

Too busy in the front office? Yarter copes with Livernois loss

By Lizzie Fox

We're all feeling the absence of Mrs. Livernois this year. But it is often not considered that when she left, more departed than her charm and cheerful voice. What exactly did Mrs. Livernois do when she wasn't writing out passes or reading off announcements? And, even more importantly, who is doing that work now? "She was so successful at what she did throughout the day," says Mrs. Yarter, the secretary to the principal, "that it appeared to passersby that her job was easy." Mrs. Livernois' duties were, in fact, multiple and in no way easy: She did attendance, called parents about pos-

sible truancy, answered the office phones, wrote out and mailed disciplinary referrals, collected parking permits and activity fees, dispensed driver's ed and sports' certificates, checked in visitors, watched students who had been kicked out of class as they waited for Mr. Payne or Mrs. Penna, called students down to the office, wrote out passes, sent belongings to students that their parents have brought in, created a disciplinary report for the state's records, and, finally, managed to also do the announcements. And, as the school year began and no replacement for Mrs. Livernois was hired, these responsibilities fell onto the collective shoulder of the school staff, in particular, onto

Mrs. Yarter.

For those of you who don't know, Mrs. Yarter is the woman who now writes you a pass when you come in late or have to leave early, who accepts the forgotten lunch your parents bring in, who sometimes reaches us as the voice coming over the loudspeaker. Her primary responsibility, however, is and has been for many years to be the secretary to the principal, a job that includes filling out various paperwork, writing for the principal, and staffing the building every morning with substitutes. Yet now that

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Photos by Jayne Russo

Pep rally makes for a great show

By Dan Weiner

Although this year's homecoming game did not leave us with the satisfaction of a victory lap, the pep rally was a hit. The senior-junior feud was apparent as always, including the juniors' special seating arrangement. The show began with juniors running through the auditorium, half-naked and flailing a piñata about their heads, stealing the senior's bleachers while they prepared for their entrance.

This was followed with the energetic entrance by the seniors that resulted in the formation of a jumping crowd in the middle of the gymnasium. Adding to the junior-senior competition were the expected jeers from both sides. Equally important to the feud was the actual show, which turned out to be quite a hit. Many say that it is the best one they have seen in years, thanks mostly to emcees Anthony Bellmon and Nick Fogel.

Also, there were some great skits, as always: the favorites this year appeared to be the Piggyback race, which included mock players from regional schools, and 'McNuggets', which was performed by "lunch ladies" Henry Sauvé and Andy Chick. Another hit was when, to the surprise and joy of everyone, Mrs. Livernois emerged from a secret hiding place in the back of the gym to give the announcements one last time. In most people's eyes, pep rally of the class of '08 was a success.



At left, Mounties Chris Condron and Whit Montgomery-Nassif cross the finish line in the "Piggyback Race" at the pep rally on Oct. 12. Above, John Lucido at the rally.

Harvard donates old \$70K spectrometer to MG

By Gina Iannitelli and Echo Staff

The science program at Mount Greylock got a boost last month with the arrival of a sophisticated piece of equipment, worth at least \$70,000 when new, donated by the Straus Center at Harvard University as the result of efforts by parent James S. Martin. "Whether it's analyzing sediment in the Green River or whatever, the kids can do some really neat analysis with this," says biology teacher Larry Bell. "We're hoping it can grow into some senior projects. It's going to peak certain kids' interests."

Martin runs Orion Analytical LLC, of Williamstown, a materials analysis and consulting firm that investigates materials comprising cultural property, forensic evidence and manufactured goods. In August, a colleague at Harvard asked Martin if he had any use for an infrared spectroscopy system scheduled for replacement. Martin



recommended that the instrument be donated to Mount Greylock. Harvard agreed, and Martin moved and installed the equipment at the school in early September.

Scientists use infrared spectroscopy to identify a vast number of materials. Martin teaches students at the FBI Academy how to use infrared spectroscopy to identify paint chips, fibers, explosives and illicit drugs.

"It really is like those machines you see on CSI," says Bell. Martin's firm also raised \$2,000 to maintain the equipment, and has committed time to train faculty, like Nelson Russell, to use it in the classroom.

