

PowerSchool Allows for Parent and Student Grade Checks

By NAOMI LACHANCE

The world was once a place where the only mouse was the one that ate cheese, and the only tweets came from birds. In that world, some students made a cherished tradition out of hiding grades and other aspects of school from parents. Aficionados would watch the mail, feign disaster, anything to avoid sharing that bad mark. On occasion, it worked, but grades were always an ultimatum. Parents had to pry if they wanted to be involved in their child's grades. We now find ourselves in a very different world.

This year an online program called PowerSchool was made accessible to Mount Greylock students and parents. It is a program administered by Pearson Education, a company that also makes textbooks. The Parent Portal—no, that's not something from a science fiction movie—gives students and parents a username and password, so they can check the child's attendance, graduation progress, teacher comments, and see grades on every individual assignment. A student can use it to ensure that he or she has completed all assignments, and has been graded appropriately. Parents can use it to become more involved in their children's education.

"Hopefully, [PowerSchool] will increase communication between home and school," said Mr. Wnuk, who is in charge of technology at Mt. Greylock. "Parents can know how students are doing, kids can know how they're doing."

"It's really helpful to keep you updated on your grades," said sophomore Elise Masson. Teachers use the program as an electronic grade book, and scores are published as soon as the teacher enters them into the system.

PowerSchool has the potential to become a valuable liaison between home and school. Dr. Travis said he hopes that it will "improve parent communications, particularly for students who are struggling." By watching progress on PowerSchool, students, parents, and teachers can work together to help a student away from the precipice of poor grades.

The accessibility that is most helpful to some, however, is harmful to others. "It has its pros and cons just like anything in the world," said Mr. Wnuk. PowerSchool could promote obsessive grade checking, and overzealous parent involvement. There is a fine line between active encouragement and harmful pressure to succeed on every assignment.

"I know that parents are very aware of their kids' grades," said history teacher Mr. Ostheimer. "I'm sure kids are looking at it, but parents are almost on a daily basis."

"If I have one bad test grade, then [my parents] get all worked up about it even

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ARE GREYLOCK STUDENTS CIVILLY ENGAGED?

By NED KLEINER



Shannon Babcock interviewed various members of the Greylock Community about their definitions of "Civic Engagement" as part of a recent School Committee Initiative. Graphic: Editorial Staff

Do Mt. Greylock students need to have more civil engagement? Or do they need more *civic* engagement? What's the difference? These questions have recently been raised by David Langston, a member of the Mt. Greylock School Committee and the chairperson of its new civil engagement subcommittee.

At the August 11 meeting of the School Committee, Mr. Langston aired his concerns over a lack of "civil engagement" at Mt. Greylock. Civil engagement, in Mr. Langston's view, means that "students that come out of public schools have a clear sense of their status as citizens of the society and have a sense of responsibility for its character and continuity, and that they find ways to engage themselves in that." In Mr. Langston's view, the term "civil engagement" implies a combination of civic responsibility and civility.

In order to gauge the levels of "civil engagement" at the high school, Mr. Payne and Mrs. Kaiser volunteered to create a list of activities at Mt. Greylock that create civil engagement in its students. This list, mistakenly entitled "Civic Engagement," was presented at the October meeting of the School Committee. It detailed thirty-four facets of Mt. Greylock's curricular and extra-curricular activities that

encouraged civil engagement, such as the 8th Grade constitutional debates, the "Where Are We?" workshops, the Student Council, Peer Team, and (cough) the Echo.

Shannon Babcock, Mt. Greylock's audiovisual director, also presented a movie at the October meeting. This movie, composed of student interviews collected by Mr. Babcock, was designed to gauge Mt. Greylock students' opinions on civil engagement.

This movie's main feature was students professing their ignorance of the definition of "civic engagement."

Unfortunately, due to miscommunication, the students were asked to define "civic engagement." Mr. Langston pointed out the disparity between the movie

and his concerns, though in a later interview, he himself acknowledged that there are not significant differences between the two terms. This movie's main feature was students professing their ignorance of the definition of "civic engagement," but there were a few humorous responses to Mr. Babcock's questioning. One seventh grader answered "one car [presumably a Honda] engaging with another." A pair of seniors thought that it was gay marriage, and were somewhat embarrassed when Mr. Babcock corrected them. Another senior thought that it was "two civilians fighting." Only a few students were able to provide real answers: "maybe just... engaging

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1 in 650: An Interview with Gwendolyn Tunncliffe

By NATE NURMI



Photo: Luke Madden

Q: So we hear you've been in a few professional operas. Care to extrapolate?

A: Well, my first professional experience was in May playing the Spirit in *Dido & Aeneas*. I'm so lucky that for my first opera I was working with someone who was a regional finalist in the Metropolitan Opera contest. The odd thing was that even though all of the company members had gone through years of training, some even teachers, they were goofy, relaxed, and very eager to give me tips on becoming less terrified. My other experience was this summer in *Bastien & Bastienna* playing Bastienna. I would call it semi-professional; it was a group of nerdy music lovers coming together to put on an opera because it's what we all love.

Q: How long have you been singing?

A: I've always sung around my house, but only last year did I become serious about it as a possible career.

Q: Where do you currently take lessons and what music groups are you involved with?

A: I now take lessons with Keith Kibler at Williams College and am taking Chorus with Mrs. Walt. As for music groups, a couple of musicians and I really want to get a Balkan singing group going.

Q: What do you like most about singing?

A: It sounds corny, but I love the ability to express myself. Singing is such a vulnerable act. There isn't an instrument that's in between the sound and you; you are the instrument. Also, most classical music is about extreme emotions. It's hard to find an aria about being bored; most are about dying for love or having a religious experience.

Q: What are some favorite vocal projects you've done?

A: Playing Bastienna has been the hardest, yet most rewarding role - there were about 16 arias to learn in only a couple of weeks. Taking a bow after that show was the first time I felt like a singer. I also loved playing Lina Lamont in *Singin' in the Rain*. Because her singing was supposed to

Gwen, Continued on Page 5

The Echo is RECYCLABLE!
Please do NOT throw it in the trash when done reading.

THE BOOK WORM

Isabel Kaufman, after a month's hiatus, reviews *Juliet, Naked*, by Nick Hornby.

See Page 3.

Cartoon

Cartoonmaster Rufus Paisley is at it again.

See Page 3.

The Williams Center

Haley Mahar discusses all of the changes the Williams Center at Mt. Greylock has been making. Read about old and new initiatives, who's involved, and how to get involved.

