

The Past, Present, and Future of Newspapers

By NAOMI LACHANCE

The 21st century leaves print journalism in a precarious spot. Americans are increasingly receiving news electronically, where headlines are updated at a speed that leaves even daily publications trailing behind. In the rush to keep up, quality is sometimes compromised, both in print and online. "People are getting their understanding of the world from random lunatics riffing in their underwear, rather than professional journalists with standards and passports," wrote Time Magazine's Michael Kinsley.

We live in a world that values the immediate, where even books are available electronically. "The idea of a newspaper is somewhat antiquated," said Chris Densmore, '09, a former Echo editor. Newspapers are needing to adjust in order to stay current and relevant, and soon, the Echo might need to follow suit.

Or, it might not. The Echo, after all, is really not equitable to, say, the *New York Times*, as much as some of us would like to hope. In terms of going electronic, a physical newspaper works well for the audience, while PDF forms of the paper are currently located on the school website, MGRHS.org. Larger newspapers are suffering in print copies, but this newspaper seems to be read most during school, where electronics are generally unavailable. If the newspaper followed its larger counterparts and moved to only an online format, readership would certainly decrease.

Still, if the Echo were to go electronic, it would not be the paper's first change. The paper's start is unclear, but it has existed at least since 1961, when Williamstown High School became Mount Greylock and moved to the current building. In 2008, under the leadership of Matt Baker-White and Chris Densmore, the Echo was expanded from four to six pages, the font was made smaller, and Adobe InDesign software was adopted for layout. Around the same time, the Echo became "more student-run," said Baker-White. More recently, the website has been simplified and new columns have been added, such as the 1:650 interview, introduced by Nate Nurmi in 2009. In the future, readers might see even more improvements, as editors toy with introducing a movie column and altering format.

Why the changes? The Echo must serve its purpose in clearly portraying current news to the Mount Greylock community. "The Echo gives citizens in the towns a sense of what is going on at Greylock and highlights the hard work of our...contributors," said editor Cate Costley. She added, "The best part of working on the Echo is hearing kids discussing the latest opinion

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MRS. WALT TAKES FINAL BOW

By HANNAH PAUL

For almost 25 years, the choral sector of the Mount Greylock community has been impeccable. Both on stage and off, students sung beautiful songs and have been educated in reading and writing music. This is all thanks to Mrs. Walt.

Mrs. Walt started her music teaching career at an elementary school in Ohio. "That was really fun," she said. "I got a lot of practice with rhythms and the Kodály system of hand signals that is used to represent

of "really nice friendships" she has made at Mount Greylock are what she says she will miss the most.

From leading regular, every day class, to teaching enrichment classes throughout the rest of the day, to directing all the music for the winter musical, Mrs. Walt does much more than many people stop to realize. Anyone in chorus can also tell you that she is not only an incredible singer, but also a very skilled pianist. "She is respectful



Mrs. Walt has given much to the music department at Mount Greylock, and she will be sorely missed by her students and colleagues. Photo: Echo Staff

the notes of the scale." She also taught at Drury, Pine Cobble, MCLA and Smith College. She began teaching here in 1986.

But as you probably know by now, Mrs. Walt is no longer at Mount Greylock; she retired on January 31. She would have retired a couple years ago, she says, if it was up to her. When the school was feeling an economic crunch a few years ago, they had to cut many peoples' jobs, including hers. Mrs. Walt was cut from a full time job to a part time job, making the time until she could retire with full benefits come slower than she would have liked. The time she reached that point was at the end of this year's first semester, so she seized her opportunity. She will continue to work with the cast of *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, but she is no longer teaching chorus class.

Chorus students have been preparing themselves since Mrs. Walt announced her retirement plan near the beginning of second quarter. "I'm scared about what's going to happen to us as a chorus," said sophomore Kim DiLegio, reflecting on the daily warm-ups and routines that have long been a part of the class. "She really knows us as individuals, not just as a group."

"It's because of Mrs. Walt that I can sing at all," said junior Rebekeh Packer. When thinking back to her days of middle school chorus, Packer explained how Mrs. Walt was "so patient and never cringed. No matter what, she's always smiley and sweet and wonderful."

Mrs. Walt expressed that the most rewarding part of her job was the opportunity she had to nurture young people and install a love of learning. "I so love the senior high chorus experience," she said. "The atmosphere is so encouraging and a place where one can grow." This and the number

and supportive of all things musical," says orchestra teacher Ouisa Fohrhaltz. It was known from the beginning that losing Mrs. Walt was going to be a big blow.

