

Gap Year Offers Limitless Possibilities

By HALEY MAHAR

For many, March and April represent the beginning of spring. The sun reappearing, the snow melting, the temperatures rising. The school year is well into the second semester, and summer break is closer than it appears. But for seniors, it means one thing: college acceptances are being mailed.

While those lucky few who have applied and were accepted Early Decision can sit back and thank their lucky stars they aren't waiting for the mail each day, most of the senior class is now receiving letters from their respective colleges. While not everyone attends college directly after high school, to continue school is an overwhelmingly popular choice for most Greylock students. As exemplified by the colorful display of posters outside of Guidance, colleges across the country offer an incredible amount of variety in their campuses and courses. But while the application process is generally an unavoidable hurdle, college is not the only option after high school. Some may turn to employment, and others may apply to college only to defer enrollment. Graduated from high school and accepted into college, the perfect opportunity appears to be to refuel, explore, and live a little. Here enters the gap year.

When searched on Google, the term "gap year" rounds up a healthy 25 million hits. The typical gap year is taken usually between high school and college; its purpose to allow a once in a lifetime experience of new places, people, and things. Gap years can be taken for travel, study, employment, service, athletics- anything that strikes a fancy. Undeniably, the preparation is extensive, and the first step is usually acceptance into college. As the Director of Admissions at Williams College Dick Nesbitt says, "The key to a "Gap Year" is to get into college first, secure your place with a deposit, and then take your year off. It is not easy to apply to colleges if you are in Honduras or Norway, so take care of the college application process first and then enjoy a worry-free year pursuing a passion."

While taking a gap year does not exactly make a prospective student a more attractive college candidate, many colleges do think it is a good idea. "Students that take a gap year are inevitably ready to hit the ground running when they get to college. They have gained a year of maturity, and many have gained a world view unusual for the typical first year." With college settled and on hold, those who take gap years are ready to adventure with a free conscience. Embarking on this experience is exactly what past Greylock alumni have done.

Our first story follows the footsteps of Katie White, who graduated from Greylock in 2006. Deferring enrollment from Williams College for one year, Katie spent the fall of 2006 in Costa Rica, assistant teaching at a bilingual Spanish/English school

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BUDGET WOES

By NED KLEINER

On March 16, the Mt. Greylock School Committee was faced with a cheerless task: cutting \$600,000 from the budget. Because of continuing uncertainty over the amount of money at their disposal, the School Committee created four tiers of cuts, each more drastic than the last. The less money the school has, the more tiers will be cut. The point of the March 16 meeting was to determine what to put in each tier.

While the debate was surprisingly cordial, it did have some contentious mo-

mentary, but now the School Committee has to make sacrifices. Tier one also includes one semester's worth of health classes, and the closing of the guidance office for the entire summer. In Tier 0 and Tier 1 combined there are just under \$400,000 of savings.

The tiers only exist because the school doesn't know how much money it has, and that uncertainty only exists because the Finance Committees of Williamstown and Lanesborough haven't told Mt. Grey-



The School Committee must make some hard decisions in the coming months, if \$600,000 are to be cut from the budget.

Photo: Willinet News

ments. For example, at a certain point one member proposed that Stained Glass be cut before the Senior Project, leading to a long debate over the relative merits of the two programs and finally the passage of the motion four votes to three. At a meeting the following week, the decision was reversed, and the Senior Project was moved all the way into the first tier. As School Committee member Ron Tinkham said, the budget is in a constant state of flux.

The cuts begin with "tier zero." Tier zero is used to delineate the items that would be cut even if the budget weren't in crisis mode. While it consists mainly of budget redundancies or items made unnecessary due to class size fluctuations, tier zero also includes a large amount of technology spending. As you may have noticed, the school's computer hardware and software are not very up to date. The school hoped to remedy this with more than \$40,000 worth of purchases, but in these hard times, anything not essential to running the school is on the chopping block.

After the technology comes the staff. By eliminating one evening custodian, the school could save \$50,000. While no one wants a dirty school, most agree that it is better than cutting faculty. The school may have to reduce the library staff by .6 Full Time Equivalents - the monetary equivalent of about 3 full-year courses - with the result that the library will only be open three days a week. In times of plenty (or even times when the school made ends meet by the skin of its teeth) there was enough money for a fully functioning li-

lock exactly how much they will give the school. The tiers will be presented to the two Finance Committees, making it tempting to make the cuts look very drastic in order to persuade the towns to give the school more money. The members of the School Committee, however, refuted that line of thinking. "I won't participate in a bait-and-switch," said Rob Ericson, "that's presenting illusionary input."

If the school reaches Tier 3, it will already have cut about \$400,000, and here the most drastic measures begin. First in Tier 3 are a number of sports teams. The football team has the highest number of coaches as well as a lot of expensive equipment; the tennis, golf, and alpine skiing teams have a small number of players; and the track & field team uses the Williams track, which is likely to be renovated in the next few years. Coupled with the athletic teams are all of the school's drama productions, which cost a combined total of \$23,000. On the initial list, all of the theater activities were in the second tier, but Heather Williams made a motion - which passed unanimously - that they be coupled with the sports teams, since the two categories should be on equal footing. Tier 3 also includes some of Mt. Greylock's AP offerings, which typically have fewer students than honors or college prep courses, and therefore could be cut with a smaller impact on class sizes in general.

One of the last measures on the list is a proposal to reduce the guidance counselors to four days a week. Some members, re-

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1 in a 650: An Interview with Hallie Walker

By LUKE COSTLEY



Photo: Deb Dane

This month, sophomore Hallie Walker discusses how a small 4H project in 6th grade has grown to be a huge part of her life that could possibly direct her career path.

Q: When did you start raising sheep?

A: I started in sixth grade. I was riding horses then, and I really wanted a horse, but they are so expensive. But I was part of 4H at the time and I got an email that said I could raise livestock for a summer, and actually own it and so I started with a sheep and went from there.

Q: What initially inspired you to do so?

A: With the sheep I got what I wanted out of owning an animal. I saw the direct correlation between how much work you put in was exactly how much you got out of it.

Q: Explain what caring for them entails...

A: That usually consists of feeding them in the morning and evening, during the summer shearing them, and making sure that they stay healthy all year round.

