an addition in 1968, minimal building work has been undertaken in the past decades."

The architects recommended a full system replacement. Inconsistent heating and poor ventilation that may be detrimental to the health of the student body contributed to the recommendation.

In view of the fact that Greylock was constructed in a time of more lenient health standards, the architects consider it altogether possible that hazardous materials were used in the building process. However, such materials are typically benign until disturbed by the type of large-scale renovation now being considered. The water that has infiltrated the walls has accelerated the deterioration of the building. The water stains prevalent on the ceiling can attest to that.

The comprehensive feasibility study involves a four-step process, the committee document says, and at

least four more public hearings. The next meeting is Tuesday, Jan. 24, at 7 p.m. in the school library to consider projected enrollments and educational space needs.

Other hearings are set for Jan. 31, in the Lanesboro School Cafeteria at 7 p.m., also on space needs, enrollments and the building and site assessment, a "development of building options" hearing on Feb. 15 back at the school library, and a meeting on the cost implications of building options, on Feb. 28 at the library.

### Architects' assessment part of Jan. 11 document

**EDITORS' NOTE** -- Although a more detailed report is forthcoming, following are the highlights of the building and site assessment, as released Jan. 11 by the building committee:

#### Life Safety

- No fire suppression sprinkler system
- No fire separation walls for assembly areas
- Combustible materials -- wood slats at auditorium walls; control booth wood dividing walls are not compliant with current codes
- Stair hand rail diameters are not code compliant
- Door widths do not meet egress requirements
- Fire alarm system is not code compliant

#### Heating, Ventilating, Air Conditioning

- Recommend full system replacement:
- Original Boilers are near the end of their design life
- Heating is inconsistent -- some rooms are hot while adjacent rooms are cold
- Pneumatic temperature control system should be replaced
- Hot water system needs replacement
- No door area vestibule

cabinet heaters to create air curtain

-- Poor ventilation throughout building -- particularly bathrooms (many complaints)

-- Little to no ventilation in corridors is not code compliant

#### Architectural

-- Single pane glass windows are large source of heat loss, and crumbling caulking is allowing air infiltration

-- Some areas at main building walls are being infiltrated by water; mortar has deteriorated and has been pushed out due to freeze/thaw cycles, and will deteriorate further

-- Some interior classrooms (#56-59) reported to have poor air quality. They are windowless spaces that when combined with adjacent rooms due to class loading, created too large of a space with acoustic problems

-- ADA (Accessibility) issues

-- Corridor ramp to gym is not ADA compliant and enters girls locker room rather than gym lobby

-- Not all entrance and interior doors meet width and hardware requirements

-- Auditorium sloped floor is too steep. There is no lift or ramp to stage and compliant seating is not provided

-- No ADA compliant toilets in building

-- Existing handicap ramps too steep and lack landings

-- Core areas (library, gym, cafeteria, etc.) are located in different corners of the building -- difficult to navigate and to open securely to the community for after hours use

-- Students have complained about timeliness between classes due to building sprawl -- one-story structure with additions

-- Lack of natural light is prevalent, particularly in hallways, and some classrooms.

-- Lack of identifiable Main entrance with direct access to administration or greeter

-- Numerous front entry exterior doors increase security risks

-- Most furnishings, equipment and finishes are showing signs of significant use and age

-- Curling and popping floor tiles in building northwest area likely due to high water table/humidity issue -- also contributes to poor indoor air quality

-- Roof (replaced in 2002) some areas of ponding due to clogged drains or compressed insulation (no pitch to drain)

#### Structural

-- Generally the structural systems are in good condition with no evidence of distress or settlement

-- No vertical expansion (additional floors) possible due to slab type construction

-- Seismic upgrade is necessary if building is renovated

#### Electrical

-- Available power service capacity is sufficient, but fixtures and wiring old

-- New wiring for future technology and technology infrastructure, is recommended

-- New single emergency generator recommended

#### Plumbing

-- Plumbing is 35-45 years old -- copper piping life generally 40-50 years -- recommend full system replacement prior to failure and damage

-- Plumbing fixtures are well worn and not as efficient as current low flow fixtures nor ADA compliant

#### Hazardous Materials

-- At the time of original construction some suspect hazardous materials may have been utilized

-- A thorough documentation (testing) of suspect materials should be undertaken prior to any proposed renovations

-- Hazardous materials are typically benign unless disturbed for maintenance or significant renovation

-- Abatement will need to take place during any renovation construction and will impact costs and schedule

#### Site Review

-- Intersection of driveway with Route 7 has poor road visibility

-- Parking lot and access roads are old and in need of maintenance and repair

-- Drainage -- storm water quality will need to be improved with any project

-- New well(s) will be required to replace existing contaminated well

-- Fire suppression will require fire pond or storage tank with pump station

-- Large portion of site is Amenia silt loam, "Prime Farmland" soils -- will trigger an Environmental Notification Form (ENF)

-- High water table (depth of 2 feet) contributes to water infiltration at NW corner of school).