Through the last few weeks of January, one question was looming: Who will take her place? A search committee was established, consisting of Mr. Payne, Mr. Moors, Ouisa Fohrhaltz, Mr. Welch, junior Sophia Santore, and a former MG student, now parent. "We're being very careful because they're big shoes to fill," said Fohrhaltz. On Thursday, January 20 and Friday, January 21, two guest teachers came to teach the chorus class as sort of "auditions". Terry Larsen taught on Thursday and Ramsey Kurdy on Friday.

Just because Mrs. Walt no longer teaches here, though, doesn't mean she is no longer singing. She is continuing with studio lessons at Williams College and other private lessons. She said that, even though she is no longer a teacher, she wants to continue to be a mentor. Other than singing, she plans to pursue more community service and has big travel plans with her husband. Above all, however, Mrs. Walt is looking forward to spending more time with her family. "She's worked so hard and done so well," said DiLegio. "She deserves it."

The chorus class and music department in general are gradually settling in to routine without Mrs. Walt. "It's going to be a total change of pace," she said. It was a bittersweet parting for her; she's excited to explore this new chapter in her life. Mount Greylock can't thank Mrs. Walt enough for all she's done over the past 24 ½ years. Thank you, Mrs. Walt, for all you've done, and we wish you all the best in the years to come!

1 in 650: An Interview with Aaron Ziemer

By LUKE COSTLEY



Photo: Aaron Ziemer

Mount Greylock freshman Aaron Ziemer immediately impressed peers and older student council members at the groups' first meeting this September. His poise and command of the room were noticed and appreciated by those around him. Little did they know, Ziemer was just getting started.

Aaron Ziemer recently took on the job of being Mount Greylock's lone representative on the Western Massachusetts Student Council, a job few students in the past have been capable of doing. And with this being Aaron's first year as a high school student, this promising start indicates he will be able to contribute his experience and knowledge to both the Western Mass. student council and our own here at Greylock. Aaron was willing to shed some light on his duties as representative with the Echo this month.

Q: Okay so, explain the Western Mass. Student Council...

A: At the WMass Student Council meetings we talk about how our different student councils work, and what we are going to do for events on the horizon. It's really fun and the other representatives are a great group of people.

Q: Who organizes the meetings? Where do you guys meet?

A: It is organized by the adviser Angella Mass, and president Celine Livermore, while the meetings are held at either Celine's or Ms. Mass's house.

Q: How did you get involved? What sparked your interest?

A: I got involved when Hallie Walker brought it up at the meeting; it just seemed like a fun and interesting thing to

Aaron, Continued on Page 2

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

THE BOOK WORM

Cate Costley reviews *The Cookbook Collector* by Allegra Goodman.

See Page 3.

Winter Sports!

The Echo's sportswriters report on how the winter season is going.

See Pages 5 & 6.

Responding to Racism

After the appearance of racist and derogatory images at Mount Greylock, steps have been taken to combat racist sentiments that exist in the school, reports Rebekeh Packer.

Read about it on Page 4.

Examining the Appeals Process

Ned Kleiner offers insight into and shares his views on the disciplinary appeals process at Mount Greylock.

See page 3.

Upcoming SEE Fund Telethon

See page 2 for more information on this important community event.

News in Brief

See the News in Brief column on Page 2 for a quick update on what's going on in the Greylock community.

NEWS AND EVENTS IN BRIEF

TELETHON TO SUPPORT THE SEE FUND

On February 17th, from 6:30 to 8:00 PM, the Sustaining Educational Excellence (SEE) Fund will host a telethon, with the aim of raising money and awareness for this endowment fund at Mount Greylock. The SEE Fund is an endowment that provides grants for special academic and extracurricular projects at Mount Greylock. In the past, grants have been awarded to teachers, the art and technology departments, and Mount Greylock sports teams. The upcoming telethon will be broadcast live on Willinet and will feature short interviews with past grant recipients and current board members. Over the course of the night, student callers will be making and receiving calls from donors. The telethon will give community members an opportunity to donate directly to the SEE Fund. Please support the SEE Fund by making a contribution and tuning into Willinet on February 17th.

SELECTED EIGHTH-GRADERS SHARE SPECIAL DAY WITH GOV. DEVAL PATRICK

COMPILED FROM OTHER NEWS SOURCES

Each and every day – in every city, town and hamlet of the Commonwealth – young people are making a difference through service and volunteerism. At schools and community centers, on playing fields and community gardens, and with citizens of every age in need of their care and compassion, this generation extends hand and heart to address critical needs. Age is no barrier to impact, as we bear witness to the creativity, resourcefulness, and courage of this generation as it leads the way towards positive change.

Governor Deval Patrick believes deeply in the power of service – and in the potential of the Commonwealth’s next generation of learners and leaders. He believes deeply in youth. To make his commitment, he concluded his inaugural events with a celebration of young people in service: Project 351.

