

Are you aware of big changes coming to academics?

By Sofie Brooks

Big changes are being planned at Mount Greylock right under our noses.

You might have heard a rumor about AP enrollment, or meetings during lunch, but did you know that **you** could be a member of a committee deciding on the future of our school?

The Mount Greylock Strategic Planning committee has been meeting for several months now, and it is proposing several radical changes in the way the school handles academics.

Last week, 36 of the 50 eligible vot-

ers supported open enrollment, a student tutoring program, differentiated learning, and no weighting differences between AP and honors classes in calculating GPA.

The Strategic Planning Committee is not some informal group of friends chatting about the school. It is a group of students, faculty, administrators and community members assembled "to encourage, inspire, and actively support all students to pursue challenging academic programs."

Last week, the committee held a vote

in which a majority of members supported open enrollment for AP classes, forming a school-wide mentoring system to help with academics, incorporating differentiated learning into college prep and honors classrooms, and finally, collapsing AP and honors weighting to both equal the current honors weight.

These changes would mean that any student who wants to be enrolled in an AP class would have the opportunity to do so with support from faculty and other students to help them adjust to the more rigorous standards. In addition, switch-

ing up to an honors class would be much easier with differentiated learning, because honors and college-prep students would be taught in the same classroom.

Finally, students would have to take AP classes simply because they want to learn, because there would be no extra grade boost to their GPA.

Although these ideas are totally new, the basic idea of forming a committee to allow an organization to assess its goals is not. Other Strategic Planning

See ACADEMIC, on Page 3

Scoping economic ground zero

By Shannon Young

A trader turned teacher guided Mount Greylock students on a tour of economic "ground zero" -- three key financial centers in Lower Manhattan.

The Economics class traveled to New York City to witness the United States' monetary policies and practices at three of the most important financial institutions in the country; the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE), and the New York Mercantile Exchange (NYMEX).

The small group of students was led on May 1 by teacher Drew Gibson, who wanted to share his own experiences as a former New York stock-broker with his class. The trip took months to coordinate as security increases in the past few years have made it almost impossible to get public tours of both the Federal Reserve Bank and the New York Stock Exchange. "As soon as I found out I'd be teaching the Economics course, in the fall, I decided that [the class] should go to New York and experience economics firsthand," admits Gibson. "I wanted them to witness the things I did as a stock-broker."

Though the group was on a strict time constraint due to the train schedules in and out of Grand Central Sta-

See ECONOMIC, on Page 3



When MGRHS teacher Drew Gibson (top right) took on teaching an economics class, he reached into his own work history, and took students on a field trip to lower Manhattan, where he once worked as a stockbroker. Above, students near Wall Street; to right, the New York Stock Exchange trading floor.



CSPAN to air "Williamstown Warming" next week

"Williamstown Warming," the 10-minute video by Mount Greylock Regional High School students which won a national award from CSPAN, will be shown on the cable public-affairs network on Thurs., June 7, at 6:50 a.m.

The three collaborating MGRHS students were seniors Anna Hogeland and Evan Dethier, along with junior Marichal MacDonald. CapitalNews9, the cable-news channel originating from Albany, N.Y., aired a story about the video (and one by a student at a New York school) on May 27.

"Most of the press you see on global warming today focuses on national or global issues, you don't really see the local aspect too often so we were able



Time-Warner cable's local news Channel 9 featured a story on "Student Cam" winners.

T-W's Albany regional headquarters -- which now manages all the cable systems in the Berkshires, also touted the "Williamstown Warming" video in a May 24 news release.

The "StudentCam.org" project is an annual documentary competition which encourages students to think seriously about issues affecting communities and the nation. "Williamstown Warming" won a second-prize nationally, as did a video by a student from Latham, N.Y., about the power of the judiciary. Hogeland, Dethier and MacDonald split a \$750 prize and their faculty advisor -- Thomas Murray -- will receive \$125. In addition, Hogeland will be interviewed on the "Washington Journal" program on CSPAN at 8:30 a.m. on Thursday -- an hour and a half after the trio's video is aired. All videos are available online at www.studentcam.org.