See Page 3

Student Council Survey

The student council recently surveyed high school students about key issues within the school. See the survey itself as well as the breakdown of results and some student comments.

See page 4.

Test Scores

Rebekeh Packer reports on the latest Mt. Greylock MCAS scores and how they relate to state averages.

See Page 3.

Crossword!

Blair Dils presents a new puzzle of his own design, complete with both "Varsity" and "JV" clue sets.

See Page 6.

NEWS AND EVENTS IN BRIEF

High School Classes Waste No Time Fundraising

Even though the crisp feel of autumn still hangs in the air, the Mount Greylock classes have already started fundraising. The Sophomore class held a 3-on-3 basketball tournament on Friday, November 20th. It was deemed a success and many students enjoyed the event. They are also selling widely popular See's Candies to raise further funds. Starting in late September, the Juniors sold pies provided by the Apple Barn. Many Juniors sold enough pies to considerably cut down the cost of dues. The Student Council held a can drive with each grade competing to collect the most cans. The prize was \$500 to be used by the winning class. The Freshmen pulled out a big win and started their high school fundraising on a high point. We look forward to what other fundraising techniques the classes come up with over the coming year.

AfterProm Committee Holds Annual Auction

The AfterProm Committee is seeking donations for their annual silent auction (which will take place on April 10th from 6-8 at The Orchards in Williamstown). All the money raised will go toward providing a safe and enjoyable after-prom party for the seniors. The committee hopes many members of the Greylock community will donate. They are seeking any big ticket items you would be willing to donate. If you or someone you know would like to help, contact Liz Grees at 413-237-6635. or egrees27@netscape.net. You may also visit the Mount Greylock website for more information.

Auditions for Brigadoon!

The annual musical for this year will be Lerner and Lowe's Brigadoon. For those returning or those interested in participating for the first time in this year's spring musical (especially after seeing smash hit Singin' in the Rain last year), auditions will be held in the auditorium after school on Monday, December 14th and Tuesday, December 15th. Students should prepare a short (about 90 second) musical audition piece for Monday's audition. Reading parts will be distributed for Tuesday's audition. All are welcome to attend, and no previous experience is required. Please see Mr. Welch or Mrs. Walt with any questions.

Return of the Mt. Greylock Literary Magazine!

After a six-year hiatus, a Mount Greylock literary magazine is back! The purpose of the magazine is to share student and faculty writing, artwork, and photography with the greater school community. This year's magazine will be called Iris, and it is seeking submissions already! Submissions may consist of poems, short stories, memoirs, creative non-fiction, photographs, and artwork. Iris's board of editors will anonymously review all submissions, and the chosen pieces will appear in a published magazine. The deadline for submissions is February 8, 2010. Please look for fliers in English teachers' rooms for more information, along with submission envelopes. Please contribute your work and help make Iris a success!

Valuable Financial Aid Seminar for Parents

On Tuesday, December 8th, at 7 p.m. in the library, a financial aid seminar will be held for parents. Now more than ever, financial aid is a huge part of the college process for many juniors and seniors and their parents. Whether in the midst of the process or just beginning the college search, information about financial aid is vitally important. The seminar helps to educate and advise parents. Questions will be answered and guidance will be given in filling out various financial aid forms. Please take advantage of this valuable resource!

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as a citizen, engaging in civic duty." When asked if "civic engagement" was sufficiently promoted at Mt. Greylock, one student replied that it was mismanaged, and that it was "kind of shady, the way that we have to fill out the [community service] forms and they don't actually collect them."

After the movie was filmed, there was widespread confusion about its goals and methods. Senior Samuel Shuker-Haines said, "Civil engagement is a very weird phrase to choose. I mean, I could talk about civic duty, civil obligation, civil service, civic pride, civility, etc, but I've never heard the phrase 'civil engagement' before. I'm sure I could talk about the concept if the initial question had been phrased in a less obscure fashion."

Many students, though, agree with Mr. Langston that Mt. Greylock's promotion of civil engagement is insufficient. The general consensus among students seemed to be that while there was some civil engagement at the high school, more could be done to encourage community ser-

PowerSchool, From Page 1

vice and an interest in civics. though it's not going to make that big of a difference," said sophomore Melyssa Fortini. PowerSchool does not show grade weighting systems, so a 50% on a homework assignment might appear just as severe as a 50% test grade.

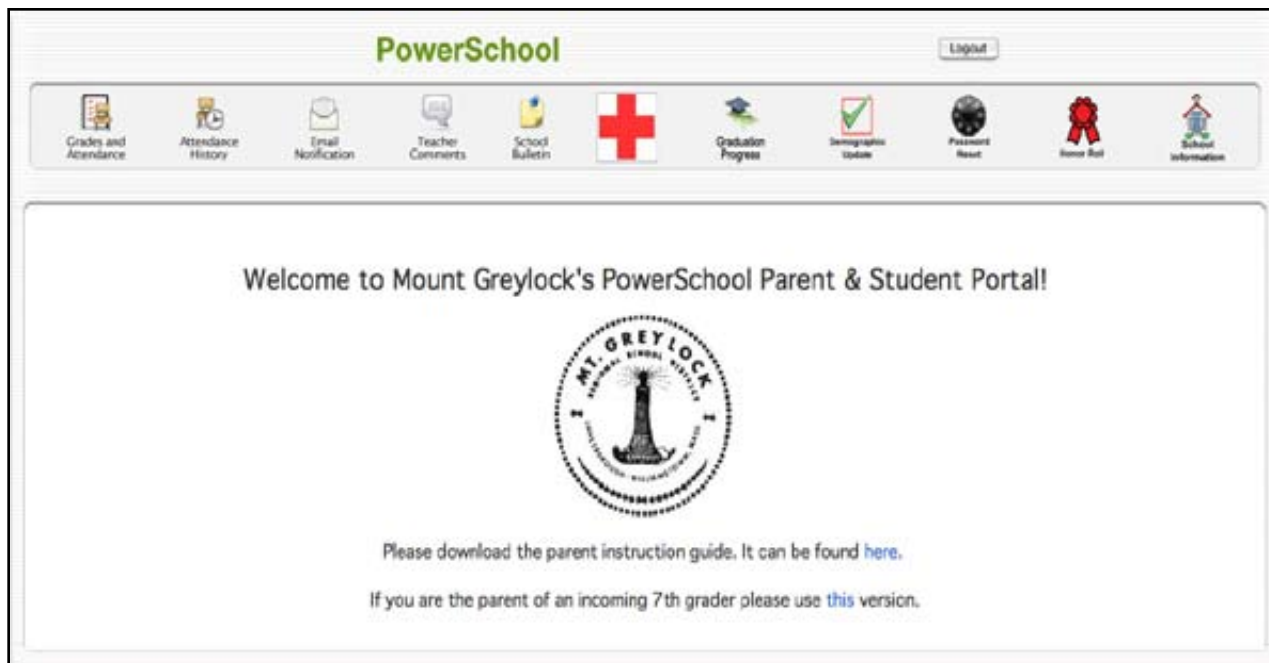
vice and an interest in civics.