On Saturday, January 15th, a “congress” of youth assembled in Boston for dialogue, action, and celebration. Governor Deval Patrick brought together eighth-graders from each of the 351 cities and towns in Massachusetts to participate in a day of Citizenship, Community Service and Leadership development in Boston. Teachers were asked to identify on eighth grade student from each of the cities and towns in their school district to participate in the day’s festivities. The students were picked based on their academic standing, high personal standards, aspirations for the future, demonstrated leadership in service and volunteerism, being mature, responsible, sensible and engaging. The students nominated by their teachers to represent Mount Greylock and its four towns were Benjamin Burdick for Lanesborough, Connor Hadley for New Ashford, Xavier Alvarez for Hancock and Michelle Fang for Williamstown.

The students had a great day filled with inspirational speeches and discussions with the Governor. He shook each student’s hand and spoke to each one personally over the course of the day. They participated in community service projects and shared ideas about future projects to bring back to the school community.

SUBMIT TO IRIS!

Mount Greylock’s literary magazine, Iris, is looking for submissions! Revived last year after a lengthy hiatus, Iris was a huge success. The current board of editors is looking to continue and build on that success, but this can only happen with the help of the school community. Iris accepts submissions of short stories, creative nonfiction, poetry, photography, and artwork. Anyone in the middle or high school can submit - including faculty and staff members! Pieces can be submitted in two ways: first, place your submission in the white Iris envelopes in all English classrooms with your email address attached to the back, or send the submission to irislitmag@gmail.com. The board of editors will review all the submissions and then contact you as to whether or not your piece will appear in the magazine. The deadline is coming up on right before February break, so compile your submissions as soon as possible!

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piece or talking about the crossword. That really makes me feel like the Echo is fulfilling its role.”

To Densmore, the Echo “fosters understanding,” and makes students aware of events outside of their own “niches.” Baker-White called the Echo “a voice for students,” and pointed out that it also teaches students about journalism itself, a vital step for any informed individual.

True, the Echo has been guilty of false reporting and misspelled names, and still has miles of improvement. “It’s hard to find the time, motivation, and resources to really expand the Echo,” said Costley. She added, “I would love to have a journalism class.” Echo advisor Mr. Niemeyer is pushing such an idea as well, and points out that the Echo is really more about the learning process than creating a perfect newspaper. The history teacher envisions a class open to high school students, whose purpose would be to produce a paper and learn about the craft of journalism.

The beauty of journalism is that it fosters an awareness of the world outside of a person’s own observation. This quality can bring communities together, and even make a person reconsider his or her role in the world. “News in some form is always going to be a sustainable endeavor,” said Densmore. Journalism may be struggling, but its end is nowhere in sight.

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do.

Q: Has anyone in the past from Greylock participated?

A: I don’t know if anyone in the past has participated, but if they did, Ms. Mass said it has been a long time since then.

Q: What kind of time commitment is it being on the WMSC?

A: One meeting a month and a tad bit of homework, not too much.

Q: How do you plan on taking what you’ve learned and applying it to Mount Greylock? How do you envision strengthening the Mount Greylock Student Council?

A: I plan on taking the Mount Greylock Student Council to many of the events I am invited to, or those that I run. We are actually quite backward compared to some of the student councils, and I think if we see some of the stuff they do at other places we might want to do some of it ourselves.

The Mount Greylock Echo is the student newspaper of Mount Greylock Regional High School in Williamstown, Mass. Published monthly during the academic year, each issue is developed and edited by a team of student photographers, writers, and editors. Any Mount Greylock student is welcome to submit articles, come to meetings, or join the Echo staff. Meetings are held in the Echo Office at the back of the library, typically during early lunch on Mondays.

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Sports Editor: Tommy Dils
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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.

AN APPEAL TO JUSTICE

By NED KLEINER

The Mount Greylock Student Handbook lists 15 infractions that can result in a suspension, among them: “fighting,” “gambling,” “insubordination,” “being in an unauthorized area,” “causing damage to school property.” If the administration is considering suspending a student for less than ten days, the student’s “due process” is an informal hearing between the student and “the principal or his or her designee.” After handing down a suspension, the administration is supposed to “make a reasonable effort” to contact the student’s parents. Within a day, it is supposed to mail the student a letter outlining the reason for the suspension and the specific rule that was broken. And that’s it. There is no appeals process, no formal hearing, not even a guarantee that the principal will be present.

The most nerve-racking, high-stakes, all-or-nothing part of everyone’s high school career is the college admissions process. And a suspension, according to one college admissions officer, “raises red flags” on a high school transcript. When the administration administers a suspension, it is not only making a student miss a few days of school, (which most people wouldn’t think of as much of a punishment anyway) it is potentially affecting the student’s future education.