Meanwhile, the two-year-old video production class lead by instructor Michael Powers, is also garnering

to incorporate elements like how it's affecting the local ski industry or how local citizens are making informed decisions about how they build," Dethier told Channel 9 reporter Mark Repasky in the news account. CSPAN is a non-profit organization owned by the nation's major cable companies, including Time Warner. So

awards. Close to 100 students, parents, teachers and guests -- including nearly 40 from Mount Greylock, traveled to Cambridge for a May 11 award ceremony in a "2007 Imagining Tomorrow: Alternate Energy Futures," writing and/or video contest organized by the Northeast Sustainable Energy Association (nesea.org).

The ceremony took place at the energy-efficient headquarters building of Genzyme Corp. the Mount Greylock contingent, lead by Powers was the largest and traveled the farthest. Powers said that, in total, 85 students participated in the contest.

Turn to VIDEO, Page 4



A contingent of some 40 MGRHS students were among those at Genzyme-sponsored event May 11 in Cambridge to celebrate completion of "Global Warming" videos.

INSIDE:

Senior waiver -- pro/con

MGRHS graduate Tara Young considers the senior-year waiver option from the perspective of a year spent at Berkshire Community College. Page 2

Humor -- Murray interview

The questions you always wanted to ask Mr. Murray -- answered -- in an Echo interview. Page 3

OPINION

Listing the pros and cons of a senior-year waiver

By Tara Young

I wanted more from my senior year than just an English class and a collection of miscellaneous classes; I wanted to study theatre, my passion. But Mt. Greylock had a grand total of one drama class. So when I looked through a Berkshire Community College catalogue and found a paragraph on Dual Enrollment, I was intrigued.

My parents and I then met with my guidance counselor to discuss my desire to take all my senior year classes at Berkshire Community College, thus allowing me to study theater and get a head start on my college education. In taking part in what is known at Mt. Greylock as a Senior Year Wavier and at BCC as Dual Enrollment, I would receive both high-school credit and college credit. I would also be able to take classes in subjects that I was interested in, classes that are not available at Mt. Greylock.

This opportunity seemed perfectly ideal. However it was not a decision to be taken lightly. While deciding whether to take part in a senior-year wavier and since doing so I have discovered many pros and cons:

Pros of a Senior Year Waiver

- You can study what you are interested in.
- You get a year's head start on your college education.
- You are academically challenged.
- You meet new people.
- You can participate in both high school and college events, clubs, and activities.
- You have more resources to help you with your senior project.
- You get a sense of independence and responsibility.
- You get a longer winter break (a month) and you are done with your Spring Semester classes by mid May.
- You can still take part in Senior Week.
- You are eligible for end of the year awards, and some scholarships at both institutions of learning.

Cons of a Senior Year Waiver

- You still have to do a Senior Project.
- You will not have a high-school class rank when you graduate.
- At some transferring colleges they do not accept college classes taken before high-school graduation.
- You are not as connected to the high school and your classmates there, as you would have been if

Thanks to my Senior Year Wavier I have not only gained a year of higher education, but I have also gained a sense of accomplishment and self-pride, which I feel my senior year could not have provided me with.

you had done the traditional senior year.

- You can not participate in high school athletic teams while taking college courses.
- You have to pay full tuition at the college because Mt. Greylock will not pay for it, and you are not eligible for financial aid.

While it is important to look at both the pros and cons before plunging into a Senior Year Wavier, I found that the pros far out weighed the cons. I recommend the Senior Year Wavier to any student interested and motivated. Thanks to my Senior Year Wavier, I will be graduating from BCC with an Associates Degree in Fine Art with a Concentration in Theatre Arts on June 1st of this year; a little under

a year since graduating from Mt. Greylock.

I had the female lead in the BCC Players' Spring '06 musical. I received BCC's Falconer's Award for theater, and will be receiving the BCC Players award and Town Players Scholarship (both theatre awards).

I was just recently inducted into Phi Theta Kappa, the national honor society for two-year colleges, and because of my grades and office with BCC's Student Government Ambassadors, I was nominated for The All USA Team for community and junior colleges, which has presented me along with many scholarship opportunities and offers to attend several well respected schools, such as Texas A&M, Columbia University, and the Harvard Extension School, to name a few. In the fall I will be attending Wagner College on Staten Island to continue my theater studies in performance and theater administration.

Dual Enrollment not only looks good on a college application because it shows a transferring college that you are interested in higher levels of education and you are motivated, but it makes you feel that your senior year was not a waste of time. Thanks to my Senior Year Wavier I have not only gained a year of higher education, but I have also gained a sense of accomplishment and self-pride, which I feel my senior year could not have provided me with.

