

THE SCHOOL BUILDING TURNS 50

Built in 1961, the building has suffered a collapsed roof and broken boiler in the past year alone.

By RORI BROWN

Fifty years ago, a state of the art school was built—a school with not only an amazing view and vast expanse of land for athletic and leisure activities, but also brand new, up-to-date facilities in terms of the building itself. This year, we say happy birthday to that school—our school. Fifty years does not seem all that old for a building; many homes in the area are twice that age or older. One thing is for sure, though, and it is that at fifty

years, our school is showing signs of age.

When it comes to the state of the building, Superintendent Rose Ellis is optimistic. “Right now,” she explains, “the goal of the school committee is to discuss the building’s needs for the future.” Currently, the administration is considering extensive renovations or a new building altogether. If the funds are available, it seems obvious to choose the exciting prospect of a new building;

however, plans for the future of the building are still in the preliminary stages. In 2006, the Dore and Whittier Feasibility Study was performed, which gave a complete analysis of the building’s needs. The results gave two choices: major renovations or complete replacement. Since then, Mount Greylock sends a Statement of Interest (SOI) to the

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“If you can dodge a wrench...”



At the Dodgeball Tournament on Friday, March 11, junior Kaylene Lemme winds up for a shot. The annual tournament is a fundraiser for the class of 2011.

Photo courtesy of Annie Flynn

SUSPENSION: IN OR OUT OF SCHOOL?

By HALLIE WALKER

Room E501 at Mount Greylock is now functioning as The Student Support Center, or SSC, from 8:00 AM to 2:21 PM. New as of February, the SSC was created for two main purposes: to provide a place for in-school suspensions and a place for students who have broken the code of conduct within their classrooms.

Suspensions are and have been a topic of concern among the student body and the administration. Earlier this year, students were alarmed by the implementation of suspensions they considered unwarranted. The Student Council addressed the issue, and, after deliberation, the Student Council drafted a statement to the School Council suggesting “that the school’s disciplinary policy should be changed to better recognize the severity of the repercussions that can result from a suspension.” The Student Council recommended the addition of an appeals process for students who felt their suspension was undeserved or unjust. The appeal would take place after the student served their suspension. A successful appeal would allow the suspension to be stricken from the student’s

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Call me Ishmael

By CALEB RAYMOND

On Thursday, March 10, the meeting room at Mount Greylock had been completely changed. Most of the chairs and a flag had been piled in one corner to resemble a ship, and a podium had been set up. Although many students would regard staying at Greylock for the night as a nightmare, Mrs. Ames’s eleventh grade AP English class was there to stay. They brought in sleeping bags, floor pads, plenty of snacks and copies of Herman Melville’s classic, *Moby Dick*. The plan was to stay up overnight to read through all of *Moby Dick* in one long sitting. The read-a-thon began at 3:00 PM on Thursday with Ned Kleiner, who read the opening line to the enthusiastic applause of his classmates. He was followed by other readers, who took turns reading a section of the book, for either a half-hour or an hour. After a long narrative filled with harpooners, sailors, and one notorious white whale, the read-a-thon ended on Friday afternoon, around 21 hours after it had begun.

Congratulations to all the readers, who hopefully will be able to make up the lost sleep! ■■

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“MIXED” BIOLOGY DEBATED

By REBEKEH PACKER

Biology classes at Mt. Greylock, unlike physics classes or chemistry classes, are heterogeneous—that is, honors and college prep level students are in the same class. Honors and college prep students receive the same lectures, but are “held to different standards” on tests and assignments, says biology teacher Larry Bell. Mixed classes are partly designed to give students more flexibility with their other classes, because there are more periods available in the day for each student to take biology. Mixed biology also increases “the quality of education for most students,” says biology teacher Rebecca Green.

Biology is not the only heterogeneous subject: anatomy also offers two levels in one class, and many history or language classes don’t divide students by level at all.

This year, however, some students have expressed concerns about their experiences with heterogeneous biology. “Regular biology should be going at a slower pace,” says Oona Wood, an honors level junior. “If the teacher fits the curriculum to the honors biology, then a lot of the regular students fall behind because it’s going too fast. But if they fit the curriculum to the regular biology, then a lot of the honors students feel bored.”

Katie Rathbun, a college prep student, says her mixed biology class is “harder than last year’s [science class] for sure... College prep students like to go at a slower pace than the honors students.”

Bell says, “I think in any class some students are going to feel the pace is too fast.” Green says she would probably not “slow down the pace in a [homogeneous] college prep course, because the material that we cover I would want to cover in a college prep course. I might go into less detail [than in an honors class or] require less specific vocabulary.” This is essentially what happens in mixed biology. All students learn the chapters at the same time, but as Bell puts it, “There’s a different level of accountability or evaluation.”

Doing the same basic classwork as the college prep level

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1 in 650: An Interview with Isabel Füssel

By LUKE COSTLEY



Isabel shares with us her experiences in being an exchange student from Germany and the differences among the schools she has attended.

Photo: Luke Costley

Q: Can you give us some basic background information on who you are, where you are from, and what brought you to Mount Greylock?

A: I was raised in Bavaria, a German state on the southern border with Austria. The main city of Bavaria is Munich, but I lived in a small town not far from there. I came to the United States this year as part of an exchange program that led me first to Berlin, New York, then second semester brought me here to Mount Greylock.

Q: What are your impressions of American school? How does Greylock compare with your school in Germany?

A: School here is different. Mainly, I get to choose what classes I take and very few classes are required. In Germany, everybody takes the same classes, most of which you are forced to take. I’ve actually found that the tests here are easier. Even though in Germany we do not have different levels—such as honors, regular or Advanced Placement—the tests are very difficult.

