

GREYLOCK JET SETTERS: GAP AND POSTGRADUATE YEARS

By KATELIN MARCHAND

Each year about one hundred seniors graduate from Mt. Greylock and almost all of them attend college. This year not as many seniors will go right to college, because at least five of them will be taking a gap or a postgraduate year. A postgrad year is another year of high school, while a gap year usually involves traveling and isn't as academically oriented. Seniors from the class of 2012 that will be taking a gap year include Luke Costley, Tom Dils, and Katie Swoap, while Ryan Mahar will be taking a PG year. What would entice a student not to go directly to college? Greylock seniors had varying motives for taking gap or PG years.

Although Katie Swoap already traveled halfway around the world when she lived in Australia several years ago, she still yearns for adventure. Swoap says, "I first heard of gap years when I was in Australia, and that is when I knew I wanted to take one." Swoap will be taking her gap year in Argentina for eleven months through the Rotary Club's Long Term Youth Exchange Program. While she is there, Swoap will be attending a local high school and speak to Argentinians about aspects of American culture as part of her program. "I believe that a gap year can give a person perspective as well as provide motivation for college," Swoap said, reflecting on why gap years have become a new phenomena.

While Swoap will be in Argentina, another senior, Tom Dils, will be traveling to three different regions during his gap year. The first place he will visit is Frankfurt, Germany. There, Dils will be playing soccer and coaching a youth soccer team. He will be staying with a family that used to reside in Williamstown. The next leg of his journey will be in the southern United States where Dils will work on a farm through the World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farming Organization (W.W.O.O.F.). Finally, Dils will live in New Haven, Connecticut with his aunt and uncle and work at their restaurant. "This is an opportunity to do something fun and unique," says Dils. Although many are eager to immediately attend col-

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THE LIBRARY: BOOKS VERSUS COMPUTERS

How much is the library really used in this technological age? And for what purpose?

By PEARL SUTTER



Photo: Jonah Majumder

The increasing use of technology in schools begs the question: are books becoming obsolete?

Fifty years ago, libraries were extremely important parts of schools because most of the information that people needed could be found in the books stored there. However, in the past decade with the invention of the computer, books are being used less every day. As Mt. Greylock tries to catch up to the current technological age by buying new computers and other technology for classrooms, the library is noticing changes occurring in the number of books that are borrowed.

The new rise in technology has particularly affected the non-fiction books and the magazines. Sarah Henry, one of the Mt. Greylock librarians, says, "the reference section has become obsolete, and magazines are no longer read and so they just sit there." The library has stopped ordering magazines because many of them have not been read since last year. Kathleen Share, another Greylock librarian, says "some sections are going to start to get smaller because they just aren't read anymore."

Reference books used to be read all the time before computers and the internet contained all of the information. Henry says, "Teachers used to collect a cart full of books for their classes on particular topics. However, now teachers book the computer labs for their students." Since technology is so popular now, teachers must reserve the library for the computers, instead of reserving books for students.

Students see the new computers in the library as wonderful additions. Sophomore Aaron Ziemer says "computers are used more than books because there is more information on the Internet and teachers do not usually tell students to look in books for research." Sophomore Derek Wood agrees. He says, "the technology has become the most useful part of the library."

Since many students need current information for projects, the Internet offers them the most updated and usually the most accurate information. Books that

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2 in 650: An Interview with Jacob and Hannah Paul

By EMILY KAEGI



Photo courtesy of Jacob and Hannah Paul

For this month's 1-in-650, we sat down with Hannah and Jacob Paul. The siblings, although three years apart in age, (Hannah a senior and Jacob a freshman), seem to work together very well, a skill that came in handy during their recent trip. The two took a week off of school to travel to Kingston, Jamaica. Unlike many people who travel to Jamaica to lay on a beach, they went to help other children in need.

Q: How did you get to go to Jamaica?
Jacob: We went with our dad, one of the local Williams College priests and five college students.