Youth conference on for next year

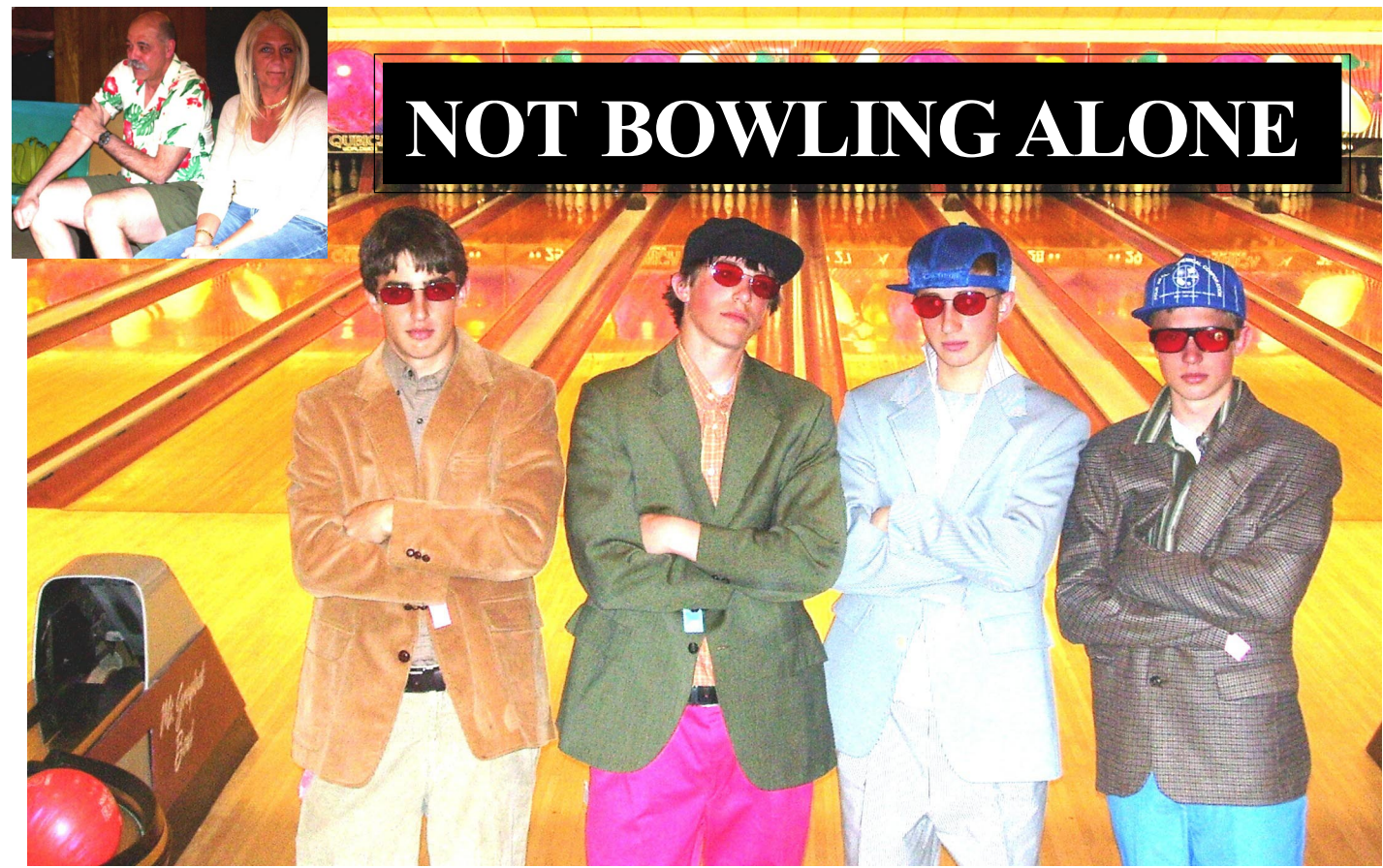
By Jen Kodela

As part of the Berkshire Youth Development Project, a countywide conference was held on April 11th for high school teens. The conference took place at Shakespeare and Company, involving more than 80 students from North, South, and Central County. Kate Merrigan, Dahlia Bousaid, Ashleigh Carr and I worked together since the fall to put together a dynamic and interactive day-long event.

