

## Standardized Testing

By ALINA FEIN

Greylock's opinion regarding standardized testing is one that is impossible to answer satisfactorily with a dark mark in a bubble, as there are many grey areas and conflicting views when it comes to this issue. Students, faculty, and guidance counselors all acknowledge the benefits and drawbacks of the many tests.

Students are faced with an assortment of standardized tests every year, especially as they advance in high school. The major tests that many Mt. Greylock students take are the SATs, the ACTs, MCAS, the Accuplacer, and the AP tests. Guidance counselor Beverly Maselli said, "Each type has a different purpose and they are all important. They all absolutely relate to college and getting into college in some way."

MCAS stands for Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System. The MCAS are mandated by the state of Massachusetts to evaluate students and their schools. Students must take the Mathematics and ELA (English Language Arts) MCAS tests in grades 3-8 and 10 as well as the Science and Technology/Engineering tests in grades 5, 8, and 9. In order to graduate from high school, they must pass at least one test in each category during high school. Most students take the SAT and/or ACT as part of their college application process during junior or senior year and the PSAT the year before. The Accuplacer is an optional test that is a ticket into community or state colleges as well as determining a student's needed academic placement, and the AP exams are used for college credits and advancing or placing out of classes in college. All of these exams are either required or strongly encouraged for students. (For more information, please see sidebar.)

In general, our school does well on standardized tests. Very few people do not pass the MCAS tests. Mt. Greylock's SAT scores, taken as a whole, almost always exceed the national average, while AP scores are more of a moving target.

Although taking standardized tests is a fact of life for all high school students, there is no consensus in students' reactions to them.

Freshmen Julia Vlahopoulos and Rebecca Silva have conflicting views when

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## DO STUDENTS CONTROL THEIR OWN LIVES?

By HALLIE WALKER

"School is prison," said junior Quentin Anderson.

Catie Benoit, another junior, quickly followed, saying, "We are told when to get up in the morning, when to sit, when to stand, when to go to the bathroom. We're not allowed to make choices."

A similar sentiment echoes throughout the school, with a stipulation made by junior Matthew

rules would be quite a feat. Mount Greylock has sixteen pages dedicated solely to "Rules, Regulations, and Procedures." Lee High School has eighteen pages of "Student Responsibilities/Consequences" and "School Rules and Regulations." Wahconah wins the Berkshire County award with a whopping 28 pages of disciplinary policy explanations.

ing number of rules in the school. Student-administration clashes and misunderstandings over the dancing policy, while now resolved, felt to many students like an infringement on their rights. More recently, the student-directed spring play has been met with some opposition from the administration. The students were asked to cut an off-



Junior Hannah Paul, right, is co-directing a play this spring. The Spring Drama presents a dilemma common for the Mt. Greylock student: directors may exercise a significant amount of power, yet they still must follow the requests of the administration.

Photo: Aaron Ziemer

Cheung, "Well, I suppose that you could choose to fail."

Is that really the only choice a student can make: to follow all the rules or to fail?

Looking at Student Handbooks from around the region, following all the

Rules in the region's handbooks range from restrictions of romantic relationships on school grounds to bans of all pranks to bans of visible underwear.

Recent debates at Mount Greylock have called into question the increas-

stage rape as well as some language from two of their three one-act plays.

However, the majority of the rules in the Mount Greylock handbook are directed towards limiting hazing, bullying, or sus-

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## 1 in 650: An Interview with Alyssa Alimonos

By LUKE COSTLEY



Photo courtesy of Alyssa Alimonos

Senior Alyssa Alimonos has a different set of skills than the typical Mount Greylock student. She is not a three-sport athlete or member of the drama club. She has, however, dedicated herself fully to her own interest outside of school: dance. Read on to find out more...

Q: Where and when did you first start dancing?

A: I danced for the first time when I was six years old. My classes started with Mrs. Jackie's dance program here in Williamstown, just as an after school thing. But then I switched over to BDT, Berkshire Dance Theatre, which was more serious. I still dance with that program now.

Q: What kind of dance do you do?

A: It's a variety of different styles: ballet, modern, tap, jazz, hip-hop...

Q: So are you working on all these different types of dance at the same time or will you focus on a particular style for a particular event?

A: Well I really just pick and choose. The program has its biggest show in June, so in preparation for that, I practice every type of dance. During the show, I will use each style in a different dance.

Q: Will the June show be the only one of the year? And are the shows group performances or just solo dances?

A: June is the major performance, but the program also has shows during the fall coordinated with the '62 Center at Williams College. And we perform as a group.

Q: Certainly you have devoted a lot of time to dancing. In what ways have your dance classes affected the rest of your life?

A: Dancing takes up a lot of time. For instance, I used to play soccer when I was younger, but my schedule does not allow for other sports anymore. Dance is pretty much year round, and consistent throughout each week.

Q: Finally, do you know what you will be doing next year? Will dance follow you to college?

A: Yes, I will be going to SUNY Purchase. The school has a specific dance program for performing arts that I will be part of. I'm very excited. ■■

*Interview has been edited and condensed.*

To nominate a student for 1 in 650, contact the editors at [mountgreylockecho@gmail.com](mailto:mountgreylockecho@gmail.com).

## FACE-OFF



The boys' lacrosse team is looking to a characteristically successful season. Story on page 5.