Q: What about caring for your sheep continues to engage you?

A: It gets harder every year. There are more problems that rise up and I learn more each time. I eventually want to be a wildlife biologist so it is interesting looking at their behavior and to be having that experience, sort of hands on, caring for animals.

Q: What would you say your sheep are to you? Are they household pets, strictly farm animals, or a combination?

A: They're kind of in between. You show with an animal and they're not just sheep that run off, but they know you and come to you. There is though, a certain level of knowing what their purpose is for. Unlike your dog, who you would do anything to save from a sickness, you have to make that decision with a sheep. It's definitely a different relationship.

Q: Would you say your sheep are somewhat of a substitute for a sport or theater career?

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

THE BOOK WORM

This month, Cleo Levin reviews *The Namesake* in its book and movie form.

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Senior Project Reflections

Rebekeh Packer shares thoughts on this hot topic.
See Page 2.

Spring Sports Preview

The Echo's sports writers give an overview of the upcoming season.

Read about it on pages 5 and 6.

The New Williamstown Youth Center

Tom Dils reports on this exciting project and how Greylock students can make it possible.
See page 4.

Crossword

Attempt the latest creation from Mr Dils on page 6.

Recognition Night

Krista Mangiardi writes about the proposed changes to Mount Greylock's Recognition Night.

NEWS AND EVENTS IN BRIEF

Cookie Dough Fundraiser for the Girls' Softball Team

It's cookie dough time again! The girls' softball team is selling boxes in an array of flavors for \$15 each to help benefit this year's team. Be sure to mark your calendars; boxes are only on sale until Thursday, April 8th! Cookie dough is always delicious, and makes a great gift for a friend, family member, or to just eat yourself, so make sure to pick some while there is still time.

3rd Annual Dodgeball Tournament Benefits the Junior Class

The 3rd annual dodgeball tournament this year was held on March 12th and was, as always, a huge success. Although all teams put up a vigorous fight, the team "Freshest Freshmen" beat out the senior team "Notorious" in a heated last round to become the champions. Congratulations to both teams!

Pasta Dinner for Gettysburg Trip

To benefit the eighth graders' trip to Gettysburg this year, there will be a pasta dinner on Friday, April 9th at the ITAM lodge in Pittsfield. There will also be a Chinese raffle help benefits with prizes including rounds of golf and restaurant gift cards. The dinner will be held from 5pm-7pm with tickets on sale at \$9 for adults and \$5 for children and seniors. It is sure to be an event you won't want to miss, so be sure to stop by and help this year's eighth graders!

Certamen Team Represents Mount Greylock Well at Lunenburg

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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Reflections on the Senior Project

By REBEKEH PACKER

Junior year spring. These words strike fear in the hearts of high school students everywhere. In the months leading up to summer vacation, eleventh graders have to begin thinking about the years after their graduation. College visits and SATs fill the time not taken up by homework. At Mount Greylock, junior spring is also the time for students to start thinking seriously about one of their last graduation requirements—the Senior Project.

The Senior Project program requires every Greylock graduate to take on a project according to his or her interests and work on it over the course of senior year. This year's projects include Keith Martin's one-man art show (which can be viewed in the studio across from the art room), an extensive quilting project by Johanna Tremblay, and an original play written and directed by Sam Shuker-Haines ("Box"). Connor Fields built a porch for his home and Krista Mangiardi learned how to sew an entire wardrobe of clothes. Last year, '09 graduate Hannah Cochran chose to teach herself sign language.

The Senior Project begins in the spring of junior year, when students are introduced to the assignment. In September of senior year, students turn in topic proposals for faculty approval. After working on their projects all winter, seniors turn in reports and give oral and visual presentations in April and May respectively. Some students take a "fast track" option, working over the summer and finishing their projects by January. Each senior works with a community mentor and a faculty advisor, and each turns in a portfolio of his or her fieldwork. Upon passing the Senior Project, a student receives three required credits toward graduation.

Teachers Tom Ostheimer and Mike Caraco initiated the pilot program in 2004, with 35 students completing Senior Projects. The Senior Project became a graduation requirement in 2005. The program began with a grant from the Braitmayer Foundation, which provides money to support proposals that "enhance the quality of education at the pre-collegiate level," but later became a standing budget item.

Now, five years after its inception, the Senior Project is on the School Committee's tentative list of possible budget cuts for the '10 - '11 school year.

Superintendent Dr. William Travis describes the list, which is posted at <http://www.mgrhs.org/news/index.php#472>, as a "prioritizing" of programs and classes that might be cut or reduced depending on the size of the drop in revenues next year. In short, the 22 items are ranked by the likelihood that each will be dropped from the budget. The Senior Project is number 14 on the list. For reference, number 1 is a reduction of summer maintenance projects; number 8 is the removal of summer guidance; and numbers 18 and 19 are the eliminations of sports teams (golf, alpine skiing, tennis, football and track & field) and theater productions (Shakespeare, musical, spring drama) respectively.

If it's in danger of being cut, then it must be expensive. How much money could the Senior Project cost? Over thirty thousand dollars—more than AP Physics, AP Biology, and AP Calculus put together! Expenditures like printing the Senior Project handbook and hosting the mentor luncheon add up. But most of the \$31,681 Greylock spends on the Senior Project each year goes to pay the faculty

involved. Two coordinators organize and run the program, and eleven advisors provide individualized attention. All receive stipends for their contributions. In addition to his or her stipend, each coordinator is paid the salary equivalent of a one-semester course to update the Senior Project handbook, schedule events, and keep seniors on task.

Coordinator Cindy Bradley suggested limiting these stipends in order to make the Senior Project more affordable for the school. Mt. Greylock, she said, "is trying to figure out how to do [the Senior Project] differently and do it in a way that the school won't have to forgo all the money...but it will not go away."

Adam Miller, an '09 graduate, said that "if Senior Project is cut, Greylock will be losing a very useful tool for preparing students for life after high school."

Travas McCarthy, class of '07, agreed: "I feel that [the Senior Project] is a good graduation requirement because it gives us a taste of what the real world is all about with respect to meeting require-

ments and personal responsibility."

