

SENIOR PROJECT: PROBLEMS AND POTENTIAL

By PAIGE BELANGER

The Senior Project at Mt. Greylock has always been a bit controversial to both students and faculty. Many seniors loathe the prospect of researching and creating a project, finding a mentor, writing a paper, and presenting their efforts orally, all while trying to deal with academics, extra-curriculars, and the college process. Many students find the idea of exploring an independent interest to be quite exciting. However, it is not simply the idea of completing a senior project that is debated throughout the school, but the way that the project is set up as well. Currently, the "Essential Question" is how the project should be carried out by students.

In a meeting that addressed the timeframe and quality of the average Mt. Greylock student's senior year, the idea of changing the format of the senior project was brought to attention. The meeting, which included members of the faculty and Mr. Payne, ended with no conclusion about any kind of major framework shift for the future. However, it did wield one considerable change: next year's seniors will be able to complete most of their project over the summer vacation and entirely finish it by the end of the first semester.

The prospect of having their senior project already done is quite intriguing to some of this year's seniors. While senior year consists of immense proportions of time-consuming studying for exams and demanding college applications, the prospect of relaxing during second semester seems a welcome revision.

This year, seniors are all completing their projects on the original time frame. Papers are due on April 8, two days before the end of third quarter. However, many of the complaints about the current version of the Senior Project have nothing to do with deadlines or a time frame. While many eventually accept the values and products of the Senior Project and the work that goes into it, a few speak of its lack of an educational or overall value. In contrast, others believe that the project has reinforced their personal life goals.

Alicia Dupras, senior, who has formulated a Senior Project around prenatal

nursing, states that she "really enjoy[s] senior project because it is what [she] really want[s] to do for a career." Blair Shea, senior, who also is pursuing a project revolving around nursing, comments that "senior project didn't influence or affect [her] decision making," and she would definitely want to pursue a career in nursing. Both projects have reinforced their chosen career paths and have given them personal experience in the area that they wish to ex-

ploring addition to their high school years, while others feel that it is completely ineffectual. Still others feel as though the project could have been useful "if they took it seriously" (Gina Riggins).

According to the Mt. Greylock school website, "the Senior Project is an innovative program that offers students the opportunity to expand their educational horizons beyond the classroom." This broadening of perspectives is judged by the student's

ability to meet the Graduation Proficiencies of the project. The fulfillment of these Graduation Proficiencies, which require that the student be able to "creatively and practically solve problems... [become a] collaborative and responsible community participant... [be a] self directed learner... [and be able to] communicate effectively," decide whether the student has exemplified good citizenship (Senior Project Handbook). However, many students who are completing the project claim that their own individual efforts are not aiding them in any of these areas. A large proportion of this year's seniors do simply what they have to in order to get by, and don't push themselves to excel in the project. When asked if the Senior Project was something that he used to push and better himself as a person, college sophomore Elias-John Fernandez Aubert replied "No. In fact, I spent a decent amount of time making my senior project as easy for myself as possible. I picked a topic that I already knew about and had already done most

of the work on." A few of the students that have put vast amounts of effort into the Senior Project are those that chose a subject matter related to their desired career field or major in college. These reasons are still, for a majority, extrinsic, in that they will help the student excel at a later date. Many, however, feel as though their project will be of little value later in life. Says senior Duane Bailey, "the lack of encouragement regarding the application of academic skills in addition to the stringent requirements and deadlines leads to projects that are, in most cases, unrelated to high school and future education or careers."

As it stands now, the value of Senior

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Olivia Tousignant-Pienkos works on learning to play the guitar for her senior project. Photo: Sarah Crosky.

plore in college.

However, certain people do not feel that the Senior Project has helped them to excel. "I do what I have to do to pass, but I'm not over thinking anything," says senior Gina Riggins. For her, the project has not been an intellectually stimulating experience. The same applies to fellow senior Rebecca Bishop, who is studying cake making and decorating for her project. She admits that "[she] did it a couple times and thought that it was horrible. [She] couldn't pay attention to what [she] was doing. It took forever. Even [her] mentor thought that [the project] was a waste of time."

Contrasting opinions seem to characterize the Senior Project in general. Some students find it to be a valuable and stimu-

1 in 650: An Interview with Eli Catlin



By NATE NURMI

At Java Jive a couple months ago, multiple Echo staffers were quite impressed with a young man who got up on stage and played some incredible blues mandolin. We tracked him down and managed to get an interview. Eli Catlin, who is 13 years old, in 7th grade, and lives in Williamstown, was slightly difficult to find because he is home-schooled through Mt. Greylock. He is, however, on the Mt. Greylock track team this spring. So if you see him at practice, around town, or at a musical performance, make sure to say hi (and get his autograph - he might be famous some day).

Q: How long have you been playing the mandolin?

A: About three years . . . well three for mandolin and four for guitar.

Q: How many other instruments do you play?

A: Um, besides guitar and mandolin, I play harmonica, banjo, ukulele, and I'm starting piano.

Q: Do you read musical notation mostly or play by ear and improvisationally?

A: I don't really read music a lot. I mostly do it by ear.

Q: How did you learn to play the mandolin?

A: Well, for my tenth birthday, I was going to get a banjo, but when i got to the music store, I saw a mandolin and decided to get it instead. A man at the store taught me a few chords. Soon I got a private teacher. I really wanted to play blues mandolin, but he hadn't really heard of someone wanting to play blues mandolin. Then I got another

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What's New in the Arts?

Krista Mangiardi previews upcoming theatrical and musical events as well as discussing Mt. Greylock's art classes, curricula, funding, and curent projects on display in the halls.

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THE BOOK WORM

Isabel Kaufman reviews *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay*, by Michael Chabon.

See Page 3.

Cartoon

Rufus Paisley and Keith Martin entertain us once more.
See Page 3.

A Close-up look at Close Up

Max Reinhardt writes a detailed recap of *Close Up*, the week-long program in Washington D.C. that immerses students in a wide range of political issues and ideas. This year, Mr. Murray took 6 students to D.C. for a truly exciting trip.