Hannah: Our dad is teaching a winter study class at Williams, and part of the class was going to Jamaica on a service trip. So we got to tag along.

Q: What did you do there?
Jacob: We stayed at Mustard Seed Communities. There are many different locations around the world, but mostly in Jamaica.

Hannah: Mustard Seed Communities provide a home for orphaned kids and young adults who are disabled, mentally and/or physically, or have HIV/AIDS. Their developments are mostly situated in Kingston, Jamaica and the surrounding cities. Mustard Seed is a Catholic based organization and, although you don't have to be Catholic to work or volunteer there, prayer is definitely an important part of what they do.

Q: What did you do at these Communities?

Hannah: We did a lot of physical labor there. There were two days where we just made concrete and made footings for a fence. And then we did some gardening and landscaping. We also got to talk to the kids and hang out with them. Since they don't really get out of their compound that often, they like it when people come in and talk to them. "The Wheels on the Bus" was sung too many times to count!

Jacob: We also read them a lot of stories.

Q: What was it like to see all those kids in need of help?

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EATING HEALTHIER IN THE CAFETERIA

By NAOMI DAY



The cafeteria has been implementing more changes than just the nicely decorated walls. Most students who buy school meals have probably noticed changes in

their daily lunches. These changes are the result of the new MA School Nutrition Bill, which goes into effect in August 2012 and contains certain stipulations on what kinds of foods and beverages can be offered in schools. These changes seem to result from the pressures of today's society wanting healthier options for children.

Students may notice informal signs in the cafeteria outlining the changes that have been implemented. These changes include serving only whole grain bread and homemade soups, replacing commercially processed foods such as chicken nuggets with healthy alternatives, buying more organic vegetables instead of canned versions and increasing the assortment of fresh fruit. Although the MA School Nutrition Bill requires these changes by next August, the Mt. Greylock lunch staff has been working to introduce many of the healthier foods before that deadline.

The head of the cafeteria, Judy Richardson, says she wants the students to be as healthy as possible. She has also been

buying from sellers near the area. Richmond Bakery in Pittsfield, where the whole wheat products in the cafeteria come from, has been extremely cooperative with Richardson's efforts: it will customize what it makes for her needs. When possible, Richardson purchases organic vegetables, which make up about one third of the total vegetables served in Mt. Greylock. The cafeteria has also been trying to make as much as they can from scratch. The goal is to eliminate as many processed foods as possible. And, as Richardson says, "It is the right thing to do."

However, while most people would agree that bringing healthy foods to the lunchroom is a fantastic idea, there are budget constraints. Healthy eating is costly: there are shipping costs, extra costs for every box of fresh fruit, and extra costs that stem from buying whole wheat products from Richmond Bakery. Although it can get expensive, these changes are certainly

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SCHOOL ASSESSMENT

Zavi Sheldon reports on the community forum held in collaboration with the International Center for Leadership in Education.

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WONDERFUL TOWN

Will Walter gives a rundown of this year's musical.

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THE OSCARS

Nate Taskin and Maggie Crane offer their takes on this year's Academy Awards.

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VIETNAMESE?

Alina Fein & Grace Singleton visit a unique Asian restaurant in Williamstown.

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LIBRARY USAGE

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were published in the twentieth century do not always contain the most updated information. Henry says, "non-fiction books get old quickly, especially science books because we are always discovering something new in the world. New facts are being uncovered and discovered all the time and so in order to be reading the most accurate information, computers are almost necessary."

The only two sections of the library that are still being used as they were before computers are the fiction and art books. Fiction books cannot be currently found on the Internet for copyright reasons, so students still look for stories to read. "Art Books," Share

says, "are more essential as books because you can't replicate them and they always contain different styles and techniques that do not get outdated as information in science books do."