Photo: Katie Rathbun

## RAINBOW DAY

The seventh grade had the highest percentage of students wearing their assigned color. Page 3



Photo: Hannah Paul

## CROSSWORD

Mr. Dils has created yet another challenge.

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## THE BUDGET

Rori Brown makes a confusing topic make some sense.

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## USES FOR YOUR ECHO

Unsure what to do when you're done reading? Rebekeh Packer offers some creative options.

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## DAY OF SILENCE SWEEPS SCHOOL

By EVELYN MAHON



Students of all grades participated in the National Day of Silence. Top left, Hallie Walker leads a discussion on the day's experiences during seventh period. Top right and direct left, students participate in the discussion.

All photos: Katie Rathbun

On the Friday before Spring Break, most students are anxiously making plans for the next week, conversing with friends, and making sarcastic comments to the teachers they will be temporarily free from. However, on April 15, a group of students participated in the Day of Silence, taking a vow to be silent for the whole of the school day. These students, wearing all or mostly black clothing, avoided speaking to friends, whispering in class, or even singing in chorus. Why? The official website of the event, [www.dayof-silence.org](http://www.dayof-silence.org), defines the Day of Silence as a day in which silence is used in order to "call attention to the silencing effect of anti-LGBT [Lesbian/ Gay/ Bi-sexual/ Trans-gender] bullying and harassment in schools."

The fifteenth annual Day of Silence attracted over 200,000 participants from over 8,000 schools nationwide and hundreds of supporters at Mt. Greylock. Freshman Aaron Ziemer, a member of the Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) at Greylock, said, "it's a really good way to raise awareness combined with Rainbow Day, and it's great for Greylock to be participating in a national event." The day was an effort to encourage acceptance of all types of people. Each grade wore an assigned color. (Please see charts on page 3). Even though the seventh graders bested even the upperclassmen in their color-coding prowess, the spirit wasn't lost. Kellie Houle, a ninth-grade English teacher, described it as "fabulous. It's wonderful to see everyone supporting it. It helps encourage diversity, community, and the acceptance of everyone." George Dilthey, a junior, agrees with Houle and commented "it's cool to appreciate the society we live in and how we can accept all of the different kinds of people."

Mike Leja, a substitute teacher at Greylock, said, "it represents something important. It's hard to do, but it's for a good cause. I'm all for good causes."

However, not every student supports the Day of Silence. Aaron St. Martin, a freshman, did not participate. "In my opinion," he said, "I don't think it's going to make any change. I don't think it's going to make an impact on people's ideas and actions." Another freshman, Derek Wood simply didn't "have the desire to write notes down. I'd rather speak."

Hallie Walker, a junior and leading member of the GSA at Mt. Greylock said she "really struggled. I realized how often I speak without thinking." In the discussion period at the end of the day, many of the silent students admitted to accidentally speaking in class, and, more seriously, many spoke of facing resistance from their classmates. Lynn Penna, Dean of Students, said, "I know we don't have 100% of our students on board. We just have to keep doing it. Every day we do a Rainbow Day or Day of Silence there's always a kid who sits there thinking: 'maybe this place isn't so bad. I'm safe here.' It's about increasing awareness."

Not every school is as supportive as Mt. Greylock on the issue of LGBT awareness days. In fact, some groups have established counter-protests to the Day of Silence; the most prominent are called the Day of Truth, or the Day of Dialogue. The Day of Dialogue takes place usually the next school day after the Day of Silence, and is meant to "encourage respectful discussion about God's design for sexuality," according to the official website, [www.dayofdialogue.com](http://www.dayofdialogue.com). To this, freshman Nate Taskin comments "there's nothing immoral about

gay marriage/ gay rights. If you're not gay, then don't marry a gay guy. It's a pretty obvious debate." Another, slightly more "intense," counter-protest is the Day of Defiance- a deliberately anti-LGBT protest, whose members post on Internet forums messages responding to teachers who support Day of Silence like: "Do I blame teachers? YOU BET! It is so-called good teachers who could do the most to end the destruction of our nation's children. They are feeding children to the mouth of Molak for a paycheck."

Resistance did not seem to be as intense at Mt. Greylock, and many students, though not taking a vow of silence, still showed their support by wearing black.

The teachers of Mt. Greylock, unlike at other schools, did not require students to speak during class. Happily for students, their right to free speech remained intact for the entire day.

Ramsey Kurdi, the chorus teacher, has participated in the Day of Silence at Hopkinton School when teaching there, and it was a major success. "It took an incredible amount of planning. In chorus I had to write more things on the board, I had to teach the class several created hand signals. It's not like playing charades. I don't see it as a question of rights, but a responsibility of everyone, incumbent on all of us to go, 'okay, what matters? Does what a kid believes in impact the education of others?' Probably not."

Rainbow Day and the Day of Silence are not limited only to LGBT awareness. Walker said, "the goal for Mt. Greylock is not to strictly raise awareness of lesbian/gay issues, it's to raise community and the realization that we're all made of the same stuff." ■■

## DO STUDENTS CONTROL THEIR OWN LIVES?

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pendable offenses, none of which were cited by Mt. Greylock students when they complained of the oppressive nature of the average school day.