Each school was asked to send eight students, from grades 9-12, to spend the day exploring topics from "Diversity: Moving Beyond Tolerance" to "2000 Year Old Stress Solutions". The day began with a speech by state Sen. Benjamin Downing, D-Pittsfield, and then broke into three workshop sessions, with a total of 18 workshops offered. Discussions were energetic and provided students with information to take away from the conference and apply to their daily lives.

Students were also able to network and communicate with other teens from across Berkshire County - a rare opportunity. The day ended with a cheering crowd as Reggi and Q, two local rap artists, closed with two original songs. The conference was funded by a legislative grant from substance-abuse prevention, which has been received again, allowing for another conference next year. Some 120 teens took part this year.

Workshop topics included: Life after high school, diversity: moving beyond tolerance, art as a tool for empowerment/change, healthy relationships, what to expect in college relationships, nutrition with a twist, coping with depression, how media exploit youth, media violence, youth involvement with the United Nations, stress management/alternative medicine/yoga, dealing with divorce, environmental issues/activism, how to create change in your community and discussion of hot political topics.



From left: Dylan Dethier, Than Finan, Patrick Joslin, and Taylor Foehl (Team Norge). Team Norge was one of more than a dozen teams that took place in a sophomore-class fundraiser held May 6 at Mount Greylock Bowl in in North Adams. Supt. William Travis and Adjustment Counselor Lynn Pena (inset) joined one team.

The Greylock Echo

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

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Carlson Library

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This issue's editors:
Gina Iannitelli and Sean Peltier

This month's contributors:
Sofie Brooks, Tara Young, Jen Kodela, Shannon Young

Send all submissions to:
greylockecho@yahoo.com
Mount Greylock Echo
Mt. Greylock Regional High School
1781 Cold Spring Road
Williamstown MA 01267
(413) 458-9582
<http://www.mgrhs.org/>

INTERVIEW

BoSox, Coyotes and Rosie the Riveter, The World Of Mr. Murray

Tom Murray is a history teacher at Mount Greylock Regional High School. Echo staffers decided to interview him to get the facts, and, we must point out, he was quite humble despite the questions we threw at him.

Echo: “How do you maintain your boyish good looks?”
Murray: “It’s a mask I hide behind, like the portrait of Dorian Gray.”
Echo: “Do you think you were born with a purpose? If so, what is it?”
Murray: “I wasn’t born with a purpose, I just enjoy what I do.”
Echo: “How long have you taught at Mount Greylock? What year was your favorite class to teach?”
Murray: “Since 1973... They’re all special, but the class I’m with is my favorite.”
Echo: “Was there ever a moment at which you thought you would lose your mind? When was it?”
Murray: “Not as a teacher—I go to my inner world where I find tranquility. But there have been students who have lost their minds.”
Echo: “Did you always want to be a history teacher?”
Murray: “The thing I thought of doing was politics and was involved in it for a while, but then I went into teaching and enjoyed that.”
Echo: “What is your favorite movie? Color? Wild animal?”
Murray: “I like film classics, like Clint Eastwood movies...but I’d go with Ferris Bueller’s Day Off. Color, blue, icicle blue. And favorite animal...Wally.”
Echo: “Who is your favorite Red Sox player?”
Murray: “Right now, it changes. Cora is doing well for someone who doesn’t play every day. And for a regular player...Papellbon.”
Echo: “Secret celebrity crush?”
Murray: “I’ll take a little of what Tom Brady has, Giselle, but she’s probably a hollow shell.”



Mr. Murray on the Close Up trip to Washington, D.C. that took place in March.

Echo: “Seriously, would you ever consider running for president?”
Murray: “Well I couldn’t be elected to the cemetery committee in town...I’ve peaked as being elected to the Planning Board of New Ashford. Also I couldn’t raise ninety million dollars.”
Echo: “Which AP US History class do you enjoy yourself more during?”
Murray: “See, I can be a diplomat—I love them both equally. But especially block three.”