Read about it on page 4.

The Compost Effort

Camille Robertson reports on the newly installed composting system in the Greylock cafeteria as well as other goals and objectives of the Youth Environmental Squad.
See page 4.

The Texting Phenomenon

Taylor Foehl comments on the extensive use of phones for the students of Mt. Greylock, and their effects on our interpersonal communication.
See Page 3.

AP Euro

Ned Kleiner gives us the scoop on AP Euro's availability to sophomores (or lack thereof).
See Page 2.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Spring Concert is Coming Up

The High School band, chorus, and orchestra will showcase their talents on Wednesday, May 6, in their annual Spring Concert. It will be the last performance for seniors, some of whom have played in eighteen concerts in their careers at Greylock. The musical ensembles work hard every block three to prepare for the concert and would love for you to show your support by coming to watch them perform. The concert starts at 7:30 and is free.

High School After-Prom Fund-raiser and Talent Show

The senior class will host a Talent Show on May 15th with all proceeds going towards their After Prom. There will be no better time to showcase your secret ability to balance flaming spoons on your tongue while riding a tricycle. Send any questions or requests to Beth Stomberg at stomberg@verizon.net


Ritchie's Run for Cancer

Jessica Lemieux will host Richie's Run for Cancer on Saturday, April 11. For her senior project, she has organized a 5k trail run and a one mile walk, with all proceeds benefiting research for Thyroid Cancer at the Boston Medical Center. There are flyers around the school with details or you can contact Jessica at (413)-884-5501 or at jesslemieux@roadrunner.com. Exercise for a cause!


Seniors Direct Tennis Tourney for Charity

On April 25, seniors Matt Vaughan and David Nolan will direct a community doubles tennis tournament open to all pairs willing to pay a small entrance fee. All of the proceeds of the tournament, in turn, will be donated to HospiceCare in The Berkshires, a not-for-profit, Medicare-certified and Massachusetts-licensed hospice provider for which Vaughan has volunteered over the years. Vaughan will direct the procedures of the tournament itself while Nolan will act as a business manager of sorts—fundraising and advertising for the event.

The tournament will last the entire day, and Vaughan and Nolan have guaranteed at least two matches to all entrants regardless of potential first-round defeats. While the brackets may be relatively competitive, all are encouraged to attend. When questioned as to his motivation for organizing the tournament, Vaughan explained that “over the past few years in high school, tennis has become one of the main sports and passions in my life, so I wanted to give back to the sport. I want to get people involved in the sport.”



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AGLANCE AT THE ARTS

By KRISTA MANGIARDI

The art departments at Mt. Greylock are bustling all year long. Whether students choose to participate in music, theater, the visual arts, or some combination of the latter, there will always be something to do. As the refreshing start of spring presents itself, artists are taking part in new and exciting activities. They are perfecting and cultivating talents in a variety of forms that not only affect themselves, but the whole school and community as well.



Self-Portraits from the Mt. Greylock Lobby. Photo: Sarah Crosky

There are several times during the day when one can walk down the band hallway or the path to the gym and suddenly be surrounded by the melodies of classical or contemporary compositions. The middle and high school orchestra, chorus, and band rehearse every day to learn and explore music (and to prepare for their seasonal concert). While their music echoes through the hall, even more is going on behind the doors. The music department will soon be receiving a SEE Fund grant, for which a ceremony will take place including performances by a UMass ensemble. Three music students were recently given the opportunity to participate in a composing project. Each, guided by a contemporary composer once a month for about four months, created a two to five minute piece to be performed by the Sage City Symphony. Sato Matsui, a violist and vocalist, got to take advantage of this opportunity and says of the experience, “It was a big challenge for all of us. I had always had a passion for music, but this was the first time I tried creating my own.” Music at Mt. Greylock is attempting to go outside of the traditional three ensembles and expand student’s experiences even further. Matsui continues, “In participating in the Sage City Music Project, I found a new passion that I hope to pursue in the future.”

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AP EURO FOR 10TH GRADERS?

By NED KLEINER

Two days before current freshmen were to take the entrance exam for AP European History, they were told not to show up, since the class would be offered only to seniors.

In January, Mr. Payne had asked Mr. Welch about the viability of offering AP Euro to sophomores. Mr. Welch thought the idea to be a good one that could solve a series of issues. Having taught both AP Euro and World History & Geography II, he believed that the curricula of the two were quite similar. He felt that “for those with a genuine interest in history, the class would be successful,” and that the sophomores, with some help from him, could handle the challenges presented by the more difficult course. Mr. Welch had heard reports of sophomores in AP Euro from people in other parts of the county. In addition, he thought it could alleviate the problem of declining enrollment in AP Euro.

In February, he visited freshman social studies classes to gauge student interest in the proposal. He found what seemed to be enough interest to justify offering a second section. Mr. Welch encouraged the freshmen to take the entrance exam and the idea was generally well received.

Were one to look through the Course of Study, he would not see a wide variety of classes offered to underclassmen. There is only one possible elective next year, a semester of Political Science. All freshmen and sophomores must take College Prep World History & Geography I and II, respectively.

When Mr. Payne was asked why the proposal had died, if both he and Mr. Welch supported it, he pointed to the School Council meeting of February 12, 2009. The School Council is a body, which, according to its bylaws, “[adopts] educational goals for the school that are consistent with local educational policies and statewide student performance standards.” At the February 12 meeting, some members of the Council, in particular the parents and community members, raised questions about the appropriateness of offering an AP to sophomores. Most of the conflicts over AP’s are based on their difficulty. They are supposed to represent a college course, though most colleges no longer give credit for them. One of the members stated that it was this kind of misuse of AP’s that caused colleges to reject them. Another member said that there was a feeling that there was already too much competition among students, and that the proposal to offer an AP to sophomores would only worsen the problem. Another, on hearing that this proposal was supposed to lessen the stress of senior year, said that in all probability this would just pave the way for seniors to take a different AP.