Bell said the spectroscopy system is expected to be useful in the school's emerging forensics curriculum. "We're hoping to keep it going for a few years," said Bell. "If there is an upside to a shrinking student population, it is that we have a spare classroom we've started to put a lot of technology in."

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OPINION

This student made a choice -- and picked MGRHS

By Krista Mangiardi

With enrollment at about 640 students this year, Mount Greylock's population didn't shrink as much as was projected for 2007-2008. As a school-choice student from Pittsfield, it's not hard to see why.

"Many don't realize the wide variety of educational options that are available here at Greylock," says sophomore Patrick Madden. Some students take it for granted how lucky they are to have the opportunities they are given. Furthermore, sophomore Cleo Levin adds that "there is a general stereotype at Greylock." The "general stereotype" that she refers to may actually vary due to people's personal experiences, but it is not something that should be a turnoff to the school. Cliques and stereotypes are pretty much unanimous throughout high schools.

Possessing some of the best MCAS scores in the county and ranking as one of the best public schools in the country, a "school choice" student is hard pressed to identify serious problems with the school. However, on the first day of school this year, new students constantly heard from peers about the conditions of the building. Also, there's a popular opinion from both students and

non-students that the school tends to run in cliques.

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"With increasing pressure to get into top colleges, private school is becoming an increasingly more attractive option for students," says Madden. It is true that the school not only loses students to McCann Tech, when they come of High School age, but also that some make the choice to leave to places like the private Miss Hall's School. Are students making a good choice by leaving or

do they not know just how good of a place they are at already?

Whether often recognized here or not, Mt. Greylock has a reputation of being very strong academically. An honors class at other high schools, in many cases, is equivalent to an intensive class here.

For these reasons there are students that are making the choice to come to Mt. Greylock over other schools. As a school-choice student, I've found a dramatic change in atmosphere at Mount Greylock compared to other typical high schools. In an environment where students care about learning, it is much easier to succeed. For people who only know Mt. Greylock it is easy to see all of the problems, but for someone new, it is clear what a unique high school it is.

There are countless attributes that belong to this school and while people are leaving, the general facts that the Mounties are in a good place.

The commentator is a new MGRHS student.

A skit's aftermath raises the question: Did punishment fit the crime?

By Sean Peltier

The relationship between students and school administration is and should be pretty clear-cut. The administration uses its power to run the school, and while it may occasionally err in its judgment, decisions are made which benefit the student body as a whole.

Yet should that power be recognized when the administration repeatedly appears to abuse its power, perhaps harming the very students they were supposed to protect?

On Friday, Oct. 12, senior Ben Ogden broke several rules. Not only did he perform an unapproved skit in the pep rally, but he went out of his way to poke fun at athletic director Lynn Jordan.

The seriousness of these offenses is certainly debatable. I mean, his actions were hurtful, but can't we all take a joke? The larger issue here, however, is the absurdly heavy-handed punishment that the administration handed down in the aftermath of the pep rally.

Ogden was not allowed to attend the Homecoming football game. He was also banned from attending the Homecoming dance. An attempt to elect him Homecoming King was blocked by school officials.

Ogden was not allowed to attend the Homecoming football game. He was also banned from attending the Homecoming dance. An attempt to elect him Homecoming King was blocked by school officials. As if this punishment were not enough, on Monday, Oct. 15, Ogden was suspended from school for three days (with

the dance and football game counting as one day), causing him to miss a varsity soccer game and putting a permanent black mark on his record.

How can one, as an administrator, take away a senior's homecoming weekend, especially when the "crime" consists of a senior going a bit overboard? When asked to comment, several teachers declined, though physics teacher Shawn Burdick called the punishment "just," referring to the skit as "off-base."

It's not just Ben who was punished, it was the fans at the football game who missed his jubilant cheering. It's his homecoming date who had to go alone, it's his friends who didn't get to spend homecoming weekend with him. It's his classmates who missed his quick wit and intelligent insight. It's the varsity soccer team missing him on the field.

Ben's actions may have been cruel. But still, the question remains: what did the administration hope to accomplish with this punishment?

