

“Anything Goes” Unveiled At Mount Greylock

Small Cast Proves to be a Blessing

By: Olivia Tousignant-Pienkos

Have you ever wondered who those goofy kids are who hang out in the auditorium every day after school in the winter? They are perhaps the most passionate and daring kids at Mount Greylock. After school, these kids don't spend their time on a court, in the snow, or on soft mats; they spend afternoons on a stage. The cast of twenty rehearse every days, each day getting closer to their final performance in front of an audience. This winter the cast is preparing to perform the musical, “Anything Goes.”

“Anything Goes” is a story about “a trans-Atlantic crossing on an old-fashioned style cruise ship. Fundamentally, it is about human relationships, not only as a group—the media dynamic and the celebrity dynamic, that is—but also about individual relationships: love, respect. It's a human story,” explains Jeffrey Welch, the production's brilliant director. This year there are about twenty kids performing in the musical, a number distinctly lower than in previous years; however,

the performers are diligently rehearsing to create a memorable show. Each rehearsal consists of the cast members' familiarizing themselves with lines and blocking, working on perfecting the idiosyncrasies of singing each song, or tap dancing, a new task for most members.

This year, Mount Greylock senior Sofia Brooks applied for a grant via the SEE Fund such that a professional choreographer could be acquired for the musical. That choreographer is Mrs. Anne-Marie Rodriguez, who is now teaching the cast members how to tap dance. The actors enjoy themselves, looking forward to rehearsal every day. Along with the fascinating plot, “Anything Goes's” music is “peppy, fun, American classic. It's very memorable, very singable,” Vocal Director Marlene Walt tells. On a daily basis, various cast members can be heard in

the halls humming recently learned tunes. On the stage every, each member responds to his scene partner's energy with pizzazz. At the end of a two hour rehearsal, no one is ever heard saying, “phew” or “thank goodness;” the performers are often amazed at how time has flown by and are rarely ready to “call it quits.” Anna Swann-Pye, a veteran of musicals, raves that “the [time of the] musical is my favorite time of the year... You get to go after school and just hang out and do work with all your friends and with people who are really interesting and cool.”



Choreographer Anne-Marie Rodriguez demonstrates proper tap dancing techniques to the cast.

With each day that passes, the small cast seems to be less of an obstacle and more of a blessing. Welch seems pleased with the the show and says “the more I've gotten to know the show, the more I think that the cast size we have is well-suited to perform it. The people in the cast have a lot of talent. I think whoever comes to see the show is in for a treat.”

All of this time spent on the show will lead up to the ultimate performances which will be on February 28th, 29th, and March 1st. At that time, the costumes are on, the nerves kick in, the lights come up, and the actors do their best to prove to the audience that it is worth its time to be there. This year the musical will definately be worth it!

Olivia is a member of the cast of “Anything Goes.”

MUSINGS WITH MURRAY

Interview conducted by juniors Dylan Dethier and Patrick Joslin. Tom Murray organizes the enrichment program Close Up for Greylock and teaches 9th and 11th grade history.

Echo: What's one thing that most people don't know about the “real” Murray? Any hobbies? Maybe some polo, some shuffleboard?

MURRAY (laughing): I don't know. I think what you see is what you get. I think part of the reason I have a certain chemistry with my classes is that I'm not artificial, at least I don't think I am. I try and share who I really am, and I think the kids do the same thing. I'll tell you one thing; I'm beginning to enjoy country music. People will go, “What are you, nuts?” But no, man, I gave my daughter my iPod and about a third of the songs she put on there were country, and I have to tell you, that's not bad stuff! So I do a little bit of that. I still can't get through to rap. It's still not making it for me.

Echo: What is CloseUp and what has made it so successful at Mt. Greylock?

MURRAY: I think that what makes it successful is that, of the four or five programs like it in Washington, it allows all different students to show up to the thing. You don't have to reach a certain academic level. Some others buy scores from College Board and they target a certain group that they think will be tomorrow's leaders and then they invite them to come to Washington. And I think that eliminates an entire group of people that could really be turned on to government, and I think they could do something

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SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPROVES CURRICULUM CHANGES

By: Patrick Madden

Over the course of the last year and a half, Strategic Planning 3.1 (a subcommittee of the original Mt. Greylock strategic planning committee concerned with the school's curriculum led by Robin Lehleitner) grew until it had over eighty members from all parts of the school community. The entire Mt. Greylock faculty was informed about and invited to each meeting. Eventually, the committee came up with and passed, with an overwhelming majority, five proposals that were then given to the greater Mt. Greylock community for review. After leaving the hands of the committee, the proposals were discussed at two faculty meetings, two school council meetings, one PTO meeting, numerous televised school committee meetings, and were outlined and described on a handout given to each parent at Mt. Greylock's parent night. All of the motions have now been passed in some form by the School Committee.

One of the motions proposed by the committee was to “create a school-wide program that incorporates students and community members as tutors and mentors.” This action was inspired by Lehleitner's Step Up tutoring/mentoring program and was passed by the school committee some time ago. Progress has already been made, largely due to Williams College's establishment of a “Williams Center” at Mt. Greylock. Thanks to this generous contribution, students can now receive after-school academic assistance in Lehleitner's room from Williams's students or any peers who are available.

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The Plague of Senioritus

Dan Weiner reflects on Senioritus, the disease that affects high school seniors every year.

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Abdul Samad Sadri gives a view into a typical day in his home country of Afghanistan.

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NEWS

NEW STUDENT MENTORING PROGRAM A SUCCESS

By: Marta Kowitz

The transition from first to second semester can often be a rocky one. Schoolwork seems to pile up faster than it is humanly possible to do and dreaded midterms haunt students around every corner. But if you are feeling stressed with the difficulty of your courses, you can always turn to Step Up, the tutoring program right here at Mount Greylock.

Step Up was created by English teacher Robin Lehleitner last school year, and was originally funded by an Olmsted grant. The initial inspiration behind Step Up was to support 9th and 10th grade students who were struggling with Honors courses so that they could eventually attempt AP classes and then attend premiere colleges.