Deb Dane, a School Council member and parent of one freshman and one senior, said that she is strongly in favor of an honors Social Studies class for sophomores which stressed writing skills rather than preparation for the AP test. “I feel that an AP course teaches to the test,” Dane said. “And by teaching to the test we are selling our students short.”

Dane had presented to the School Council an article from the Berkshire Eagle which stated that 20.8% of Massachusetts students received at least a three or higher on an AP exam. She interpreted that to mean that 80% of students had paid \$85 just to effectively fail the exam, and said she didn’t understand why more students should be encouraged to waste effort and money. In fact, though, Dane’s interpretation was based on a misreading of the figures. The article’s real import was that of the 27% of students in Massachusetts who took an AP, more than three-quarters scored at least one three.

One parent said that there was a feeling that there was already too much competition among students, and that the proposal to offer an AP to sophomores would only worsen the problem. Mr. Payne referred to that idea as a major factor in his decision. “I don’t want to create the situation where [freshmen] think ‘I’ve got to sign up [for AP Euro] to be a top student,’” Mr. Payne said. “There’s already stress, but do I need to shove it on them a year earlier?”

Many of the freshmen have their own views, ranging from indifference to anger. Hayden Barber, a freshman, said, “I don’t really care. It didn’t matter to me.” Some were outraged when they were told that they could not take AP Euro because they might stress others. Matt Cheung, a freshman, thought, “Students should be able to take the classes that they want, regardless of what other students take.” At a recent Student Council meeting, many views were aired, though the group as a whole did not offer an opinion. One freshman member was also dismayed by the idea that the course offerings for everyone were being limited because of the possibility that they might stress out others. “This is like telling a really good cross-country runner that he can’t run as fast as he can, because other runners might get dehydrated trying to keep up.” Other members, however, posited that though this year’s freshmen, who are an unusually strong class, could handle an AP, future grades might not be able to. There were also parents who were proponents of offering AP Euro to sophomores. Charlie Sutter, when asked about his views about the proposal, said that he was angry that it was recalled, but if you ask his parents, “they’ll rant for hours.”

There were also some technical problems with the proposal. To allow struggling students to move back into World History & Geography II, Mr. Niemeyer would have to teach a sophomore class the same block as the sophomore block of AP Euro, adding even more rigidity to an already tangled schedule. Also, there was some debate about how similar the curricula really are. World History & Geography II covers the modern era for the whole world, in which Europe plays a major role, while AP European History only covers the world outside Europe when those nations affect European History.

Mr. Payne, however, has not given up on the idea of offering AP Euro to future sophomores. “I need to do more homework,” Payne said.

The views expressed in opinion or editorial pieces do not reflect the collective views of this newspaper or the administration, but of the individual authors.

Connection Lost

By TAYLOR FOEHL

As a teenager, I have grown up alongside technology. It is difficult for me to imagine a world without e-mail, cell phones, GPS, and digital cameras. There is no debating that these advancements have changed the world for the better. Today we can communicate with ease with people anywhere in the civilized world. We can share videos or pictures instantaneously. We can watch live televised events taking place on the other side of the planet. With the use of cell phones, almost everybody is a dialed number away from contact. From a technological view, the list goes on and on. But there are two sides to the story.

A friend that I rarely see recently suggested that we become pen-pals, an uncommon relationship these days. Via text message I told her that I thought it would be a great idea, before realizing how inefficient exchanging letters was. I sent her the message that she received in the next five seconds and before a minute had passed I had a response. We exchanged messages for the next hour. This situation clearly illustrates two important changes that have been brought about by technology. The first is that there is little point in sending letters, because we can talk to each other "live" whenever we desire. What

could I have said in a letter that would reach her days later that I couldn't tell her immediately on a computer or by cell phone? The second is our choice to communicate via text message rather than phone. Our conversation went on for an hour with about thirty-five messages sent, but if we had our exchange on the phone, we could have shared the same amount of information in five minutes. More and more teens are making the choice of text over call. A recent study by Nielsen Mobile reported that 13-17 year olds send an average of 1742 text messages per month while making 231 calls, a ratio of 7.5:1. These results appear to show that teens would rather avoid the human to human

contact of a phone call in favor of the rather inhuman text conversation.

In defense of the text message, most teenagers will give an alarming reason: texts avoid the hassle of talking to a person. To ask a simple question like, "what's the math homework?" many teens will text their friends for an answer. A reply may take upwards of five minutes depending on whether the receiver has his or her phone on him. If a phone call had been made, the question would have either been answered immediately or it would have been determined that the other party did not have his phone on him, at which point the question could have been directed to another classmate. The most egregious text message sent, however, is "hey". With this conversation starter, it is clear that the initiator is anticipating a dialogue rather than a brief discussion. This type

secretive glance to see if they've been contacted on their silenced phone. Students test their skills by sending a message while feigning interest in the teacher. Sometimes these messages are productive, figuring out after-school logistics with parents. Far too frequently, however, useless pieces of information are sent to a friend to be seen during the next passing time. One of the best running jokes in the school is to send a text to an unsuspecting classmate, ideally with their ringer on, and see their reaction when they recognize the comic genius you have just displayed by sending a text message from the same room. Perhaps it is time for students to take a step back from their phones during the school day and wait until lunch to talk to their BFFL.

Technology has played a huge part in keeping people together. Almost everybody is reachable at any point, no matter what the location. I can talk to my aunt in Hawaii just as easily as to my friend across the street. But while technology brings us together, it is driving us apart. Cell phones were intended to be used as phones, yet most teenagers would say that they could live without a phone function on their mobile devices. They'd rather communicate silently with

their thumbs, avoiding talking directly to humans. I often become concerned when somebody calls me since it is such a rare occurrence. I wonder what could be forcing him into taking the extra hassle of making a call. Since this is a problem sprouted from new technology, it is difficult to know what implications this will have on current teenagers. Perhaps later in life when we will be forced to interact directly with co-workers or clients, our social avoidance will come back to bite us. The sad truth is, however, that our society, in general, is shifting away from direct conversation and more towards virtual exchanges. This trend needs to be slowed, for the human in us all.