The Senior Project indicators for graduation proficiencies are, in fact, focused on graduates' real-world skills—problem solving, community membership, self-directed learning, and effective communication. Coordinator Dr. Gerol Petruzella said, "A good Senior Project is one that comes from the senior him- or herself...that the senior cares about...that connects the senior to other people... [and] that gets the senior out there understanding the broader world."

"It offers them a chance to work with a mentor who's outside the school and outside the family," said Mrs. Bradley.

Mr. Ostheimer, founder and coordinator until 2008, said, "[T]he most significant aspect of the Senior Project is it gets kids thinking about what their interests are. I think that's something that's not done enough in a typical high school." Miller, who now attends Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, said his web-design-related Senior Project helped him explore a field of interest "so when I finally got [to college] I wasn't completely lost as I tried to decide what direction I want my education to take."

Not everyone is quite so supportive of the Senior Project. Current senior Krista Mangiardi, although she enjoyed the creativity involved in her sewing and knitting project, expressed a desire for the school to be "more open to genuine and serious student feedback." She said, "I wish there was more freedom for students in how to express their end result...I think that [if] something has to be cut, it should go."

It seems that most, however, would rather keep the Senior Project in the budget. Mr. Ostheimer said of the possible cutting of the senior project, "it's understandable, but my feeling is it's unfortunate."

Dr. Petruzella expressed the situation diplomatically: "I don't envy the administrators who have to make this call."



Petra Mijanovic and Patrick Madden direct this year's spring play, *Rhinoceros*. The play is part of Petra's Senior Project.

Photo: Katie Rathbun

Budget, Continued from Page 1

calling the minimal assistance they received from counselors in their youth, felt that the \$42,000 it would save was easy pickings. Others, though, felt that in this era of highly competitive college admissions, reducing guidance hours could harm students as much as removing AP's. In the end, the motion to move guidance into Tier 2 failed five votes to two.

As a last resort, Mt. Greylock can use furlough days as a way to find enough money to keep the school afloat. Furlough days work by telling teachers not to come to school

one day a week at the end of the year, and replacing them with less costly substitute teachers. Every time the school asks teachers to take a furlough day, it saves \$31,000.

At the time of this writing, the School Committee was planning to take these tiers in front of the Williamstown Finance Committee on March 25. This process culminates with town meetings in Williamstown and Lanesborough. At these meetings, voting will be done to determine how much money the school will receive. Any parents or students registered to vote in one of the two towns are encouraged to attend a town meeting.

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

Proposed Changes to Recognition Night

By KRISTA MANGIARDI

The School Council has recommended the restructuring of Recognition Night into separate grade-level events to be held during the school day. Mr. Tim Payne, the high school principal, supports the change.

In past years, at the end of every school year, the ninth, tenth, and eleventh grades have come together to celebrate each other's achievements. The evening program would typically run for over two hours as the administration made awards to students in all three grades. There were awards for overall academic achievement, departmental awards for outstanding performance in a particular subject, like math or music, and awards for athletic and extra-curricular success as well as school spirit and service.

The night has had the same format for many years, but there are currently efforts underway to mix things up a bit. The School Council initiated the discussion of a possible restructuring of Recognition Night, and Mr. Payne immediately took up the project. Ideas are still in the early planning stages, but it appears that there will be definite changes to what students and parents alike are used to.

The major concept behind the changes is to replace the single evening ceremony for all three grades with separate daytime class assemblies. Each of the grades (ninth, tenth and eleventh) would come together as a class during the school day to recognize and celebrate their classmates' achievements. In addition, Mr. Payne would like to add class superlatives to the current mix of achievement awards. Typically, seniors vote for superlatives ranging from "best athlete" to "most likely to succeed" for the yearbook. Now the underclassmen will have a chance to do the same thing, to be awarded at the recognition assemblies. Sophomore Hallie Walker is helping to plan the events and says that the two goals of the changes are "to involve all students, wheth-

er by winning an award, or by voting for someone they think should be recognized, and to recognize efforts and successes that perhaps would not be represented strictly by grades alone."

Mr. Payne says that he has been asking students about the proposed changes and that reactions are mostly positive. A number of students, however, have expressed the concern that some families may find it difficult to attend a daytime event. To address this concern, Mr. Payne says that he would plan to write to the families of all ninth, tenth, and eleventh graders well ahead of time so that every family would have sufficient time to make arrangements to attend.

Hallie Walker hopes that the new format will "inspire kids to strive to improve their personal performance in schoolwork, extra-curricular activities and sports, and to create a sense of community within the grades." By expanding the range of awards, and by bringing each class together to celebrate their year-long achievements, Walker envisions a ceremony that is "by design more inclusive and by intent more representative of the wide range of interests Mount Greylock students have."

The assembly will take place in late May or early June. Mr. Payne hopes that class officers and advisors will play significant roles at the day-time recognition assemblies and that the assemblies would be run by student emcees.

All student and parent feedback is welcome on these ideas and should be directed to Mr. Payne. As he says, "Let's make our recognition events more meaningful and fun for everyone." At the end of a year of hard work, each class would be able to come together to celebrate positive achievements in a new, personalized way—a great way to wrap up and recognize while building community and class spirit.



Mountie alum Dylan Dethier is spending his gap year playing golf in the lower 48 states. Follow his adventures at eighteeninamerica.blogspot.com.

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and living with a host family. In January and February of 2007, Katie worked at Blueberry Hill Inn in Goshen, VT, giving ski lessons, keeping the stove running, and discovering the many tasks of keeping an inn running. She also spent time doing office work at Overland in Williamstown. The final leg of her trip brought her to a farm called Castello di Spannocchia just outside of Siena, Italy. Helping out in the vegetable garden and receiving Italian lessons, she spent many days outside in Italian gardens and weekends exploring Tuscany. As Katie says, the pros of a gap year were "pretty obvious. I was burned out in a lot of ways after high school, and taking a year to do what I wanted to do versus what I felt like I should do (homework, practice, etc.) was really refreshing. I noticed a lot of freshman at college who had trouble revving up again for tough classes, and I was more rested in that sense."