Certain rights are guaranteed to all students in the nation. *Tinker v. Des Moines*, a 1969 Supreme Court case in which Mary Beth Tinker and her brother appealed their school's decision to forbid wearing armbands protesting the Vietnam War, ruled "students do not leave their rights at the schoolhouse door," so they could wear the armbands.

Justice Abe Fortas wrote that, "in our system, state-operated schools may not be enclaves of totalitarianism. School officials do not possess absolute authority over their students. Students in school as well as out of school are 'persons' under our Constitution."

So what is it in our culture that lends to such a consistent view of student oppression?

Junior Wesley Davis said, "I can choose hot lunch, salad or quick-pick lunch lines. That's the first decision [during an average school day] that comes to mind. I'm allowed to choose the courses I take, but that's limited by prerequisites."

Classmate Vanessa Lopez feels the same restriction: "I have control over the classes I take, but the options are so limited that I'm not really in control academically."

Bell schedules control student movements throughout the day. The rigor of a seven period schedule with directed study requires a total of twelve passing periods, including before first period and after seventh. Students move at the sound of a bell and sit in class with little choice. And many high school teachers do indeed curb their students' bathroom privileges. The science department deducts points from participation grades for bathroom visits during class, and, school-wide, students ask permission from their teachers to use the restroom.

Balancing faculty responsibility for each student's whereabouts and behavior with a student's academic growth and development into a freethinking individual is a struggle at Mt. Greylock.

Greylock's mission is to "prepare all students to achieve their full potential as learners in an ever-changing world." But how is that worldly preparedness pos-

sible if students are not responsible for their own learning?

Students at Monument Mountain High School demanded an answer to that very question.

"It seemed like everyone around me was unhappy. I realized that all of my friends were spending six hours a day, 180 days out of the year just not being happy. That just doesn't make any sense to me," said Sam Levin, a student at Monument, in a recent documentary. Levin petitioned the school for a new method of learning.

As a result, the school created a pilot program in 2010 called the Independent Project. The eight students participating in the project were completely responsible for their education.

Days were broken in half. In the mornings, students pursued individual endeavors—semester-long projects that included building a boat or writing a play. The second half of the day was allotted for research on questions the students asked within the range of math, science, English, and other academic subjects. Each student would then present their findings at the end of the week, teaching their fellow scholars.

The initiative sparked questions within the community about the very foundations of the educational system.

Matt Whalen, a student in the Independent Project, asked, "How can you teach someone about the world when you're isolating them from the world?"

"A really important thing that students learn is how to be independent... And when everyone has the same things that they have to do [in school], it's really hard to feel that you're being independent. There are all kinds of boundaries, where inside you can be as independent as you want," said Kathy Ericson, a math teacher at Monument.

Michael Whol, a history teacher at the school, said, "It's not as if there's some sinister group of educational leaders intent on making American education intellectually and existentially numbing. It's just the nature of large institutions."

Back at Mount Greylock, junior Wesley Davis was feeling the same way. He said, "School feels like a really long routine or habit. I can choose individual things, but on the whole I don't make many [choices]. The routine blends the days together." ■■

*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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## The Proposed 2011-2012 Budget and How it Will (or Won't) Change Your Life

By RORI BROWN

The budget. Sounds boring, right? If you look online on the school website, it can be a bit tough to read through. It's not difficult to understand, it is just hard to make the connection from what you are reading to what it actually means you can expect to see happen in the school. However, the budget directly impacts everyone in the school. So, here's the projected 2011-2012 budget, in layman's terms, and how you can expect it will affect you.

The main goals of next year's budget include expanding staff to reduce class size, investing in technology, increasing funding for educational materials, and developing a professional development plan. There appears to be more money available in the budget this year.

We'll start by going into a little more detail about the reduction of class sizes. I'm sure we've all noticed that in the past year or so, the size of classes seems to keep growing—especially the size of English classes. According to the information available online, "class sizes are being monitored closely." The retirement of at least one English teacher is also expected for the end of this year, so what has been proposed to help the problem? More funding will go toward staffing the English department and to adding an additional full-time teacher. This would help keep our English department strong by providing students with more contact with their teacher and more one-on-one time. Another option, according to the business manager, Jennifer Coscia, would be to put funding toward having the teachers we already have add an extra class to their teaching schedules.

The next goals, investing in technology and increasing funding for educational materials can be viewed similarly at this point, because as of now, the additional funds are not yet going toward specific items. Coscia explained that "the principal met with all the staff and asked for wish lists" of educational materials, such as books and supplies, they see themselves needing in the coming school year. These wish lists, in addition to Technology Director Rob Wnuk's technology one, are pending until next year's classes are sorted out. This spring, and possibly into the summer, the wish lists will be prioritized and subject departments' budgets from last year will be increased accordingly. The technology budget will be increased by about 55% from this year, as superintendent Rose Ellis sees technology as being "an essential component of a twenty first century education." With this extra money, the idea is still to buy the most equipment with the money available. And you know what that means: cool new gadgets for everyone to play with! And, you know, further your education and all that, too.

Finally, the last main goal is to create a professional development plan. The point of this is to build the capacity of our teaching staff. It would help the teachers function at their maximum ability and to continue to refine their skills. In addition to everything else in this projected budget, this focuses on making the most out of what we have to work with in terms of money.

Some of the other goals the school plans to focus funding toward in the upcoming school year include the continued maintenance of the school building and the collaboration with Williamstown Elementary School and Lanesborough Elementary School to enhance the educational opportunities for students.