Mr. Payne feels that despite the student body's general unfamiliarity with the term civil engagement, "it's part of the culture here at Mt. Greylock." He did acknowledge, though, that he has no real way to measure the levels of civil engagement. Mr. Langston has a few remedies for the civil engagement shortfall. For years, Mr. Langston has been pushing for school-wide elections for student council officers. He feels that more civics should be taught in history classes, and that a class devoted solely to civics should be offered. In a very informal survey, I found that there was significant, though not overwhelming, interest in a civics class.

The School Committee's subcommittee on civil engagement has so far come to no definite conclusions. It is looking for student and teacher members to provide perspective from inside the classroom. It seems unlikely that there will be any consensus in the near future on a course of action. For now, it is not even clear whether there is a dearth of civil engagement at all. Or is it civic?

For many, though, the addition of PowerSchool is a quiet one. "I've only checked it once since it's been up," said senior Adrien Wojtkowski. "It's not that I don't care, but I don't need to know my grade all the time."

"I'm sure there's communication," Mr. Ostheimer



This screen greets parents and students when they log into the newly created PowerSchool Parent and Student Portal. The top panel shows all the informational pages parents and students can access.

The records can be misleading. "It's only as good as the information you're putting in it," said Mr. Wnuk.

PowerSchool could make students more conscientious about their grades. "It's a little more stressful to have to worry about each individual grade than just the final grade," said sophomore Sarah Kelly. For some, it's easy to coast along, until the end of the quarter when the concern over grades suddenly inflates. By then, however, it is often too late to make the needed improvements. PowerSchool allows students to check their grades as often as desired or needed, thus becoming more involved in their work.

said about parents' new proximity to their children's grades, "but so far I'm not getting any idea that it's changing any sort of behavior in my class."

Mount Greylock teachers and administrators have been using PowerSchool since 2005. To them, it's much more than just a program to keep track of an individual's grades. "It's a database which allows us to do all the scheduling of classes," Dr. Travis explained, "one thing that students don't see is how tough it is to get everyone in the classes they want to be in."

It also helps the school keep track of attendance. Once, attendance was hand-written and then copied down by a secretary. Now, teachers enter it into a computer. "The computer does all the calculations," Dr. Travis said.

PowerSchool might also eliminate the need for a printed report card at the end of every quarter. According to Ms. Penna, the administration is in the process of deciding whether or not printed report cards will be distributed to high school students next quarter. By making families use the Internet to see end of quarter grades, Mt. Greylock would save resources and money. It would be a decision both economically and ecologically conscious.

With PowerSchool's accessibility, a simple white-out job will not suffice to hide skipped classes and sub-par grades. Hopefully, that's a good thing.

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 writers, cartoonists, photographers, and editors. Any Mt. Greylock student is welcome to submit articles, come to meetings, or join the Echo staff. Meetings are typically held during early lunch on Mondays, but contact an editor if you'd like to attend.

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The Williams Center at Mt. Greylock

By HALEY MAHAR

Over the past two years, Mount Greylock has been revamped with new programs. Suddenly, walking down the halls, there are Williams College students helping out in English classes. On Tuesdays and Thursdays after school there are students from Williams available as tutors. Members of Williams College have also aided the recently-formed Youth Environmental Squad. A new philosophy class has appeared on the elective list, and posters advertising the Greylock literary magazine line the hallway. All of these innovations for the Greylock community have one common source: Williams College. Implemented just last

Center has expanded its range of programs for the '09-'10 year. Last year, the freshman class was the sole class to host the Williams Fellows, a group of students assisting in English classrooms. This year, the freshmen are not the only group to have the help of Williams students, as one is assigned to each of Mr. Dils' sophomore classes. As Fellows coordinator Liz Costley says, "It appears to be a 'win-win' program whereby Williams students interested in teaching get hands-on classroom experience, where Mount Greylock teachers get assistance in commenting on student drafts, and where high school students have the opportunity to work with and get to know enthusiastic college students who love to write."



Roger Bonair-Agard, a well-known performance poet, works with senior Melissa Palmer during a workshop made possible by the Williams Center. Photo: Cate Costley

year, the Williams Center's goal is "to maximize the academic value the College can provide Mt. Greylock," and it has already been widely successful. The group works to create new connections and programs that allow the two institutions to work together and benefit from each other. Director of the Williams Center Kaatje White says, "it has knitted together community resources and thus allowed Greylock students and teachers to take advantage of some of the wonderful educational opportunities available through the college. It has also given Williams students tremendous opportunities at Greylock to participate in the classroom and as after-school tutors."

With its debut in the '08-'09 school year, the Williams

The Fellows will also be involved in the exciting creation of MG Literary Magazine, new this year. Costley says, "reviving the Mt. Greylock literary magazine has long been a goal of mine. Our school is full of thoughtful writers and artists whose work should be shared with the greater Greylock community." The literary magazine aims to include poems, short stories, creative non-fiction, black and white photographs, and drawings. More information will be available later in the year.

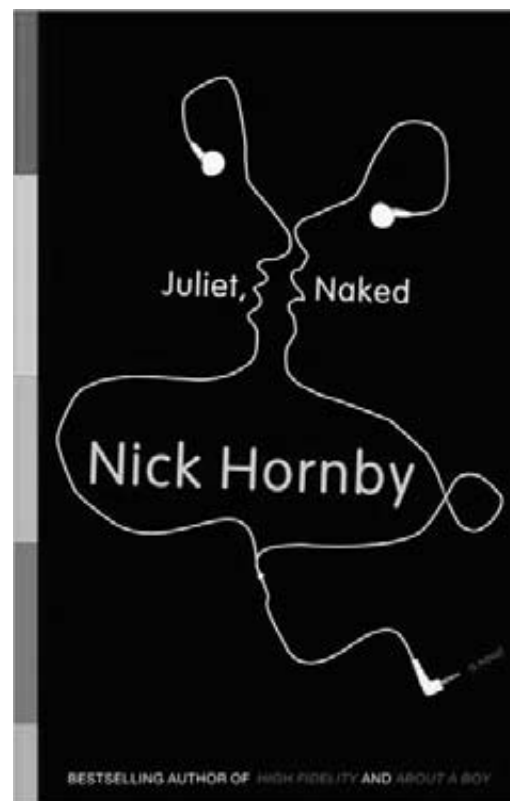
In addition to the English department, the Williams Center has also helped the Science department. Last year, the seventh graders visited Hopkins Forest to study invertebrates, while the eighth graders participated in a cheese-making lab. Both grades will have the chance to repeat these experiences. With the help of Williams College, the students of AP Chemistry at Greylock have four labs scheduled on Williams campus, two in December and two in June. The juniors will once again be able to participate in "Where Are We?" In its second year, this full day program is a hands-on approach to environmental awareness. During this program a variety of workshops, headed by various members of the Williams faculty and the community, are available throughout the day.