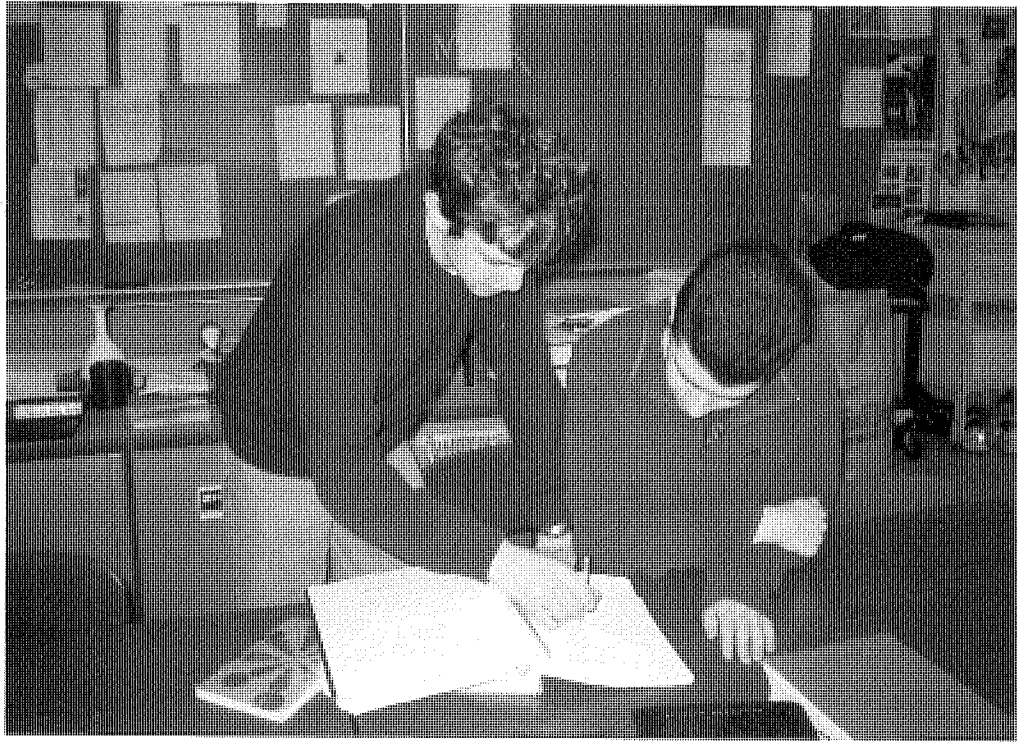
When asked what first inspired her to start the program, Lehleitner says "Having Honors nine students who I could see would struggle in tenth grade if they stayed on the honors track made me want to give them the kind of support that would allow them to succeed and even move up into AP courses in eleventh." This desire to help students continues to be the inspiration behind the program.

Faculty-recommended Greylock upperclassmen served as the mentors in the program, having already grappled with the same Honors courses themselves.

The success of the students involved proved to be well worth the time and effort poured into the program.

Step Up continues to thrive this year, but with a few minor tweaks to the system. Williams College students have now joined the field of tutors through the collaboration of Step Up and the Williams Center. All Greylock students in grades 9-12 can now take advantage of the ever-growing tutoring force because Step Up is no longer limited to Honors students. The mentors offer help with all of the core subjects and languages as well as assistance with paper editing. These same mentors can also give valuable advice to students. Emily Baker-White, who helped found the program and who mentors students regularly, says "Step-Up has enabled me to form valuable long-term relationships with other students in the pursuit of academic excellence."

Step Up mentors meet with students on Mondays and Wednesdays from 2:30-4:00 p.m. in Robin's classroom (S-09). Any student that is interested can contact Robin so that she can line up a tutor with expertise in the



Junior Duane Bailey mentors sophomore Patrick Madden in math during a StepUp meeting in Lehleitner's classroom (S-09).

subject of need.

Whether you're baffled by your math homework or you are looking for the chance to share your knowledge, Step Up is an excellent opportunity to become involved. There is absolutely no cost for participants and the on-site location is perfect for catching the 4 o'clock bus home, no matter

where you live. And along with the reward of encouraging fellow classmates, mentors in Step Up receive Service Learning Credits for their time.

Step Up has blossomed into a successful program that supports all members of Mount Greylock, truly bringing it together as a community, not just a school.

AN EPIDEMIC OF SENIORITIS HITS GREYLOCK

By: Dan Weiner

In the beginning of each high school year, a crippling disease corrupts our senior class. It seems to be extremely contagious and hard to avoid. Though it is most prominent in the twelfth graders, each year you can find traces of this illness going back to both juniors and some sophomores. There is no definite definition for senioritis, but it seems to be commonly known as a lack of motivation in all things related to school caused by the excitement to finish high school and reality of the impending four years of college or entering the work force.

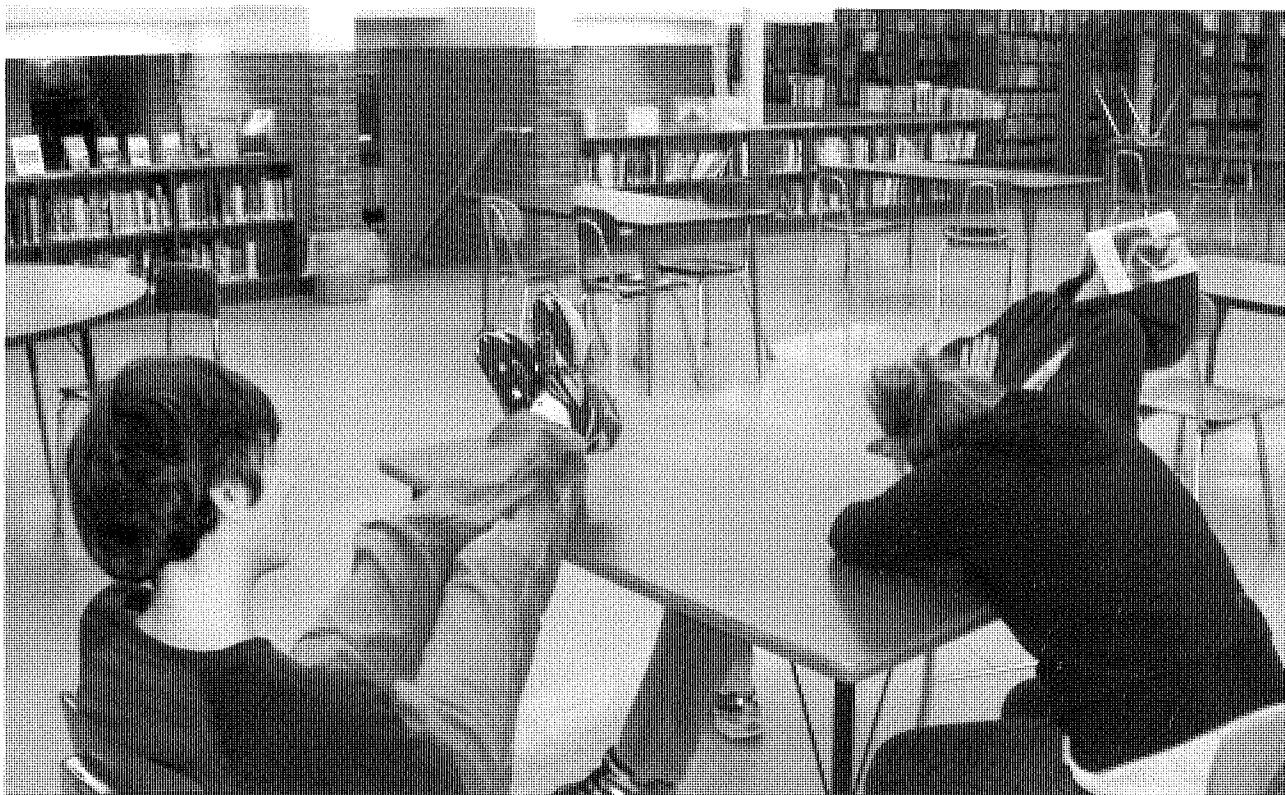
One anonymous senior stricken with an extreme case of senioritis said, "I have cared so much [in school] that I have gotten to the point where I can't care anymore." By the time students become seniors, they are burnt out and need more than the one-week vacations given to them to revive themselves. The lack of motivation not only stems from the fact that seniors have spent

most of their life in school, but also from the idea that for some college is quickly approaching. By now, some seniors have already found out whether or not they have been accepted to college. One of the major reasons many students work so hard in high school, is to get into their first choice college, and that goal has now either been achieved or failed, therefore seniors no longer feel the need to kill themselves in their schooling.