Q: And in terms of living situations, what are the differences in terms of life outside school?

A: I have noticed how in the United States, if you want to see a friend, it really depends on having a car. But in Germany there are many ways for me to get around with ease. The towns are not so spread out and I can either walk or take some sort of public transportation.

Q: When you first arrived in Berlin (NY), was it difficult to overcome a language barrier of any type?

A: Well, I’ve been taking English classes in school for the past six years, but I learned most of my conversational skills in my time at Berlin. Even though I had been learning the language since fifth grade, I have started to understand much more about speaking it in the past few months.

Q: Now that you have your bearings in the country and at the school, will you be involved in anything outside your typical day-to-day?

A: I am planning on doing track and field this spring, and I wanted to do the musical but I arrived too late. I also did cross-country and played basketball at Berlin.

Q: Okay, and finally, just to boost our confidence, which school is better: Berlin High in New York or Greylock?

A: I like it here much more. Again, the schools are different, but here the school is bigger and the food is definitely a lot better. ■■

Interview has been edited and condensed.

To nominate a student for 1 in 650, contact the editors at mountgreylockecho@gmail.com.

MR. KURDI



Kim DiLego interviews the new chorus teacher.

Page 3 Photo: Hannah Paul

SPORTS

The upcoming softball, baseball, and track seasons are previewed.

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CROSSWORD

Mr. Dils is back and better than ever.

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FILM

Maggie Crane addresses Hollywood’s remake addiction.

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VEGGIES GALORE!

The Youth Environmental Squad prepares to help plant a garden.

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Photo: Naomi LaChance

SUSPENSION: IN OR OUT OF SCHOOL?

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record. The School Council is still considering these suggestions.

The number of suspensions at Mount Greylock also alarmed members of the administration. According to Principal Tim Payne, the number of suspensions for drugs, weapons or violence is small, but minor, "silly" infractions that are currently named in the Student Handbook as "suspendable offenses" increase the number of suspensions. For example, being in an unauthorized area, like the Cold Corridor, warrants a suspension. Because each out-of-school suspension is documented and reported to the state, overuse of the punishment can negatively affect the school, a problem the Superintendent wanted to fix. The new SSC addresses that concern.

In past years, students with behavioral problems have been sent to the Principal's Office for in-class misbehavior or sent home for more serious offenses. The Student Support Center aims to implement a "Therapeutic Intervention Model that will lower the number of suspensions...using the reflection process to help students recognize negative behaviors and positive alternatives." Under the new system, a teacher would be responsible for completing a Student Support Center Referral Form to send with a disruptive student to the SSC.

Shawn Flaherty, the paraprofessional assigned to the SSC, oversees the completion of the "Student Reflection" form by the offending student. The form asks the student to describe why he or she was sent to the SSC, circle which "Mount Greylock School expectation" he or she did not observe and identify whether he or she "learned [what] to do differently next time." Both the Referral and Student Reflection Forms are reviewed every Monday by the Student Support Team. The team is made up of a group of administrators consisting of the Principals, Dean of Students, School-Adjustment and Guidance Councilors, and Director of Student Services. According to Payne, the purpose of the review session is to "help students who are in trouble and talk to teachers who are in the wrong." This process, he says, is meant to improve administrator oversight of discipline, improve the environment for misbehaving students and decrease the out-of-school suspension rate.

Not all members of the Greylock community see the benefits of the Student Support Center. One Greylock teacher, who wishes to remain anonymous, feels that the new system is "putting more of an onus on teachers, when [calling home and the Referral are] more of an administration duty." The teacher is not

planning to use it because "it's too much work," pointing out the difficulty of further interrupting class to take the time to give a detailed disciplinary explanation.

Students also found fault with the system. Looking over the SSC Reflection Form, Juniors Luke Costley, Rebekeh Packer, and Leah Miller found the questions "condescending."

"It makes me feel like I'm in first grade," says Costley, "The intention's fine, but if a kid gets in trouble, they're really going to have to respect the system to fill this out with seriousness."

Miller refers to the P.R.I.D.E. acronym for Mount Greylock School expectations, saying, "Kids hate this stuff, I hate this stuff. As a rebellious teenager, I think it's stupid."

Looking to the future, the administration hopes to revise the Handbook to reflect the changes implemented in disciplinary policy and expand the uses of the Student Support Center to ensure that there are safety nets for at-risk students at Mount Greylock.

"I understand the idea of making kids conscious of what they've done wrong," says Packer, "but I don't think [the administration] can do that by making them fill out a survey." ■■

21 Hours, 135 Chapters, 20 Students and 1 Fated Whaling Ship



Junior Logan Wilson reads *Moby Dick* aloud while classmate Hallie Walker follows along during the read-a-thon on Thursday, March 10.

Photo: Aaron Ziemer



Juniors Kyle Robataille, left, and Anthony Carvahlo look at protists in biology class. The course has been both criticized and praised recently for its mixing honors and college prep students.

Photo: Katie Rathbun

"MIXED" BIOLOGY DEBATED

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students, says honors student Rori Brown, was "tedious" to her.

But Bell points out, "The research shows that a heterogeneous class will benefit far more students than it will hold back."

The Mt. Greylock Student Council looked into mixed biology classes this year, says Brown, a junior class representative, because it had received "a lot of student concerns." It issued a survey, which asked each student what he or she felt were the effects the mixed class. The results were "basically neutral," Brown said. The strong negative opinions and strong positive opinions were both there, but they mostly canceled each other out, and many students didn't seem to care.