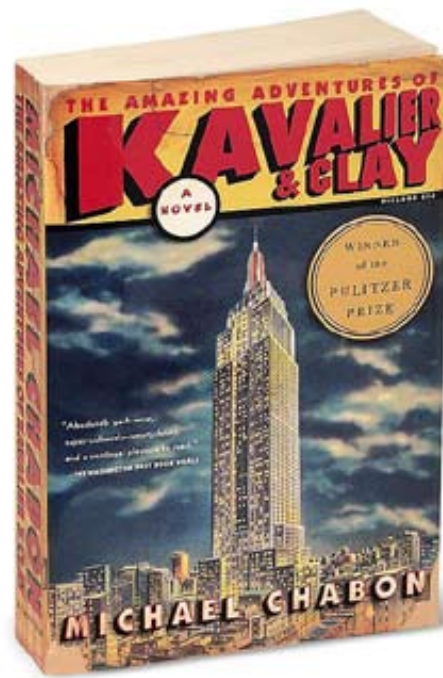
Photo: Taylor Foehl

of conversation is the main culprit in high teen text numbers. Since one text can only hold 160 characters, messages are limited to short responses for even the most advanced in abbreviating and translating. It is not unusual to send thirty messages in one conversation. When you factor in that thirty messages are also being received, you have amassed a total of sixty text messages in perhaps one hour. It is easy to see how monthly totals can get so high, and communication so incredibly inefficient.

The effects of texting can be seen daily in the halls of Mount Greylock. It is difficult to go through an entire class period without catching someone take a

The Book Worm

By ISABEL KAUFMAN



Title: The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay

Written By: Michael Chabon

Price: \$11.52 (paperback)

Let me address the elephant in the room and answer the basic reviewer's question going on here before I tell you why you should read this book: what's left to say about it? It's not new to the literary world. It won a Pulitzer Prize, for God's sake.

Well, the fact that I'm reviewing it in spite of the fact that it's already got a fairly massive share of fame should say one of two things. Either all the praise is a massive display of misdirection and it's secretly bad, or it actually is just that good. Here's a hint: it's the latter. This book is excellent and sprawling and should be read, just as the world would have you believe.

Reading it now makes very direct sense to me. Now that comic books are undergoing a sort of renaissance, they're becoming more and more pervasive. I won't cop to any basic comic-book knowledge, but it certainly struck me as natural to go from watching previews for the now-released Watchmen to reading a book that deals with the exuberant beginnings of America's comic-book love. It was easy, after thinking about graphic novels (like Watchmen itself, the thoughtful, fascinating work upon which the movie was based), to read a novel with a graphic sensibility. Yet in spite of its love of the comic, the comic even before it actually got good, Kavalier & Clay is literate more than anything: a book that uses the exuberance attached to the other art form to tell a giant story with a beating heart.

It starts with boys (because that's how the comic-book thing always seems to start). Two of them. One escaping from WWII-era Prague with nothing but a few magician's tricks up his sleeve; the other waiting in his Brooklyn apartment for something exciting to happen. Josef Kavalier and Sammy Clay, cousins, young, Jewish, idealistic, the beginning of something great. Joe can draw and Sammy can dream and together they create something great. From the stories they tell and the comics they sell comes a massive tale, something that's about cities, circuses, Houdini, pulp fiction, love stories, golems, magic, American idealism, and ink.

Chabon's a great writer, and he's remarkably enthusiastic about his subject matter. Metaphor, simile, and hyperbole suffuse his prose. He exaggerates for effect: he makes his words larger than life because that's what they should be, what they need to be. It doesn't come across as affected; instead it is striking, a seemingly unfettered display of exuberance. This, for the most part, drives the reader through the over-600-page book with basic ease. Though it flags a little toward the

end (when he removes his characters from the immediate creative whirlwind of the comic-book world, Chabon seems just a little less enthused about writing them), it never sinks. It's a bright, buoyant read, something optimistic and smart and most of all, big.

So that's why I'm reviewing a Pulitzer-Prize winning book, a book that clearly doesn't need my approval. Because it reads like new even though secretly it's old, even though it was secretly decades-old even before it was published, rooted in the spirit of a movement that began in the '30s. Because Chabon's magnum opus is the kind of big and bright that makes you feel bigger and brighter for having read it.



Cartoon by Rufus Paisley, Drawing by Keith Martin

COMMUNITY

STUDENTS EXPLORE POLITICS IN D.C.

By MAX REINHARDT

People at Mt. Greylock may have noticed that from Monday, March 8th until Friday, March 13th, Charlie Besnard, Chris Bope, Erin Manners, Nate Nurmi, Jessi Payton, and Max Reinhardt were all missing in action. Or they may have only noticed that their favorite history teacher, Mr. Murray, left them for a week. Either way, everyone probably noticed the absence of a significant portion of the school. As it turns out, the six students and Mr. Murray were participating in the Close-Up Academy in Washington D.C. The program, running year long, brings schools from all around the United States together for one week at a time to work toward a number of goals, such as exposing students to the cultures of other parts of the country, deepening an understanding of the nation's history and government, and proving the impact an individual can have on his or her own community.

Students at Close-Up were paired with one roommate from their own school and two from another school in another state. "Forty percent of what you get out of Close-Up is that exchange of information, getting along with people from different parts of the country. It's that diversity," said Mr. Murray. By luck of the draw, Mt. Greylock members roomed with people from Alabama, Arizona, and Texas. (Other states represented were Colorado, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, and Wyoming, as well as a large number of students from elsewhere in Massachusetts.) It was a challenge, but everyone was able to adjust to their roommates' differences and make friends quickly. "It was a fun experience even though they were strange," Besnard remarked. The program provided means to make friends with other people as well. Broken into six workshops, students were

not always with their best friends from home and had to get to know the rest of their groups. Close-Up members could interact with new acquaintances almost every



Photo: Jessi Payton

day on the many bus rides from place to place and for an hour each night at "student lounge." The social life concluded with a two and a half hour dance hosted by a live DJ on Thursday night.