Recently, there has been a spate of suspensions at Mount Greylock so pronounced that the administration is considering reinstating the in-school suspension. Many students felt that the punishments were excessive, and this, combined with complaints from the students involved regarding how the administration handled the suspensions, prompted the Student Council to issue a statement proposing a new disciplinary process. One of the changes advocated by the statement, which the Student Council approved unanimously, was the institution of a formal hearing for all students whom the administration plans to suspend. Says Tom Dils, the Student Council treasurer, “a formal hearing, where you can share your side of the story with the administration... will be better – and fairer – both for the administration and for students.” One facet of the hearing that the Student Council deemed especially important is giving students under suspicion the option of having a one on one conversation with an administrator. If a group of students breaks the rules, individual students are often unwill-

ing to throw their friends under the bus, particularly if they are sitting right in the room. But it is not fair for the administration to give students the choice between earning the animosity of their peers and giving their side of the story.

The Student Council, understanding “the necessity of having a disciplinary system that can act quickly to defuse situations,” realized that it was unrealistic to expect the administration to allow appeals before suspending a student for one or two days. Instead, the Council expressed a desire for a “retroactive” appeals process. For short suspensions the administration would still not have to deal with any appeals before sending a student home, but students would be able to appeal their suspensions after they were served. The student would bring his or her case before a board composed of teachers and administrators. Under the Student Council’s system, in the event that the appeals board deemed a student’s punishment unfair or excessive, the suspension would be expunged from his or her record. Says Hallie Walker, the Student Council Secretary, “I feel that the lack of an appeals process undercuts what schools stand for... we can’t trust a punishment in which we have no voice.” If this system is implemented, the Student Council believes, it will ensure that “no student’s college application is harmed because of a suspension he or she did not deserve.” Walker says that the fairness of a punishment is not the only concern: “No one can learn from a situation [he] didn’t understand or felt was misrepresented.” If students see punishments as unfair and arbitrary, they will have less trust in the system and be less willing to accept responsibility for their actions. Even if very few suspensions are overturned by the appeals board, the board will offer students the chance to learn from their mistakes.

The importance of an appeals process seems to already be understood by the administration. As it now stands, if a student receives a suspension of ten days or more, there is a formal hearing, the student has the option to have a lawyer present, and the decision can be appealed to the superintendent. Any suspension is a serious thing, and a nine-day suspension shouldn’t be treated totally differently from a ten-day one. One can hope that fewer students will be suspended in 2011, and that those who are will get a fair hearing.

THE BOOK WORM

By CATE COSTLEY

Title:
The Cookbook Collector
Written By:
Allegra Goodman
Price:
\$26.00 (hardcover)

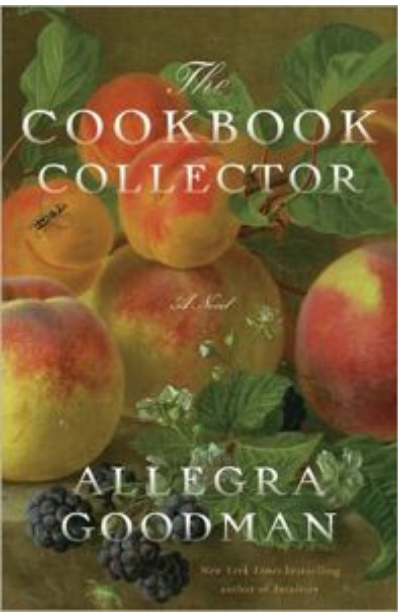
Some book titles draw the browser in almost magnetically, inviting him or her to stop and flip through the book’s pages. Such was the case when I saw the title *The Cookbook Collector*, by Allegra Goodman, nestled high up on a bookshelf. Opening the book up, I was anticipating a cozy story about recipes, sugar cookies, and maybe young sweethearts or old grandmothers. And while *The Cookbook Collector* is charming and fun, its storylines and characters are complex and thoughtful. Allegra Goodman handles themes as varied as the stock market, family relationships, falling in love, and the Internet boom with a deft hand, weaving a fascinating portrait of life in the early 21st century.

At the center of the novel are two sisters. Jess and Emily have strived to each carve out her own niche, completely separate of one another. Emily is the fantastically successful CEO of an Internet start-up that is taking the world by storm in the early 2000s. Jess, on the other hand, is a vegan graduate student at Berkeley who spends her spare time working at an antiquarian bookstore. Emily has a superman-like boyfriend who is already looking at expensive rings. Jess is searching for love – in all the wrong places. Emily is disciplined and pragmatic; Jess is fanciful and idealistic.

The novel chronicles the sisters’ relationship as they struggle to understand and support each other, while also navigating their own way in the world. The world they live in is now changing at a blistering pace: the advent of the Internet has made Emily a multi-millionaire in a matter of days; cell phones now buzz in their pockets every few minutes; the stock market is thrilling and lucrative to the young computer geniuses.