For example, junior Quentin Anderson, a college prep student, says, "I don't think it's affecting my education at all...As long as I don't have honors work, I don't really mind it."

Brown feels that "school should be about self-motivation," and she argues that if mixed classes confer most of the benefits on the lowest-level students, they are "basically helping to drag along the kids who don't want to succeed."

However, many college prep students do feel the benefits of heterogeneous classes. "It pushes us a little bit," says Kyle Robotaille, a junior in college prep. Another junior, Vanessa Lopez, says she likes having high-level students in her class: "I'm not great at biology, and I can go ask a student for help, and they will give it to me."

Bell says he likes the class dynamics in heterogeneous classes, where he says "student effort" and "attention in class" increase. He also likes that it encourages students to break out of the skill-levels they "pigeonhole" themselves into. "It's fun to watch kids shine even if they're not in the honors section, especially in lab."

Deborah Kasak, the executive director of the National Forum to Accelerate Middle Grades Reform, told the *New York Times* that in heterogeneous classes, "We see improvements in student behavior, academic performance and teaching, and all that positively affects school

culture."

Midyear, Green gave a class evaluation to her students. Using the results, she redesigned her curriculum somewhat to challenge the honors students more. College prep students answer questions from the textbook, while honors kids choose between a project, SAT 2 tests, or a paper.

"It was sort of a drastic change," says Brown. "Now there's a really heavy workload, but it's better...I'm actually learning."

Some honors student are not so pleased. "I was happy with how things were going," says senior Marta Kowitz. "Although some honors kids didn't like the amount of review... I appreciate talking as a class and going over questions."

Senior Cate Costley says, "Even though [the new system] was made with the best intentions, there's been a little bit of confusion in class."

Green explains the confusion: "The classwork assignments are new, so I think students are getting used to them." Costley acknowledges, "I think we need a little bit longer to figure it out."

It is difficult to come up with a system beneficial to everyone. Green says, "I try to make sure I'm challenging everybody, but also make it understandable for everybody." However, she says she is "a big supporter" of the heterogeneous class system. Bell also firmly believes in the method. "I think it's a popular misconception people have," he says, "that the honors kids are going to be held to a less rigorous standard. That doesn't need to happen."

Costley and Brown—two honors students—both said they felt their current class was rigorous enough. "[The teachers are] working towards making it more rigorous for us," says honors student Mary Tremblay.

The biology teachers want to provide the best possible education for the most students possible. Green says, "If there are students who are confused, they should come and talk to me personally." Both teachers welcome students to come to them with any concerns about the course. ■■

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Editor's note: any community member is welcome to submit letters to mountgreylockecho@gmail.com. The Echo reserves the right to publish edited or excerpted letters.

An Ocean of Gratitude

The recent fantastic, wonderful, exciting, bonding, terrific, tiring, fun marathon reading of *Moby Dick* has prompted me to send a short letter of thanks.

THANK YOU Mrs. Ames & Mrs. Keeley for supporting a rare and special celebration of Herman Melville's behemoth work "*Moby Dick*." THANK YOU Leah Miller for spearheading the 21-hour, overnight, marathon reading of *Moby Dick* by your 11th grade English class. I deeply appreciate Mrs. Ames and Mrs. Keeley's commitment to, and respect of, our students. Bravo to all the readers!

Signed,
A grateful Greylock parent

The 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, photographers, artists, and editors. Any Mt. Greylock student is welcome to submit material or join the Echo staff.

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YES Ready for Spring

The Youth Environmental Squad is planting a vegetable garden whose crops will be served in the cafeteria.

By EVELYN MAHON

Along with organizing Turn-Off Tuesdays, composting and recycling around the school, the Youth Environmental Squad (or YES) is also the driving force behind the school garden, which grows vegetables featured seasonally in the cafeteria.

Although it may seem early, YES has already started to order seeds for the garden. Only half of the cultivated area will grow produce, where the other half will be planted with buckwheat, a soil enricher.

Rebekeh Packer, current President of YES, says she is "delighted to get the garden up and running and excited to learn more about gardening."

Until spring arrives, YES members will be working in the greenhouse. Before anything can be planted in the garden itself, the seedlings will need to be grown for a few months in sterilized pots. Since the garden requires so much attention, YES members will be working in the greenhouse nearly every day for the rest of the year.

Packer adds that YES has "received a grant over the winter for 1,000 dollars, and even raised 300 dollars of our own last fall." The money will go towards seeds and gardening equipment.

What most people didn't know, however, is that most of the food from the garden goes directly to the Mount Greylock cafeteria, saving the school money and giving students healthier, organic vegetable options. This year, YES is working with Judy Richardson, the head of the cafeteria, to help our school get the maximum benefit from the garden. "Last year she made a quiche with the first harvest of spinach, and last fall she made three different kinds of potato salad, which we handed out samples of at the Open Houses," says Packer. Many of the crops grown this year will be used in school lunches, mainly in the salad line.

If you're interested in joining YES or just getting involved in the garden, send an email to greengreylock@gmail.com. ■■



Seniors Sam Rydell, left, and Alyssa Tomkowicz participate in one of YES's initiatives, composting at lunch.

Photo: Dominique Chenail-Briggs

24 HOURS OF STUDENT ART AT MASS MOCA

By EMILY KAEGI

MASS MoCA recognized local student artists for their art last week. Twenty-two pieces from Mt. Greylock were chosen by Ms. DeSomma to be displayed at "Student Invitational 2011: 24 Hours of Art at MASS MoCA." On March 3rd, students from BART, Buxton, Drury High School, Mt. Greylock and Pine Cobble were invited to the opening. The art was displayed in one of MASS MoCA's huge galleries for 24 hours.