Echo: “What color would you say your hair is? A golden amber?”
Murray: “Yes I could go with that, yes. I think it might get lighter this weekend, you know, from the sun.”
Echo: “If you could be any historical figure, who would you be and why?”
Murray: “Thomas Jefferson without the slaves, because he was a renaissance man. He wrote the Declaration of Independence at thirty three, at that age I was teaching eighth graders.”
Echo: “What is ‘Papa Bear?’”
Murray: “I don’t know...where has that come from?”
Echo: “Do you like getting your picture taken?”
Murray: “Actually no...even though the paparazzi are good at taking it.”
Echo: “Now, what do you put in your special brownies?”
Murray: “If I told you, they wouldn’t be special. Chris Condron told me they were cooked for a couple minutes too long, and I said ‘No more for you, buddy!’”
Echo: “What is your least favorite word?”
Murray: “Craft...professionals are always saying ‘We need to craft a response.’ Well craft this.”
Echo: “What sound is your favorite/least favorite?”
Murray: “Favorite: ‘Ladies and Gentlemen, boys and girls, welcome to Fenway Park.’ Least Favorite: coyotes behind my house in the middle of the night after a kill.”
Echo: “What is your favorite curse word?”
Murray: “It’s unprofessional, but I’ve been known to drop an f-bomb.”
Echo: “Who is the sexiest historical figure in your opinion?”
Murray: “I’m partial to Rosie the Riveter.”
Echo: “What do you think God will say to you when you reach the pearly gates?”
Murray: “He’s gonna say, ‘what are you doing here?’..

ACADEMIC

From Page 1

Committees such as the one at Williamstown Elementary School have been very successful in addressing problems within the school and designing action plans to guide the school toward fulfillment of its mission statement.

In fact, the end result of Mount Greylock’s last Strategic Planning Committee was the development of the Senior Project and Graduation Proficiencies, two additions to the school that have had a big impact on all its members. At the beginning of this year, the process for improvement began again.

An anonymous donor provided funding at the beginning of this year for a select group of community members, faculty, and administrators at Mount Greylock to attend a two day conference led by Ralph Jaspardo, an expert in the field of strategic planning.

During this conference, the representatives created the new mission statement, “to prepare all students to achieve their full potential as learners in an ever-changing world,” and identified three areas in which to focus to achieve the mission statement.

These three areas are the building

and facilities, community outreach, and the curriculum. The area that the Strategic Planning Committee, currently meeting each Day 1, is focusing on is area three: curriculum. Led by English teacher Robin Lehlitner, this branch’s objective is to “enhance our already strong curriculum to meet the needs of all students.”

The first step to achieving this goal was to form a sub-committee, which has become the Strategic Planning Committee that students are involved in today.

The committee began to address its objectives by first going through a long brainstorming stage, then choosing issues to focus on and attempting to assemble them in a coherent action plan.

Interestingly, the committee has encountered some strong resistance in the form of other students who found out about its proposed changes a few months ago. Since then, a hot debate has been waged about whether or not its proposals are in the best interest of the students at Mount Greylock.

Four members opposed the motions and 10 members did not vote. Another proposal currently underway is to abolish GPA and the class-rank system. These proposals were created to help students pursue the most challenging classes, and to make academic excellence possible for all students.

Do you think that these proposals will benefit the Greylock community? Make your voice heard by coming to a meet-

ing or giving Robin Lehlitner your email address to receive emails on the latest developments. These changes affect all students, and all students have the right to offer insight into their effectiveness. Take control of your education and make sure you are not left out of the exciting process taking place.

ECONOMIC

From Page 1

tion, the trip went “perfectly” in the eyes of Gibson, as the class was able to tour the Federal Reserve Bank and its expansive gold vault, located deep beneath the lower Manhattan streets, the New York Stock Exchange and one of its four main trading floors, and, finally, the New York Mercantile Exchange, whose hectic trading environment made it the consensual favorite.

In between tours, Gibson led the group through lower Manhattan’s financial district, affectionately referring to it as “Canyonland” due to the majority of tall buildings, (or in Sarah Burton’s case, “Candyland”) while emphasizing the importance of the city’s maritime history on the country’s economy.

With the advancements in technology, the future of economic institutions such as the NYMEX and NYSE re-

main in question, as computers could seemingly replace the need for trading floors and “pits,” making this trip especially close to Gibson’s heart. “I thought it was important for the class to see the trading floors of the NYMEX and stock exchange, especially since they probably won’t exist in 10 years.”

Criminal justice course offered at MGRHS in fall

Berkshire Community College is offering a three-credit course in criminal justice at Mount Greylock Regional High School from 2:30 p.m. to 5:15 p.m. each Thursday starting in September. The tuition for the course is \$367.50 and it is open to qualified Mount Greylock students as well as the public.

Students can sign up in the Mount Greylock guidance office to take BCC’s “Accu-placer test.” This test is an assessment of reading skills needed for college-level work. The assessment is given on-line by the MGRHS guidance department and is free.