The commentator is a Mount Greylock senior.

MIDDLE SCHOOL MUSINGS

EDITORS' NOTE -- Students in Mrs. Keeley's 8th grade class were asked to fill out a survey on the following questions.

How do you feel when you walk down the high school hallway by yourself?

Males:

"Bored."

"I'd feel different than everyone else."

"Nervous, apprehensive."

"Cool, cuz I'm huge so they won't beat me up. I'd be fine."

"Doesn't bother me at all."

"I don't really care because no one does anything to you."

"I am rather tall, so I might feel ok. But I may feel - out of place."

"Intimidation."

"Nervous, I'm small."

Females:

"Nervous, scared."

"A little nervous, but confident."

"Kind of awkward but I know some high schoolers so not totally bad. Alone. Small."

"Scared, worried, awkward, small."

"Short."

"Kinda apprehensive, but excited, because there are a lot of my friends in high school."

"Feeling no emotion."

"Intimidated, focused on walking fast, very small."

On a scale from 1-10, how safe do you feel in the hallways, 1 being not safe at all and 10 being very safe?

Males:average 6

Females:average 7.5

Overall average:..... 6.62

What is the most obnoxious, rude, or mean thing you have ever seen a high schooler do?

Males:

"Two of them really angry and punching each other really hard and throwing each other."

"One time when I was walking to lunch I saw one high schooler kick another in the privates."

"High schoolers making out!"

"Throwing cracker jacks into each other's mouth during class."

"Drugs, smoke when they are about to get on the bus."

"Jump onto a door handle and swing."

"Either someone putting Icy Hot [down his pants] or people making out in the halls."

"High school students jumping out at people."

Females:

"Shove people into lockers."

"Talk about smoking pot."

"Grab a [butt]."

"People kissing and hitting."

"Someone said 'you can go eat a pie!'"

"Someone yelled 'fight!' and there was no fight."

"High schoolers staring at me like I was a different species. RUDE."

"I saw a high school student walking with his friend and they sprayed another 7th grader with silly with silly string, covering him and his books with it."

"High schoolers saying 'Run! Run to lunch, little kid!'"

"Make a line of kids to block the middle school kids from getting to class."

What did you think of the pep rally?

Males:

"Lame. More candy. More bow-chicka-wow-wow."

"Pretty good...I think that they should make some of the humor a little less risqué."

"Despite one incident, the pep rally was fine. I think the McNuggets thing was the best."

"I thought it was fine."

"Way better than classes."

"More funny skits."

"I thought it was rather funny, whilst there was a rather 'inappropriate' scene (the pizza man.) C'mon! There are 7th graders!"

"I liked the pep rally. It was funny."

"Lame. I would do funnier kids."

Females:

"Sooo much fun."

"They were just saying 'blah blah blah.'"

"Some stuff I didn't get."

"Awesomely fun! The best pep rally eva!"

"Good! More conflicts between schools!"

"Should include people other than seniors. Good."

"I thought it was fun, really loud and the skits were funny!! I hope next year it's as great as this year's!"

"Spazzy but fun."

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.

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NEWS / ARTS

Pep Rally and Spirit Day, continued

Photos by Jayne Russo



Mr. October: James David Nolan

EDITOR'S NOTE -- The Echo begins a monthly feature spotlighting a student of good character -- based on nominations and written by Nick Fogel.

By Nick Fogel

James David Nolan is the definition of cool. His British accent, smile, and helping hand melt the hearts of young ladies the world over. Yes, he is a stellar athlete, scholar, and musician, but that's not what sets him apart from the rest. D Nol is the kind of guy who would help you pick up your books if you dropped them in the hall, loan you a buck if you forgot your lunch money, congratulate you on a good performance, console you in a loss, and always put your feelings first.

You will never hear JD Nolan curse or say a mean word about anyone. Some say that nice guys finish last, but David proves them wrong.

This year is David's first at Mt. Greylock. For two years he was across the pond in England and last year he was home schooled.

In less than two months, David has captured the hearts of many young ladies and seized the imagination of the entire school. D Nol is a star on the cross-country, Nordic ski, and tennis teams.