At the event, students from all five schools viewed each other's art. The art ranged from paintings and drawings to photography and even pottery, along with all sorts of other media. Along with the students' creations, some of the art teachers displayed their own work. To give her students a better idea of her own work, Ms. DeSomma decided to bring a number of her pieces to our school instead and they can be viewed in the gallery across from the art room. Besides students, a number of teachers and parents also attended the event. Food was provided for the opening by Lickety

Split and a local band, Rebel Alliance, performed downstairs.

Prizes of different levels were awarded to many of the artists. Both silver and gold prize winners were awarded cash, while the two grand prize winners were awarded an art class at MCLA. Mt. Greylock won a total of eight prizes; three silver, four gold and one of the grand prizes; which was awarded to Sarah Kelly.

After being displayed at MASS MoCA, the art was moved to the Eclipse Mill where it will stay from March 12 through March 27. Mt. Greylock artists have since completed more pieces that will be hung along with the pieces that were shown at MASS MoCA. For several years they have displayed student art at the Eclipse Mill, but this is the first year MASS MoCA has shown student art. With more gallery space than expected, Mt. Greylock students, under the guidance of Ms. DeSomma, are planning to go big for next year and leave the other schools awestruck. ■■



Ramsey Kurdi is the school's new chorus teacher for both high school and middle school.

Photo: Hannah Paul

GOOD DAY SUNSHINE



It seems that bitter winter has finally given way to spring. Sunny days of puddle jumping and kite flying ahead!

Photo: Naomi LaChance

WELCOME, MR. KURDI

By KIM DILEGO

Ramsey Kurdi has taken Marlene Walt's spot as the chorus teacher for high school and middle school. He has been working diligently the past few weeks, both by learning the ropes of the school and by preparing songs for the upcoming Spring Concert.

Q: What is your teaching experience prior to that at Mount Greylock?

A: I worked in Worcester for six years, but I was moved around a lot there. So I went on to work in Hopkinton for three years. A budget cut removed my program, so I had to leave. I looked on websites and found 75 hits for jobs. I wanted something close to my home in Northampton, and I ended up here.

Q: What were some of your first impressions here?

A: I was nervous; it had been a while since I had last taught. But I knew this was a successful group led by a wonderful teacher. It was daunting and I knew that the kids were nervous as well. It's like a strong horse: when it doesn't run for a while, it's not too happy.

Q: Are you a different teacher now than you were when you first started teaching?

A: Yes. I am wiser, that's for sure. With years of experience, though, comes the ability to establish new things. You don't have to worry about x, y, and z.

Q: How do you teach the middle schoolers versus the high schoolers?

A: I give the middle schoolers a bit of a break. They're young, but they're not a different species. The hormones of youth are not an excuse to not pay attention.

Q: Do you have any words of advice for your new students?

A: It's okay to be nervous, concerned, and upset, but don't live there.

Q: Explain to us about the snow delay that occurred on your first day.

A: I had four hours that morning to plan twenty minutes of material. I was still confident, regardless. If you know what you're doing, you do it right.

Q: What methods of teaching do you plan to use?

A: I am going to ask the kids for help. The other music teachers and many students have been very helpful. I don't plan to make any major changes. It's not fair to them if I change everything around.

Q: What is it like living in Northampton in relation to the school?

A: I'm hoping to move closer to here. Northampton is a tad too far away. I'm hoping to move to the Pittsfield or Route 9 area.

Q: What is your musical past?

A: I've been a musician since 1984. My middle school teacher begged me to join the chorus, which I finally did, mostly to shut him up. In the mid-'90s I began to play the bass for fun. I figured out very quickly that reading music is not easy. I prefer to listen and watch to learn. Don't think, just play.

Q: What other hobbies do you have?

A: I want to take up Kung Fu again in Pittsfield. It's relaxing. I'm also in a blues band.

Q: A blues band?

A: We are called the Walkin' Blues Band. I play the bass and am the lead singer for the band. It's my less professional job. ■■

Interview has been edited and condensed.

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Massachusetts School Building Authority every year appealing to the state government for support toward renovation or replacement. The MSBA then evaluates the status of the building and determines its response in terms of financing a building project. With the recent emergency renovations of the boilers and the locker rooms, it is possible that the MSBA will not see Mount Greylock's situation as urgent—from the state's point of view, lots of other schools need the renovation, too.

Dr. Ellis, however, remains positive.

"There was a hiatus during the emergency projects," she says, but reassures us that the movement toward a better building is back on track and we'll be able to "create

more momentum." She hopes we can create a twenty-first century school: one that is smaller, greener, and will hopefully reduce the school's impact on the environment. "The location is amazing," she says. "It has tremendous potential." In the meantime, before there is a definite plan regarding the future of our building, Dr. Ellis says work on it will continue. "I take the condition of the building very seriously," she states. She explains that the administration is striving to continually add little improvements here and there. Even small changes, like painting the walls, can add a new brightness to classrooms. There are ways to work with our current school, at least for the time being.

The Building Committee meets regularly to discuss the building's current status and its plans for the future. The faculty representative on this committee, Lyndon Moors, shares his knowledge of what the building has been like over the course of his teaching career here. In his experience, it has always been a "very inefficient and expensive building to run." He believes that either a comprehensive renovation or a new building is necessary to fix the problems the school has, including leaky windows, heaters which don't work, outdated science facilities, and an embarrassing auditorium. Additionally,

Mount Greylock does not comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act; lack of ramps prevents some people from accessing certain parts of the public school.