When asked what senioritis does to the students, the most common answer was procrastination. The most commonly used tool in their avoidance of all things related to school has been facebook and IM, explaining the increase of the severity of senioritis in the past few years noted by multiple teachers. Another severe symptom of senioritis was described by Katy Markland as, "every second, thinking about graduation." I know from personal experience the drastic effects of this disease, as I began this article the day before it was due.

A committee known as "The Teachers" have spent years trying to cure this ailment, but have advanced their research very little and just about given up, surrendering to the idea that they may never cure it. Such things as senior skip days, which are offshoots of senioritis, are given some extra flexibility with the rules.

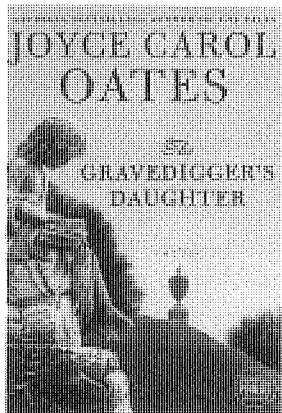
The only cure that "The Teachers" have found for this is known as graduation, and thus all the seniors long for it. I wish the seniors a speedy recover, and give my prayers to those stricken by senioritis.



Seniors Dan Whateley, Sam Beatie, and David Rosenthal, all suffer from the chronic illness, as does much of the senior class.

The Book Worm

By: Davinica Nemtsov



The Gravedigger's Daughter

By: Joyce Carol Oates
Price: \$17.79

Have you ever wondered what the life of an immigrant in America is like? The Gravedigger's Daughter by Joyce Carol Oates was an outstanding read and offers some insight into the topic. It's about a

small-town woman named Rebecca Schwartz who's family immigrated to America when her mother was pregnant with her. She was born in the filth of a boat ride across the Atlantic Ocean to America to escape Nazi Germany. Rebecca struggles with local prejudice and much tragedy in her life. She is never treated with any respect because her family is financially insecure and her father is the local gravedigger and cemetery caretaker. Unfortunately, she is practically recruited as Niles Tignor's wife and mothers his child. Tignor is a local gangster with a fearsome reputation, and when Rebecca takes her son and leaves him, he seeks revenge. Rebecca must run from the community with her son and seeks respite in a harsh world

There were only two minor weaknesses to this book. First of all, the fact that, in some passages, the moral of the story is overemphasized can be quite tedious. Second of all, Joyce Carol Oates writes with a "Hollywood" style that magnifies the slightest details such that they appear dramatic and absurdly important. This overemphasis in both areas adds some tedium to the novel in places.

Nevertheless, I would recommend The Gravedigger's Daughter, by Joyce Carol Oates, to all teenagers and adults. However, girls will likely become more enamored with the novel. The reason for this potential infatuation is that the book takes on a girl's perspective of the world and would seem to be much easier to identify with as a female. If you like realistic or historical fiction this is the novel for you. If you like Oates' work in this novel, then I would recommend *Middle Age: a Romance*, by Joyce Carol Oates, *The Museum of Dr. Moses: Tales of Mystery*, by Joyce Carol Oates, *Divisadero*, by Michael Ondaatje, and *The Maytrees*, by Annie Dillard.

CURRICULUM, Continued from Page 1

Another change proposed by SPC 3.1 was to dismantle class ranking at Mt. Greylock. The motives behind this motion have been discussed at length by the 3.1 committee, the faculty, and the school committee. Many students voiced a desire to dismantle ranking simply because of the competition that can build between classmates at the top of the academic playing field. Many members brought up their opinion that the thirtieth student in rank here at Greylock could easily be in the top five at another school and therefore, class rank is hurting the majority of our students. Other reasons why this motion was proposed are that loss of rank will make colleges look at a student's entire application rather than dismiss applications according to their class rank. Forty percent of schools in the nation have either dropped class rank or do not send it to colleges. The school committee discussed this proposal once again at the January meeting and voted on it. All but one of the members voted to dismantle class rank at Mt. Greylock starting with the current sophomore class.

Another significant change proposed by the sub-committee was to "open enrollment for AP and honors classes to all interested students." The idea that drove this motion into being was the belief that students should be able to choose what courses they feel they are ready for. The sub-committee heard from numerous students taking honors or college prep courses who felt that they were not being challenged at a proper level and had been denied access to higher level courses either because they did not have their teacher's recommendation, or because they had not received a high enough grade on an entrance exam or their past performance had not been up to par. The rationale accompanying the proposed action spoke of past performance not being an adequate indicator of students' capacities for "advancement, growth, and redirection." The school committee passed this action at the January meeting with some modifications. The new policy will include a mandatory diagnostic exam for all students interested in higher level courses. This exam will attempt to give students an idea about how ready they are for such courses. Students will also talk with teachers and guidance counselors

who will advise them in course selection. In the end, it will be the students' right to challenge themselves as they see fit, regardless of the recommendations given by teachers.

The last two motions were to eliminate the difference in grade weight between honors and AP courses and to introduce the option of a differentiated curriculum to interested college prep students. A few factors contributed to the elimination of grade weight difference. The change would theoretically stop students from cramming their schedules full of AP courses simply to get the GPA boost and rise on the ranking ladder. It would also theoretically allow more students to explore honors courses more comfortably should the more difficult and slightly test-oriented AP environment be an unattractive option. The goal of this motion, as expressed by the sub-committee was to create a healthier learning environment for Mt. Greylock students. The committee was also encouraged by the fact that more than half the schools in the county have either dropped grade weight or do not send colleges weighted grades and by the fact that every college which the group contacted said that they look at whatever system a school has and whatever information a school provides and compute their own GPA for the admissions process. The school committee discussed this motion and all of these factors at the January meeting and decided to reduce the grade-weighting gaps instead of abolishing them altogether.

A differentiated curriculum, the last action, allows students in a college prep level course the chance to explore the subject matter in greater depth by doing more work to receive honors credit. This option was originally intended for electives only and that is what the school committee decided on. Starting next year, if an elective teacher would like to offer a differentiated curriculum for his or her students, he or she will appear before a faculty review committee that will either approve or deny the request, as approved by the school committee at the January meeting. This last motion aims to solve scheduling issues and, as all the motions are intended to do, give students an option for more academic freedom and challenge coursework.

The views represented by Strategic Planning Committee 3.1 were never intended to represent the opinions of the general student body. After the group publicized its motions, many students rapidly expressed discontent with several of the motions.

Next month, the Echo will run a story regarding the conflicting opinions of the school community regarding this committee and its motions.

Person of the Month

By: Nick Fogel

We are near the end of winter, which should make most of us happy. Winter sports are either done or wrapping up. February break begins at the end of the day. If you try hard you might be able to look out the window and envision buds on the trees, a warm spring breeze, green grass, and a blue sky. Hopefully, Valentine's Day yesterday brought a lot of happiness. Hopefully you were able to spend it with your special someone and now don't need the prospect of spring to give you something to look forward to.