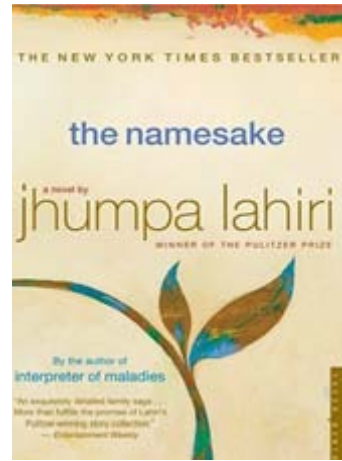
A second Greylock graduate that opted to take a gap year went about things with a different motive in mind: to

golf in every continental state in the US. Dylan Dethier graduated from Mount Greylock in 2009 and set out to begin his unique travels of an eighteen-year old golfer on September 1st. Dylan has played golf on in 29 states to date, on courses ranging from the Katrina-savaged municipalities of Louisiana to the PGA graced greens of Pebble Beach in California. The trip has passed through the economic disaster in Michigan, the endless expanse of "Big Sky" Montana, the golf communities of Florida, the snow capped mountains of Utah, and the sin city of Las Vegas. Keeping a blog and hoping to write a book about his travels, Dylan plans to return to Massachusetts at the end of May and enter Williams College as a freshman in the fall of 2010.

The possibilities for a gap year are endless. "It felt like an exciting opportunity to do something unique and to see the country while I was still a kid and before I have to deal with the pressures of finding a job or even deciding what I want to do for a career," said Dylan. Taking a gap year is about exposure to something new,

The Book Worm

By CLEO LEVIN



Title:
The Namesake

Written By:
Jhumpa Lahiri

Price:
\$18.70 (hardcover)

Entering the world of Jhumpa Lahiri's novel, *The Namesake*, requires a compromise. Accompanying a family of Indian immigrants, you will experience the long nights huddled in apartments, fearful of the Boston winter and the feeling of alienation in an American high schools. Yet, simultaneously, you will grow so close to this family that you will know the size of the mother's knitting needles and the names of all of the first semester classes her son takes at Yale.

The Namesake follows two generations of the Ganguli family, first attending newlyweds Ashoke and Ashima, from their arranged marriage in Calcutta to Ashoke's home in Boston where he is finishing his doctorate in fiber optics. Life in America is cold, spare, and isolated for Ashima until she gives birth to her first son, Gogol, who gives her life meaning and purpose. As Gogol grows, Ashima's loneliness and isolation are echoed in him, as he struggles with his name, which he believes encapsulates all his feelings of isolation and separation. He is not aware of the fact that a book of short stories by Nicolai Gogol, his namesake, saved his father's life when Ashoke was in a train wreck, and was found and rescued by a search group—only because of his ability to throw up a few crumpled pages of that book. Gogol changes his name to Nikhil, one that his parents had considered for him, which he initially feels changes his persona, Ms. Lahiri writes, "It is as Nikhil, that first semester, that he grows a goatee, starts smoking Camel lights at parties and while writing papers and before exams, discovers Brian Eno and Elvis Costello and Charlie Parker." Yet, he ultimately realizes that changing his name will not rid him of those inherent aspects of his personality that he cannot, and, eventually, does not desire to wish away.

At this point, this novel may begin to sound familiar to those of you who took the SATs this Fall, as an excerpt from *The Namesake* was used in the reading comprehension section of the test. A well-chosen excerpt, one documenting Gogol's uncertain feelings about his new name, summed up the novel pretty thoroughly, demonstrating both the idea of estrangement in a foreign country and Lahiri's impeccable attention to character detail. Unfortunately, the College Board seems to have captured the

spirit of the book better than Mira Nair's 2007 film adaptation.

This film has many good aspects. None of the closeness to Ms. Lahiri's characters is lost as the book's intense attention to detail is presented visually by Ms. Nair. She trains the camera over the characters' faces so carefully, so lovingly that we have a concrete image of the exact red hue with which Ashima's (Tabu) scalp is dyed, of the weary, half-closed eyelids of Ashoke (Irrfan Khan), and of the penetrating, soulful stare of Gogol, the talented Kal Penn.

Equally impressive are the scenes shot in India which capture perfectly idyllic if not entirely realistic vision of placid gardens with calmly swaying foliage, sitars, and bejeweled women in silky saris. One of the most beautiful scenes is shot at the Taj Mahal, when Gogol first realizes he wants to be an architect, and we experience a stunning succession of images of architectural detail, watching as Gogol's fingers slide over the surface of stone inlays and carvings.

Yet, the skill and dexterity with which Ms. Nair handles the visual aspects of the characters and scenery is not displayed in her interpretation of the storyline, and many of the most important and poignant aspects of the novel get lost in the shuffle. Most regrettable is the loss of Gogol's feelings of transformation after he changes his name, the passage that the College Board had the good sense to retain. In the novel, Gogol's decision to change his name is a pivotal point, as he effectively disowns his parents and his past. The book chronicles Gogol's indecision over his idea, the process of the name changing, and his subsequent reactions to the change. Yet, in the grand tradition of Hollywood film, all of this internal turmoil and emotion is encapsulated in a makeover, a haircut ultimately representing the entire metamorphosis.

If you are looking for a story, full of sweet, subtle detail and intense emotions, I suggest reading the book. If, however, (and this inclination is perfectly valid) you would prefer a more watered-down but visually stimulating experience, I would suggest watching the film. In fact, hold on to that advice, as, unless you are told differently, when it comes to Hollywood films, it will always hold true.

but it is also the perfect time to take a breath before diving back into four years of school.

"During the year, I met so many amazing people, from whom I learned things (even when I could barely understand their Spanish or Italian) that I never could have learned in Williamstown. Traveling really opens you up to different lifestyles that you just don't encounter in New England," said Katie. Both Dylan and Katie agree that, as with any adventure, there will be cons. For example, sleeping in the back of a car more often than a bed, or adjusting to the college life of a small New England town after the exotic world of Costa Rica. But it's all part of the adventure, and as Katie says, "I would never trade my gap year for anything."

Winter has finally given way to spring, and college is in the forefront of many minds. Most seniors are thinking about their next four-year adventure, and the world college will hold. But for some people, maybe college can wait, and just maybe a gap year is the next adventure on the horizon.

Giving Back to the Williamstown Youth Center

By TOM DILS

What is your favorite memory from your elementary school years? Is it athletics, through recess, gym, after-school practices, or weekend in-house games? Is it the creativity that you found through art or music? Or maybe just the good-natured time spent with friends? In Williamstown, almost all of these activities are directly or indirectly linked to the Williamstown Youth Center.