“Students taking the new CSI Mount Greylock electoral science might find this BCC course of particular interest,” said Supt. William D. Travis. For more info, contact Phylene Farrell at (413) 236-5201 or pfarrell@berkshirecc.edu.

VIDEO

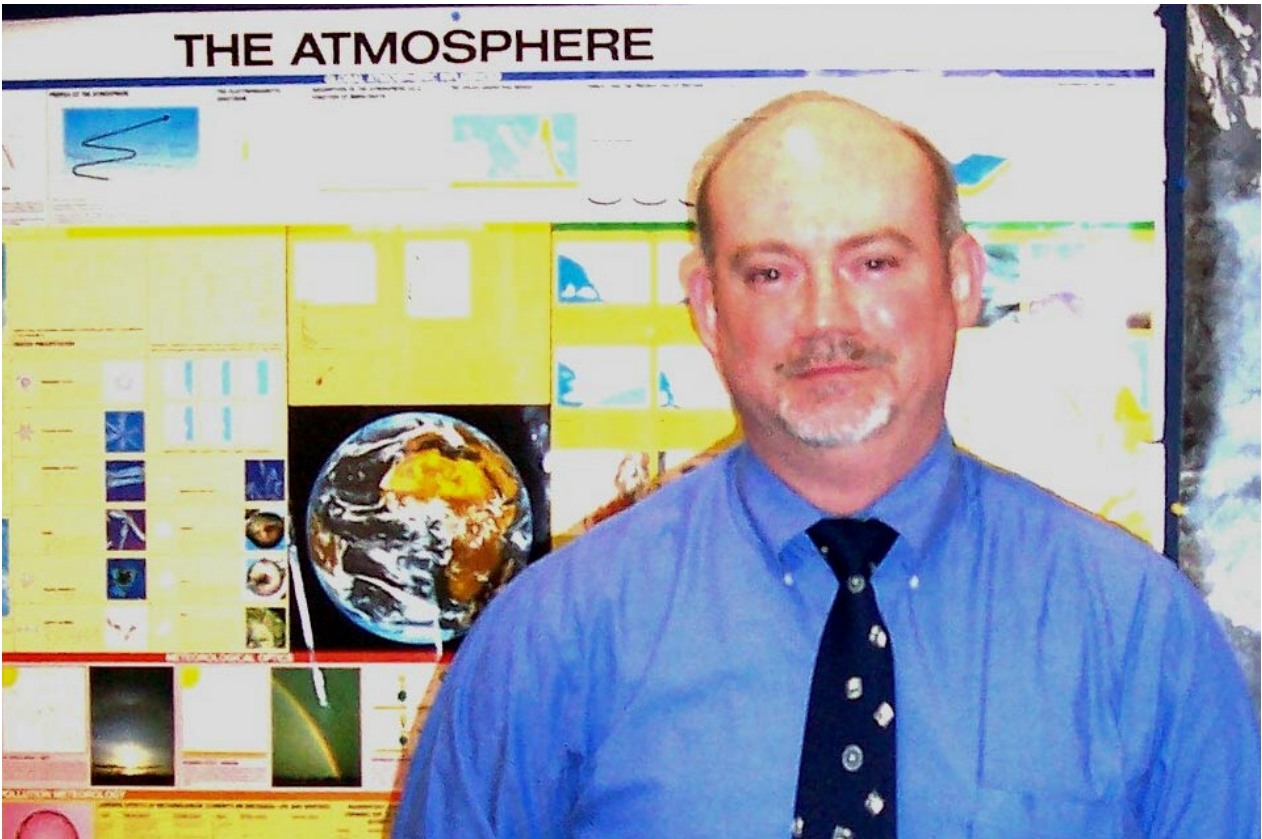
From Page 1

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The Video Shorts category included videos that were 4-6 minutes in length. Third place was a tie, going to a freshman Mr. Greylock team, "The Rubber Duckie," including Sean Peltier, Dominic Boschetti, Nick Delnegro, Caleb

Pudvar and Mary Shanley, for "Where'd That Snow Go?". "In their afterword they write, "We'll be the first to admit, when we started this project we knew very little about global warming. Over these last few weeks we've learned an immeasurable amount of information...We as humans embrace the role of the "most intelligent animals on earth", unfortunately we have yet to embrace the responsibility that comes with...that role."