The Close-Up program taught about history and government in a direct way, with nothing remotely resembling a textbook. Workshops visited many a memorial, in-

cluding those for Iwo Jima, Vietnam, and, of course, Abraham Lincoln and George Washington. The themes and messages of the memorials were always discussed in depth to add more educational value to these visits. "It gives you a sense of American culture and history. Those are people that represent the ideals of our country," Mr. Murray said of these visits. Every student in the program also participated in a simulation of the House of Representatives. The student House voted on five bills, passing one that required fast food restaurants to provide more nutritional information than they do now. None of the bills was real; the point of the exercise was to force students to think and form their own opinions on five important matters facing the U.S. government. Making students think was the main emphasis of the workshops as well. Workshop leaders often asked everyone in their group to take a side on an issue and then made them explain their reasoning. Before taking their groups to see speakers such as Ralph Nader or a liberal/conservative debate, leaders worked hard to stimulate their students to ask questions in the most interesting way possible. For example, instead of asking, "How do you feel about abortion?" leaders encouraged questions like, "What do you think is the best way to approach the teen pregnancy issue?" In the beginning of the week, at the liberal/conservative debate, the first student question asked was, indeed, "How do you feel about abortion?" but, by the end of the week, on Capitol Hill, questions were far more sophisticated. "Students feel more comfortable speaking after these experiences. They take over leadership roles," Mr. Murray noted.

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private teacher who said the same thing. But then I got another teacher who taught me some basic blues stuff. Out of the stuff he taught me, I taught myself some more.

Q: Do you mostly like to play blues, or do you have other favorite musical genres?

A: Mostly just blues.

Q: Do you have a favorite song?

A: It changes a lot. Right now it is "Shout, Baby, Shout," by Yank Rachell.

Q: Do you perform live a lot, or would you like to perform in public more often?

A: I want to do more performances, but before I do more, I want to find someone who could play with me.

Q: What other extra-curricular activities are you interested in?

A: Photography

Q: How long have been into photography and what's your favorite type?

A: Uh, about two years. I started out with digital, but then my grandfather sent me his old 35mm film camera, so I've been using that lately.

Q: Is there anywhere where the public can see some of your photographs?

A: There's this gallery called Zeitgeist in Pittsfield that's kind of community run. They let me put some photos up there. At the opening, I played live music. I think they might still be up.

Q: Do you have any definitive thoughts about a future career?

A: I think I'd like to be a blues musician.

Q: And is this your first year on the Mt. Greylock track team?

A: Yeah.

Composting Has Arrived

By CAMILLE ROBERTSON

Since Friday March 6, food waste from the Mt. Greylock cafeteria has been filling pigs' stomachs at Cricket Creek Farm instead of rotting at our local dump. The Youth Environmental Squad, a student-run high school group dedicated to instilling green habits and practices in our school, has worked all year to set this project up, and is delighted to see it finally in place. Working with their advisor Karen Lobdell and Williams-at-Mt. Greylock Center co-ordinator Kaatje White, the students took a field trip to the Williamstown Elementary School to observe their setup, met with Stephanie Boyd at the Zilka Center, and worked with the Greylock cafeteria and custodial staffs to come up with the most effective way of extracting and using leftover food waste.

Now when students go to throw away their trash and put away their lunch trays, two Y.E.S. members sitting at the compost table next to the trash bins greet them. After the first few days of teaching their peers about the new system of sorting cans and bottles from food waste from all other trash, students caught on quickly. Wrappers, utensils, and paper plates now get tossed into the multiple grey bins while half-eaten salads, bagels, juices, milks, and whatever remnants of the hot lunch of the day are left on students' trays get dumped into the blue bin. Senior Sarah Crosky not-

ed, "it was great to see how everyone was going out of their way to cooperate, asking questions to make sure they were doing it right and being really patient and helpful. I think we all want to make it work and like the idea that we can make a difference." Student volunteers will continue to monitor the compost station all year, since even one stray fork could do serious damage if dumped into a trough of pig slop.

Bags of uneaten scraps are picked up and brought to Cricket Creek Farm twice a week by the same contractor who collects food waste from Williamstown Elementary School and Williams College. In the spring and fall, some organic matter will be brought to Caretaker Farm as well, where it will be composted for future use as fertilizer for their extensive community gardens.

Each lunch produces a bag of food waste weighing on average 75 pounds. Combined with the organic waste from the kitchen, it adds up to about 300 pounds per day. If you do out the multiplication, that's 1,500 pounds each week, or 54,000 over the course of a school year, 27 tons of uneaten food. Though this colossal number should make us stop to reconsider our eating habits, at least we have the relief of knowing that it is no longer going to end up in a landfill. Ideally, separating out food waste will reduce the weight and odor of the general trash enough to cut back on dis-

posal costs and become an economical as well as environmental practice.

With the cafeteria situation under control, the Youth Environmental Squad will now turn its sights on other green initiatives around the building. Junior Patrick Madden, one of the founders of the group, explained that purchasing official bins for paper and bottle recycling to be stationed in key locations around the school is high on their priority list: "Currently many of the brown bags used for paper recycling in all of the classrooms get ignored or misused, and the majority of recyclable bottles get tossed in the trash. We're hoping that sturdier receptacles will work as a visual reminder and encourage everyone to pay attention to what they throw away."

The group attended a very informative lecture by Betsy Kolbert, political and environmental journalist, on the social and scientific effects of global warming last week. In April they will meet with students from Monument Mountain High to learn about their Project Sprout, a student-run, on-campus organic garden fertilized with their own composted food waste. A middle school branch of Y.E.S. is in the process of being organized and will soon begin working on green projects of their own including helping out with compost monitoring. Y.E.S. meets Thursdays at lunch in the meeting room, and all are welcome.