Junior Ted Burdick said he would like to see "more remodeling" of the building and more funding go toward sports. Changes like these would benefit students in multiple ways. For example, Burdick says, the baseball helmets are cracked and dangerous. Replacement of certain items of sports equipment would improve safety. Additionally, he said that smaller class sizes would be better for the learning environment. Certainly the smaller, more personal atmosphere would help classes include all students in order for learning to be at its maximum.

The projected budget does have an increase toward athletics and co-curricular activities in order to uphold Mount Greylock's "tradition of providing a well-rounded education for students," according to Ellis in the version of the budget available online. She also wrote that "athletics and co-curriculars...are a key part of providing leadership and athletic opportunities for students." All in all, the budget does seem to accommodate the needs verbalized by students as well as faculty and staff.

What has been done already this year has saved us money and is an effective way to be as economic as possible. Mount Greylock has saved about seventy three thousand dollars by sharing an administrative team with Williamstown and Lanesborough School districts. We have also saved money by sharing special education resources and through collaborative planning of the professional development program. Additionally, some Special Education students have aged out, and the total savings in that department total to a projected \$138,000. Even more opportunities to save money for other aspects of school life have been projected through continued sharing of resources with Williamstown Elementary and Lanesborough Elementary.

So, is it perfect? Well, what do students want funding to go toward that has not been mentioned? Many aspects of student as well as staff life are set aside in the budget to receive additional funding in the upcoming school year. As of yet, not everything is set in stone, but we are getting more funds to the needed places. They are going to try to get the most out of the money, and that will create changes that we will all be able to see—that will affect all of us.

More information about the budget can be found by checking out this link: <http://www.mgrhs.org/subsite/dist/page/administration-1334> ■■

## Standardized Testing

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it comes to MCAS tests. "I don't like MCAS!" Julia said. "I think it's really stressful for students and teachers and there's a lot of pressure. Her peer Rebecca, though, sees the tests in a more positive light. She said, "MCAS isn't that much pressure or stress because we know the results don't affect our grade, and we don't get the results until later." Sophomore Chloe Anderson also regards MCAS as less of a stress inducer "because teachers don't give as much homework when we have them." However, freshman Zach Leamon said that standardized tests do not "fully measure everyone's capability in school," siding more with the also prominent student view that standardized tests are more of a judgement of test-taking ability rather than a measurement of actual knowledge.

Opinions among students also tend to vary depending on the specific test. Sophomore Ben Krant characterized standardized tests as "pretty stressful" in general and acknowledged the pressure SATs bring about: "My parents bought me an SAT book when I was really young so I've always been stressed about them. My parents have a pretty high standard...I know SATs are not joking around." Ben's classmate Rohan Shastri acknowledged the necessity of SATs in terms of getting into college: "Even though standardized tests can be long, tedious, and hard, you need SAT's because colleges look at them." However, when it comes to MCAS tests, both students feel differently. "I don't take MCAS that seriously," Krant admitted, and Shastri said students "shouldn't be forced to do MCAS." Both tests are imperative in terms of students' graduation from high school and entry into most colleges, but it seems that students have more negative associations with MCAS. Josh Harrington, a junior, said of

standardized tests: "I don't mind taking them because they challenge me," but called the MCAS "so tedious."

Standardized testing has both benefits and harms. English teacher Blair Dils called standardized testing "one of the easier ways to compare how we're doing with other schools and between individual students, so they are efficient in that regard." He views the ELA MCAS as pretty fair, since they mostly test skills over content. Maselli praised the SAT test for having an international standard that allows for equity and a clear comparison between different schools and individuals. She acknowledged the SAT testing as "one piece of the process. It is not the only piece colleges look at, so it is not as unfair as people think, but it has a prominent place."

However, teachers are also aware of the negative consequences of standardized tests. Band teacher Lyndon Moors observed, "standardized testing needs to happen, but not so much that it takes up too much of students' and teachers' time. Once you go overboard with the testing, you miss classes and get stressed out." This point concurs with many students' attitudes regarding the stress level associated with the testing. Standardized tests are obviously costly when they begin to take away from students' learning experience. Moors also addressed the point that "sometimes they don't reveal what a student's strengths really are, like music." Despite certain tests' accuracy and efficiency in comparing students, one cannot deny that it is impossible to determine a student's full potential from a standardized test.

Maselli believes that kids are over-tested by standardized tests: "They are overdone despite the equity and take up too much