John Lucido

I only spent one year in Spanish and can really only remember the days of the week and colors, but I'm pretty sure that even if your language skills are worse than mine the phrase "dos ses" means something to you. Maybe it brings back

memories of early autumn Friday nights. "26" gave fans something to cheer for almost every game, pulling in unheard of catches that gave the Mounties' fans something to say "all day" about. Maybe "dos ses" makes you think of a six-foot two kid with long hair who wears slipknot shirts, roots for Ohio State (poor decision...Go Blue!) and who is never afraid to joke around and help someone out. If you're a girl, "dos ses" probably makes you think of muscular arms and tank tops (are tanks tops only for girls? I wasn't sure if beater was appropriate). John is often thought of as just an athlete by people that don't know him. He is a star on the basketball and football teams and is one of the bigger kids in the school. As mentioned before, his arms are huge and I'm sure many middle school students (and probably freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors) look at John with a mixture of fear and admiration. Cido goes way beyond the court

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The Greylock Echo

The Mt. 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 student photographers, writers, and editors. Any Mt. Greylock student is welcome to submit articles, come to meetings, or join the Echo staff.

Next Issue:

Friday, March 21, 2008

Copy Deadline:

Friday, March 7, 2008

Next Staff Meeting:

Thursday, February 28, 2008

Editor-in-Chief: Chris Densmore
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World

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A Day in the Life of an Afghani Student

By: Abdul Samad Sadri

My mother yells, "Ramin! Wake up!"

I wake up in my room in Kabul and weak winter light filters into my dark room from the open curtain above. I hear the voice of the milk vendor shouting (shir bigire shir) outside on the street. "Milk for sale! Milk for sale!" The milk vendor is a nomad woman who sells milk early in the morning. She dips her ladle into a steel bucket that she filled earlier that morning. A glass jar of milk costs 10afghani. About ten cents American Dollars.

Oh I don't want to buy milk I don't want to go to school, I hate school! I think to myself. I close my eyes again. The milk vendor has gone up the street she is far away and I barely hear her voice.

"Ramin! Wake up Ramin! It is time for school!" My mother is now in the room now. "Wake up my son you will be late!" my mother says.

I have no choice now I have to get up, and get dressed.

I am still sleepy going to the bathroom which is outside on a 2nd story porch. I put on my cold slippers and the freezing water with which I wash my face wakes me up quickly. My mother prepares parata (round shaped flat bread cooked in oil) and a glass of hot green tea.

After breakfast I take my school bag and I start my motorcycle to go to school. Lots of kids are go school by foot. We don't have school buses and many students walk hours to get to school.

Once I arrive at school, the security guard demands that I open my bag so he can check it. He is checking bags and pockets for cell phones and sharp things which are not allowed in school. Bringing cell phones, sharp things, iPods or MP3 players, cameras, decorated shirts or torn pants, long hair, or wearing jewelry are prohibited in school. Physical punishment (a strong strike with a large stick to the palms) await anyone who misbehaves or breaks any rule at school.

After parking my motorcycle, I go to auditorium where every morning students and teachers must be present for chanting verses of holy Quran and singing our national anthem (Da Watan Afghanistan De). Then each class, with its first period teacher, goes to its classroom.

On the way from auditorium everyone tries to get to the room quickly to grab a seat. In a class of 55 students and only 25 or 30 chairs, those who are bigger and powerful usually get a chair. Others are left standing or sitting on floor. Some students share their chairs with best friends. After taking the attendance the teacher asks for homework and grades the work. Those who do not do their work face the big stick.

After each period the teacher leaves the class and another teacher comes. We remain in the same classroom the whole school time. After last period, the bell rings and each class walks in a straight line, following its teacher until the gate of school. After school, I work for the rest of day in our shop, a small motorcycle shop, helping my brother selling spare parts and sometimes cooking lunch for my family. Lunch gets out at around noon. Lots of kids work for the survival of their families. Most students are not able to attend school regularly. They must work instead.

I am lucky to work in a shop; there are lots of people working out in the freezing cold weather. Sometimes, when it snows, they get a break because they can work under an umbrella. Usually, they must work in the biting wind and the bitter cold. They have no other option.

We close the shop in the evening because after dark people try to get back home quickly for security reasons. Most of the shops are closed after dark in Kabul city. You see people are rushing and waiting long times on a bus stop to catch a bus, to go home. You can't easily find a bus. There are lots of Town Ace cars (small wagons) that transport people from one part of the city to another. Technically there is space only for 8 passengers on each Town Ace car, but it is possible to seat up to 16 people. Lots of people can't afford to pay for a taxi unless they have an emergency or they are with their family and kids.

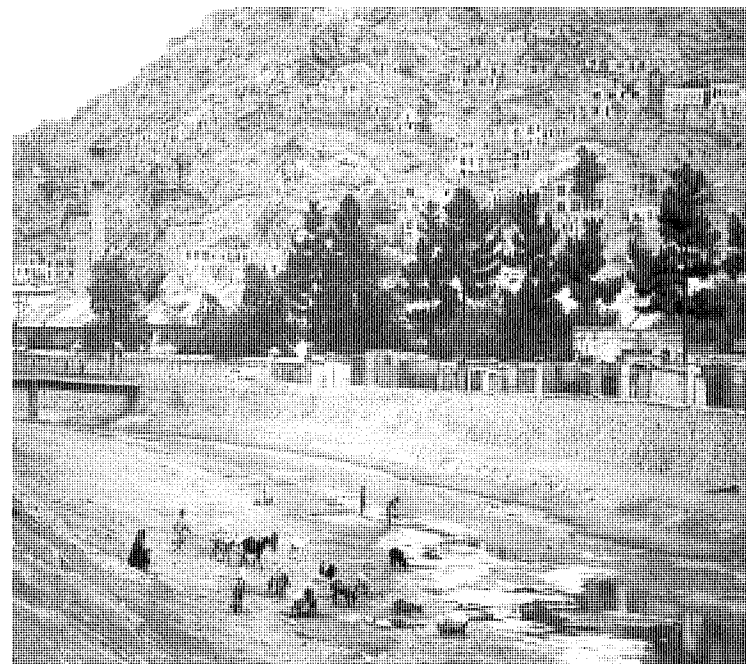


Photo Provided By: Abdul Samad Sadri

Afghans drink tea a lot before food and after food (and usually in between food). My mother and brother drink at least 10 cups tea after each dinner.

I don't drink a lot of tea because it makes me lazier than I am already. After eating dinner and drinking tea my father falls asleep early and we all sit in front of the TV and watch a movie or a show. Everyone falls asleep slowly and goes to sleep one after the other. My mother and I sleep last because we double check that the door is closed and that no window is open for security reasons.

"Ramin go to sleep son. Tomorrow you have a lot to do. You seem sleepy," my mother says.

"Mother wake me up please tomorrow early!" I say to my mother.

My mother says laughingly, "You always say the same thing in the same way and I keep shouting at you in the morning and you never wake up!"

I drift into sleep and think of tomorrow. It will be the same as today.