With the school's population considerably smaller than what it was when Greylock was first built, there remains much unnecessary, underutilized space. Mr. Moors goes on to add that if a new building is built, we could still have school in the old building until the new one is finished, thanks to the expansive property. In a new building, there are also many ways of ensuring that it is more

energy efficient, including the use of multiple stories to contain and centralize heating. "We don't realize how bad the school is," says Moors, "until we go to a nicer school...or until someone comes here and is shocked at what they see."

Other teachers also weigh in. Jeffrey Welch, a teacher of fourteen years at

Mount Greylock, says that in his time here, "the school has had its ups and downs." He says the auditorium is "a great public space," and it is regrettable that there are not larger improvements being made to it. Additionally, while many schools do not have beautiful views from every classroom, the school has interior courtyards that could be beautiful with a bit of work. Tom Murray adds that the building could have used a general renovation about ten years ago. "But," he says, "we have great kids at Greylock who excel despite what is around them." Trudy Ames adds that "[The building] is just a shell for our students...they deserve more."

A new building or major renovations would give Mount Greylock's school building the push it needs to make the best of its amazing location and charismatic, talented students and faculty. As Dr. Ellis suggests, we can all remain optimistic; as we say happy fiftieth birthday to our school this year, it can be with the assurance that steps toward improving the building are bringing us closer to our goal every day. ■■

"I take the condition of the building very seriously," says superintendent Rose Ellis.



From left, Miranda Park, Mary Laidlaw, and Blake Sherman backstage during *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, which was performed March 3, 4, and 5.
Photo: Leah Miller

Spring Drama Creatively Solves Setbacks

Six juniors to direct three one-act plays

By PEARL SUTTER & THE ECHO STAFF

Every spring, there is a play directed by two or three seniors. However, this year, two issues have sprung up involving the Spring Drama.

One of the issues this year was lack of seniors that wanted or were able to direct the Spring Drama. Fortunately, six juniors decided to step up and direct. These students are Maggie Crane, Peter Iwasiwka, Ned Kleiner, Naomi LaChance, Hannah Paul, and Charlie Sutter. The six students have split into three groups of two and each group will direct a one-act play. Crane and Kleiner are directing *Medusa's Tale* by Carol Lashof, a serious play with some "adult content" about Medusa, a character in Greek mythology. LaChance and Paul have decided to direct *Seven Menus* by David Ives, a comedic play that shows the round robin of relationships at a restaurant table. Iwasiwka and Sutter are directing a comedy called *The Actor* by Horton Foote, which is about a fifteen-year old who has to fight through many situations to become an actor. Sutter says, "Peter and I decided to choose this abstract comedy because we thought it would lighten the show up."

The other issue surrounding the Spring Play was that there was no adviser, as history teacher Tom Ostheimer preferred not to continue with the tradition. However, Roman Iwasiwka has volunteered to be the adviser.

Many students auditioned, including those that have never before tried acting. "I'm really excited for the Spring Play," said Paul. "We're all a little nervous since it's unprecedented, but I think it can be really good because so many talented people are involved."

Principal Tim Payne is excited for the show, and he does not want the Spring Play to disappear from Mount Greylock because, "the Spring Play has always been very entertaining. I find it a little edgier than the other theater productions we put on. Also the plays that are chosen are always great because they are really unique."

The title of all the plays put together into one production is, "A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Mediocrity," and the shows will take place on May 20 and 21. ■■

Editor's Note: The recent implementation of Directed Study has led some students to wonder whether being required to stay in a specific classroom is worth having the extra time to do work.

The ideas expressed in this cartoon reflect those of the individual artist and not those of the Mount Greylock Echo nor those of the High School.



By HALLIE WALKER

SOFTBALL

By ALEX WHITE

As the snow melts, the weather becomes milder and winter comes to a close, the Mount Greylock softball team looks forward to a new season. Coach June Blake has taken over the helm and hopes to provide a spark for the Mounties. Captains for the team are juniors Michaela Dinicola and Caitie Benoit. Both look to be leaders on and off the field. Sophomore pitcher Alexis Bushika is entering her third season as the Mounties' go-to player on the mound. With two years under her belt, she has matured into one of the county's best. Despite the Mounties' youth, they have experience far beyond their years. After struggling last season, they return almost the whole team in their pursuit of victory in 2011.

When asked about team goals, sophomore Anna Penna said there was a big focus on working together as a team instead of one or two people carrying the team on their backs. Heading into the spring, they're focusing on playing to their potential, being competitive in the county, and putting in hard work to keep improving as the season goes along. Coach Blake, who played for Western New England College, brings with her both knowledge of softball and a desire to win and develop all parts of the Mounties' game. No one is expecting the new coach to transform the team immediately, but with a spark of excitement and experienced leaders from the star players, the Mounties have the potential to improve and succeed. ■■

BASEBALL

By TOM DILS

Two seasons after the Mt. Greylock baseball team's wild run through the Western Mass bracket and into the state semifinals, nearly no one from the squad remains. That 2009 team won because of their core of senior leaders who stepped up throughout the season and in the playoffs to come through in the clutch. The 2011 team has just started their mission to emulate the Western Mass champions. Although the makeup of the team is different—what they gave up in power they gained in speed and defense—the 2011 Mounties are in a position for success. Led by a core of veteran seniors and featuring depth from up-and-coming sophomores and juniors, Greylock is set to embrace its position as a slight underdog in Berkshire County. It won't be easy to replace the talent they have lost, but the Mounties feel they will be able to turn some heads in the county. Right now, their emphasis is on coming together as a team to boost their performance.