### THE TYPES OF TESTS

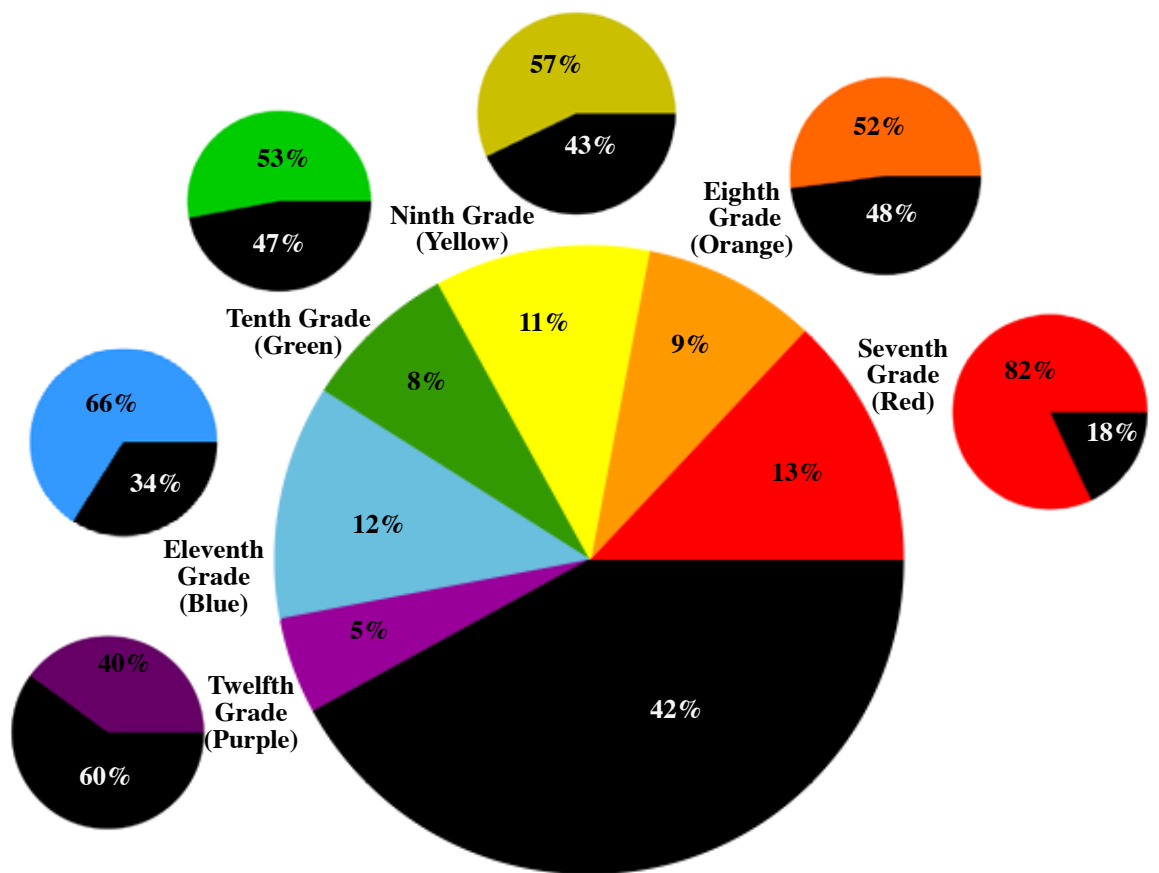
Maximum Score  
SAT: 2400  
ACT: 36  
MCAS: 280 (Advanced)  
Accuplacer: 120  
AP: 5

Skill Area  
SAT: Critical reading, mathematics, and writing; 20 subject tests  
ACT: English, mathematics, reading, science, writing  
MCAS: English, mathematics, science  
Accuplacer: reading, writing, and mathematics  
AP: 32 different classes; 11 are currently offered at Mt. Greylock

Purpose  
SAT: College application  
ACT: College application  
MCAS: Evaluate the achievement of MA public schools  
Accuplacer: Determine a student's skill level, admission to some colleges  
AP: Gain college credit, prove ability

time. There is a purpose, but we'd always be open to exploring different ways to get to the same end." Dils accurately summed up the general attitude by referring to standardized testing as "a necessary evil." Quite a few arguments can be made on both sides regarding this matter, but overall, it is apparent that standardized tests are necessary for students get into college and therefore ensure an educational future. As painful and frustrating as they may be, standardized tests are, at this point, essential for students to be able to, as Mt. Greylock's mission statement proclaims, "achieve their full potential as learners in an ever-changing world." ■■

## RAINBOW DAY BY THE NUMBERS



These charts represent the number of students recorded by the Gay-Straight Alliance as wearing his or her class' assigned color on Rainbow Day, which was Thursday, April 14. The larger chart represents the students wearing their colors in proportion to the total student body; the smaller charts represent the students wearing their colors in proportion to each grade.

Congratulations to the seventh grade, which had the most students wearing their color! They enjoyed a munchkin and hot cocoa breakfast courtesy of the Student Council.

# COMMUNITY

## A CAPITAL TIME

The Close Up trip to Washington, D.C. brings insight, depth in nontraditional classroom setting.

By GRACE SINGLETON

Despite a lack of department stores and boutiques, the National Mall has a lot for visitors to take in: government buildings, national monuments and 9 Smithsonian museums. The vast array of cultural and historical attractions displayed on the Mall offer a snapshot of the rest of Washington D.C. The nation's capital is stocked with more opportunities for sightseeing and exploration than it is humanly possible to experience in merely one week. For six days this March, however, participation in the Close Up program gave me – along with nine other MGRHS students and famed faculty member Tom Murray – the chance to explore a good chunk of D.C.'s offerings.

During the week, us ten Greylock students were divided among eight "workshops" and followed packed daily schedules that introduced us to some of D.C.'s many treasures. A particularly thought-provoking "study visit" was to memorials in honor of the Vietnam War, the Korean War, WWII, and President Lincoln. Besides exploring the details of the memorials, the individual workshops discussed the qualifications for a "just war." Junior Sarah Kelly reinforced the benefit of such discussions and said, "it was wonderful to see Washington from such an academic perspective and learn about the historical significance of places and memorials in our nation's capitol."