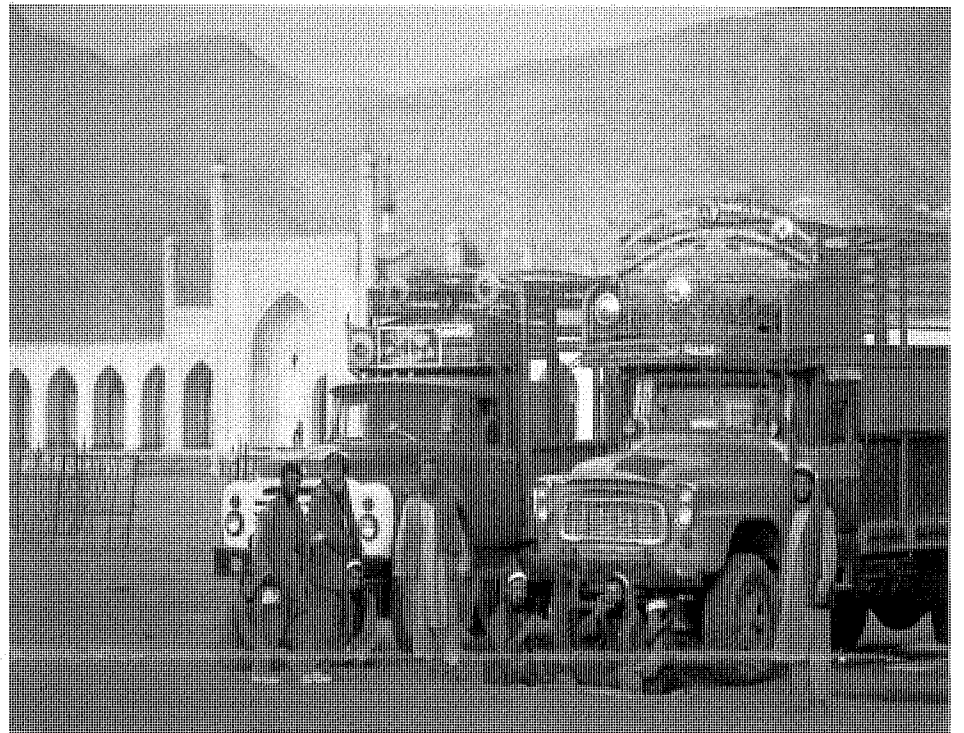


Photo Provided By: Abdul Samad Sadri

PERSPECTIVES

A Look Into Private School Life Through the Eyes of a Former Greylock Student

By: Ian Nesbitt, Holderness School

What is your image of a private school? When you think of a stereotypical "boarding school," you might think of stuck up kids, popped collars, and upper class incomes. You may think the kids are flauntingly rich, spoiled even. I'll admit that a scary image something like that was what I was expecting when I transferred from Mt. Greylock. What you may not know is that those stereotypes are largely fiction. Here are some comparative topics that may help you understand the boarding school world a little better.

Classes

How many kids are in your average class? Most answers will be around 25 for a Greylock student. Is a teacher able to simply look at a class and figure out who is missing? Probably not. My average class size is twelve. The biggest class I have contains 16 students, and the smallest class on my schedule, an English class, has just nine students. It truly does help participation. Every person has a chance to speak their opinion, and everyone participates in each class session. I find that the smaller the class, the more engaging the discussions. Some people complain that Holderness has classes on Saturday. Yes, Saturday classes are a sacrifice. However, Wednesday and Saturday are aptly called "gamedays," and most sports teams will have a competition on either or both of these days. Therefore, each of those days' classes only last until about 11:30 AM. This might seem harsh to Greylock students, but in reality, it is quite manageable.

Extra Help

How often are you confused about an assignment? Or just need help on homework? When you are confused, you will most likely ask a friend to explain online or over the phone. If most of your class really didn't understand, you might have trouble finding someone who really knows what the assignment is. The teacher might have given you their home phone number, but you are afraid to call after 9:00 PM. At Holderness, most of the teachers live on campus. During study hall, they are usually available in their apartments. If someone has a simple question, everyone on campus has their own school email address, which usually is religiously checked.

Structure of Day

Greylock has a fairly demanding schedule. While on student council a few years ago, I remember people asking me if we could petition to lengthen the four-minute passing time between classes. Here at Holderness, it's not much different. There are five minutes between classes. Also, similarly to Greylock, teachers here do get angry when the forty five minute periods are over, and sometimes have to write notes to excuse students from being marked "late." Holderness has a six-day rotating schedule, because we go to class Monday through Saturday.

Workload/Studying

How much do you study at Greylock? Considering students' answers, if you do not take any honors classes, homework may take you two hours or less. If you take a few honors classes, and you take the time to finish all your assignments, it could be around two and a half to three hours. AP students may have up to four hours of homework, and high-level English students may have more, given the day. At private school, unless you are in freshman-level classes, you will nearly always have more than two hours. The honors classes are more challenging, but also more engaging. I find that there is less busywork, and more of the type of work that keeps you on your toes, figuratively speaking. Each AP class usually requires more than an hour of work every night.

People

There are about two hundred and seventy students currently enrolled in four grade levels at Holderness. At Greylock, there are over six hundred students enrolled in six grades. I don't think anyone at Mt. Greylock could name every single one of the students. At Holderness, however, many people could name every student and every teacher there, and there is rarely a time when I walk by someone on a path and

we don't say hello. Since everyone does at least two sports, and almost everyone goes to some home games to cheer, the entire community has a sense of camaraderie that seems to spread beginning on the first day.

Dress Code

Dress Code at Holderness is not like a typical public high school. At Greylock, the oft-ignored rules of "no spaghetti straps" and "no visible undergarments" are more like guidelines anyway. Holderness does not have uniforms, but it requires boys to wear a shirt, tie, jacket, slacks, a belt, and leather shoes. During the winter, a sweater can be worn instead of a jacket. Girls' dress code is definitely the biggest grey area in the Student Handbook. Most teachers do not know what kind of top girls are supposed to wear with a skirt. The skirts themselves are only supposed to be three inches above the knee, but after the first week, that rule goes down the drain as well. Most people dislike the dress code, and sometimes there are murmurs of student government trying to change it. Most students hurry back from class to take the dress code off and just wear jeans and t-shirts around campus when the weather is warmer.

Religion

Yes, Holderness is an Episcopal school. No, that does not mean you have to be a devout Christian, or even have any religious faith at all, to attend. These are usually the two questions I end up answering when people find out that there are two required all-school chapel meetings per week. This might upset some people who think there should be a separation of church and state. I do believe strongly in

a wide separation in church and state, and so does everyone here at Holderness, but since it is a private institution, it is allowed to have chapel services. The mission statement of the school includes that the statement that students should be strong academically, athletically and spiritually. That means that it is not necessary to believe in God or anything religious, but it is recommended that you believe in yourself and in your soul.

Rules

Holderness generally has a "two strike rule" in which after two "major" disciplinary situations, the student will appear before the Discipline Committee to discuss possible further punishments, including expulsion. Some of the major situations include being in possession of drugs or alcohol, visiting an opposite-sex dorm when it is not designated inter-visitation time, missioning (being outside the dorm after check-in time), stealing,

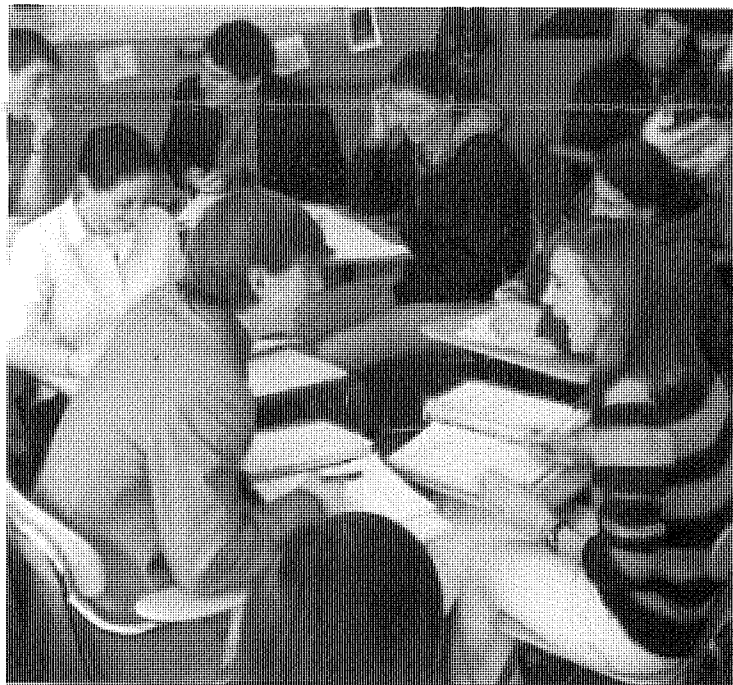
and misuse of the computer network.