And so, the sisters struggle to define wealth and happiness. Emily wrestles with questions of business morality as her company, Veritech, looks to expand into new arenas. She strives to please her boyfriend. She makes all the “right” choices. But is she happy? Is wealth all it’s cracked up to be?

Flighty Jess rejects money and material-



ism, preferring instead to immerse herself in old books and environmental activism. Jess is an enchanting character: opinionated, romantic, witty, and dreamy, she leaps off the pages of the book with energy and zest. It is Jess’s escapades that give *The Cookbook Collector* its whimsy and humor.

Emerging as the novel’s heroine, Jess reminds the reader that, despite the serious subplots of money and morality, *The Cookbook Collector* is a love story and a tribute to the unbreakable bonds of family.

The main topics of family, love, wealth, and happiness are what drew me to this book and encouraged me to keep reading, but I was constantly distracted by the many secondary themes and commentaries running through the book. Allegra Goodman, unfortunately, tried to do too much. Instead of staying focused on Jess and Emily, the book started jumping around to lesser characters and random subplots. The main kernel of the novel would have more than satisfied and engaged me; the extra stuff was simply bothersome.

But despite some extravagance and unnecessary complexity, I devoured *The Cookbook Collector*. Allegra Goodman’s writing is rich and passionate, filling the reader up with memorable characters, scenes, and images. Like an elaborate seven-course dinner, I savored each course and then waited eagerly for the next development in the story. Treat yourself to *The Cookbook Collector*. In a world of buying and spending, losing and gaining, *The Cookbook Collector* offers a hopeful perspective: no matter how digital and speculative things may become, family and love remains.

Cartoon

BY MARY LAIDLAW



MOUNT GREYLOCK RESPONDS TO ISSUES OF RACISM

By REBEKEH PACKER

On November 17, 2010, images were found in the Greylock football locker room, including a Confederate flag and pictures of Greylock students that were perceived to be derogatory. The images were taken down immediately. Faculty, students, and parents were contacted, and the students responsible for the images received consequences guided by the student handbook.

Mount Greylock contacted a local group called BRIDGE to help deal with the issues this event brought up. During December, BRIDGE held three Cultural Competency workshops at Mount Greylock, each with about fifteen people: three hours with the football team, three hours with a group of selected students, and a day with a group of faculty members. Work with BRIDGE is ongoing; the next workshop is scheduled for February 1st.

In September, Dean of Students Lynn Penna attended a workshop with BRIDGE and was impressed. Ms. Penna says that when the administration started “figuring out ways to address kids that were making some really poor choices, and empower kids that make good choices every day...I thought of Gwen right away.”

Gwendolyn VanSant is the director of Multicultural BRIDGE (Berkshire Resource for the Integration of Diverse Groups and Education). The Cultural Competency Training at Greylock aims to increase communication and help students and faculty talk about prejudices. “We try to tailor [the workshop] to wherever we are,” says VanSant, depending on “what issues are important.” In the workshops, students identified diversity issues at Greylock; BRIDGE showed the list of issues to the faculty. Diversity issues are “not really on their radar,” says VanSant, and part of BRIDGE’s work is an attempt at “turning their radar on.”

The incident in November was “upset-

ting to a lot of people,” says superintendent Rose Ellis. Football coach Sean Flaherty says when he learned about the images: “It was awful. I went to Greylock, and I know how things are reflective of the team.” He adds that he was upset with himself “because I had missed it... I saw one picture, and I guess I felt like the guys were just teasing each other.”

A member of the football team agrees: “At first it was taken as a joke, so I thought they were funny, but after we got in trouble for it, I thought they were kind of racist.”

Ms. Penna recognizes that: “I don’t think kids are saying the words always with the intent of using it as a racial slur.” But she says, “Your intent when you said the words doesn’t matter at this point, because the impact you’re having on the other side is what we’re trying to address... When you start to impact other kids in a way that they don’t feel comfortable, that’s not okay.”

“We’re very secluded [in] the ‘Village Beautiful,’” says Coach Flaherty. In a community as homogeneous as Mount Greylock, it is sometimes hard for students to gauge which words are offensive. Student Oona Wood says, “The fact that [Mount Greylock] is not diverse definitely would affect it, because people that are minorities would feel even more isolated.”

Mr. Payne agrees: “We don’t see as much physical diversity, and we’ll make comments, there’ll be actions, and there’s just not that push-back.”

Dr. Ellis says, “There aren’t the opportunities for our students to interface with differences...I’m not sure they have a level of understanding or appreciation for diversity or cultural differences.” But she emphatically adds, “Even though we don’t have a lot of diversity here doesn’t mean we should be in a place where we can’t accept it and certainly embrace it.”