First off, Greylock needs to find some pitching solutions to back up their ace and captain Tommy Nowlan. There are plenty of possibilities, including Kyle Byrnes, Eli Burnham, and Nick Zimmerman, to fill the number-two role. Nowlan will be called upon not only to perform at a high level, he will also need to help mentor these less experienced pitchers. On offense and defense, the lineup is more secure. Seniors Brandon Decelles, Kevin Agostini, junior Billy Pulasky, and sophomores Sean Houston, Andrew and Eric Leitch, and Eddie Dufur all hope to progress from role players to the stars and leaders of the team. Andrew Leitch will anchor the defense from his catcher position, and Sean Houston will lead the outfield from his place in center.

Both of these players have the chance to succeed on high levels this season despite their age, and with three full seasons left in their careers, they have the chance to become the best in the county at what they do.

Baseball is a highly specified and individualized sport, yet talent cannot achieve success without a team mentality. Besides Decelles and Houston, the Mounties lack some of the offensive power they have had the past few years. "We need to make this a team effort and get hits all the way through the lineup," said Billy Pulasky. "We need to do whatever it takes to get a win on any given night." This season, the Mounties will look to play more of a "small-ball" type of game: lots of singles, bunts, sacrifices, steals, and manufactured runs. This takes focus and heads-up baseball. Not always making the one big play, but combining many small ones and avoiding mistakes. Collectively, the 2011 Mounties have a high baseball IQ, and they must use this to overcome their lack of power on offense.

Pulasky also noted that this team seems to have a lot of confidence, perhaps feeling like they need to prove themselves. Being an underdog isn't such a bad position in a talented county, because the Mounties know that they can hang with anyone. In a sport like baseball, where a win is often decided by a couple clutch plays or a few costly errors, knocking off a favorite is always possible. For Greylock, with a strong pitcher and leader in Tommy Nowlan and a combination of experienced veterans and talented underclassmen, nothing should be ruled out yet. And if the Mounties can slip into the playoffs, there's no saying that they can't repeat what the team accomplished two years ago. ■■

For the Mount Greylock boys' track team, expectations are high; for the girls' team, expectations are even higher. The boys return a solid group of talented upper-classmen that will be able to contend in all areas of the sport and challenge for a league title. And the girls enter the season with the unavoidable target on their backs as five-time defending Berkshire County champions. Not to mention, both teams enjoy the luxury of gaining promising new talent across the board. Quite simply, girls' coach Brian Gill believes both teams would be selling themselves short to not set their sights on postseason success.

The girls' success takes root in the team's versatility and depth. Distance and mid-distance runners include Mackenzie Hitchcock,

TRACK

By LUKE COSTLEY

Kaylene Lemme, Kat Chenail, and Emily Kaegi. Liz Gorson and Jenna Phelps dominate both the 200 and 100-meter dash events, while Susie Shanley, Geena Chang and Oona Wood help out wherever and whenever, specializing in jumping and hurdling. It is this flexibility and wealth of talent that makes the girls so hard to beat.

The boys, though less successful by comparison, play a major role in the outcome of every meet and this could be a year to top them all. Similar to the girls' team, the boys have a balanced attack that is able to fill all starting slots. Matt Cheung makes it a three for three in endurance sports, leading the distance runners while Aaron Taylor, Matt Belouin, and Josh Hadley make up a core of mid-distance runners, hurdlers, and field

athletes. Finally, Kurt Schultheis and Nate Bishop cover the short events.

As evident by the impressive rosters, both teams will be hard to overcome. Further, the season's schedule benefits the team greatly. In past years, each week of the season was swallowed up by one or even two meets. This year, however, the league season is limited to only four meets, each one with more schools than previously. The new format means more training later in the year, and less burnout as the season progresses. This, in turn, will hopefully factor into both teams peaking at the right time of year. With all signs pointed toward success, it is hard to argue that the track program should be focusing anywhere but on another banner year. ■■



Last year's track team set standards high, winning Berkshire County champions. Junior Kurt Schulteis and freshman Emily Kaegi were integral parts of that team, and are expected to serve a similar role this year.

Photos: Katie Rathbun

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PREQUELS AND SEQUELS AND REMAKES, OH MY!

By MAGGIE CRANE

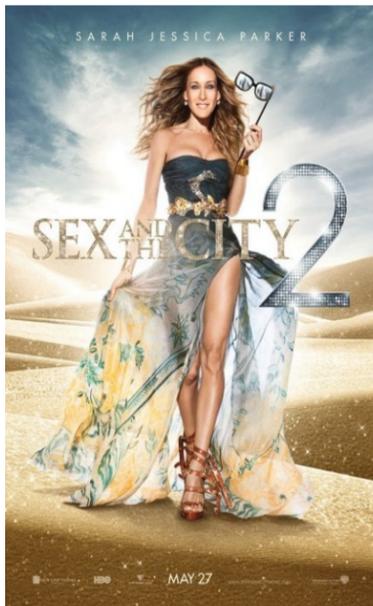
If you were to walk under any movie theater marquee, you would be bound to find two things. One, the newest installment of a bad blockbuster franchise, which probably took about two days to write and 150 million dollars to make. And two, a new 3-D movie that no one will ever remember in a few months, but will ultimately make some Hollywood producer very rich. Prequels, sequels and remakes of all sorts are being shoved down our throats in bad 3-D, and making good, imaginative films is almost a rarity. Alright, I'll admit, I cried like a baby at *Toy Story 3*, and a part of my soul will die when the last *Harry Potter* movie comes out this summer. I'm not that pretentious; but for the love of god! Hollywood needs to stop beating a very dead horse, no matter how much money that dead horse can make them.