Freedom/Spare Time

Saturday classes at Holderness do cut down on free time quite a bit. When I first started, it felt like I didn't actually have a weekend. Most students use the first half of Sunday to catch up on sleep. After the best meal of the week, Sunday brunch, students have the opportunity to visit downtown Plymouth, go to Wal-Mart, participate in the weekend committee's activities, or catch up on work.

Sports and Student-Athletes

It is a requirement that every student at Holderness plays at least two sports. This is not the case with most private schools. Holderness prides itself on putting academics first, but has turned out many world-class athletes and coaches. For example, former Tour de France cyclist Tyler Hamilton is a Holderness graduate. (Okay, bad example - Dont do drugs kids). A more pure example of a world class athlete is Lindley van der Linde (class of '89), an internationally acclaimed nordic ski marathon racer, who happens also to be a science teacher at Holderness and an expecting mother. Holderness faculty stresses that every student excel in academics, athletics, and spirit, and Mrs. van der Linde is a perfect example of that. Over ninety percent of Holderness's student body are athletes that come specifically because of a winter sport. Over one half of the school does a snow sport in the winter, and hockey is also incredibly popular. However, the Holderness basketball program has sent students to Division 1 schools. Martynas Pocius, a Lithuanian Holderness graduate, is now playing basketball for Duke University.



Students in a classroom at Holderness.

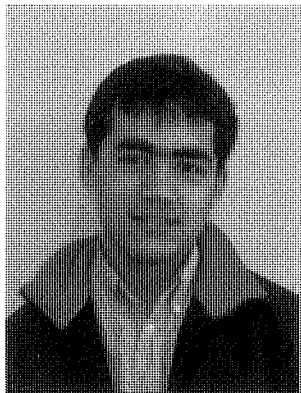
PEOPLE

NEW FACES IN THE GREYLOCK COMMUNITY

Echo staff member Melody Edwards interviewed and profiled Greylock's three foreign exchange students.

Ahmadshah Hazra
Age: 16
Homeland:
Afghanistan

Have you seen that guy around school who's always smiling? No matter what the situation, he's got a broad grin across his face? That is Ahmadshah.



Besides looking happy though, he may also look familiar, because his sister Soraya went to school here as a junior last year. Both were brought to the US by the Peter M. Goodrich Memorial Foundation, which was created by Sally and Don Goodrich (Vermont residents) in honor of their son Peter who died on September 11.

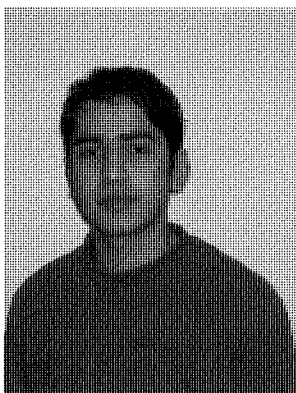
This charity is intended to promote the spontaneous love of learning that was so characteristic of Peter himself. The foundation has brought many Afghan students to America where they attend various schools in New England. Prior to his arrival here, Ahmadshah lived in Kabul, where his education was highly compromised.

While we are disgruntled to find that a bathroom stall is missing its door, in Afghanistan they rarely have desks, chairs, notebooks, pens, or even enough teachers. Here, his education will be above and beyond what it might have been, just as he "always wanted".

Those who know Ahmadshah are fond of his love of life despite the adversity he and his family have faced. He seems similarly to appreciate the welcome he has received here at Mount Greylock, saying, "Americans are kind, friendly, and respectful of other cultures and nationalities." While he is the youngest of all the exchange students he certainly stays outgoing and positive. He truly is *always smiling*.

Abdul Samad Sadri
Age: 17
Homeland:
Afghanistan

"...Everything was different for me." Whether it be the diverse culinary experiences (Mexican and Italian being pronounced his foods of choice), or the relationships between students and teachers, Samad experienced considerable culture shock upon arrival in America.



Before describing his adjustment though, let's go back to his roots... The youngest of five siblings, Samad grew up in Kabul, Afghanistan where he attended a German school—one of the best in the country. However, even at this theoretically top-notch institution, there was still much left to be desired.

There was rampant corruption, and many bribed the faculty to get good grades. As a result, the integrity of the school was severely compromised. Besides this, there were so few qualified teachers that they couldn't even utilize the resources they did have, such as the science lab donated by the German government. So when Samad was able to come to Mount Greylock through the YES (Youth Exchange and Study) program, his situation improved considerably.

Also, despite the inevitable difficulty of being far from his family, Samad seems to have found some good stand-ins—"Helpful and kind teachers as my parents, and lots of good friends as my brothers and sisters." We at MGRHS are only temporary replacements, as he will return home this summer, but Samad hopes to go all the way with this experience. He wants to continue his education next year at an American college, saying, "I don't want to ruin my future."

Ozgur Aydin
Age: 18
Homeland:
Turkey

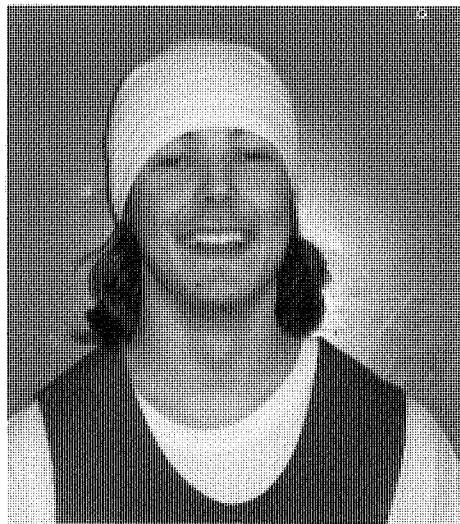
Ozgur Aydin came all the way from Turkey, and ended up in what he calls, "the best part of this big country." He arrived with the help of the Youth Exchange and Study program, which was founded after the tragedies of 9/11 to bring students from predominantly Muslim countries to the United States, and in-so-doing, foster understanding of the two cultures.



I'm sure all would agree that it is a noble goal, particularly Ozgur, who already sees the benefits of Mount Greylock's academics. In fact, he believes that one year here will give him what his friends back home would get in five years, despite the fact that students in Turkey study thirteen subjects per year, while we study seven. All of this learning will come in particularly handy, because he intends to go to college to study mechanical engineering when he returns home. However, Ozgur seems to feel, as many Greylock students do, that the best part of our school is our sports. He is particularly enthusiastic about learning to ski, which seems to have been the most profound of his first-time experiences here. Back home, he concentrated much of his energy in swimming and playing water polo for a local club.

Upon coming to America though, he learned that that the sport is taken much more seriously here, and appreciated that there were many other options for him to choose from. When it came down to it though, despite the many positive experiences and opportunities, when asked what his favorite aspect of American culture was, Ozgur replied, "Sarcasm."