Dr. Ellis calls the work with BRIDGE “an incremental approach. Let’s start small so we can understand the dynamics of the event and how it affected people.” After the introductory workshops in December to identify Greylock’s diversity issues, BRIDGE is beginning a series of trainings. Mr. Payne says, “The next step is to form an adult leadership team, and then have high school students certified [as Youth Ambassadors].” The faculty group will present to

“Even though we don’t have a lot of diversity here doesn’t mean we should be in a place where we can’t accept it and certainly embrace it,” said Dr. Ellis

the rest of the staff in March. The Youth Ambassadors will be leaders in the school community. They may make presentations to their peers, lead by example, or travel the county with BRIDGE.

Coach Flaherty says the BRIDGE workshop “would be a rewarding thing for every student in the school to go through... I think that BRIDGE still has a lot more to offer, and we should take advantage of that.” According to Ms. Penna, “It helps to have a fresh new face...and [VanSant has] been very helpful about sharing stories of what other schools or community organizations have struggled with... It helps you balance how you go forward...”

Mr. Payne says that involving an outside organization also makes sure the school

stays on track in dealing with diversity issues. “A school is busy—students get older, students graduate...and there’s always the next project that gets bumped off. But the building and the community has a longer memory.” He says people often bring up incidents from several years ago, and even isolated events affect the school’s image in the community. “It doesn’t matter if it’s only been a handful of things over a ten year expanse. People live here, people connect that [to the school].

So my hope with BRIDGE is that they can help us stay on the work... so it doesn’t get bumped off the list of things to do.”

At the end of the workshops, students answered Post Assessment Questions. Each student said what he or she could do to make a difference: answers included “think more about my actions,” “speak up calmly when I see someone saying or doing

something hurtful,” and “don’t fall into the drama.” They also discussed new concerns related to diversity, including sexual orientation, race, and gender. Finally, twenty-two out of twenty-three students said yes to the question, “Do you want to become a welcoming Mount Greylock student?”

“I thought that the guys responded extremely well,” said Coach Flaherty. “We can take an unfortunate incident that happened in the school and in the team and turn it into a positive. Where we go from there is going to be the lasting message that we can send to the community.”

More information about Multicultural BRIDGE can be found at www.multiculturalbridge.org.

THE “DIRTY DANCING” DEBATE

By ALYSSA TOMKOWICZ

Although the Homecoming dance was over three months ago, the controversies surrounding that night are still sitting heavily in the minds of both the administration and the school community as a whole.

In early January, Mr. Payne called a meeting with the senior class officers, Kim Houston, Geena Chang, Rachel Down, and Alyssa Tomkowicz, and the senior class advisor, Ms. Murray. This meeting was primarily set up to get approval for the next high school dance, but soon the discussion turned to the Homecoming dance. Mr. Payne stated that he would not sign off on another dance until the controversy of the previous dance had been fully addressed and steps were taken to help all students feel comfortable.

The scene in the Mountie Dome on the night of October 23rd was a familiar one for all sophomores, juniors, and seniors. The middle gym was dimly lit as popular dance music blasted through the speakers. Many freshmen treated this dance as a learning experience; they immersed themselves in the high school dance culture. And, much to the horror of parents and chaperones, this immersion included “grinding.”

Grinding is the primary form of dance

employed at Mount Greylock dances. Without going into great detail, grinding

their children, many freshmen parents called the school to complain about what



is a sexually suggestive form of dancing that is in practice at numerous dances and clubs. The sight of a gymnasium full of teenagers engaging in this style of dance can be an alarming image for anybody not familiar with this display. After having this dancing described to them by

they feel is an inappropriate activity.

Once a student enters high school, the thrills of growing up and gaining some sort of maturity are fully palpable. A high school dance seems to represent a certain rite of passage: a night when everyone dresses up, takes pictures with

their friends, and spends the night at a whole-school party. It should be everyone’s hope that all attendees to this event feel comfortable. For a majority of the freshmen class, this dance was already a nerve-wracking prospect because it was a completely new experience. The shock of witnessing the dancing was short-lived for a few who accepted the norm and joined in on the dancing. But for the ones that didn’t accept it right away, the night became uncomfortable. That is the primary issue regarding the dancing that takes place at Mount Greylock: the issue of ensuring everyone is comfortable.

So, will grinding stop? Can the administration enforce dancing guidelines and restrictions? The issue is still up for debate. Students should use discretion when dancing and realize that they are at a school-sponsored event, not a night-club. Anyone feeling uncomfortable should not feel pressured to participate and their peers should respect their wishes. A school dance should be a time to socialize with classmates and forget about the stresses of life for a few hours. Therefore, at the next dance, all students should try to ensure there is a comfortable and enjoyable environment for everyone.