The other third place team was also from Berkshire County -- "SAJ" -- Jordan Adams, Anthony Bellman and Samuel Garivaltis, for "Make a Difference". Five entries received a Fourth-Place Plus award and four were from Mount Greylock: "Earth in Twenty Years", an anchor format, by KMD, Michael Leja, Katie-Rose De Candida, and Max Joder; Ryan O'Conner, Revo-lution, for "Saving Energy"; "Global Warming" by CGJK, Gina Riggins, Jes-



Michael J. Powers, M.Ed., an instructional technology specialist at MGRHS, teaches the video skills course whose students garnered several awards in a statewide “sustainable energy” video contest. (Echo file photo).

sica Lemieux, Kelsie Leon, and Cameron Szymanski; and "Wobal Glarming" by Purple Armadillos, Erin Bates, Bridgette Tattersall, Kristy Hamilton and Autumn Wolf.

Fourth Place Awards also went to the other two finalists from Mt. Greylock: "Global Warming" by Einstein Productions, Britany Calderwood and Trevor Rathbun and "Global Warming PSA" by the All Stars, Lindsay Maynard, Brigid Flynn, Ty-Kia Hay, Hayden Kuhn, TJ McCarthy and Brier Turner.

Instructors from both Mt. Greylock and from Northampton noted that they were taking these films out to the community, to educate others, by running them on local cable channels, and at Mt. Greylock, by having a film festival, which occurred on May 17 at the school. The video portion of the IMAGINING TOMORROW: ALTERNATE ENERGY FUTURES program was supported by a grant from the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative (MTC); the awards reception is made possible in part by a grant from the Genzyme.

Seniors graduate, and The Echo needs a new team of sports writers and photographers. Cover the thrill of victory, the agony of defeat, and the fun of team and outdoor activities. We focus not just on the scores but on how the games are played. Join The Echo team at the Thurs., June 6, recruitment meeting -- in the library right after school.

WHERE'S SPORTS?

Sudoku

5						7		
				1				4
9	8		7			1		
2				4				
		7	9		3	2		
				6				9
		1			2		6	3
4				8				
		6						1

Think you can solve this? Be the first one to bring the completed, correct puzzle to Sean Peltier, Shannon Young or Gina Iannitelli by Friday, June 8th and get your name in the next issue! courtesy of www.sudokufun.com (reprinted by permission)

Eight seats left for summer arts program at Tanglewood

Seventh-graders moving up to eighth grade in the fall have an opportunity to enroll in a one-week residential program at Tanglewood in Lenox during two weeks this summer, according to Supt. William D. Travis. The program spans all the performing arts.

It's second year that Mount Greylock has had an opportunity to send students to a one-week summer program sponsored by the Boston Symphony.

All DARTS students, staff and faculty are housed in dormitory facilities at Simon's Rock College in Great Barrington. Each dormitory suite consists of 4-5 double occupancy student rooms, 1 Counselor-in-Training room and 1 senior staff room. Meals are served in the dining hall or picnic style, either at Simon's Rock College or at one of the excursion sites. [Dining services can accommodate special menu requests if notified in advance.] The tuition fee is \$450 -- including a \$50 non-refundable deposit[-- which includes all meals, housing, admission fees and transportation.

As of May 16, Travis said, there were five slots dedicated to MGRHS students available for the week of June 25-29;

and three slots available during the week of Aug. 13-17. Interested students should contact Travis right away.

The Days In The Arts Program (DARTS) is a residential education program where Massachusetts' 5th, 6th, and 7th-grade students gather together

to explore the arts. DARTS offers students the opportunity to spend five of their summer days totally immersed in the arts, engaged in

DARTS offers students the opportunity to spend five of their summer days totally immersed in the arts, engaged in intensive workshops and touring various cultural venues throughout the Berkshires.

tensive workshops and touring various cultural venues throughout the Berkshires. Places visited include Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, Chesterwood, Shakespeare and Company, Berkshire Theater Festival, Norman Rockwell Museum, Williamstown Theater, Tanglewood, and more.

Students choose from five areas -- vocal music, instrumental music, theater/drama, dance, or the visual arts for workshops with students from other schools. In addition to this intensive workshop area, students are immersed in other aspects of the arts during daily cultural excursions to institutions listed above. Students are taught by experienced art educators from across Massachusetts.

SHOUT OUT TO VI WOOD!!! Last month Vi was our Sudoku Challenge winner, though Kyler Schelling came in at a close second. As a reward the Echo editors gave Vi a great prize...see if you can beat him this month!