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. Meetings are held in the Echo Office at the back of the library, typically during early lunch on Mondays.

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Senior Project, from Page 1

Project depends entirely on what the student makes of it. Those who are content with scraping by, barely meeting project deadlines, and compiling a paper at the last minute, will not have trouble passing and graduating on time. However, those that put immense amounts of effort into creating a project that is both beneficial to them and inspiring to others can obtain so much more from the project. They can acquire experience and skills in areas that they plan to pursue later in life, can attain knowledge in communicating by finding a community mentor, or could increase their public speaking abilities by practicing and accomplishing the often dreaded Oral Presentation. Most seniors this year, however, agree that the Senior Project is not something that requires vast amounts of time and effort, unless they choose to make their own project valuable, and thus time-consuming.

The Senior Project is not only capable of using up large periods of time; it also requires a good deal of money from the budget. Considering that many students fail to take the project seriously, some question its worth. Says Mr. Bell (science teacher), "The cost to sustain Senior Project is not practical in this economy. The school could [hire] a teacher rather than putting students through unnecessary rigor." The monetary funding for the project comes in part from the General Fund, which itself is financed in part by student fees. The profits from the cost of second semester parking stickers, a recent bone of contention for some students, are put into the General Fund, which can be used for any financial need of the school, including Senior Project. The fact that students are unaware of what their money is put towards frustrates many.

However, since Senior Project is not something that will immediately change in the school, current seniors are pursuing the goals and guidelines of senior project in their abundance. On March 26 seniors helped each other's projects in a peer review day; this gathering of seniors, which lasted the first three periods of the school day, was extremely beneficial to some in

preparing them for the due date on April 8, although others still claim that it was of little help. The format of the peer review consisted of groups of four, some with a teacher present at the table, reading and critiquing each other's papers. Most students welcomed advice from their fellow peers. Says Tessa Nalven, senior, "It was helpful. Now I actually know what to write about."

Relatively few seniors, however, fully welcome the prospect of creating a Senior Project. While many choose a subject that they are deeply interested in, they find that finding a mentor, writing a paper, and formulating an oral presentation ends up being as much a hassle as an intellectual immersion. Whether or not this unwillingness undermines students resulting efforts so much that the productivity of the projects is worthwhile is the real question of the Senior Project. However, it is not only the students' groaning that urges the administration to change the format of the project. The debate between members of the faculty is ongoing as well. And these grumblings do not go unheard. The Senior Project has been debated and changed in the past, and due to recent concerns over student stress and the format of senior year, teachers and various governing bodies, including the school council, have been tentatively discussing some more comprehensive changes in project structure. Nothing at all concrete has been proposed or decided, but conversations are underway. For the time being, juniors should be thinking about the prospect of completing the project a semester early, the one major change that has been installed for next year. Next year's seniors will, for the most part, have to undergo the very same ordeal that their older peers had decidedly mixed feelings about. As the evidence and testaments of past project completers shows, the Senior Project, if carried out in earnest, can be a great experience. Nevertheless, the added burdens and stress, scorned by a distinct majority of seniors, has made many lower classes apprehensive and has sparked some healthy discussion about the Project's future and effectiveness.

Close Up, Continued from Page 4

The week included two days on Capitol Hill, the first at workshops and the second with other schools. Throughout these two days, students visited the Capitol Building, the Supreme Court, the Library of Congress, Senate and House office buildings. Besnard described it as "fun," and "interesting."

On the workshop day, leaders gave an introduction to everything that happens on Capitol Hill. A small contingent of one workshop, including one student from Mt. Greylock, was lucky enough to see Republican Presidential candidate John McCain in a hallway. The next day, with their teachers, students returned to Capitol Hill to take a closer look and to meet with staffers for their Congressmen and Senators. Students from Mt. Greylock went with Mr. Murray to meet with an assistant to Western Massachusetts' John Olver and with a woman who works with Senator Ted Kennedy. Olver's staffer clearly knew what he was talking about and answered all questions thoroughly, while being friendly and even suggesting a particular burger place. "He seemed generally interested in what he was doing. He really wanted to meet with us. We weren't just a waste of his time," Mr. Murray explained. The woman representing Kennedy, perhaps because of a more distant connection to the Senator and the larger group (all Massachusetts students met with her), came off as less friendly and informed, often not fully answering people's questions. The Greylock group was also able to obtain gallery passes to the Senate and House from a friendly man in the office of an Oregon Senator. The group was then allowed to go inside and watch the House of Representatives. Only a few Congressmen were actually in attendance, but it was a good experience, anyway. "You see how it really is run,"

said Mr. Murray.

School activity was not limited to Capitol Hill day. Mt. Greylock also stuck together on the first and last days. After arriving on Sunday, the group thoroughly visited the National Holocaust Museum, before exploring one of Washington's oldest neighborhoods at Georgetown, right across the Potomac River from the hotel, which was actually in Arlington, Virginia. The historic neighborhood is lined with shops of all sorts, including a gigantic mall that takes up an entire block. "Georgetown was hot," Nurmi said enthusiastically. On Thursday, the last full day of the trip, the group went to ride the flight simulator at the Air and Space Museum and to visit the natural history museum, and the zoo, where they witnessed zebras behaving in a way that will not be described in this newspaper, before returning to Georgetown again.

While the students were attending all the aforementioned activities, teachers met at different sites such as the National Archives, the U.S. Peace Institute, and the First Amendment Society. They were treated to speakers like Joe Biden's campaign manager. Teachers, too, attended workshops. "The workshops I attended are top-notch," Mr. Murray said, and when asked why it is still a good experience when he has already been over twenty times, added, "They are all things I can bring back to class."

Throughout the five days of the program, everyone learned a lot and made many new friends. Close-Up sent home a message that anyone can change an issue that they feel strongly about. Knowing that, any young person is bound to view the future in a brighter light. An abundance of metal detectors, early wakeup calls, and a cocky know-it-all from Dover, Massachusetts aside, the Close-Up experience was positive for everyone.