GIRLS' HOOPS

By ALEX WHITE

After a steady start to the season, the Mount Greylock girls' basketball team has had quite a hectic stretch as of late. Senior captain Sarah Brink went down with an ankle injury six minutes into a 43-38 win over Lenox. Brink, a force on both sides of the ball, left the court after landing awkwardly and twisting her knee. The Mounties needed to find a replacement for their leading scorer, and up stepped eighth-grader Lucy Barrett, scoring seventeen points to lead the Mounties to victory. She hit a buzzer beater to end the first quarter on a good note and then continued where she left off in the second quarter by nailing a three to give Greylock a seven-point lead. Barrett, who, until two weeks ago was on JV, has provided a spark to the team. In a resounding 66-19 drubbing of St. Joe, she nailed four shots from beyond the arc in a row to

put an exclamation point on the win.

Captains for this year's squad are seniors Brink, Kim Houston, and Siri Mason, while juniors Kaylene Lemme and Caitie Benoit are both having strong seasons. The rest of the squad consists of senior Marissa Ericson, junior Sierra Holland, and freshman Jamie Bondini - all putting in tough minutes both offensively and defensively for the Mounties. When asked about her thoughts on the season, Houston said, "It's been a solid year so far, and we hope to pick up some momentum as the season progresses." The Mounties may not have a deep lineup, but everyone can play at a high level and make an impact on the game. As injuries heal down the stretch, look for the Greylock girls to make a late season charge into the playoffs.

WRESTLING

By LUKE COSTLEY

The Mount Greylock wrestling team has, in many ways, evolved over the past several years. The Mounties were once a large presence within the school, generating big teams and a passionate following of new recruits every year. Recently, that has not been the case. The team has only a handful of Mount Greylock students on the roster, and relies heavily on a co-op program with nearby high schools. In fact the co-op has become necessary to field a team, with the majority of athletes coming from Hoosac, Drury and McCann.

Despite this new dynamic, the end result in terms of wins and losses has remained the same. The Greylock squad has continued to be a force in Berkshire County, but has also had significant success in the region. Two major tournaments stand out on the season's schedule: the Dean Tech

tournament and the Cohoes Invitational. At Dean Tech, the team was able to showcase individual talents; and at Cohoes, the team won for the first time.

Now, as the winter moves into the postseason, the team prepares for Western Mass individual and team tournaments. Key Mounties Josh Hadley, Anthony Carvalho, and Sean O'Connor will all be vying for titles in their respective weight classes. And veteran Coach Miro, who surpassed the impressive 500 win-mark this year, believes that it is now that his wrestlers will buckle down, focus, and excel. At this point, the priority will be on making weight, healing injuries, and peaking for the most important time of year. If history is any indication, the Mounties will be as ready as ever.

FACES IN THE CROWD: SEAN O'CONNOR

By TOM DILS

Junior Sean O'Connor has grown into a dominant wrestler in Berkshire County and a leader of the first place Greylock team. He also ran in the top seven for the Mounties this fall on their way to a Western Mass title. We sat down and asked him a few questions about the wrestling season and his passion for his sports.

Echo: What makes wrestling such a rewarding sport?

Sean: The most rewarding part of wrestling is competing individually and not being able to blame anyone else for your failures. Not to diminish the team aspect of wrestling, it would not be as rewarding if all of the hard work was only for individual benefit. The real glory comes from helping your team win.

Echo: What are some of your goals for the 2010-2011 season?

Sean: My main goal this season is to place in Western Mass and compete in States.

Echo: Mount Greylock has always been dominant in wrestling. What are some aspects of the program that sets it apart from others?

Sean: It starts with the great coaching we get. Coach Miro, Coach Miller, and

the other coaches put a lot of their time into helping the team accomplish what we are capable of. Also, the team has a lot of kids willing to give it their all and that's what a team needs.

Echo: Wrestling and cross-country running are very different sports. Do you think balancing your training helps each individual sport?

Sean: Obviously cross-country running and wrestling are not the most similar sports, but training for one does help the other. Running all summer and throughout the fall does a great deal for the conditioning needed for wrestling. Similarly wrestling through the winter builds a toughness and discipline that is needed for the aches and pains of a long, harsh summer run.

Echo: What is your favorite sports memory?

Sean: My favorite sports memory would have to be from the Springstead invitational in New York during the 2010 cross-country season. My main goal for the season was to set a PR for every race and this was only the third race. I had a pretty bad race leaving me feeling down. Luckily when we got our times back I saw that I ran one second faster than I had the previous season, which was a huge lift in spirits for the season ahead.

FREEZE FRAME



Greg Karabinos leads a pack of Mountie Nordic skiers up a hill at the school. Freezing temperatures did not deter the Nordic ski team from hosting a home race on Saturday, January 22nd.