-- Wetlands Protection Act -- the connecting brook appears to be intermittent -- another wetland area on south portion of site

-- North portion of parcel is within neighbor's well head protection area -- need to recognize with any new construction

## Pannesco: 'Shadow' visits set for MoCA, Clark, Williams Feb. 2

By Grace Laidlaw

On Feb. 2, anxious news watchers across the nation will turn to their television sets to find out if Phil the Groundhog has seen his shadow. On the same day, high school students around the country have the opportunity to take part in a Job Shadow Day as part of a nation-wide effort to give high school students hands-on experience in their prospective careers. Participating students are encouraged to choose careers they are interested in pursuing and spend the day trailing ("shadowing") and observing a professional working in his or her chosen field.

Mount Greylock students in grades 9-12 will have the opportunity to participate in the program with the help of Ms. Penna and Mr. Pannesco of the guidance office, who are organizing the Shadow Day at MGRHS. According to Mr. Pannesco, although most students arrange the day with chosen professionals on their own, the school has made arrangements for interested students to spend the day at certain establishments, including Mass MoCA, Williams College, and the Clark Art Institute.

Far from being an excuse to take a day off from school, the Job Shadow program is intended to expand on classroom lessons by providing practical experience. The program is also an effective way to help students find out which careers they are best suited for, and which are best suited for them. As Mr. Pannesco explains, "most students have some idea of what they want to do, but, very often, until they spend a few hours learning about it from someone who's actually doing it, it's difficult to have real grasp of the duties and responsibilities of that job."

"So this is the perfect opportunity for students to experience, if only for a short time, the real responsibilities and challenges of the job they think they want." So if you want to narrow the job options field, or if you have one career in mind and you want to be certain, consider giving Job Shadow Day a try. Interested students should pick up permission slips in the guidance office.

## The Greylock Echo

The Mount Greylock Echo is the student newspaper of Mt. Greylock Regional High School in Williamstown, Mass. Published monthly during the academic year, each issue is developed and edited by a team of editors and writers. Any Mt. Greylock student may join the staff, attend meetings and submit articles.

**Next news meeting:** Wed., Jan. 25  
**Next Deadline:** Friday, Feb. 9  
**Next issue:** Fri., Feb. 17

**Editors-in-Chief:** Carl Kubler, Kejia Tang  
**This month's Staff:** Gina Iannitelli, Grace Laidlaw, Flora Lim, Rachel Payne, Isa St. Clair, Shan Wang, Rosanna Zarza.

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## CURRICULUM

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In some instances that have occurred in the past, students have lost interest in certain electives, and they were subsequently dropped. In other instances electives were lost when the size of the faculty was reduced due to budget constraints. The meeting on Jan. 10 lasted all day, which was an unprecedented length, but no solid conclusions were made concerning next year's electives. Enough popular electives must be approved to be able to fill out students' schedules through senior year.

Future meetings are scheduled to occur later in the month that may resolve some of these issues.

# ARTS/MUSIC/CLUBS



Ms. DeSomma's art theory class's AIDS exhibition

Photo by Roseanna Zarza

## 'Food of Love' Shakespeare benefit set Feb. 10 at Williams Inn

The second annual "Food of Love" — a celebration of Shakespeare, love, and chocolate — will take place at the Williams Inn in Williamstown on Friday, Feb. 10, at 7:30 p.m. The event, a benefit for the Fall Festival of Shakespeare, will feature Mt. Greylock students and alums performing Shakespearean scenes, soliloquies, and sonnets on the subject of love, along with Elizabethan music. Meanwhile, the audience will enjoy a buffet of chocolate delights.

Tickets will be \$20 for adults and \$12 for students, available at the door or (a week in advance) at Wild Oats and Where'd You Get That? in Williamstown and Country Tack in Lanesboro. Seating will be limited. For more information please contact Deb Burns at 458-0925.

## JCL quartet plans to offer February learning in art and mythology

Four members of the Mount Greylock Junior Classical League -- Jen Kodela, Faith Shuker-Haines, Isa St. Clair, and Shan Wang -- will be conducting an Adventures in Learning course beginning in February. The course will involve artwork and mythology.