Mt. Greylock's Youth Environmental Squad, in its second year with strong support from the high school and middle school, has made great progress with the help of the Williams Center. The group has implemented both a food waste program and a recycling program and is looking forward to some new initiatives for the new year. From the beginning, the Williams Center has supported YES in all of its goals. YES co-president Patrick Madden remarks that "without the help of Williams and the Williams center, we would have no composting system right now. We're

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Book Worm

By ISABEL KAUFMAN



Title: *Juliet, Naked*
Written By: Nick Hornby
Price: \$25.95 (hardcover)

You know Nick Hornby. Even if you don't think you know him, you do. He's reasonably prolific, and writes pleasantly-written books that lend themselves rather naturally to moviemaking. Most of his books have been made into movies that are fairly faithful to the source material. They are nobody's favorite movie, but generally the viewers don't feel cheated after watching. His books are slightly more animated. He does write about average characters, but he tends to put them into contexts he likes. I suspect he is a nice guy. He comes across that way, which doesn't mean he cheats his characters so much as he is quite understanding of the human experience.

He's a character man, less a plot man. He also happens to be a music man—he's done music reviews, on and off, and his book *High Fidelity*, the main character of which is an unlucky-in-love record-store owner and the main theme of which is the music as much as the love, is fairly considered to be the Hornby masterpiece. So now that he's writing music-centric fiction again, *High Fidelity* comparisons are bound to pop up. Not unreasonably: *Juliet, Naked* is about music and it is about relationships. We, the readers, have a whole swath of Hornby common ground to cover, and no one will fault us for making easy connections.

But *Juliet, Naked* is not *High Fidelity*, and jumping to comparisons is as unfair as it is ingrained. Where *High Fidelity* turned out to be about the gentle joy of settling into relationships, and to a certain extent about knowing who you are as you grow up, *Juliet* is about refusing to settle in spite of not really knowing who you are. Oh, and music.

Let's talk circumstances. The main character of *Juliet, Naked* is Annie, who is stuck in a dull relationship with a man whose main passion is the work of obscure, Dylanesque musician Tucker Crowe. Crowe has been in retirement for years after the release of his greatest album, "Juliet," but is now releasing a series of acoustic demos of the songs on it. This stripped-down CD (the titular "Juliet, Naked") provides the means to the end of Annie's relationship and the beginning of a correspondence with Tucker Crowe himself. It ends nondefinitively, but optimistically. Things ought to end well for Annie; if nothing else, she's not stuck.

Music is a powerful catalyst in Hornby's novels, and he writes about the experience of listening with passion and effect. There is a reason that his best novels focus on the experience of being a music listener and a music lover; that love is just as real to him as the love between people. Whether he's gently mocking Annie's pompous boyfriend for his perceived ownership of the songs he loves or showing Annie's surprised fondness for a Crowe CD, he writes truthfully. Music is a universal tie, and it certainly makes reading his novels universally enjoyable in that respect.

Juliet, Naked is not a bad book. There are elements that make it a very good book. But it is not *High Fidelity*; it feels distant while the former felt immediate, and it is only ironic that a book about settling comes out more passionate than a book about striving. It is certainly readable, but not necessarily memorable. You will stick with it, if you read it, without effort, and it is quite likely that you will like it. It is worth the first read. I am not sure it is worth the second thought.

Cartoon

By RUFUS PAISLEY



COMMUNITY

STUDENT COUNCIL SURVEYS HIGH SCHOOLERS ON KEY ISSUES

By EDITORIAL STAFF

Two weeks ago, the Student Council anonymously polled students in every high school English class about key issues under discussion in Student Council and School Council meetings. Due to many absences and other conflicts, the total number of polled students was lower than the total number of enrolled high school students (approximately 350 surveys were finished and tallied). Students who missed the survey and would like to complete one should email mgstudentcouncil@gmail.com. The first subject addressed by the survey is the policy wherein teachers can only assign major tests and projects on specific days of the week. The assigned days are subject-based and listed on the MG website. The second area of inquiry was about Mt. Greylock's new pilot tardy policy, according to which a student who is late to school four times is withheld from his/her first period class and not allowed to make up work from that period. So far, the policy has been largely

successful in improving tardy numbers from last year, despite mixed sentiments among the student body. The third surveyed issue was the option of a study hall built into the current schedule. While no concrete plans for a study hall are under discussion, the issue has been a prevalent one for years, especially after the "extended period" was dropped from the schedule.

The questions on the survey itself are listed below, as well as a chart and graph of the percentages of surveyed students who chose which options. Students had the option of commenting anonymously at the end of the survey. Many of those comments are listed below as well. Visit the student council webpage (under the "students" sidebar on the Greylock website to download class-specific results, and contact the student council with any questions or comments.

Student Council Survey Questions

1. Which is closest to your opinion of the test day policy?

1. Strongly support
2. Support
3. Neutral
4. Dislike
5. Strongly dislike

2. Which is closest to your opinion if the policy were only applied to projects and essays, not tests?

1. Strongly support
2. Support
3. Neutral
4. Dislike
5. Strongly dislike

3. How many of your teachers strictly follow the test day policy?

1. Zero
2. One
3. Two
4. Three
5. Four or more

4. Do you feel the test day policy increases or decreases your stress?

1. The policy increases my stress
2. The policy decreases my stress
3. The policy does not affect my stress

5. How well do you understand the new attendance policy?

1. Very well
2. Well enough
3. Not much
4. What policy?

(For those who answered 3 or 4 to question 5: the pilot attendance policy is that students are held out of their first period class if they are tardy more than three times).