Arts, from Page 2

The music department hopes to continue to give its student new opportunities to explore its fields. Ouisa Fohrhaltz, the orchestra teacher at Mt. Greylock, explains that there is a need for more music electives: "Most of the area high schools offer lessons to supplement the program...there are, at this time, no music lessons for high school students." She refers to such elective as instrumental or vocal master classes, American Popular Music, Music Theory, and Keyboard which have been offered in the past and have been cut for various reasons like budget and enrollment. Furthermore, they would like to find a way for students to be able to have both art and music in their schedules, which is currently difficult to do. From a student's perspective, Sato Matsui says, "For me, studying the symphonic scores of Beethoven or Bach seems just as educational and edifying as reading some of the greatest literature."



3-D Sculptures on Display. Photo: Sarah Crosky

For now, however, the three ensembles in middle and high school have events to look forward to year-round. All six groups join together every fall for a "Get Acquainted" concert and then the middle and high school separate for two more concerts each throughout the year. The high school ensembles also perform at Graduation. They will be performing their spring concerts coming up in May, and encourage anyone to come for an enjoyable night of music.

The Mt. Greylock Auditorium remains active this spring, with thespians jumping into another production after a successful showing of the musical *Singin' in the Rain*. This time, look forward to a classic comedy: *The Importance of Being Earnest*, by Oscar Wilde. The play takes a cast of characters that range from pretentiously overbearing to downright hilarious. Wilde crafted the play with unsuspecting wordplay and wit that makes for a comedy that can be appreciated by a large variety of audiences. Unlike last year's *Arcadia* by Tom Stoppard, it is more traditionally accessible for a high school cast to perform.

The spring play is the most unique theater undertaking at Mt. Greylock in that it is directed by students. This year's directors are seniors Chris Densmore and Rachel Sheppard. They chose the play, held auditions, cast it, are directing it, and will also gain experience in the business aspect of a production. Densmore says of the experience, "I personally have enjoyed the challenge of directing so far. It's uniquely different from acting in that Rachel and I are partly responsible for each actor's performance. Weaving together the various egos and personalities that this show

entails has tweaked my perspective on the theatrical process and made me realize how crucial developing relationships between characters on the stage is as opposed to developing individual characters." The two student directors also work alongside with faculty advisor Tom Ostheimer, who says of student directing: "there's a lot of involvement; it's a good experience from that standpoint." Therefore, the spring play is unique in both its directing as well as genre. This variety is enjoyable to the actors, as well as the audience.

The *Importance of Being Earnest* will be performed Friday May 1 and Sunday May 2 at seven o'clock both nights. Densmore says of it: "Those attending the play should be ready for what will hopefully be an accessible, hysterical adventure in fictitious identities, spurned social obligations, and Victorian satire. Almost everyone I've spoken to is excited to see the play, and the Mt. Greylock community should be too."

The middle school musical will then bring to a close the theatrical productions of a year full of exciting shows.

The students and faculty involved with the visual arts are busy this spring as well. Their work can be seen in the front lobby of the school where currently work from advanced art, art theory, and college prep art resides. There will also be new art rotating in throughout the spring. A grant was received to purchase a kiln, so there will be ceramics in the future. Also, Ms. DeSomma hopes to do an on-campus field trip where students can observe the local natural environment from an artistic perspective.

There have recently been several changes in the art department as well that help to better prepare a student to study art in college. The college prep portfolio building was moved to junior year,

while AP art is no longer offered. This helps students to have a more solid representation of fifteen pieces for college and also gives room to allow them to branch out and do electives including painting, print-making, and 3-D design. No matter what art elective a student is in, they will gain valuable experience for the future. Ms. DeSomma says of her classes, "my program is heavy on drawing instruction. It is the basic important skill. No matter what you are studying, they want to see that the student can draw from observation."

The art department's focus on being exploratory and liberal gives students the opportunity for new experience. They participate in several extracurricular shows and projects. Also, the school's gallery is maintained and brings in several local artists. Overall, it is a program that students not only enjoy, but also greatly benefit from. Senior Tori Wonderlick takes Advanced Studio Art II, and says of the class: "It is a serious class, and Ms. DeSomma has taught me a lot, but it's nice not to have the competitive atmosphere of my AP classes." It is clear that the Mt. Greylock community can look forward to seeing a lot from the art department in the future.

The artistically gifted (or even those students who are first-timers) at Mt. Greylock have the advantage of the support of similarly gifted programs. Music, theater, and visual art will hopefully continue to grow at the school, give guidance to the artists that walk the halls, and provide great viewing and listening opportunities to the eager audiences of the building. This spring, Mt. Greylock will continue to highlight the culture and artistic abilities of its students.

Baseball

By TOMMY DILS

The Greylock baseball team is hoping to surprise some people this year. Greylock has never been considered a perennial baseball school, but this year the team has the potential to succeed in Berkshire County and possibly make a deep run in the Western Mass. Tournament. Last season they finished 10-10, losing in the tournament to top-seeded Greenfield 2-1 after knocking off Wahconah in the first round. This year will be different; the team has more experience and is returning many of their key players from last year. In 2008, Than Finan led the team with a .500 batting average, while Dave Jones had two home runs. Both are back for 2009, as well as seniors Dylan Dethier, Cary White, Chris Geannelis, and Jeff Romejko. Returning juniors include Chris Koch, Jeff Kucka, and Hayden Kuhn.

The power arm of Dave Jones, mixed with Dethier's nasty off-speed pitches, will always keep Greylock's opponents guessing. With the leadership of captains Finan, Geannelis, Dethier, and Romejko, the team looks to build some success this year. This will be Coach Messina's eighteenth season with Greylock, and if they are able to keep within reach defending Western Mass. Champion Hoosac Valley and runner-up Monument Mt., the Greylock boys will have a great shot at pulling off a few upsets in the tournament. The first home game is on Tuesday, April 14 against Drury.