The Junior Classical League, the high school's largest club, boasts approximately 80 members. In October 2005, the JCL hosted a successful Catapult Contest and unofficial classics day, involving Certamen (Latin jeopardy) scrimmages and Clark Art Gallery talks. In December, the JCL hosted its annual Induction Ceremony, in which all new members of JCL, young and old, stayed after school for an afternoon of movies (A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum), pizza (Hot Tomatoes), and fun. Most recently, the club has held a candy wreath fundraiser; all wreaths were made by dedicated members willing to spend hours after school to assemble them. Members also sold tickets; winners have been posted on Mrs. Keeley's Room 63 door.

## From \$10-\$500, more than 80 gifts auctioned Jan. 29, at Goodrich, for PTO website project

The Mt. Greylock Regional High School PTO invites the public to the second annual "At Your Service" silent auction featuring items and services donated by parents, students, faculty, staff and friends of the PTO. The auction will take place on Sunday, January 29th, 3:00-5:00pm, at Goodrich Hall, on Route 2 in Williamstown, next to the Williams College Museum of Art (and eye sculptures).

Admission is free, and entertainment will be provided by student musicians throughout the event. Free refreshments, including baked goods, hot cider, cocoa, coffee and tea will be served.

PTO co-president Nancy Nylen said, "We have a fantastic array of over 80 (and counting) gifts and services ranging in value from \$10 to \$500 that people will have fun bidding on. We encourage people to come to bid or simply to visit with friends and enjoy the student musicians."

Offerings include: a Chinese dumpling cooking session, math tutoring, an aerial photograph of your neighborhood, a one-hour full body Swedish massage, a lasagna dinner delivered to your home, a kite-making workshop, a fly-fishing lesson on the Deerfield River, a life-coaching session, an ice-skating party, home-baked chocolate chip cookies for four weeks, a golf outing, and rides to doctors' appointments. Nylen commented, "We're thrilled with the creative, thoughtful, and unusual services that people are donating."

Also, a veterinary visit and vaccines, an evening of babysitting, homemade moussaka, creativity coaching, a mid-winter flower arrangement, a private yoga lesson, a portrait by a local photographer, four dinners delivered, teens staffing a party, a drawing of your home/child/pet by a local artist, matzo ball soup, clothing alterations, an architectural consultation, scones, a guided geology walk, a feng shui consultation, and many other items.

Bidding on items will begin closing at 4:15 p.m., so people are encouraged to arrive early for the best selection. Cash and checks are welcomed.

Student musicians providing entertainment at the auction include Davey Payne (acoustic guitar/vocals), Ananda Plunkett (piano/vocals), Jason Silberstein (flute), Katie-Rose DeCandia (classical guitar), Emily Baker-White (viola), Keija Tang (piano), Mt. Greylock A Cappella (vocals), Katie Markland (piano), and David Rosenthal (jazz). Also, raffle tickets for the handmade quilt donated by Beth Nesbitt will be for sale at \$1 each or \$5 for six tickets.

PTO co-president Anne Hogeland described the auction as "a wonderful event, with members of the

entire Mt. Greylock community sharing their talents, interests, and hobbies for a good cause. I'm especially pleased that so many students are participating and are offering services to be auctioned, ranging from Chinese Yo-Yo lessons to serenading a party."

All proceeds from the auction will go to PTO projects, including the purchase of new software and technical support for the school website and otherwise enhancing communications at the school. As Hogeland described, "The website project is the culmination of a six-month study of the school's needs and capabilities done, on a volunteer basis, by local computer experts. We are excited about the chance to bring this project to fruition."

## "All the President's Men" at Echo's annual election

Greylock Echo staff members are invited to a 1:00 p.m. showing of the film "All the President's Men," on Saturday at Images Cinema in Williamstown. The free showing will precede the annual election of editors and officers of the Mount

Greylock student monthly newspaper. Any MGRHS student who has written for the paper is eligible to vote. The film chronicles The Washington Post's reporting of the Watergate scandal which forced President Nixon's resignation.

# IMAGES

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# Winter sports in progress...

# Mountie skiers excel again at home cross-country race



Boys' basketball, against Pittsfield on January 12.

Photo by Roseanna Zarza

By Isa St. Clair

Up until last Sunday, Mount Greylock's anxious skiers awaited the news as to whether their first home race of the season could go on. Inclement weather conditions had thrown the event into doubt, and skiers dreaded a possible cancellation due to lack of snow. Luckily for them, the much-hoped-for snow finally settled on the Mount Greylock campus, and the skiers planned to celebrate Martin Luther King, Jr. Day with a triumphant home race.