6. I feel that late students should be punished equally regardless of when they come to school.

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. No opinion
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

7. You are going to be late for your fourth time. Would you:

1. Come into school knowing that you'll be forced to miss 1st period
2. Skip more of the day
3. Skip the whole day

8. How would thirty minutes or more of study time during school help your ability to complete all homework on time and to be fully prepared for tests and quizzes?

1. Extremely helpful
2. Helpful
3. Somewhat helpful
4. Would not change

9. How productively would you work during a study period?

1. Very productively
2. Somewhat productively
3. Not productively

10. If it were necessary, would you be willing to have a slightly longer school day with a study period?

1. Yes, I would want a longer school day with study time
2. No, I would prefer a regular school day without study time.

Brief Results Summary by Question:

Question 1: 42% of surveyed students supported or strongly supported the test day policy while 36% were neutral toward it.

Question 2: A plurality of surveyed students (42%) felt neutral toward the possibility of the test day policy only applying to projects and essays, not tests. The remaining students were fairly divided.

Question 3: Most students (41%) reported that four or more of their teachers strictly follow the policy while only 4% reported that none of their teachers do.

Question 4: 50% of surveyed students reported that the test day policy does not affect their stress while 21% said it increases their stress and 29% said it decreases their stress.

Question 5: Most students (45%) reported that they understood the new tardy policy "well enough," but a worrisome 18% reported no understanding of the new policy whatsoever (more than the percentage of students who answered "very well.")

Question 6: 32% of students had no opinion regarding equal punishment for varying degrees of lateness. Of the remaining students, a majority disagreed or strongly disagreed with the idea.

Question 7: If late to school, 44% of students said they would come into school knowing the penalty, while 29% said they would simply skip more of the day and 27% said they would skip the rest of the day entirely.

Questions 8, 9, and 10:

An overwhelming majority of surveyed students said they would find 30 minutes or more of study time extremely helpful and would use the time very productively, but answers were very divided about whether or not students are willing to extend the school day to accommodate for such a period (43% in support of a longer day and 57% opposed overall).

Sample Student Comments:

"Study hall instead of gym for athletes."

"The new attendance policy is a joke... I've been late five times and they haven't said anything. What is the point in holding students when they WANT to go to class... Seems like the high school is giving off the wrong impressions to their students."

"On Tuesdays and Thursdays you should shorten the periods by five minutes and make a study hall."

"Regarding question 10, how long is slightly? Ending at 2:30 is good, but to end at 3:15 is too late."

"For me, it seems the attendance policy is slightly unfair. Those who continually abuse the class times should be punished. But for some people, an unfortunate quarter might hurt them."

"The late policy only forces already late students to become discouraged about attending school on time."

"All periods can be shortened by a few minutes and the study hall can be at the end of the day."

"I would love a longer school day if it gave me an empty block in which to take another class. Could I do that with a study hall?"

"Maybe take three minutes from each class? And regarding question three, one teacher strictly follows the test policy but all of them do if you count a class vote for a difficult day."

"If they try to extend the school day, I will drop out."

"Like test days, dislike attendance policy, would like a study hall but dislike longer days."

"Study hall PLEASE!"

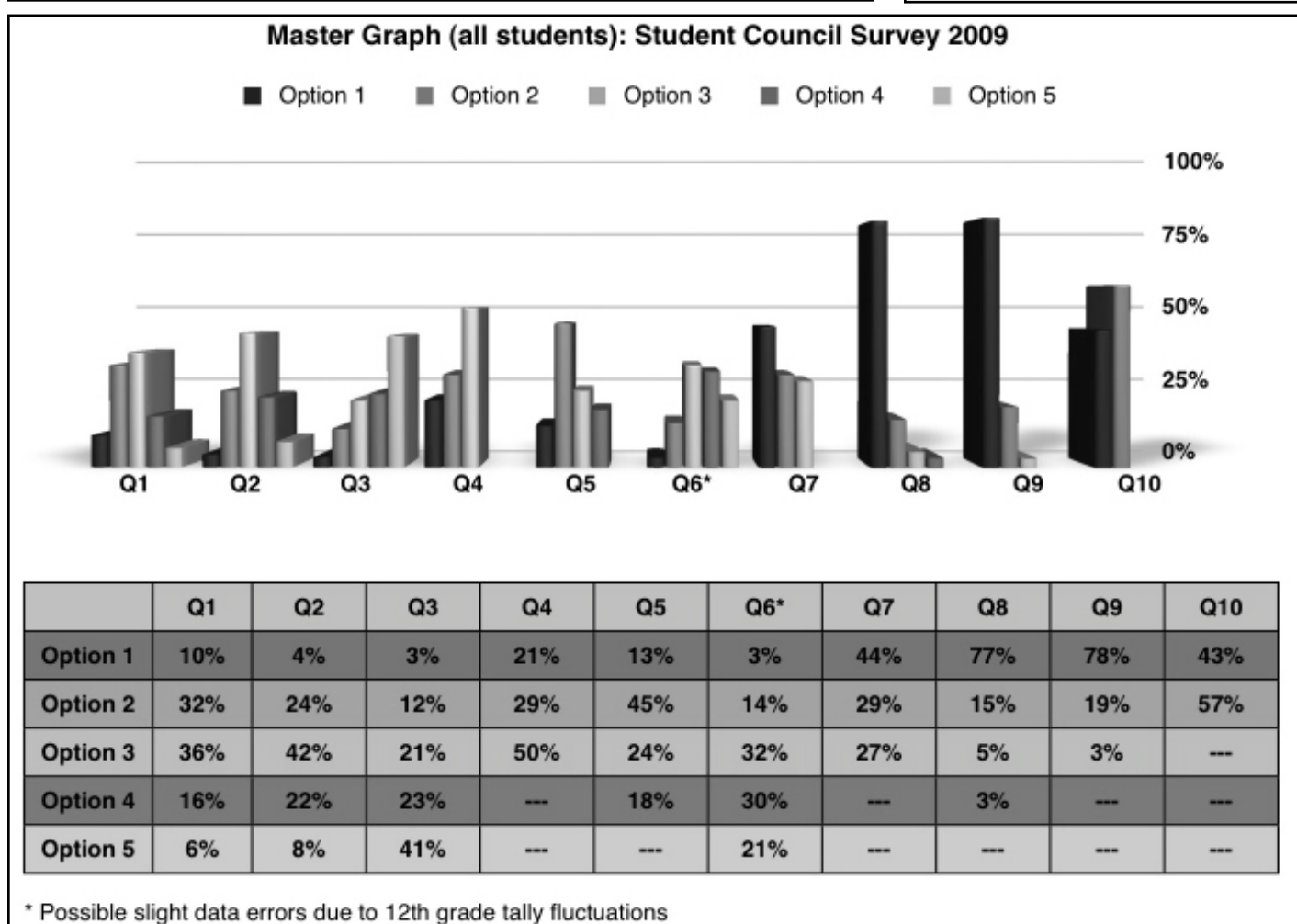
"Regular school day with study time."