The magnitude of potential places to discover in Washington D.C. has kept Murray intrigued for the twenty-six years that he has been bringing students on the week-long trip. He cites the group work that goes on throughout the week as one

of the positives of the program. Close Up is open to all high school students and does not require that participants meet



Students used famous landmarks, including, from left, the Iwo Jima WWII War Memorial, the Capitol, and the Washington Monument to foster discussion.

a minimum grade average to attend. As Murray explained, this policy contrasts with many leadership programs that send

students letters about being selected for participation. The term "selected" simply means that the company bought students' names from the College Board and sent letters to individuals whose zip codes indicate a likelihood that attending the program is possible financially. While this invitation technique may be the most profitable money-wise, Close Up's enrollment policy allows for a diverse body of participants.

The mix of students in our Close Up group included representatives from a public school in Rhode Island, a Catholic all-girls school in Florida, a military institute in New Mexico, and a high school in Hawaii. The range of backgrounds represented enriched the depth of discussion and debate that took place throughout the week. Kelly said, "the most notable aspect of Close Up was the chance I got to interact with people from all over the country, and listen to new perspectives." Junior Nico Amuso agreed: "It was awesome meeting people from different parts of the country with separate views on politics."

In addition to covering historical topics, the trip's curriculum also covered current issues facing the nation. Wednesday was referred to as "Capitol Hill Day." On that day, the Greylock delegation was reunited and spent the day together in the Capitol.

There, our group was given a tour of the building and had the chance to spend time in the Senate gallery observing the legislative proceedings.

Close Up gave students the chance to experience politics not only as observers, but as active participants as well. Katya Danyluk, a junior, explained, "Close Up gave me the opportunity to debate the political issues being discussed in the capitol." Key activities that contributed to this opportunity were a domestic issues debate during which Close Up students posed questions and a Capitol Hill simulation which walked the students through the steps necessary to get a bill passed in Congress. Kelly called the program "the perfect environment to get in healthy debates over what matters to me and hear what others have to say."

For participants, the Close Up program entails a high level of active involvement. This characteristic works toward the overall goal of producing alumni that are more engaged citizens. Amuso felt that this goal was achieved, observing "that when the week is over you feel a lot more politically effective." Senior Kevin Stant shares a similar enthusiastic sentiment, commenting that, "the things you take away from the program really make you think things out and really make you ask why things are the way they are." Evidently, this year's Close Up program has sent ten young adults back to Western Massachusetts with a greater political awareness. As Murray has noted, D.C. is "a young person's city," and there is no reason why a greater number of young citizens should not actively experience it. ■■

## STUDENTS RAISE OVER \$1,000 FOR CANCER RESEARCH; PAYNE DYES BEARD

By EMILY KAEGI

SMILE (Students Making an Impact Locally for Everyone) organized a fundraiser in the past month for Pennies for Patients. With donations from students and teachers in middle school and high school, they were able to raise \$1,248.58, more than doubling their original goal of \$500. For three weeks, fourth period classes put money in boxes that was later counted. Mr. Ostheimer's high school class and Ms. Kirby's middle school class both got a breakfast from Dunkin Donuts for coming in second place. A pizza party was awarded to Ms. Green's and Ms. Barrett's classes for winning. Ms. Barrett's class raised over \$140 while Ms. Green's class raised over \$350. When Ms. Green was asked how her class collected so much money she said, "I had a very motivated class that would bring in big bags of change." The class had their pizza party a couple weeks ago and juniors Kelsey Goodwin and Luke Costley both said it was "fun and worth it."

Pennies for patients is "a foundation that collects spare change for national leukemia and lymphoma research," said SMILE member Leah Miller; it's a cause that needs all the support it can get. SMILE held a similar fundraiser last year and with successful results they were motivated to run it again. This year they had outstanding results. Caroline Viteck, who made the announcements every day, was also one of the students who collected the change. "Some boxes were empty, but others were full of dollars" she said when asked about how much money was in the different boxes. Member of this group stayed after school a couple of times to roll coins.

An interesting twist was added after the first week of fundraising. SMILE needed a reward for halfway through the fundraiser to keep people interested. A member approached Mr. Payne about allowing the leading class to choose a color to dye

his beard for a week. It was for a "great cause" so he said yes. Ms. Green's class, which had been ahead from the start, picked green. Mr. Payne, on his search for green hair dye, went to the Clip Shop in Bennington. The employee he talked to had a green stripe of hair and piercings all over her ears. When he asked her about dying his beard she replied with "That would be a strange look". They could not fit him in for an appointment, so he found some "Snooki-approved Hair Paint" to use instead. Mr. Payne described the experience as, "feeling like having Elmer's glue in my hair." After dyeing it himself, his son said he looked like "Papa Smurf".

The original dying job didn't look very good so he got professional help from senior Kevin Stant who redid it with real hair dye. Because the middle-schoolers do not usually see Mr. Payne, they asked him to stand outside of the cafeteria so they could see it. "I got a lot of 'nice beard,' but some people didn't want to look at me," he said laughing, remembering the experience. But he was anything but embarrassed. "It was totally worth it and for a great cause." Walking around the grocery store and pumping gas he said he got some strange looks but most people probably thought he had lost a bet because it was so close to Saint Patrick's Day. He kept the beard for four or five days and then shaved it off, as he usually does, on the first day of spring. It left him with green streaks and a dyed chin. His beard had been totally bleached having tried to color it two times, and he would not recommend it for anyone else's hair.