"The skiing conditions were excellent," said senior Carl Kubler, and, if their performance is any indication, his teammates might agree. The boys' varsity team made a great showing, placing first of nine teams: Greylock scored fourteen points, Lenox took second with thirty-three, and Gateway came in third with a score of sixty. Junior Evan Dethier came in first overall, and senior Sean Condron claimed second some twenty seconds later. Dethier, Condron, and sophomore Nick Fogel, who finished fifth, made strong finishes despite competing for two straight days at the Junior Olympic Qualifiers on Saturday and Sunday.

Gateway High School, delayed by a broken-down bus, arrived late and missed the start of the boys' varsity race, forcing all its skiers to race with the junior varsity.

The Greylock girls' varsity teams also had a strong race, led by freshman Camille Robertson, who place fifth overall. Third for the Mounties was fellow senior and co-captain Caitlin O'Brien, in fourteenth place, and rounding out the top four for Mount Greylock was eight-grader Andrea Fishcer, helping the team take third place with a score of forty-six. Lenox came in first at fourteen and Mohawk took second with thirty-four points.

Leading the girls' junior varsity was seventh-grader Kate Costley, coming in third, followed by freshman Jackie Lemme in fifth.

This classical-style race began with a mass start, which, although not uncommon, tends to cause crowding and topple a few skiers. But the Greylock team refused to be disheartened by a mere fall, and the whole group skied hard and finished strong.



# CONTRACT

Continued from Page One

coverage is influenced by the current contract. Pelletier said that "it was extremely painful for retirees...because their health insurance costs doubled for them, they're on a fixed income, and nothing that we gain in this contract is going to offset that at all for them."

Nonetheless, these issues did not dissuade the majority of the Faculty Association from accepting this new deal. The approval of this final contract hinged on the fact that it promised significantly more money than the most recently rejected proposal. Also, teachers were unwilling to go another year without a raise. Last year's loss in pay had severe repercussions and was impossible to recover, according to Pelletier. She said that such a loss "affects whether [she is] going to retire in the next three years." She went on to say that "had the contract not been approved, there would have been a major job action and that would have had a large impact on the community as a whole, the students included. One of the things that both sides have been trying to do in the process of figuring out how to allocate the district's resources is to try to have the least impact on students."

Finally, the teachers have conceded partly in recog-

nition of the constraints of the School Committee. Ever rising healthcare costs have put the committee in a bind. "Because of the way schools are funded, it's very hard for [the School Committee] to be compliant...so for them it was a difficult decision, too," said Pelletier. This understanding, however, has not put to rest a residual hostility between the teachers and the School Committee. "The biggest frustration with the School Committee is that for a year and a half they sent us proposals that were downright insulting, and only at the last minute when a job action was threatened did anything reasonable come to the table," said Pelletier.

Tim O'Brien was one of a minority of School Committee members who voted against the contract proposal. The essential problem of approving the contract is that it eliminates the possibility of further reform of Greylock spending for years to come, he says. Because the contract was approved and signed, teacher salaries and health benefits are non-negotiable until 2009.

One of the factors that lost O'Brien's vote was the health-care package promised by the contract. Payment of 80 percent of health coverage costs by an employer is extremely unusual, O'Brien thinks. He says the benefits received by Greylock faculty "do not reflect what the person on the street is getting," said O'Brien.

The fact that Pelletier, as president of the Faculty

Association, is excused from teaching one full-year course to make time for her association duties also contributed to O'Brien's "no" vote.

O'Brien was also disappointed by the School Committee's urgency to avoid a job action. Though he made no claim to know the motives of those who supported the contract, he fears that the threat of job actions impacted his fellow committee members too much. "If we had held out and not signed this contract, who knows what we would have gotten, but we were threatened with job actions, and I know that in the past, the School Committee weighed that into their decision. While [preventing job actions] was preventing pain for the students, it was not in their best interests," O'Brien said.

Even so, he considers some small progress to have been made. "One of the things that needed to be changed was to get a more plastic schedule, and that was, to a degree, improved," said O'Brien. According to this contract, the administration is now more free to make changes in the structure of the school day without having to defer to the Faculty Association in every instance.

All things aside, it was the contract's four-year term that most influenced O'Brien's decision. "If this had just been a three-year contract that started on the day it was signed, I would have supported it," O'Brien said. "I realize you can't get everything you want."