"IF we had a study period instead of extending the day, the students who would want the study period could have that in place of extracurricular activity."

"I don't think they should expand the day. They should take five minutes of each class to make a study hall."

"I like the test day policy."

"I'm not sure if I like the attendance policy; I don't understand why you would have to miss your entire first period just for coming late."



Visit the Student Council Website for More.

MCAS SCORE REPORT

By REBEKEH PACKER

In a Massachusetts high school, one element is certain – the MCAS. Every year, grades seven, eight and ten take the MCAS, regardless of ability. The test is a pressure both to students and to teachers, who have to prepare their students to pass MCAS. Students who attended Greylock in middle school remember MCAS Madness, the giant game organized by English teachers to prepare them for the seventh and eighth grade ELA MCAS.

MCAS scores affect individuals and schools. Students must pass their tenth grade English Language Arts (ELA), tenth grade Mathematics, and at least one Science and Technology MCAS to graduate. Scholarships and monetary grants for schools are based on MCAS performance. MCAS scores hold weight in school-wide, district-wide, and individual academic assessments.

The Competent Performance Index (CPI) is a value, with maximum 100, that measures the number of students that achieve proficient scores on their MCAS tests. Overall, in the past few years, high school CPI values have gone up. Between 2006 and 2009, the statewide CPI value on the grade ten ELA test rose from 86.8 to 92.2. The average value among the high school grades changed little, staying at about 87. Mount Greylock's CPI values went up as well, and they were mostly higher than the state values. Greylock's grade 10 CPI rose from 92.8 in 2006 to 96.7 in 2009, and its average high school CPI rose from 77.1 (ten points below the state value) to 94.8 (eight points above it) in the same four years.

Mount Greylock's math scores, however, did not fare so well. Greylock's average CPI hovered at about 79 points while the state CPI rose from 72 to 78.5, a growth of over six points. The statewide tenth grade CPI also went up – from 83.2 to 88.1. Greylock's CPI fluctuated. In 2009, Greylock's score was still 6.8 points above the state score at 94.9, but if the statewide trend continues, Greylock's math scores will fall below the state average.

The importance of MCAS scores and other standardized tests is often debated. Certainly, scores do make at least some difference. The John and Abigail Adams Scholarship offers eligible students eight semesters of tuition at a state college or university. Students are eligible if they are in the 25th percentile of their district and score "advanced" on either the grade ten ELA or Mathematics MCAS and "proficient" on the other. Massachusetts schools are analyzed by their students' MCAS scores. Schools that are identified as "exemplary" can receive monetary grants from the government.

Some argue that the MCAS testing system does not correctly assess schools' success because it encourages dropouts. FairTest.org says that "[h]igh-stakes testing betrays the most vulnerable students in the Commonwealth." Low-performing students, FairTest says, drop out after failing the MCAS, keeping them from college but raising the schools' MCAS scores.

Fair or not, the MCAS are here to stay, and scores will continue to affect schools and students. The question remains whether Mount Greylock's scores will change.

Williams Center, From Page 3.

also really looking forward to the environmental presentation on December 9th." On the ninth, thanks to the Williams Center, Stephanie Boyd (director of the Williams Zikha Center for Environmental Initiatives) will do a presentation on sustainability which YES will conclude.

A new Elective course, taught by Dr. Petruzella, is available for the first time this year. The Philosophy class, which focuses on philosophy and ethics, was available due to the generosity of the Williams Center and a grant from the Squire Foundation. The students have tackled topics ranging from decision-making to a unit on the Matrix. Williams Students have also helped the Greylock Peer Team, another important addition the Greylock Community.

The new opportunities that the Williams Center has allowed Greylock inside the building are vast, yet opportunities continue outside of the school. Tutoring is available for both high school and middle school students Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2:30-4 pm at Greylock. The Williams Center offers one-on-one tutoring for students from 7:30-8:30 pm on Williams Campus. Students are paired with a tutor and given the responsibility to determine a meeting time and place. Furthermore, private tutors are available for \$15 an hour. For questions, contact Kaatje White at kwhite@williams.edu.

With both schools working together to expand horizons at both campuses, ideas are always welcome. Anyone who is interested in getting involved is urged to attend PTO meetings. Contact Kaatje White for more information or questions. Information can be found on the school website, <http://www.mgrhs.org>, in the sidebar titled "Williams Center."

Gwen, From Page 1



sound bad, it gave me the liberty to have fun with it.

Q: Does your senior project involve voice? What is it?

A: Yes, my senior project is to put together a vocal concert. So far I've got an early music section, an American section, and then a show tune section. My goal is to sing a broad range of music, solo, and still be able to be relaxed and enjoy myself.

Q: Do you have a favorite song or two?

A: Right now my favorite song is "This Year" by The Mountain Goats; it's a good anthem for how stressful senior year is. In the music that I'm currently singing, one of my favorites is "O Mio Babbino Caro." It's about as Italian as an aria can get; it's sold a lot of pasta and meatballs.

Q: Do you intend to pursue music/arts as a career? Any future plans in mind?

A: I hope to! My dream is to go through even just the first round of the Metropolitan National Council auditions.

To nominate someone for a 1 in 650 interview, just email mountgreylock-echo@gmail.com!

SPORTS

Girls' XC Running

By ALEX WHITE

The girls cross country team triumphed in the postseason as they won Western Mass and placed a very respectable fourth at states.

Western Mass, which took place at Northfield on November 14, was a rainy affair, yet the girls seemed to enjoy the elements as they powered their way to victory. Sophomore Mackenzie Hitchcock came into the finishing stretch all alone and easily won the race. Junior Cate Costley followed Hitchcock closely for the whole race and ended up getting third. Next for Greylock came sophomore Kaylene Lemme in fourth and freshman Kat Chenail in eighth. Rounding out the top seven were eighth grader Emily Kaegi, sophomore Susie Shanley, and eighth grader Jenna Phelps.

The following Saturday the Greylock girls did it again on the same Northfield course. A solid effort from Hitchcock, seventeenth, led the team to fourth in the state, completing an outstanding year for the runners.