The library does not only contain books and computers, but it also has quiet workspace. Ziemer says, "I find the library a good place to work after school because it is quiet and it has technology if I need it. Many students will work in the library after school if a meeting or test ends early and so they have an hour with nothing to do." The library is used more during the school day than after school. Many groups or clubs will meet in the library during directed study in order to have a quiet area to concentrate. Sophomore Caleb Raymond says, "the library also pro-

vides people with independent study classes, work periods, and free periods a silent place to work and concentrate."

Despite its popularity, technology is not going to completely disregard books. Ziemer says, "Non-fiction may be found mainly on the Internet in the future, but fiction is important because it is unique and creative." Many updated facts are found on the Internet, and so students find the facts easier to find and use. However, people may still wonder why books are read. Henry says, "There is something comforting in a book that makes it nicer to read than a hard plastic iPad." Share agrees and says, "even in the future we will still have books because books give comfort to humans, and humans will never want to give up that comfort." ■

2 in 650: An Interview with Jacob and Hannah Paul

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Hannah: Sometimes it was hard to see so many kids who were often severely disabled, but it was almost harder to know that they didn't have any real family, since it seems like they were the people that needed one the most. Jacob: I agree.

Q: What was the most rewarding moment of part of the trip?

Jacob: Spending time with the HIV/AIDS kids was a really great experience. Some of the kids there, you would never even guess there was anything wrong with them. It was also fun reading stories to the smaller kids. Although they couldn't really read, it was great to see them "read" the stories to you by following the pictures.

Hannah: It was incredible to talk to them or even do something as small as smile and watch their whole face light up. They all loved having company, especially the HIV/AIDS kids, and it was so rewarding to be able to feel like you could make a difference for them, even if it was just for a day...not to get cheesy or anything.

Q: Would you see yourself doing something like this in the future?

Jacob: Yes! I had a lot of fun. Hannah: Hopefully! People need help all over the world, and just helping people was a lot of fun. We also met a lot of really nice people there so it was a really nice community to be in.

Q: Do you have any good stories?

Jacob: We were on the radio! It was our "big surprise."

Hannah: Yeah, our leader just comes up and was like "Go into this room. It's a surprise," and it was a radio studio.

Q: So were you interviewed?

Jacob: Yeah! Hannah: They asked us what we were doing there.

Q: Finally, as a way to end every interview, if you could have any super power what would it be and what would you do with it?

Hannah: I think I would be invisible. Wreak havoc on the world! But actually, it could be very useful.

Jacob: I would fly! There is nothing more to it!

Interview has been edited and condensed. To nominate a student for 1 in 650, please contact the editors at mountgreylockecho@gmail.com. ■

GAP YEARS

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lege, Dils believes that a gap year is a beneficial break. "The U.S. education system puts a person on a path from preschool to grad school and by the end of high school people are burned out. A gap year is a good way to prepare for college and do something that isn't school related."

Another student from Mt. Greylock who is taking a gap year is Luke Costley. Cross country ski training and skiing itself will be the main focus of Costley's gap year. "I'm looking into some Scandinavian countries or traveling around the western portion of the U.S.A.," Costley stated. Even though Costley is unsure of where he will be during his gap year, he is confident in the reason for taking his year off. "Gap years are a great chance to accomplish something without responsibilities and to grow up and transition into college life."

While Costley, Dils, and Swoap travel, Ryan Mahar will be taking a postgraduate year. "I want to take a PG year so I can have another year playing sports and get myself more organized before college," says Ryan Mahar. The two schools that Mahar is looking at for his PG year are Holderness in Plymouth, New Hampshire, and Northfield Mount Hermon in Mount Hermon, Massachusetts. While taking his PG year, Mahar will be playing soccer. Mahar also believes "PG and gap years are a good way to have some freedom and explore."