Mr. Payne seemed to be pleased with the large amount of money raised and had no regrets. SMILE appreciates everyone's donations and especially the help of Mr. Payne. ■■



Cartoon: Mary Laidlaw

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## THE NEW LOOK OF BOYS' TENNIS

By TOM DILS

The past four years have been the ultimate roller coaster ride of ups and downs for the Mt. Greylock Boys Tennis team. In both 2008 and 2009, Coach Mary Vaughn led a squad of experienced and talented players through Berkshire County and Western Mass., falling just short of a state title twice.

In 2010, everything changed. A core group of seniors graduated and key underclassmen chose to take different routes. Coach Vaughn also said goodbye to the program, satisfied with the two state final appearances. During the winter months leading up to the spring season, even forming a team seemed that it would require a stroke of luck. It came from none other than a group of middle schoolers and a science teacher. When a handful of seventh and eighth graders went out for tennis tryouts, they found no coach had been hired. Teacher and cross-country running coach Scott Burdick stepped forward. In an interview last spring, he said, "I couldn't let the kids go without a coach. They were the ones who rescued the program." The young group was applauded for their courage but not taken seriously by many in the county. Said current eighth grader Jake Foehl about last year's experience, "I enjoyed last year, but many teams would weaken their

lineups to make the competition more fair." In 2011, however, the Mounties feel as if they have the talent to be the ones on the dominant end.

Sophomore Jonah Majumder had always played tennis simply for recreation, but when he heard of the young team, he started to seriously consider going out this spring. Soon others including juniors John Karabinos and Jesse Foehl had put their names on the list. Said Majumder, "I think that a lot of the new team members such as myself decided to play just to have a good time playing with other kids we liked." Playing for fun may have been the case before the season started, but through the first few weeks, the Mounties are realizing that they have some serious potential.

Although Coach Burdick filled his position admirably in 2010, he believed that the 2011 squad should have a coach with more tennis expertise. Mt. Greylock hired former tennis player and experienced coach Stephen Bryant. Said Majumder, "Coach Bryant is a very knowledgeable coach and is capable of rebuilding the team." With a new group of high schoolers, eighth and ninth graders with a year of experience under their belts, and a strong coach, the Mounties have already taken giant strides in returning the tennis program

to its former greatness.

One might ask whether the team chemistry would take a hit with older high schoolers bumping the younger kids who played last year down a few spots? Both Majumder and Jake Foehl assured us that this was not the case. The older guys are new and inexperienced, so they are learning along side the eighth and ninth graders. Speaking for the younger guys, Foehl said, "Having the older guys to practice and play with is a fun challenge." This season, Foehl is paired with fellow eighth grader Will Nolan at the first doubles slot, and already the duo has picked up a victory in their first match against Pittsfield. Although the Mounties lost, the new team showed great potential. Majumder was a point away from claiming victory at first singles, and Karabinos lost in a narrow three set match.

There is certainly room for improvement, but the 2011 tennis team is a lot further along at this point in the season than they were last year. They need to keep getting better—especially at their serves—and just focus on taking it one match at a time. With a new coach and an energetic squad, it will only be a matter of time before the Mounties are challenging for the top spot in Berkshire County again. ■



Eighth grader Jake Foehl has been an integral part of this year's boys' tennis team.

Photo: Katie Rathbun

## BOYS' LACROSSE

By ALEX WHITE

With the warm spring weather, the Mt. Greylock boys' lacrosse players have successfully made the switch from the slopes and basketball courts to the lacrosse field. After a number of preseason scrimmages, the boys made the trip down to Williams College's turf field to play their first regular season game against St. Joe. This game quickly turned into a blowout in Greylock's favor. Marston Albert and freshman Brett McCormack led the team with two assists apiece and five goals and four goals, respectively. Junior Noah Kelly did his part as well by chipping in with a few goals.

Dominant in Berkshire County over the past few years, the Mounties want to pick up where they left off. Senior captains Mike Greb, Jason Pilot, and Albert hope to lead the team to another Berkshire County title. McCormack, Kelly, and

junior Kent Hanson will be key to the Mounties' explosive offense. Senior Rudy Goff, meanwhile, will secure Greylock's defense.

With their first win under their belt, the Mounties appear to be the early-season favorites to win the Berkshire County championship. When asked about how the team is looking, McCormack responded, "The team is definitely looking strong. We still have some things to work on, but we have a high-powered offense, and we are anchored by a strong defense. As the season progresses, we are looking to score a lot of goals and to keep working in order to raise our level of play." With these high-expectations, anything short of a county championship will be a letdown for Greylock, but they are embracing the challenge to succeed. ■



Senior Kim Leon competes in the long jump during a track meet on Thursday, April 14 at Hoosac Valley High School.

Photo: Katie Rathbun



Photo: Katie Rathbun

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## Alternative Uses for Your Echo

By REBEKEH PACKER

In a world full of teachers and other imagination-less people\*, there is enormous pressure on students who pick up the *Echo* to actually read it. Such expectations place unwarranted limits on the creative possibilities of the *Echo*. "I pick up at least one New York Times every day, but the last thing I'd think to do with it would be read the articles," says little-known papier mâché artist Hugo Flesh. This issue, we take some space to honor the great range of uses for our beloved school newspaper. Feel free to try any and all of these ideas out for yourself, and never allow societal conventions to stifle your creativity.