Photo: Katie Rathbun

Girls' XC Skiing

By ALEX WHITE

The girls' Cross-country Ski team has returned a high powered squad looking to do battle with the opposing teams across the county and the state. Leading the varsity lineup are returning varsity skiers: sophomores Mackenzie Hitchcock, Haley Mahar, and Laura Nolan and juniors Cate Costley, Bree Flynn-Kasuba, Allegra Robertson, and Amy Santella. This core of girls looks to lead the team throughout the year. When asked about the team's goals, Flynn-Kasuba replied, "Train hard and stay tough through the vigorous practices, and hopefully it will give us another state title." This type of attitude is just a part of the mentality brought into the season by the team as they hope to make it through the year and make it three straight years of coming home with a win at the state race.

Hitchcock, last year's most valuable skier in the league, and Santella have each had experience leading the field, both coming away with wins last year. They look to lead the way for their fellow skiers, and hopefully these girls will be able to work together at the front of the pack to dominate the competition this year.

Boys' XC Skiing

By LUKE COSTLEY

For the first time in years, the Mount Greylock boys' Nordic team finds itself in an unusual position. As the new season dawns, Greylock, who has won the past four state championships, will be widely considered state underdogs. Despite fielding another strong team, they find themselves facing an eastern mass school with one of the most impressive groups of skiers in the past decade. However, as we all know, sports never cease to surprise us, and no one will rule the Mounties out. The team is led by senior tri-captains Jordan Tuboly, Nate Nurmi, and Caleb Pudvar. All three will consistently place in the top five for the team and hopefully the top ten in the county. Add junior Greg Karabinos into the mix, as well as a slew of sophomores to round out the varsity roster, and the county will have a hard time competing. The team, which prides itself not only on success but unity and strength in numbers, boasts forty members on the boys' side alone. This wealth of enthusiasm and new faces promises a bright future for the Greylock boys to accompany another amazing year this winter.

TUNNEL CITY COFFEE

NORTH ADAMS
115 STATE STREET

413-458-5010

WILLIAMSTOWN
100 SPRING STREET

Boys' Alpine Skiing

By LUKE COSTLEY

After a lull in roster numbers, a couple years of limited success, and even less exposure to the general populace of the school, the Mount Greylock downhill team has grown in leaps and bounds recently. Now sporting a much-improved thirty-three-athlete roster, the boys' and girls' teams should have success in the county. For the boys, this year marks the culmination of a long wait, as the same top four have been racing together for the past four years. Leading the group is Connor Krell, a junior who placed well all of last year. Following him are captains Hayden Kuhn and Nick Krant as well as sophomore Kent

Hanson. On the girls side, co-captains Kristina Chesney and Eliza Densmore, both with state championship racing experience, bring veteran leadership to a fairly young team. Although the Mounties do not necessarily expect championships and glory by the end of the season, they are certainly pleased with the increase of interest shown early in the season. While the vast majority of our student body has been downhill skiing before, it is exciting to have so much enthusiasm for the racing aspect that this team brings to the table.

Girls' Basketball

By TOM DILS



Photo: Katie Rathbun

The Greylock girls' basketball team has had their share of success in Berkshire County over the past few seasons, but they have struggled to get that "elusive first round win," as head coach Paul Barrett said. Last season, the Mounties were led by captains Amanda Karampatos, Katherine Wadsworth, and Janelle van Luling, who were passionate, enthusiastic leaders. They finished 10-9 and lost to the favorite Wahconah who made it to the Western Mass. finals.

The 2009-2010 season may be a little different, because the Mounties are returning eight varsity players all of whom were contributors last season. The list includes captains Annabel Barrett and Erin Manners, both of whom are four-year starters and have been playing at the varsity level since eighth grade. A strong lineup of juniors and sophomores, which includes Kim Houston, Sarah Brink, Siri Mason, Susie Shanley, Kaylene Lemme, and Katie Benoit, back the seniors. The girls' goals for this season are to win the South, challenge the North opponents, and return to the Western Mass. playoffs. Coach Barrett emphasized the team's defense, and he noted that the Mounties will be a fast team who will challenge their opponents by pressing and fast-breaking. All of their eight players are very capable both offensively and defensively.

The Mounties are jumping into the season with a trip to Maine where they will train and scrimmage local school Waynflete. The north Berkshire jamboree is at Greylock this year, and the Mounties

will play Hoosac Valley. The Greylock girls' basketball team has the opportunity to knock off county rivals that they have not beaten in years past, and they hope to make a deep playoff run.

Boys' Basketball

By TOM DILS



Photo: Katie Rathbun

Last season injuries, inexperience, and tough county competition kept the Greylock boys' basketball team from the Division II Western Mass. playoffs. Only one senior, Chris Geannalis, was an every day player because Sam Gerivaltis and Alvand Hajizadeh were sidelined with injuries. Last year's team was young and inexperienced, featuring a starting lineup with two underclassmen and two juniors, along with Geannalis. They were able to compete, but ended with a 4-15 record and no playoffs.

In 2009-2010, however, the Mounties are now in Division III where the competition is different from Wahconah, Hoosac, and Drury. Although the Mounties will still play these county foes in the regular season, the postseason will be easier to reach. Led by captains Will Alimonos and Spencer Rioux, the boys' basketball team will feature four out of five of last year's starters, as well as many of the bench contributors. Juniors Tommy Nolan and Jason Pilot, sophomore Mike Geannalis, and freshmen Tyler Picard and Hank Barrett all played last season, and the Mounties add Ray Alexander and John Distant as well. This year's team is much taller than last year, which will help against Division III opponents Lenox, St. Joes, and Lee. With everyone more experienced, the Mounties are looking to rebound from last season and compete in the county to qualify for the playoffs. They host the North County jamboree and open up their season against Mount Anthony.