Dave is a straight A student in the classroom, but is about as likely to rub a high score in your face as the Cubs are to win the World Series. More likely, Dave



would offer help to anyone who asked.

D Nol is not a 6 foot 4, 215 lb., blonde hair, blue eyed, California dream boat with a rocket arm, but his devilish charm and boyish good looks more than replace all that. D Nol's suave nature and kindness set him apart from other guys.

Where a regular guy might take you to the movies, D Nol would pack up a picnic, take you on a hike up a mountain, and watch a sunset there.

D Nol defies the ordinary and illustrates what we should be. D Nol's kindness and honesty are found far too little in a high school world filled with worries about clothes, looks, class rank, and college applications.

While ladies strive to be with him, all of us should strive to be like David.

We should thank him for reminding us what we're all capable of. That's simply what he does—he inspires the uninspired (Ok, I took that line from Van Wilder, but you know what I'm saying).

So ladies, if you're looking for a nice guy who will take you out to tea, make you smile, and take care of you when you're sick, James David Nolan is your man.

Nominations for Mr. and Ms. November can be submitted to Nick Fogel or the Echo staff via greylockecho@yahoo.com

The Greylock Echo

NEW STAFF

Profile Q&A's by Sofie Brooks and Irena Pandzic



Evan Paris

Teaching Experience: Student teaching at Chicopee High School

Why do you like the subject you teach? It is fun. I get to play all day.

What made you decide to come work at Mount Greylock? Close to home and I had heard great things about the school.

What is your favorite thing about working here so far? All the other teachers are very nice and helpful and the students are fun to teach.

Do you buy lunch? What is your favorite food from the cafeteria? Not usually but if I do I get a salad and a bagel.

What is something students don't know about you? I went to Hancock school for elementary school before going to Lenox.

If you were moving and you could only bring two objects with you, what would they be? My two pets, a cat and a dog.

What teacher do you have a secret crush on? Coach Paul and Coach Miro.

Office

Continued from Page 1

Mrs. Yarter is the only person who sits in the office all day, much of her job is taken up with "people traffic." Even as I interviewed her after school hours, numerous people came to talk to her or called her phone: students staying after to take tests, teachers with questions, parents, salesmen. And because of this, Yarter says, "what's getting done is what has to get done, and, when you rush, invariably the quality [of your work] goes down."

Years ago, there were three people who sat in the office during the day: Mrs. Yarter, Mrs. Livernois, and a man named Mr. Bennett who managed data entry. Over time, the amount of people coming in and out of the office has not decreased proportionally to the decrease in administrative staff. The office is so busy during the day that in order for Mrs. Yarter to check her mailbox or go buy lunch, someone must take her place, even briefly -- either a member of the special education department (Mr. Payne has asked the department to offer support whenever possible) or a teacher who is in the office to make copies.

But Mrs. Yarter alone is not able to fulfill all of Mrs. Livernois' old duties. The outside door by the principal's office cannot be seen from Mrs. Yarter's desk. When Mrs. Livernois sat at the very front of the office, she could make note of anyone exiting or entering the building. Now that is not being as closely monitored, although Patsy Worley, who manages the project copy machine and shipping/receiving (her office is



Kellie Houle

Teaching experience: I taught middle school English at Anne M. Dorner Middle School in Ossining, NY, and I taught 9th, 10th, and 11th grades at Monument Mountain Regional High School.

Why do you like the subject you teach? I love hearing what students have to say about the literature we read, and I love reading the things they write.

What made you decide to come work at Mount Greylock? My youngest daughter is in school now, so I began looking over the summer. I had student taught here many years ago, so I was very pleased when this opportunity came up.

What is your favorite thing about working here so far? I am impressed with the maturity of the students. There seems to be a genuine respect among them, and people seem to get along well and help one another out.

Do you buy lunch? What is your favorite food from the cafeteria? I haven't bought lunch yet. The bagels and ice cream looked good when I was at lunch duty today.

What is something students don't know about you (maybe a hobby outside of school)? Mr. Bell once coached my cross-country running team when I was a student at PHS *years* ago!

If you were moving and you could only bring two objects with you, what would they be? I'd bring my family photo albums--the two that had the most pictures of my three daughters growing up.