**1) Make a paper hat**— Traditional hat-making materials, like yarn and cloth, are terribly expensive these days. Unlike some flimsy newspapers, the *Echo* is made of water-resistant, good quality paper, and it's free. You can find directions to make your own hat at <http://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Paper-Hat>. After making your hat, you can decorate it with pompoms, stickers, or even more newspaper.

**2) Hide your identity**— Full of words and even names in common use at Mt. Greylock, the *Echo* is the perfect source for cut-outs when you don't want your handwriting to be identified.

**3) Crack secret codes\*\***—

Most reporters work long and hard to invest their articles with secret messages, but many readers never take the

time to look. Next time you find yourself tuning out to a lecture about angular velocity or The subjunctive mood, slip out your *Echo* and try to decode your favorite article. Some ideas to get you started:  
-place the first and last letter of every other line next to the middle letter of the alternate line  
-first take the third letter after every typo, then reverse the order  
-count the letters in each word, starting at the end, add ten to every other number, and replace each number with that number letter off the alphabet  
-threaten the reporter with a paper cut unless he/she reveals the contents of the secret message

**4) Decorate your house**—

Do your parents ever express their nostalgia for the days when you papered your house with craft projects? Those days don't have to be over! The newspaper before you is full of useful patterns for domestic décor.

**-Paper dolls:** Cut out the 1 in 650 article in your *Echo*. Alternating directions, fold this strip back and forth until it's a rough square. Cut it in the shape of a person, with the arms extending out into the folded edges. Now unfold, and use

your work to brighten up a doorway.

**-Snowflakes:**

Cut out the crossword puzzle from your *Echo*. Cut out all the black parts between the words, leaving only the white spaces. If you did it right, you have a pixelated snowflake. Now, place your snowflake in a window. Remember, no two corners of a snowflake are exactly alike!

Presumably, these new ideas have struck you speechless with their brilliance. But don't stop here. Let yourself be inspired. Use your *Echo* as a telescope, a megaphone, an umbrella. Cut holes in the headline and spy on people who naively assume you to be reading it. Fold a paper airplane to carry your ransom note, or take a page from Curious George's book and make it into a boat. The possibilities are endless. Open your mind, and this might be the last *Echo* article you ever read.

\*I mean, really, who gets through all of high school and can only think to go back?

\*\*The *Echo* is not responsible for any failure on the part of its readers to properly decode an article. ■■



The views expressed in this note do not reflect the collective views of this newspaper, but those of the individual ransom-note artist.

All photos: Rebekeh Packer

## FUMBLEROOSKI

By BLAIR DILS

### ACROSS

1. Home of "My Big Redneck Wedding"
4. One with flaming trousers?
8. In the lead
13. Insulting bid
15. Mooring
16. \_\_\_ Wan Kenobi
17. Red leader?
18. Star in Orion
19. Venice's Bridge of \_\_\_\_\_.
21. Pemberley creator
23. Otherwise
24. Roger Daltry role in The Who's rock opera "Tommy"
28. Ogle
30. Digital pic format
31. Canadian island, to locals
32. Like many ibuprofen bottle tops
35. Shock
36. God of War
37. Clue for 13-, 24-, 46- and 62-across
40. Reiteration
41. Co. at heart of housing market collapse
42. Mark Wahlberg's team in "Invincible" (2006)
43. Vietnamese dish
44. Wile E Coyote weapon
45. College chem. course
46. Voting methods
49. Schools chief, for short
53. Leaflet
55. Wise men gift
56. Sebaceous or adrenal, for example
59. Quench
61. Personal history, briefly
62. Clamor
63. Classic rock songs
64. Not over
65. Incurs a penalty
66. Maiden name introducer

### DOWN

1. Shut
2. Company with Pegasus in its logo
3. Spindly legs
4. Clark's gal pal
5. "\_\_\_ I Was God" – early Michael Jackson song
6. Cary Grant film "An \_\_\_\_\_ to Remember"
7. "Seinfeld" episode, today
8. Hawking's "\_\_\_\_\_ History of Time"
9. Ketchup maker who owns Ore-Ida fries
10. Unit of energy
11. What the dog did to the homework
12. USPS competitor
14. Jrs. in the first-year dorm, often
20. Assist in the completion of
22. Majorettes
24. Baseball banners
25. National Poetry month
26. Volleyballer Gabrielle
27. DVDs or CDs
29. Non-discriminatory business designation (abbrev.)
30. Rockabilly song "My \_\_\_ Is Red Hot"
32. Smith of "Fox Report" and others
33. Specialty
34. Kind of committee
35. Luxury car, informally
36. Large merchant ship
38. Routine
39. Playground game
44. Fitzgerald's "\_\_\_\_\_ Is the Night"
45. Home of the Parliament of Canada
47. After lather, before repeat
48. Low ship deck
50. "You Look Good in My Shirt" singer Keith
51. Rock-y setting in "The Lion King"
52. Not these
54. Sixth sense
55. Méditerranée et Noire
56. Water buffalo
57. Silent film star Chaney
58. Assistance
60. Roller skate tightener