For many reasons, more and more seniors are deciding that another year could be beneficial before they attend college. Some choose to take a gap year for academics, some for athletics, and some for life-changing experience. However, whatever the motivation, the consensus among these seniors is very clear: gap and post grad years are helpful learning experiences. ■

ICLE VISITS GREYLOCK

By ZAVI SHELDON

On Tuesday, January 10 and Thursday, January 12, the administration hosted a Mt. Greylock Community Forum to allow parents and community members to share opinions and concerns regarding the state of the school. The Forum was conducted as part of an ongoing partnership with the International Center for Leadership in Education (ICLE). Superintendent Dr. Rose Ellis said that the forum and ICLE partnership are part of an ongoing process to change Mt. Greylock's educational approach and to prepare students for an unknown future. ICLE, founded in 1991, "assist[s] schools and districts in implementing organizational changes that translate into world-class curriculum, instruction, and assessment systems," according to its website. The school was able to hire ICLE partially through a generous grant from Williams College.

The forum was facilitated by Dr. Richard Jones, who has worked on behalf of ICLE in the best and worst schools across the country to identify their strengths and challenges. His role in the event was, as he described, "to capture the good and bad about Mount Greylock and reflect it

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SEE FUND HOSTS TELETHON

By KELSEY HEBERT

On February 9th, the SEE Fund hosted its annual telethon to raise money for Mt. Greylock. The telethon was held on Thursday from 6:30 to 8:00. Students from Mt. Greylock made and received calls with local community members to ask for pledges to raise money for the SEE Fund. Students were also broadcasted live on channel 16, Willinet, during the telethon. The money collected will be used to support the fund so they can continue to provide our school with grants. The SEE Fund made great strides towards its goal of collecting \$5000 during this year's telethon.

The SEE Fund stands for Sustaining Educational Excellence. It is an endowment that grants money to the school and students for new ideas and programs. The program is run by Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation, Inc. which aims to provide stronger communities in Berkshire County. The SEE Fund pamphlet and transcript of Mt. Greylock's website says the fund is to "fund and support the school's efforts to provide students with a challenging and engaging curriculum, enhance [the students'] love for learning, promote responsible citizenship and stimulate intellectual and creative endeavors." The program has been funding suggestions of Mt. Greylock students, staff and community members since 1997 and was one of the first funds for educational excellence in Berkshire County. The Endowment has a balance of over \$300,000 and gave out around \$18,000 in grants throughout last year alone. Since improvements to a school, especially one as old as Mt. Greylock, of any type are often extremely expensive, outside support is needed. Often local, state and federal funding is not enough or not even provided. The SEE Fund helps by being a contingency for Mt. Greylock's budget.

In the past, the SEE Fund has granted money to the school for the visit of James Preller, the author of *Bystander*, for the Middle School Bystander project, provided money for the PEP Club, a whale watch field trip for AP English students, new TI-Nspire calculators, the opening of the new school store, *The Red Zone*, and much more. Superintendent Rose Ellis says, "In times of budgetary constraints, it is wonderful for a school to have an Endowment that can provide financial support for educational improvements above and beyond the core program."

Anyone can apply to receive money from the SEE fund. All applicants are reviewed by a committee of parents, teachers, students, the superintendent and members of the school community, who choose the applicants that most fit the criteria for goals the SEE Fund aims to achieve. The criteria for a grant includes the extent of impact it will make on the school, the relevance to the Mt. Greylock school program, the feasibility of the project and the cost effectiveness. The applicants chosen by the committee are sent to Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation, which has the final say in whether or not the grant will be given.

Each year, one student representative from the incoming sophomore year is chosen by Mt. Greylock faculty to represent their grade in the SEE fund for the rest of their high school career. These students provide support, ideas and opinions to the fund to support innovation and educational improvement to the school. The selected students also help advertise fundraisers,

provide feedback within the school and spread the word about upcoming changes and events. Other students can request ideas through their representative as well.

Sophomore Alex Delano, a member of the SEE Fund, says that students are encouraged to help by telling their friends, parents and others about the SEE Fund, especially about events such as the telethon.

For readers who missed the recent telethon, the SEE Fund's telephone number is (413) 458-9582. Contributions to the SEE Fund are tax deductible and can be made by anyone and everyone. All proceeds will go to help the Mt. Greylock Regional School District to provide improved education and learning environments.