For those readers who do not know what the Williamstown Youth Center is, let me briefly explain. The Youth Center is a non-profit organization that works closely with the Williamstown Elementary School to organize after-school, vacation, and summer programs for kids. Under the direction of former elementary school principal, David Rempell, the Youth Center is expanding its resources and offering more diverse opportunities to kids. The organization runs many of the in-house athletic programs for kindergarten through fourth grade students and helps to manage older travel teams. They plan unique trips and programs with the help of Williams College's resources. Most importantly, the Youth Center offers a safe place for students to go after school if their parents are working past 3:00. After school activities include study hall, recreational games, art opportunities, and many more options.

The Williamstown Youth Center helped to shape my own childhood experiences. Many of the sports I play began with the coaching of volunteer youth center parents. I remember the Saturday morning 5-on-5 soccer games, the hockey and basketball scrimmages, swimming at the college pool, and fun track and field practices. The Youth Center does not just provide kids with soccer balls and nets—they make sports accessible to any elementary school student in a fun and positive way. Where did you first play organized sports? I'm sure many of you began at the Youth Center.

The Youth Center helps kids find success and entertainment in many ways beyond athletics. Every day after school, a large group of Williamstown Elementary School kids walk to the Youth Center where they can stay until their parents get out of work. David Rempell told me that "everyone has interests and passions, and it is crucial for a community to provide programming in

those areas so that children can develop those interests and develop confidence and skills that they might not otherwise have the opportunity to do." Additional pro-

vides. It is too small for the number of students it helps, and the building is in terrible condition. The Youth Center's Cole Avenue location is a half-a-mile away



Citizens of all ages show their support of the new Williamstown Youth Center.

Photo: Diane and Micheal Taylor

grams include art, dance, drama, and digital media. Simone Rodriguez is a former Youth Center dance student who played a youth role in a Nutcracker performance in addition to attending summer programs. "I think that the Youth Center is great to have to allow kids to participate in a variety of activities," she said. Now as a high school student, she dances at the Youth Center often with her Irish teacher and helps teach beginners in Irish dancing. When asked about how he feels the Youth Center helps kids grow, Rempell said, "the social and emotional skills that children and young adults gain by participating in appropriate activities have an enormous impact on their future." The Youth Center offers a comfortable environment where kids can grow.

Despite all of the organization's dedication to the community, there is one major obstacle to the Youth Center's mission to help kids grow into successful young adults. The Williamstown Youth Center's facility—where almost all of the after-school activities take place—is getting in the way of the programming that the organization

from the elementary school and does not have any playing fields. This means that students cannot access the facility during the school day, and they must walk there every day after school gets out. But perhaps the most devastating aspect of the facility, as Rempell explained, is that "it is just an embarrassment for this community to show prospective members what this facility is like." The bottom line is that no matter how much kindness and devotion the Youth Center provides, it cannot offer kids enough without a new facility.

The Youth Center's recent kick-off of their "Together We Can" campaign aims to change all of this. A generous kick-off donation of \$1 million by Bob and Sheila Stone sparked the campaign to build a new Youth Center. Instead of keeping their same location, the new edifice will be on the campus of the Williamstown Elementary School. The new facility will be much larger, having access to the elementary school's playing fields, and attractive to new members of the community. The new location would offer more alternatives for students during the school day and those

who are active in the after-school program. As Rempell explained, "such a location allows more alternative programming for children during the school day as we would now have a facility that will expand experiences for children." A new Youth Center would solve the organization's current problems and would enrich and expand the educational and social experience of all students in the community.

However, the hardest part is yet to come. The Williamstown Youth Center must raise \$2 million by September 1, 2010, a daunting task. Since January, more than \$500,000 has been added to the coffers. Students from Pine Cobble School and the Williamstown Elementary School filled "brick coin banks" for the cause, raising over \$1000. Businesses have aided the cause, but in order to succeed, the whole community must get involved.

So what can you do to help the Youth Center's campaign? First off, you can help by spreading the Youth Center's message and increasing the general awareness of the project. Ask you parents if they know about the campaign and if they would consider donating. Any size donation will make a big difference. Also, you can help in other ways than simply giving money. The Williamstown Youth Center—no matter how long the campaign takes—always needs volunteers. If you are an athlete, there are opportunities to help coach younger kids, like many Greylock students are doing already. Also, if you have artistic or dramatic talents like Simone, you could use your experience to teach younger kids. As Greylock teacher Liza Barrett said, "elementary school kids need teenage role models and there aren't that many opportunities to have them." You can become that role model by simply donating some of your time to the Youth Center's programs. The third way you can help the Youth Center is by participating in an upcoming "Phone Bank" on one evening in early April. The Greylock Student Council will be running the event, but any student at Greylock is welcome to help. Little things can make a big difference, and if the entire community backs the Youth Center's campaign, a new building is possible. As the campaign's slogan goes, "Together We Can!"

D.C. Seminar Offers Political and Cultural Insight

By NAOMI LACHANCE

On March 14th, about 65 jet-lagged students, in grades 10-12, congregated in Washington, D.C. for a seminar called Panim el Panim. The program, whose name means 'Face to Face' in Hebrew, strives "to explore public policy and social activism through a Jewish lens," according to its website. Students from places across the United States including Tulsa, OK; Brooklyn, NY; Chicago, IL; and Western Mass. came to learn about leadership, ethics, politics, and current events.

Rachel Meytin, associate director of the Panim Institute for Jewish Leadership and Values, delivered opening remarks, articulating the theme for the next four days. "Politics is a process in which you can change the world for the better," she began, asking students to consider throughout the seminar whether such a definition is accurate. She said that components of that process include direct action, education, local action, philanthropy, and lobbying. "What makes your world? What makes your world a better place?" she asked. Meytin cited a quotation from President John F. Kennedy: "The Jewish people, ever since David slew Goliath, have never seen youth as a barrier to leadership." Meytin concluded with her own assertion. "Whenever you hear, 'you are the leaders of tomorrow,'" she said, "I challenge you to be insulted. You are the leaders of today...you guys have the responsibility to act now."