It's not like sequels and remakes are a new thing. Hollywood has been making follow-ups ever since the early 1900s, and really, why wouldn't they? If something works the first time, why not do it again? It's an easy way to make money. People like Sylvester Stallone have even made it into an art form. By the time that man dies there will be at least 27 *Rockies*, 15 *Rambos* and maybe even one weird crossover of the two. I wouldn't put it past Stallone. Now it seems that every movie that makes over five dollars in the opening weekend and involves spandex suits or talking animals will automatically get a sequel, then a trilogy, then an agonizing fourth installment and at that point no one will remember why the first movie was made at all.

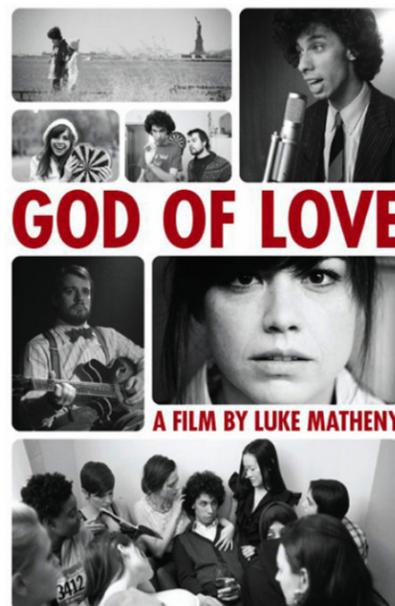
This year we were all witness to the fourth *Shrek* film, the second *Sex and The City* movie (apparently after six years on HBO and one movie they still hadn't slept with the entirety of Manhattan, so we needed a second one, obviously), a remake of *Tron* and even *Jackass* got a third part, putting it in the ranks of such films as *The Godfather*, *Lord of the Rings* and the original *Star Wars*. Bravo, *Jackass*. And next year we will see Johnny Depp plunge into sellout-dom with *Pirates of the Caribbean 4* (and *Pirates 5*

and 6 in the works. Come on Disney, just kill it already!), *Spider-Man 4* will come out with none of the original actors, and *Ghost Buster* will be the newest '80s movie to be slaughtered by a bad remake. As if we learned nothing from *Indiana Jones*. There is such thing as too much of a good thing. I know this; I once ate about 12 donuts in one sitting. Donuts are a beautiful thing, but I never felt so close to death. Hollywood needs to learn this lesson before they gorge themselves on bad sequels.

I hear people say over and over again that Hollywood is running out of ideas, that the reason we have so many sequels and prequels and remakes is because every movie idea has been used. This is malarkey! (Yes, I just used the word malarkey, that's how ridiculous this idea is.) Hollywood has not run out of ideas! As long as there are people on this earth with brains and imaginations and experiences there will never be a shortage of film ideas. With talented writers and directors you can make an interesting movie out of anything. *The Social Network*, the film that should have won best picture this year at the academy awards, is a movie about the invention of Facebook. David Fincher and Aaron Sorkin made a film about a bunch of Harvard nerds writing algorithms feel like an action movie. If you can make a movie about a d-bag with a laptop a future classic, then you cannot argue that Hollywood has run out of ideas. Hollywood is just lazy and more preoccupied with making a buck off forgettable blockbusters than making a real impact with



Maggie Crane urges readers to check out indie films (right) instead of a predictable sequel (left). Skinny jeans and ironic mustache recommended, but not required.



must be to read, but it's true. It's not always about the big explosions or the amount of money spent on effects, or even how many remakes you get. While all these things are fun, and definitely needed for those days when all you really want to see is some robot explosions (we all have those days), it is so important that we give low budget, independent films a chance.

The only tragedy about small film festivals like Williamstown, and even bigger festivals like Sundance or Tribeca, is that after the lights of the festivals go out, many of these films will never see the light of day or get the credit they deserve because they're not in 3D or starring Megan Fox in short shorts. The

world could be deprived of the next *Citizen Kane* all because of Hollywood's inability to produce more things that matter. But this can be fixed.