Photo: Ken Kuttner

TUNNEL CITY COFFEE

NORTH ADAMS
115 STATE STREET

413-458-5010

WILLIAMSTOWN
100 SPRING STREET

GSD TAKES SCHOOL BY STORM

The main news event at Mount Greylock for the month of January was the string of well-timed snowstorms that dumped powder, ice, sleet, and all that's in between on Berkshire County. Students, parents, and teachers tracked the weather patterns on Greylock Snowday Blog, better known as GSD. The blog, complete with witty commentary, flashy graphics, a freakishly accurate Confidence Meter, and even Youtube videos, has truly taken the school by storm. As of the Echo's print date, there had been over 14,600 views of the blog. Although GSD refuses to take responsibility for any zeroes students receive as a result of not doing their homework and then having to go to school due to a faulty prediction, it is becoming safe to say that students and teachers alike are putting a great deal of faith in the weathermen at GSD. So far, they've hit the mark every time.

GSD CONFIDENCE METER

STORM -- 1/25 or 26

VOLUME -- Snowmageddon??

TIMING -- ??

ICE -- no

SUPER -- neutral

% SNOW DAY -- 25%

% DELAY -- 0%

Students have begun to live by the GSD Confidence Meter, which assesses the likelihood of a snowday.



Bring on the snow. Graphics like this, depicting a Major Snow Event, make MG students' hearts sing.

ACRONYMS EXPLAINED

GSD -- Greylocksnowday

AC -- Alberta clipper

MSE -- Major Snow Event

MP -- Mixed Precipitation

NOAA -- National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration

NWS -- National Weather Service

TWC -- The Weather Channel

VB -- the Village Beautiful

WSW -- Winter Storm Watch or Warning

The Mount Greylock community is becoming well-versed in GSD terminology.

CHECK IT OUT @ [HTTP://GREYLOCKSNOWDAY.BLOGSPOT.COM/](http://greylocksnowday.blogspot.com/)

SUCCESS ON THE SLOPES

By TOM DILS

Alpine, or downhill skiing, is a little celebrated test of extreme athleticism. It's not like most other sports, a battle against the mountain rather than an opposing team or individual. Skiers must push the balance of speed and control to the absolute limit. This winter, the Mt. Greylock Alpine Ski Team is pushing the limits of success. With veteran skiers at the top, a new coaching staff, and plenty of young talent and depth, the Mounties are reaching towards the top while racing past the competition. Undefeated in three country races

The 2010-2011 Greylock alpine team has been a long time in the making. Senior captains Connor Krell and Zach Hanson have been skiing together since seventh grade, and juniors Kent Hanson and Eli Burnham are both in their fifth year of high school racing. With plenty of veteran leadership, the youngest two members of the squad, freshmen Ryan Kuhn and Nick DiS-

anti, can learn and improve without much pressure being forced on them. This group of six core skiers gives the Mounties unequaled depth compared to other schools in county. Greylock has the firepower to challenge the best skiers they face, but they also one of the strongest backs of the lineup. With these guys providing consistent times, the fastest skiers have the opportunity to push for even quicker times. As a result the Mounties have not won a race yet as a team by fewer than five seconds, a feat any team should be proud of in sport that often comes down to the closest milliseconds.

Just as important as the athlete is the coach, and the alpine team has a brand new coaching staff, with Jeff McCumber as the head coach and Rob Santore assisting. "They are very motivational and dedicate a lot of time into making everyone on the team a better skier,"

said Connor Krell. The new coaches know skiing well through experience and passion for the sport. But Coach McCumber is quick to award praise to his team. "I think they have exceeded my expectations, I'm impressed with their focus and hard work," he said. His strategy is to make the racers better skiers first, and then better ski racers. This is certainly paying off, because the coaches have their team posting individual bests and ranking highly in the county. Another fact that shows the coaches' ability: the Greylock team never practices at Bousquet Mountain—the hill where they race—while every other team they face does. To be able to win as Greylock is doing without training on the course at all is quite an accomplishment, and it shows that the skiers have a more complete knowledge of how to race. The new coaches have brought energy and expertise to the Mt. Greylock Alpine

team, and the results are taking care of themselves.

Looking towards the end of the season, Greylock is the clear favorite to finish first in the county. As long as they can avoid injuries and keep crossing the finish line, they should continue to grab first place results. But this team is not just looking at the competition in the county; they believe they have a shot at winning states. Greylock has had state championship alpine teams before, but not since the early 2000s. With this season's abundance of talent and the dedicated, well-versed coaching staff, the 2010-2011 squad has a chance to return Mt. Greylock to its former glory. "We have a great chance at winning states," said Krell. "Zach and I have been working hard for six years to get to where we are now, and we would hate to go out with any losses."