Later that afternoon, a panel from the National Coalition for the Homeless spoke to the group about homelessness. In the United States, 3.5 million people, including 1.3 million children, experience homelessness. And those are just the ones who are counted. The Panim students, who were predominantly middle-class and white, acknowledged that there are many stereotypes about homelessness: dirty, smelly, addicted to drugs, mentally ill. Yet with foreclosures and shrinking jobs, homelessness is becoming more and more common. Among the three speakers was a man named Steve Thomas. He grew up in "the 'hood" and began smoking marijuana at the age of 13. "I didn't know who I was," he said, "and the

most important thing in life for me was for people to like me." In his early twenties, he tried cocaine. "I'm a good guy basically

but that night I made a bad decision and it took me 30 years to get away from it," he said. "Every job I'd come in on entry level with fast track for success. But at one point everyone's going to give you a urinalysis." Thomas was homeless for one year. "Homelessness will break you," he said. "Most homeless people go through more thought by 9:00 than most of you guys do all day." He was finally forced to go to a homeless shelter, which he had been avoiding because of its "deplorable conditions." He had lost

so much hope that he went to the man at the front desk and "asked that guy to throw

dirt over me. He did all right, but he chose to plant me rather than bury me." One night about two years and two months ago, Thomas met a doctor and was finally able to open up about the troubles in his life. Thomas has been clean and sober ever since. He has become a homelessness advocate and is known throughout Washington, D.C. as "Better Believe Steve." Thomas challenged students to be more aware and compassionate regarding homelessness. "You're only one bad decision away from being homeless," he said.

Next, students heard from Rabbi Sid Schwartz, founder of Panim. He spoke about a "prophetic voice," saying that if a person can identify problems in the world and then do something to fix them, he has become a prophetic voice and a moral hero. "You don't become a prophetic voice unless you see something that everyone else thinks is fine and you think it's not fine," he said. Schwartz also addressed leadership, saying that when a person sees another person doing something morally wrong, there are three choices: join in, become invisible, or stand up to the injustice. The third choice, while the most difficult, is the choice of a leader, he said. Schwartz then addressed the universe of obligation, which is, according to Schwartz, "to what extent is your obligation to your in-group equal to your obligation to the out-group?"

Panim, Continued on Page 5



The group in front of the Washington Monument.

Photo: Naomi LaChance

1: 650, Continued from Page 1



A: It's a big time commitment and it gets really hard to balance everything. It definitely requires the same amount of work as a sport, so yes.

Q: On that note, you work after school. How do you feel about balancing school, sheep, and a job?

A: It gets tough but you have to prioritize. So work goes over general sheep management, but when the lambs were being born during a shift one day, something had to give. It's just telling your boss, this is something I do.

Q: Have you ever thought about the pros and cons of holding a job as a high school student?

A: It was a big decision and sometimes schoolwork takes a back seat, but the sheep do have bills to pay, it is not just money coming in from them.

Panim, Continued from Page 4

Schwartz urged students to take responsibility and to not only find their obligations and prophetic voices but to act on them. "I want to stand in front of groups in two to three years and tell your story," he said.

The next day, students took Schwartz's convictions to heart by volunteering at Washington Parks & People; Mobilization, Optimization, Stabilization, Training; Miriam's Kitchen, and So Others Might Eat, which are all nonprofit organizations geared toward public service. Later, students held a simulation of Congress where each student was assigned a legislative job and had to decide whether controlling illegal gun shows would reflect the desires of their respective states. Students also had the opportunity to explore the monuments and museums, debate scenarios involving conflicting values, and learn about preserving the environment, gay and lesbian rights, and the state of nuclear weapons in Iran.

The next day, some students met with Meisha McDaniel and Amy Johnson from the Congressional Hunger Alliance while others debated the Senate and House health-care bills and spoke with Nicki Kurokawa from the Independent Women's Forum/Winston Group on her own view of the issue. Students met next with Nevada Representative Shelley Berkley, who spoke about being the granddaughter of Jewish

immigrants, the unofficial caucus of Jewish representatives that meets for lunch every week to discuss the current bills in relation to Jewish law, and her indecision regarding the House healthcare bill. (She eventually decided to vote for the bill.)

Then, students visited a park where homeless people often congregate. Students had brought small donations, such as socks or toothbrushes, as more of icebreakers than charity: the true deed was acknowledging the humanity of these people and speaking with them. There was one man who had been a professional basketball player until he shattered his foot and another who was in Washington, D.C. on business twenty years ago when his company disintegrated and he had no way of returning home. For many students, the conversations were a turning point in realizing that everyone deserves to be recognized and cared for. Some were mentally ill, others were in a poor physical state, but they all had a determination and kindness that demanded respect. "There was a rich woman who lived on the other side of town whose mansion burned down," said a woman named Wilhelmina. "Do you know why? It was because she always ignored the homeless people. You can't do that."

The next morning, students chose issues about which to lobby their congressional representatives. The group from Western Massachusetts met with Henry Burton, a

staff assistant for Massachusetts Representative John Olver. The group, which consisted of eight sophomores, spoke to him about healthcare, Iran, lowering the voting age to 16, and education. Burton said that Olver is in favor of the current healthcare bills and is also pushing for a public option to be introduced. He said that, while Iran is a serious problem, Olver is "not inclined to rush war," and he had "no idea" about Olver's opinion on the voting age. When students were lobbying about education and Mt. Greylock RHS was mentioned, Burton, a Williams alum, smiled and said, "Yeah, that school has a lot of problems." He said that Congressman Olver is trying to find Massachusetts public schools "more funding" and "more accountability." After the meeting, he gave the students passes to visit the House gallery, where students saw Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi as well as all 435 representatives.

Lobbying is not something a person can only do through a seminar. Nor are any of the other events students experienced on Panim el Panim. If the seminar were to be pinned down in one moral, it would be this: we must acknowledge that the world is far from a perfect place, but we must realize that everyone has both the capability and responsibility to try to make it better. So, find something in the world that needs fixing and fix it.

SPRING SPORTS PREVIEW

Girls' Track

By ALEX WHITE

The girls track team looks to prove their dominance of the county by going undefeated. Senior captains Jessi Payton, Erin Manners, Meredith Phelps, and Sam Radke are hoping to lead this team right to Western Mass.