CROSSWORD: "HOLLYWOOD CUT-BACKS"

By BLAIR DILS

Varsity Clues

Across

1. Fate, to Romeo and Juliet
6. Borscht ingredient
10. "I placed _____ in Tennessee" - Wallace Stevens' poem first line
14. Rheume, first woman to play in an NHL exhibition game
15. Wife of Esau
16. Singular
17. Childish retort
18. Cut in cubes
19. "Lunch _____ a Sky-scraper" - 1932 Charles C. Ebbets photograph

20. *Taste, alphabetically?
23. Duped, with "been"
24. School grp.
25. "Hawthorne" home
26. *Way out there number?
32. Sum person
35. Willy Wonka accoutrement
36. Chocolate or Yellow
37. Loam
38. Amount of reduction of the starred clues, and with the title a hint to this puzzle
40. Pony or alligator, for example
41. Connubial words
42. NFC Pro-Bowl quarterback in '06 and '07

43. Cosmetic drug for the "Angelina Jolie effect"
44. *Time between first face-off and the second appearance of the Zamboni?
48. Baby's cry
49. Gov't sponsor of "Poetry Out Loud"
50. Home to FIFA WC 2010
53. *About 25 yards?
58. Seethe
59. Melville novel
60. "That is to say"
61. "Right"
62. Micro or macro (coll. course)
63. "If _____ a Rich Man"
64. Whacky
65. Without

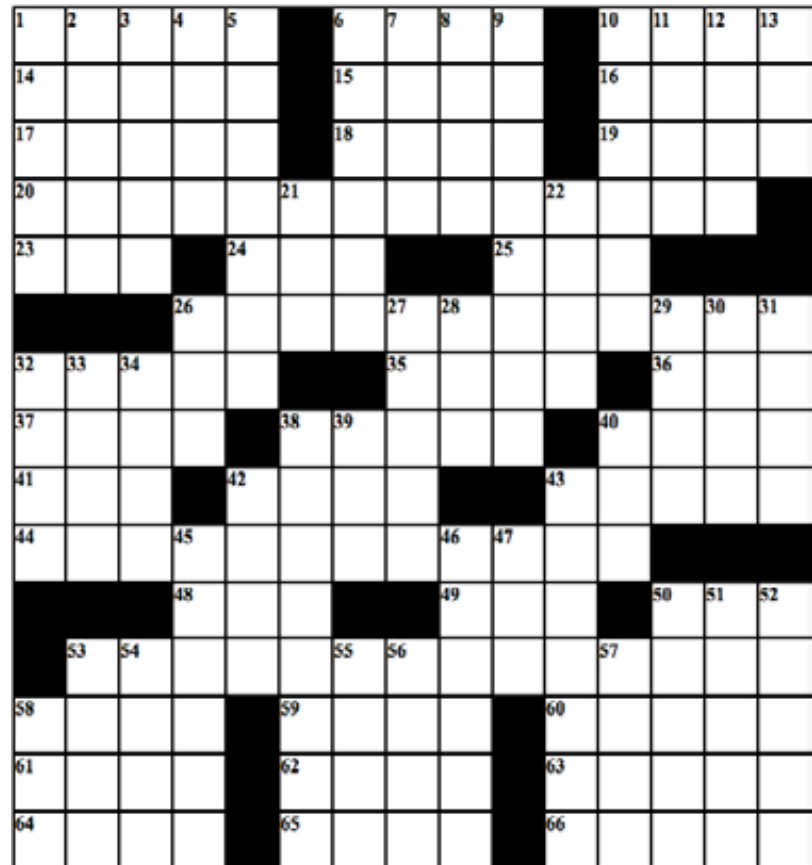
66. Orson Scott Card protagonist Wiggins

DOWN

1. Barbara Bush college
2. "Elizabeth: The Golden Age" author Alexander
3. Put in the small blind
4. "Raise the _____"
5. Busy-body
6. Bum steer
7. Writing step
8. Per
9. Steven King epic
10. "Thank you" in Swahili
11. Little amounts
12. Sunburn reliever
13. Status, informally
21. Plain state Native

- American
22. Differ ending
26. Scottish rock band _____ Amitri
27. Offshoot
28. 72, often
29. Mouth
30. Jealousy is the green-eyed monster, to him
31. Microsoft game console
32. "Yeah right"
33. Bygone bird
34. J'Adore maker
38. "Rotten _____," movie review website
39. Computer-user connection
40. _____ Alamos
42. Meg of "You've Got Mail"

43. Boy who fights for his right to party?
45. ATM dispensation
46. Marriages
47. Bugs Bunny creator Avery
50. Said the answer to 41 across a second time
51. Conical cathedral part
52. Flower that means "star" in Greek
53. Band mainstay
54. English architect Sir Christopher _____
55. Dance party staple
56. Before long
57. Companion of country or gown
58. Hip-hop artist Markie



JV Clues

Across

1. Has the lead role (in)
6. Pickled root vegetable
10. Open, slightly
14. Teammate to teammate warning
15. Esau's wife
16. Foot part
17. "She _____ fond of books, and it has turned her brain" - Alcott
18. Yahtzee need
19. Where on the tree the Christmas star is placed
20. *1999 M. Night Shyamalan film starring Bruce Willis and Haley Joel Osment
23. Owned
24. Type of mtg. after school
25. Dynamite, informally
26. *Star Trek Spin-off (1993-99)
32. Fanged creature
35. Sugar _____
36. Place for experi-

- ments
37. Farmer's need
38. Amount of reduction of the starred clues, and a hint to this puzzle
40. Nike Swoosh, for one
41. Bride's words
42. Cowboy quarterback Tony
43. Wrinkle-reducing injection
44. *CBS Sunday evening news show
48. Baby's cry
49. Teacher org.
50. African country closest to Antarctica (abbrev.)
53. *1935 Hitchcock Film (with "the")
58. Rug injury
59. Melville novel before "Moby Dick"
60. "That is to say"
61. "_____ you can't do that again!"
62. Coll. course about supply and demand
63. "If _____ a Boy" - Beyonce hit
64. Crazy
65. Without in French

- class
66. Stopper

Down

1. Black or copper ending
2. Children's book illustrator Tudor
3. Paid (up)
4. House covering
5. Detective
6. Unfairly negative perception
7. Mark with a red pen
8. "To _____ his own"
9. What a witness might take
10. _____ Samuel, former Patriots cornerback
11. Writes (down)
12. Skin cream additive
13. John Olver, for ex.
21. Provo athlete
22. Exist ending
26. State south of NJ
27. Shoot or twig for grafting
28. "_____ for the course"
29. Door opening for mail

30. Sarcastic bird in "Aladdin"
31. Wii rival
32. "_____ I really care"
33. Dummy
34. Designer Christian _____
38. Cherry and Plum, for example
39. User and computer connection (abbrev.)
40. _____ Angeles
42. "American Idol" host Seacrest
43. The _____ Boys, "Licensed to Ill" artist
45. Andrew Jackson bill
46. Labor organizations
47. _____-Mex cuisine
50. Married again
51. Steeple feature
52. Daisy-like flower
53. Low brass instrument
54. Small bird
55. 1978 Village People hit
56. "Any minute now"
57. Place between village and city?
58. Movie-making and such, with "the"