Boys' Tennis

By TOMMY DILS

The Greylock Boys' Tennis is ready for another successful season this spring, ready to take home the state title that they came so close to last season. In 2008, the tennis team came out of nowhere and stormed through Berkshire County, winning the league easily. They proceeded to the Western Mass. Tournament, which they won as well, and made it as far as the state finals, losing to Winchester in the championship match.

Fortunately, the team only lost one senior from the class of 2008 and returns many key players. This year's captains are Matt Vaughan and Taylor Foehl, who hope to lead the team to more success. Other returning players include seniors David Nolan and Nico Walker, as well as eighth-grader Rohan Shastri. They will take on Berkshire County's biggest threats, Monument Mt. and Lenox, looking to win the league again and make it back to the state championship. The tennis team has also grown immensely in popularity over the past few years, and there are many middle-schoolers and underclassmen who give depth to the already strong team. Their first match is Tuesday, April 7, the beginning to what should be an exciting and successful year for the Greylock Boys' Tennis team.



Photo: Sarah Crosky

Girls' Track

By JESSI PAYTON

The girls track team is anticipating an incredible 2009 season. Last year, with an extremely young team, they tied New Leadership for the division II Western Mass. championship title. This year, the girls have another potentially strong season and are ready to take the title from New Leadership in May. The returning Lemme sisters will hopefully dominate distance, along with freshmen Mackenzie Hitchcock and Laura Nolan. Freshman Caitlyn Riley and Sophomore Liz Gorson will cover sprints. In the hurdles, Junior Sam Radke should rock the 100s, and Freshman Susie Shanley is sure to do well in the new race: 400 hurdles. Senior Abby Bishop and freshman Oona Wood are looking promising for the last two legs of the 4x4 relay. Hopefully this year's team can break the school record in the 4x1 relay, after missing it by .3 seconds last year. The squad welcomes all of the new 7th grade runners and expects to see you at our home meets! The first meet for both boys' and girls' track, against Mount Anthony High School, will be held at MAU at 4:00 on Monday, April 13.

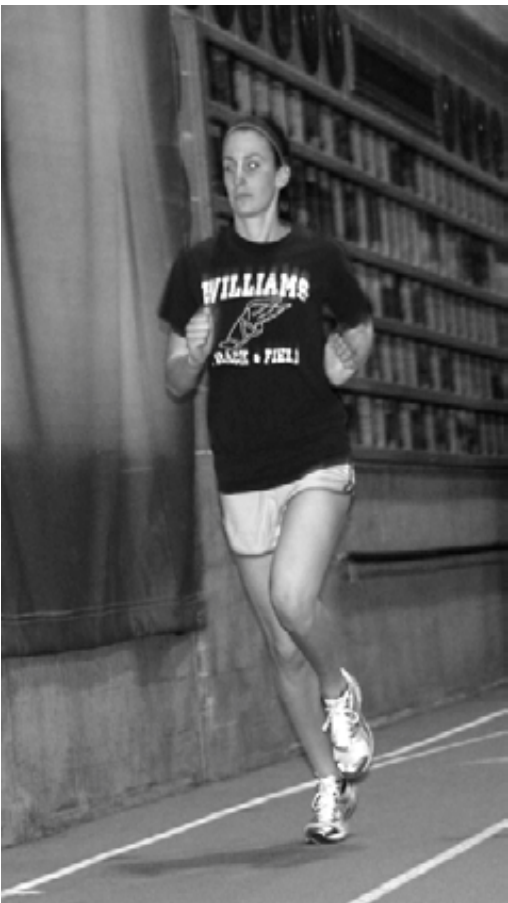


Photo: Abby Bishop

Boys' Track

By SPENCER RIOUX

Recent years at Mt. Greylock have seen a decline in the number of guys who decide to go out for the Track and Field team. Last year saw only 18 participants (on a good day). However, the 2009 Mt. Greylock Boys Track and Field team features many new and promising faces. Junior Captains Caleb Pudvar, Matt Wilson, and Spencer Rioux bring their experience and leadership to a young but talented group of athletes. Despite the fact that returning team members can be counted on two hands (without using your thumbs), the foundation for future success on the track is being laid brick by brick with each day of practice. Kent Lemme, in his second year as Boys Head Coach, is looking to the postseason with optimism, if not for the team championship then for individual accomplishments. All three captains are previous Western Mass. qualifiers in several events, ranging from sprints to throws to jumps, and new additions to the team, such as sprinter Mike Greb and distance runner Tim Dupras, certainly have competitive potential. All in all, the 2009 team is young, but capable of making a significant impact on Berkshire County and Western Mass. Track and Field.

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CROSSWORD

By DYLAN DETHIER

Across

- Chad Johnson's new first name
- Satisfied
- On a boat
- Missourian witticist
- They help guide you
- Time for giving up
- Influential Compton group
- Sluggin' Sammy
- Escapist Harry
- Early auto
- Of little renown
- Explanation
- Terrorized a house
- Site for international discussion
- Morphs
- Looking out for #1
- Wager: Make ____
- Bit
- Austin Powers Dr.
- Ways to make it
- Coincides with
- Turned negative
- Plan an event: ____ a date
- Visual affliction

Down

- Reedy instrument
- New fuel
- Won with 3 of a kind
- Alternative to eithers
- Traditional Asian dagger
- Falling short
- MadTV hairstyle
- Earth Sci.
- Spike for woodworking
- Cop favorite
- Chinese neighbor
- "____ real boy!"
- Email intro (abbreviation)
- Dull green
- Winter holidays
- Waiting room read
- Grand ____ Opry
- Ruckus
- Era
- Like a maid or a man
- Norton, Murrow and Murphy
- Above baritones
- "Bail us out!"
- Between "me's" and "so's"
- Other name
- Hits rock bottom
- Bronte's Jane
- Extremely
- Statement of understanding
- Drink at a Boston Party
- Like Sin or Tan