Payton, Liz Gorson, Alexa Adams, and Jenna Phelps hope to rule the county and Western Mass. in the 100 meter, 200 meter, and 4x100 meter relay. When asked about what she thought about this group of sprinters, Payton replied, "It is tough to replace Caitlyn Riley and Abby Bishop, who we lost last year, but the addition of Jenna Phelps should be huge, especially in the 4x100."

Radke should single handedly take on the competition from around the county as she looks to continue her supremacy in the discus and javelin.

For the hurdlers, Marissa Ericson, Susie Shanley, and Simone Rodriguez are expecting a solid season on the track and hope to make a name for themselves around the district.

Finally, distance runners Kaylene Lemme, Kat Chenail, and Mackenzie Hitchcock hope their success from cross-country carries over onto the track. Lemme says, "We have a really strong group of girls running distance this year and on any day any of us can go out there and have a strong performance. I am really looking forward to see how this year plays out for the whole team."



Photo: Katie Rathbun

Boys' Track

By ALEX WHITE

The boys' track team goes into the season with the expectation that this is to be a rebuilding year. The main objective is to fill the events for the year and to build up a core group of underclassmen on the team.

Captains Caleb Pudvar and Spencer Rioux lead this group of raw talent, providing senior leadership and experience. When asked about the upcoming season, Pudvar replied, "I am really excited to see some of the younger kids really step it up and make a name for themselves in the county."

Pudvar is the anchor of the sprinters, hoping to qualify for states in the 100- and 200-meter distances. Rioux, meanwhile, slings the javelin, works the 400 hurdles, and overcomes the high jump. Rioux states, "My running and jumping have come naturally from a young age and that is what has really allowed me to excel at track."

Matt Belouin, Will Kirby, and Matt Cheung make the distance sector of the team. Belouin runs the 800-meter, while Cheung will focus on the two-mile. Cheung declares, "This season has the potential to be really great."

Matt Wilson rounds out the team in the shot put and discus. He comes back this year looking to prove himself against the top competitors in the county.

Make sure to come out and help cheer on the team and your fellow students as they compete for Mt. Greylock.

Girls' Lacrosse

By LUKE COSTLEY

Nationally, lacrosse is one of the fastest growing sports. Here at Mount Greylock, that trend is no exception. As the new season begins, a multitude of new faces are complementing the familiar ones on the girl's lacrosse field, promising new and exciting growth for the team.

Undoubtedly already a strong presence in the Berkshires, the defending county champions are looking forward to dueling it out with the best this spring. Although none of the high schools have the funding to make lacrosse a varsity sport, our Mounties will play "club" teams from South County, Northern Berkshire and Pittsfield. Also on the schedule is a challenging match-up with the Williams College junior varsity and a pre-season jamboree, both of which will allow Greylock to test its ability.

Leading the charge are captains Kathleen Dudziak and Mollie Major, and a strong supporting cast will back them up. Notably, Kim Houston, Siri Mason and Haley Mahar return to their starting roles from last year. In addition, a promising new crop of players will ensure a future of excellent results.



Photo: Katie Rathbun

Boys' Lacrosse

By ALEX WHITE

The Mt. Greylock boys' lacrosse team heads into the year with expectations to repeat as county champions. The team is led by senior captains Andy Budz, Kyle Quagliano, and Will Alimonos.

Along with the three captains are key returning players Jason Pilot, Zach Hanson, and Marston Albert. Quagliano and Hanson are both returning from injuries and hope to regain their top form from last season. When asked about what he thought of this returning team this year, Alimonos said, "We are looking forward to really working hard and performing to the best of our ability. Our team really works well together and hopefully that unity will translate into wins."

The team's big losses from last year consist of Ian Jones and Dylan Stafford. Jones was a vital goal scorer and strong on face offs. Stafford, meanwhile, was a wall in the net as the goalie.

The team took to the field in a scrimmage tournament at Springfield College and was solid with one win and two losses, with the win coming against Monson.

The boys will be looking forward to seeing you cheering for them on the sidelines so be sure not to disappoint.

SPRING SPORTS PREVIEW

Baseball

By LUKE COSTLEY

The hardware from last spring's baseball season may soon have company. As the defending Western Mass champs, the Mount Greylock baseball team hope to have repeat success this year. There were, however, some holes to fill and some tweaking to be done. All that being said, the team should be more than up to the task. "Despite losing key players from last year's roster, we should still be able to compete as one of the top teams in Berkshire County," said second baseman and captain Hayden Kuhn.

Joining Kuhn as captains are David Jones and Chris Koch. Jones, a star from the mound and at first base is part of an infield that includes several largely untested faces such as Mike Geannelis and Keith Martin, stepping in for the likes of Jeff Romejko and Dylan Dethier. Both will benefit, however, from Chris Koch's superb play behind the plate, from where he will guide the team. In the outfield, both Sean Houston and Charlie Besnard are ready to pick up where last year's Cary White, Than Finan, and Chris Geannelis left off.

Looking forward, the Mounties will get their season rolling in earnest with an April 20th rematch of last year's regional semifinal with a game against Hoosac Valley. From there, they will play their county schedule, with a focus on the Western Mass tournament. From there, the road begins towards bringing home another title.



Photo: Katie Rathbun

Softball

By LUKE COSTLEY

For most coaches, the offseason is a time to look over the team's roster and try desperately to fill the holes left behind by the graduating senior class. In the case of the Mount Greylock softball team, however, that is not the situation. Coach Paul does not have to worry because the entire team from last year is back, ready for a new season.

Led by captains Alex Cunningham, Johanna Tremblay, Michaela Dinicola and Caitie Benoit, the Mounties will field a competitive squad in the county and hope to build on last year's success. Benoit said it best, reporting after the first week of practice that, "we are still a very young team and although most of us did gain some important experience from last year, we still have a lot of things to learn."

In the field and at the plate, Dinicola and Benoit are joined by Autumn Leon as stand outs for the team, while Alexis Bushika is strong from the mound.

The team is looking forward to open the season on a strong note with a game against Drury on April 5th.

All in all, the softball team will continue to grow and discover, hoping that their hard work will pay off in the form of a Western Mass berth. If all goes well, they could go far.