What teacher do you have a secret crush on? I'm too busy planning and grading papers--no time for fun crushes anymore.

Wanted: Sports writers!

The Echo seeks sports writers and photographers. Come to our staff meeting, Thurs., Nov. 1, 2:30 p.m. in the library with ideas.

by the gym), sometimes, when she is not occupied, sits in Mrs. Livernois' empty desk.

Mrs. Yarter's demanding day now begins "as before, [with] ensuring that the building is staffed when our students arrive for first period. Then I quickly transition to greeting students that arrive after the starting bell . . . After almost two months, I am still enjoying the opportunity to have student contact, but I am painfully aware of how well Mrs. Livernois' ability to match students' names and faces served to allow her such expediency . . . Our individual strengths [used to] complement each other



Lisa Jennings

Teaching experience: Most recently: Berwick Academy in Maine. Prior: 14 years at MGHS teaching [middle school] science and health, and [high school] peer team, child mediation, and development.

Why do you like the subject you teach? I like teaching health because the subject matter is often immediately relevant to the lives of my students.

What made you decide to come work at Mount Greylock? We moved back to town and I was delighted to find out there was a part time opening for health—I loved teaching at MGHS all those years!

What is your favorite thing about working here so far? The students—interesting, challenging, fun, (at times) annoying, smart, interested in everything, all-in-all—great classes! Great students!

Do you buy lunch? What is your favorite food from the cafeteria? No, I am not usually available at lunchtime—I use that time to prep my classes. But I have tried the yogurt/granola and liked it a lot.

What is something students don't know about you? I ran (with my husband) an educational conference center off the coast of Maine on and island 7 miles out to sea. We had over 100 college age staff working with us.

If you were moving and you could only bring 2 objects with you, what would they be? My bike and—though they are not objects—my grandsons.

What teacher do you have a secret crush on? Are you kidding? I'm way too old for crushes.

Any final words? The previous question—on second thought, I think Coach Miro is great to work with!



Patrick Stanton

Teaching experience: Gateway Regional High School and some private teaching in CT.

Why do you like the subject you teach? At the core of my like and appreciation for math is I really love solving problems. There's probably not a day that goes by where [don't] I solve a real world problem using some sort of math skill.

What made you decide to come work at Mount Greylock? I grew up in Williamstown, attended Mt. Greylock (class of '72) and love the area. The opportunity to return was too good to pass up.

What is your favorite thing about working here so far? I really enjoy the students. They are bright, articulate, funny and challenging. And I still think of myself as being younger than I am (I behave that way too), so I'm usually able to establish strong [bonds] with students.

Do you buy lunch? What is your favorite food from the cafeteria? I have not yet eaten food from the cafeteria, so I really can't say. But the pizza and some of the grinders are very tempting.

What is something students don't know about you? I am an avid outdoor person. I like to mountain bike, dirt bike, hike, and play any sport that involves a ball.

If you were moving and you could only bring two objects with you, what would they be? A pizza from Henry's Pizza of West Hartford, Conn. (it's the best) and a bottle of wine I make (it goes well with the pizza.)

What teacher do you have a secret crush on? I guess it would have to be Ms. Pelletier. She has the greatest math mind of any teacher I've known.

and set the stage for a well-balanced, productive work environment . . . Her ability to do her job so well contributed to my being able to be successful at my job."

Today, little has been done about the situation, although some are proposing that Mrs. Worley move to the front office with the copy machine so that she can help out. Mrs. Yarter and other members of the staff, although acknowledging the benefits of having Worley in the office, have voiced concerns about the "noise from the copier, limited space for storing copy projects, increased office traffic and [the detrimental

effect on] our visitors' first impression of the school." But till that time when a solution appears, Mrs. Yarter is cheerful in her job: "I was happy [last year] and I am happy now," she says. "However, I compare my current situation to a beautiful summer day in which everything appears to be going well. Daily tasks are being accomplished, but on the horizon I see little gray clouds gathering in the form of projects left uncompleted. If not tended to, I fear that they, like the little gray clouds on the horizon, could potentially come together to create a 'perfect storm.'"