Person of the Month, Continued from Page 3



gets really upset with people. He is extremely considerate and always smiles and winks at people (Don't worry; that came from a girl's account, not my own). While sometimes a flirt, he is always well meaning and just being silly. John is someone who makes the days at Greylock brighter for many people, someone you should appreciate if you know him and should introduce yourself to if you don't, someone who is worthy of praise and the title of Mr. February.

Sarah Renzi

Think back to pep rally. Ignore the whole girls' soccer vs. dance team debate, the lunch ladies, Cor-dir's finale skit, the amazing good looks of the MCs, the overall awe-

someness of the Senior class. Try to remember the dance team, just the dance team. No matter whom you are, boy or girl, you probably are remembering one girl. Now don't start calling me sketch (I wasn't even in the gym for the dance team), but there is one girl whose dancing skills, good looks, and charm speak for themselves: Sarah Renzi. If you happened to be absent from pep rally, don't go to basketball games, and don't know many seniors, you might be asking: "Who is Sarah Renzi?" Sarah Renzi is outgoing in a reserved sort of way. She went all out during senior week with spirit, passed out eight-ball stickers to unify the greatest class in the history, and continues to inspire the class with her energy. Sarah is pretty much all you can ask for in a girl: graceful, pretty, extremely



kind, caring, and interesting. Perhaps her greatest talent is largely unknown at Greylock. Sarah is a star figure skater. She can do spins and jumps on skates that most people couldn't pull off on a trampoline. And that makes Sarah one of the best girls at MG.

SMILE-ing Your Way To A Better Community

By: Marta Kowitz

Without the lovely, comforting voice of Mrs. Livernois ringing through the loudspeaker each morning, students can easily lose track of the many activity opportunities available at Mount Greylock. News about clubs is often spread by word of mouth, which not all students hear on a daily basis. One of the groups with little buzz is S.M.I.L.E., Students Making an Impact Locally for Everyone. Though members of S.M.I.L.E. strive to make an impact on the community, they go unrecognized in the school atmosphere. So what exactly does this group do?

S.M.I.L.E. is centered on the idea of students volunteering in the communities surrounding Mount Greylock. Already this school year, the group has been busy assisting local organizations with various events and causes. During the holiday season, members of S.M.I.L.E. chipped in at the Williamstown food pantry and decorated Christmas trees for Habitat for Humanity. They have also teamed up with the Williamstown Police Department and the Northern Berkshire Com-

munity Coalition to contribute to "Sticker Shock," the movement against providing minors with alcohol. Participants of S.M.I.L.E. gave their time at Snowfest as well, a winter celebration run by the Williamstown Youth Center. For the remainder of the year, S.M.I.L.E. is considering pitching in at the Berkshire Humane Society, visiting local nursing homes, and possibly teaming up with The Leukemia Society. The big event of spring will be the American Red Cross Blood Drive held at Mount Greylock this May.

If any student is interested in becoming a S.M.I.L.E. member, the group is always looking for more participants. Becoming involved in S.M.I.L.E. does not require daily, or even weekly dedication. Notice for events throughout the year is given at meetings the first Thursday of every month in Mrs. Strizzi's classroom (W-22). Whether you think volunteer work looks excellent on a college application, or you just enjoy lending a hand, joining S.M.I.L.E. is a fabulous way to give back to your community.

MURRAY, Continued from Page 1

about it. Like the other groups, it turns Washington into a classroom and it allows you to see that you do have a chance to be a voice, to make a change. And I like that opening to the "C" student as well as the "A" student. I don't think that's fair, to wipe out that whole group and not expose them to it. Some of the kids that I've had on CloseUp that have been most turned on to it have been kids that really didn't care about that stuff before they got there and all of a sudden, they got a little taste and get interested in government and get involved in campaigns and maybe go and work in Washington. And I think that's pretty exciting.

Echo: Could you maybe sum up the experience in a sentence or two?

MURRAY: Most kids say to me that they've learned in a week what they had learned in a semester in a classroom. It's not just about the politics, because each hotel will have kids from seven or eight states or even territories, and you room with most likely someone very different from you, and I ask that states we are put with are very far away from the Northeast, so the kids can have a real different experience. You know, sit there with the kids in your room and talk about NASCAR for a while. A few times we've been with Native Americans from the Aleutian Islands, which is a real culture trip for our kids. It's a very exciting program, and it has been successful here. And that's why I've been doing it year after year. Especially today, there are so many other opportunities for kids. There are so many things other than CloseUp. And I think it's wonderful, whether it's something in say, music, or Latin, or Spanish, or something like that. I'm glad that there are these other opportunities, that CloseUp isn't the only show. But it is what we can offer students that takes us out of the school.

Echo: How long have you been doing it for?

MURRAY: Ballpark? Twenty-five years.



Photo: Echo Staff

Tom Murray takes the podium in an AP class.

I work you guys pretty hard, I really do, and you rise to the occasion, and I'm proud of that. I'm so proud of the kids at this school.

They've changed my program, too. Because when we get down there, students go on a student program, I go on a teacher program. Different people, different seminars, and that's exciting too, meeting people from other parts of the country and finding out what they do in the classroom. So that part's really good. It's an arduous program for students, you start your first seminar at maybe 8 in the morning and you don't get out of your last until 10 at night. They

do seminars at the hotel now, and then after rush hour you go into Washington, use that as your classroom. If you're doing something in foreign affairs, you'll probably be at the State Department; sometimes they'll divide you up and bring you to different embassies. And it's a different program every week, and the week we go down there they're renting six hotels, with at least 200 kids in each hotel. And so every hotel has to be programmed right down to where you have to be for lunch or dinner. Some people are confused, think it's a trip down to Washington to see the Smithsonians, and it's not. They may do some of that on the side, or you may see some of the monuments as a side note, but that's not the focus.

Echo: What would you say about the current state of Mt. Greylock? Any specific concerns?

MURRAY: My thought is that I think the student body is great. I've got a lot of faith in the future, and I'm not blowing smoke. I think we've got the leaders here, and when I hear these people saying things are going down, I don't see that. I work you guys pretty hard, I really do, and you guys rise to the occasion, and I'm proud of that. I'm so proud of the kids at this school. In the regular classes too, I drive the kids really hard, and we get a lot out of them, and I think they get a great education. That we have the numbers that we do taking the challenge of AP and performing at the levels they're performing, so highly at our school, I'm not surprised at the awards the school wins, because of the work you people produce. The support you must get at home to do that is impressive, the demands, because I don't hear those same things from people at other schools. It makes it nice to come in here every day. Your frame of reference, your background, it's there. When I mention certain things, you've heard them before. It's not foreign to you. Whether it's some writers, or artists, things like that. You've been exposed to so many things, and they're going to help you tremendously, especially later on with college. I also like the idea at Greylock of the true scholar-athlete. You get good grades, and you're a solid athlete, it's not like you'd be one or the other. At a lot of schools, you're one or the other.

Echo: Finally, any secrets about dressing well that you can share? Do you match the tie with the shirt, or with the pants, or what?

MURRAY: You do both. You guys have to do it for the ladies. You shouldn't just walk into the closet and throw your latest "Slayer" shirt on, come walking out. I mean, if you really need help, just drop by.