Girls' Tennis

By LUKE COSTLEY

Although Mount Greylock is lacking a boys' tennis team this year, the girl's team is making up for it in full force. All spring, they hope to dominate the courts, and, as ace Sophia Santore says, "We plan on making Western Mass. and at least equaling our run last year by making it to the Western Mass. semifinals."

The integral parts of that run are well represented in both the singles and doubles line-up. Key returnees to

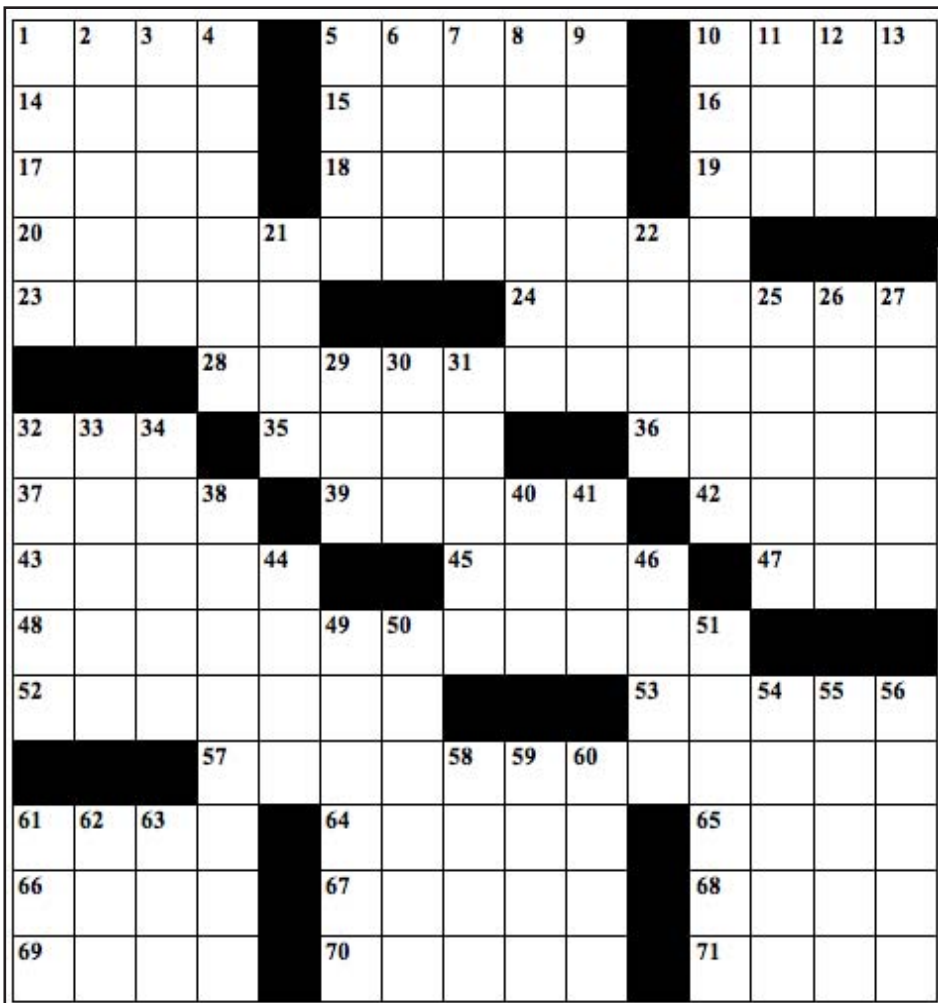
fill those spots are Santore, Cleo Levin, Maggie Dewey, and Perry Ostheimer. Also, the team will watch in excitement and anticipation as newcomers Laura Nolan, Sam Rydell, and Katie Swoap fit into the squad. All three will

quickly find their places and hope to contribute early and often.

The Mounties are hard at work already, practicing both at the school and at the Williams College courts. The Mounties will be a force to reckon with this year in the county and in the region, without a doubt making for some exciting tennis late into the spring. Home matches will take place at Williams College, with the first one coming up at 4:00 PM on April 6th.

CROSSWORD: "THE BARD'S BUFFET"

By BLAIR DILS



ACROSS

1. Hip
5. Macdonald's possession?
10. Cowboy's legging
14. "The Sweater Girl," Turner
15. Climber's command, following "on"
16. Trunk securer
17. Dog sounds
18. Hung window feature
19. Responsibility
20. Shakespearean sandwich
23. Israel neighbor
24. Dune concern
28. Shakespearean dessert
32. Small comp. units
35. Human resources addition
36. Greet the day
37. Leopold's partner
39. Underworld boss?
42. "Have You Ever _____ the Rain?"
43. Widths X Heights
45. Description for 39 across
47. Cell ph. button
48. Shakespearean breakfast
52. "Gimme _____": '69 Stones hit
53. Veldt scavenger
57. Shakespearean beverage
61. Luke or Obi Wan
64. Alternative band Nine Inch _____
65. Fight promoter Bob
66. Sacked
67. Belly-button type
68. Italian dough
69. Amazes
70. Non-com officer
71. Minimalist painter Gonzalez and others

DOWN

1. Sounds with lightning, often
2. James and Lily's son
3. "...doesn't know what he's _____"
4. Consumer of theme answers?
5. _____-bodied
6. Subject of famous Roosevelt paradox
7. Type of sax
8. Maddow on MSNBC
9. Rent-payer (with a paper moustache)?
10. Non-option for beggars?
11. Fighter pilot Solo
12. PAC-10 member in Tempe
13. After-after-thought: abbrev.
21. Way of least resistance
22. Some toreros capes, in Sevilla
25. Nastase and others
26. NFL star who later played Father Murphy
27. _____ in sight
29. "_____ Girl Friday"
30. Long time
31. Allow, slangily
32. Sick feelings, with "the"
33. Sacred text in Tel Aviv
34. End of paper comment?
38. Sideline helpers in Wembley Stadium
40. Madison or Park, for ex.
41. Zero
44. Extra-terrestrial org.
46. John of TBS "10 Items or Less"
49. Sport returnee in '88 Summer Games
50. Donations, often
51. Consumer of theme answers?
54. Like a Poe story, often
55. Science lead-in
56. Guatemalan President assassinated in 1957
58. Kind of cod
59. Books on-line
60. Chemical suffixes
61. Chew the fat
62. Skeleton starter
63. Condensation

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