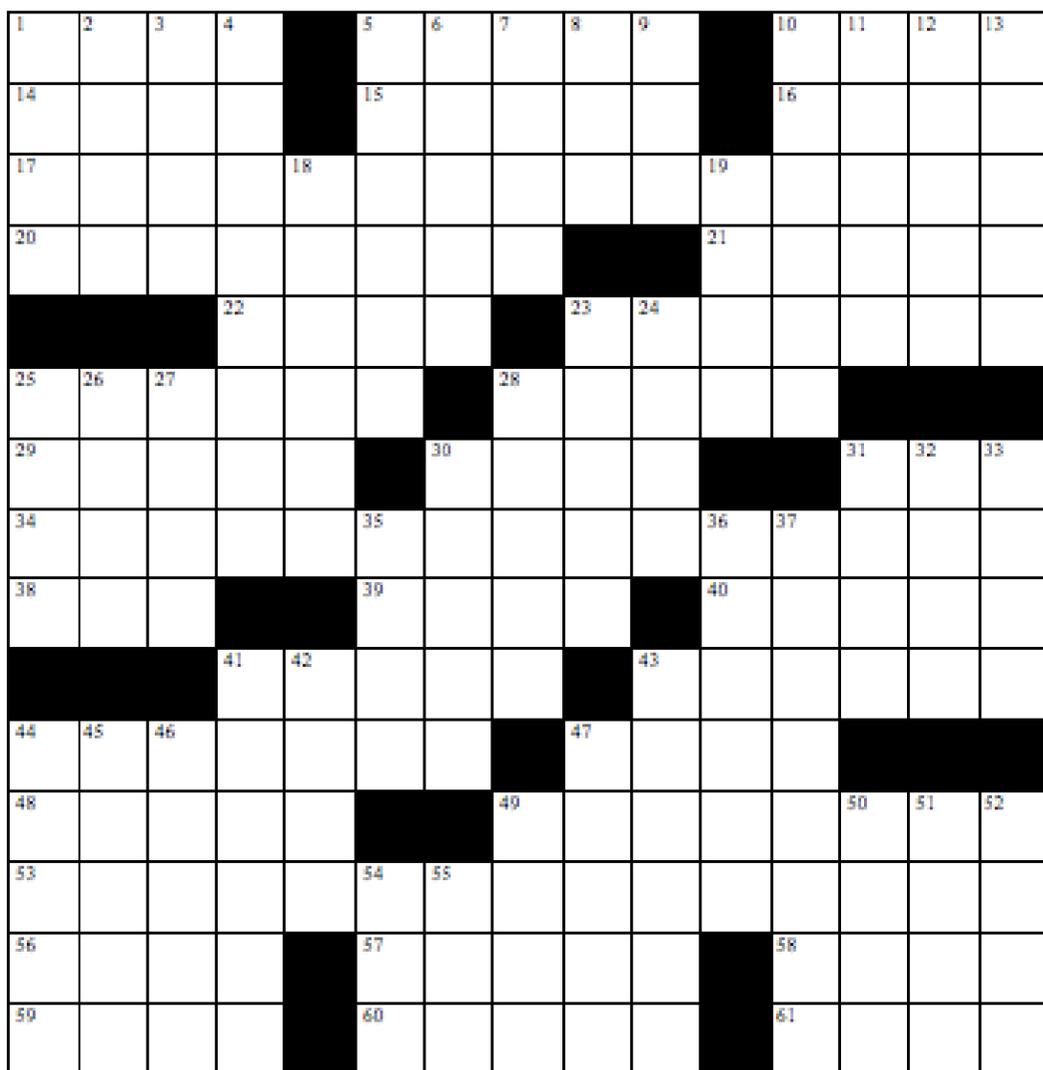
Oscar season is over, and more award worthy movies will not be coming out for another six months, and we are nearing the wave of summer movies, meaning expensive 3-D action movies. So this spring, I implore you all to pay attention to the indie movie scene. If you want to see something really special and different, these movies are perfect! Check out things at small independent cinemas like Images Cinema in Williamstown. Find that small film festival full of movies you have never heard of! Maybe even skip the next *Transformers* movie to watch that weird looking French film that keeps popping up on Netflix, who knows? It could become your new favorite movie. ■■

films that make us think.

This fall, I was lucky enough to be involved with The Williamstown Film Festival, which, for a film nerd like me, is kind of a big deal. For two weekends in October, Williamstown went from a small suffocating town in the middle of nowhere to a haven for low budget, big impact films. I was lucky enough to see these films, which include *Meet Monica Velour*, *Every Day*, *Monogamy*, *Lucky*, *God Of Love* (Winner of this year's Academy Award for best live action short! Holla Luke Matheny!!) and so many more. I was even able to meet some of the directors and creative talent behind them. Talking to these people, you remember why film is important. Movies are a way for us to examine ourselves through someone else's story. They are an escape and a reflection of human beauty and existence. And yes, that sentence was just as nauseating to write as it

“BLESSED BE HIS NAME”

By BLAIR DILS



ACROSS

1. Cleaning lady
5. Muscular sort
10. “_____ the herald angels sing...”
14. Scandinavian capital
15. “Sweet Child _____” – Guns ‘n Roses hit of 1987
16. Afghani ruler
17. “Back in the day...”
20. Type of pressure
21. Fabric with rivets, often
22. Sinister
23. Cliché
25. Film score composer Andre
28. Savannah sights
29. “Have you _____ yet?”
30. Jones, for example
31. “Who Can It Be Now?” group _____ at Work
34. Query from the man cave
38. What’s between XSs and MDs
39. Sonny Corleone player in “The Godfather”
40. Photo print paper choice
41. Fabled mouse extraction
43. Ice time?
44. Seattle athlete
47. “_____ as a ping pong ball”
48. “As You Like It” locale
49. Sombrero wearer’s music
53. Parental deflection?
56. Barbasol rival
57. Celtic GM responsible for assembling recent “The Big Three”
58. Place to hear “Amhrán na bhFiann”
59. Matches (in poker)
60. Steady trade worker
61. Voices behind the long answers, often

DOWN

1. Shoots (down)
2. Grayish
3. Martinique et Tahiti
4. “_____ look back” – refrain in “Teenage Dream”
5. Blues singer Wolf
6. Inbox stuffer
7. Mixed: abbrev.
8. Opposite of none
9. “The Matrix” protagonist
10. Solomon’s housed over 800
11. Former football Giant Toomer
12. Inflexible
13. Krispy _____
18. 2011 “American Idol” mentor Jimmy
19. Noodle choice
23. Executive Branch Joe
24. Savannah sound
25. Flock holders?
26. Chicago Mayor-elect Emanuel
27. They follow printemps
28. She “Sheened” before Sheen
30. Utterly
31. Glam rock’s _____ the Hoople
32. End for Marion?
33. “So sweet was _____ so fatal” – Othello
35. Cargo craft
36. Estevez of “Breakfast Club”
37. Required
41. Grad students’ concerns
42. HR king before Barry
43. “Getting closer!”
44. Philosophers
45. Deteriorate
46. “No news is good news,” for one
47. Cargo craft
49. Type of bond, for short
50. Pet that requires water
51. Plains dust-raiser
52. Bends out of shape
54. Jabber
55. Black gold