PRIVATE SCHOOL, Continued From Page 5

Food

Compared to most public schools, Greylock has quite a good selection of food in its cafeteria. I think Greylock's selection of different foods is better than Holderness cafeteria food. Living at a private school, where we eat three meals a day in the same place, it is hard to keep the selection changing. The food is good quality, but sometimes it seems that the selection is pretty repetitive or even boring. Sometimes I find myself going for the pasta bar two or three lunches in a row.

This article, written by a former Mount Greylock student, Ian Nesbitt, is meant to give current Greylock students an insight into what life at private school is really like.

GREYLOCK WRESTLING CO-OP WINS COUNTY TITLE

By: Jordan Adames

For the second year in a row, the Mt. Greylock Mounties wrestling team has joined forces with the Drury Blue Devils, the Hoosic Hurricanes, and the McCann Hornets. Not only did they enter the season as the defending Berkshire County League Champions, along with the Mt. Everett, but also as the underdogs. With their young and inexperienced team, they were expected to place third out of four teams in Berkshire County. With the return of only five varsity wrestlers (senior captain Matt St. Pierre, junior captain Kyle Fulino, junior Stephanie Lindner, sophomore Eli Coniglio, and sophomore Sean Kilfoil) and with nine new names added to the roster, there was little hope for the Greylock team. Some of the new varsity wrestlers include senior captain Nick Chenail and senior captain Zac Bohl.

With eight straight Berkshire County titles this young team started the season hoping (and knowing) that this year wasn't going to be the season that they gave up the long held title. Their inexperienced team was more than ready for the challenge to fight their way to the top of the county and once again become the champs.

With an early season win against the Taconic Braves, the young Mt. Greylock team knew that there was hope since Taconic was expected to be the best team in the county. But after an unexpected tie with Monument Mt., the Greylock wrestlers knew that they had to work harder if they wanted the championship title. After the Berkshire Holiday Tournament and numerous dual meets at South Hadley, Fair Haven,

Greylock, and Taconic, the Greylock wrestlers were once again faced Monument. This time Monument didn't end up as lucky, losing to Mt. Greylock 54-12. At this point this young team was only a couple more wins away from the title.

The Greylock team next took a trip to Mt. Everett on January 24th, knowing that a win against Everett and a win the next day against Taconic would make them the Berkshire County Champions. It was a battle between Greylock and Everett. After Cyrus Furtado lost at the 171 pound weight class, Everett earned three team points giving Everett the 38-21 lead over Greylock. But with Nick Chenail's pin at the 189 pound weight class, Greylock was given six points. Since Everett didn't have a 215 pounder or 285 pounder, Jordan Adames and Nick Morey took the forfeits, which gave Greylock the 39-38 win over Mt. Everett.

The next day, the Greylock team had a home dual match against the Taconic Braves, knowing that with the win they would become the Berkshire County Champs. Once again the Taconic Braves weren't a match for Mt. Greylock. The Mt. Greylock wrestlers beat the Braves 47-26. Once again the Mt. Greylock Mounties have overcome adversities to become the 2007-2008 Berkshire County League Champions for the ninth year in a row. The next challenge is the Western Mass Division 3 tournament at Pioneer Valley on February 8th and 9th.

The author is a member of the Greylock Wrestling Team

Boys Basketball Turns Things Around; Girls Ride Strong Start

By: Than Finan

The graduation of two seniors, accompanied by the loss of two other starters raised more than a little doubt in people's minds about the possible success of the Mountie boys' basketball team this year. Any doubt in the boys' team was confirmed by the disappointing 0-5 start to the season: or so it seemed. Since their loss to Pittsfield High School on December 29th, the boys have gone 7-1 beating perennial Western Mass. title contenders Hoosac Valley. They also avenged their loss to Pittsfield and picked up road wins at both Lenox and Monument Mountain to send them to the top of the Southern Division: a place it has not been in a number of years.

Led by coaches Jay Meehan and Ed Louis and a solid core of seniors, the boys are as confident as ever. Where the team noticeably lacks in size, they make up for in experience and hustle. Simply put, they know how to get the job done. Of their thirteen games thus far, seven have been decided by five points or less including two overtime appearances. Clint Mason, Zach Bishop, John Lucido, Dan Nawazelski, Alvand Hajizadeh, and Than Finan all have at least a year's experience playing at the varsity level. The addition of point guards Will Alimonos and Sam Garivalentis has also not gone unnoticed as the two have split time running the game and controlling the pace of play as needed. Another first year varsity player, Chris Geannelis, has done what he does best, shooting that is, coming into the game as a three-point sharp-shooter when they are in need of points or a quick momentum boost. To round out the eleven man roster the guard laden team needed at least some size. To fill the whole they recruited Whit Montgomery-Nassif out of retirement and also called up sophomore Spencer Rioux to battle down low for rebounds and knock down the occasional jumper. With a 7-2 record in the county and five games to play, the boys' team should be a shoo-in for the Western Mass. tournament, and, with a strong finish, may even have a home game in the first round.

If you ask any of the guys on the team, they will all tell you that one of the best aspects is the comradery amongst the players. Although things can get competitive during practice, at the end of the day they still recognize that they are on the same team. Almost

everyone on the team has at least one nick-name, the wildest of which include "Big-Shot Bill," "Sticky Rubies," and "Hot Lasagna" or "Cold Spaghetti" depending on the day. Giving guys a hard time for something embarrassing, over-usage of inside jokes, and joking around with the coaches are every day activities. The traditional Lasagna Dinner at coach Meehan's house is one of the many examples of why their team chemistry is so good. Bonding over lasagna, ping-pong and wrestling makes for a pretty close team; a team that is looking to shock the county with a run deep into the playoffs.

The Girls' team also prides themselves on their team chemistry as one of the key factors in their success. Like

they boys' team, the girls are returning eight players from last year while only losing three to graduation. The addition of a pair of promising freshmen in Sarah Brink and Kim Houston also bodes well for the future. The girls, unlike the boys, started the season with a bang. After a three point loss to a strong Pittsfield team, they won three in a row before falling to county power house Lee High School. They then rallied again, however, upsetting the favored Hoosac Valley Hurricanes on the road. This was a hard fought back-and-forth battle that came down to a three-pointer at the top of the key by Annabel Barrett with thirty seconds left to push them over the edge.

They say the hardest thing in high school basketball is to go on the road and get a win, but the girls having been finding ways to get that done this year. Another thing that factors in to the girls new found success is the "desire to succeed" says junior Janelle van Luling. They have, like the boys had a number of close games, four being decided by three points or less. Although they suffered a four game losing-streak, the girls soundly trampled St. Joe 50-17 on December 31st, to get back on track towards



Mount Greylock guard Sam Garivalentis drives to the basket.

making the playoffs. With a record of 5-6, the girls are looking to make a run and win four of their remaining six games in an effort to clinch a playoff birth. Of the six teams still to face Mount Greylock, the Mounties have already proven their superiority against four, besting Mt. Everett, Hoosac Valley, St. Joe's, and Monson earlier in the season. Only Lenox will have a chance to defeat the playoff hungry Mounties for a second time. The girls will next face off with the so far unknown Taconic Braves on February 4th.

The girls close out their season at the Mountie Dome on February the 18th against Lenox High School. The boys finish their season a day later at the Mountie Dome against Monument Mountain in what could turn out to be the Southern Division championship game. Everyone come and support your girls' and boys' Mountie basketball teams... 'cause we're not just a ski school anymore!

The author is a member of the Greylock Basketball Team.