"The SEE fund is an integral part of the resources Mt. Greylock receives from its generous school community," comments Ellis. ■

SKATE FOR HAITI

On Saturday, February 25th, from 11 am to 1 pm at the North Adams Vietnam Memorial Skating Rink, George and Harrison Dilthey will be holding one final fundraiser for their relief trip to Haiti. Admission is \$5 per person. Along with the skating, they will be holding raffles to give away gift certificates to local restaurants. Even if you can't make it, tell your friends, family members, coworkers, teachers and everyone else you know. The key to a successful fundraiser is spreading the word and letting people know. ■

The Skate for Haiti will be held at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Skating Rink in North Adams on Saturday, February 24th, from 11 am to 1 pm.

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.

Editors: Alina Fein and Jonah Majumder
Consulting Editors: Naomi LaChance and Ned Kleiner
Business Manager: Rori Brown
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Photography Editor: Katie Rathbun
Advisor: Peter Niemeyer

Mt. Greylock Regional High School
 1781 Cold Spring Road
 Williamstown, Mass,
 01267, USA

Questions? Comments? News tips?
 Please contact:
 mountgreylockecho@gmail.com

In the Mood for Vietnamese?

By ALINA FEIN &
GRACE SINGLETON

We did not head into our most recent restaurant adventure with the highest expectations. Previously, we had heard mixed opinions on the dining experience at Saigon Vietnamese Cuisine on Spring Street. Still, we decided to try the place out in order to answer the frequent question, "What is Vietnamese food, anyway?"

Despite our skeptical preconceptions, the restaurant presented a favorable first impression. Dim lighting, plum walls, and Asian accents created an intimate setting that was complimented by seasonal decorations in the form of snowflakes and festive red bows. A spicy-sweet aroma greeted our noses. We shared the quiet dining area with several sets of older couples.

Instead of the bread that might start a meal at an Italian restaurant or the wontons that usually begin one at a Chinese place, our dinner opened with a basket of exotic, round, flakey crisps. Upon inquiry, our attentive waiter told us that these delicacies were "shrimp chips." We acknowledge that, despite the odd name, shrimp chips are our new favorite snack. It took extreme self-control to refrain from emptying the contents of the basket into our coat pockets.

Examination of the menu revealed a mix of both familiar and novel Asian dishes. While fried rice, spring rolls, and multiple stir fry combinations were available, we could also order from a section of the menu titled "noodle bowls." Having never heard of them before, we were instantly intrigued and compelled to sample them. From an extensive list, Grace chose an egg noodle veggie bowl while Alina opted for a curried chicken bowl.

Our orders arrived without a long wait – especially since we were occupied by the shrimp chips. The white porcelain bowls were brimming with generous servings of noodles, vegetables, sauce, and more. A savory broth bathed the egg noodles, vegetables, and tofu featured in the veggie bowl. The curried chicken bowl included noodles, curried chicken, potatoes, carrots, and a peanut garnish. Although Grace's dish was designated as one of the many vegetarian selections, Alina's noodle bowl also featured a significant amount of fresh vegetables.

By the end of the dinner, we had completely re-evaluated our sentiments towards Saigon. We were fully satisfied in every respect. The overwhelmingly positive experience that we gained from a restaurant housed in an unassuming storefront allows us to confidently recommend Saigon to diners seeking Asian cuisine looking for a change of pace from the Chinese takeout. ■■

(Right) An egg noodle veggie bowl and a curried chicken bowl from the Vietnamese restaurant in Williamstown called 'Saigon.'

By WILL WALTER

Well, it may not be the Village Beautiful, but it sure is a Wonderful Town. Indeed, this year's musical is Wonderful Town. Performances will take place on March 8th-10th at 7:00 pm in the Mt. Greylock Auditorium. As always, it will be directed by Mt. Greylock history teacher Jeffrey Welch, who has directed the Mt. Greylock musical for thirteen consecutive years.

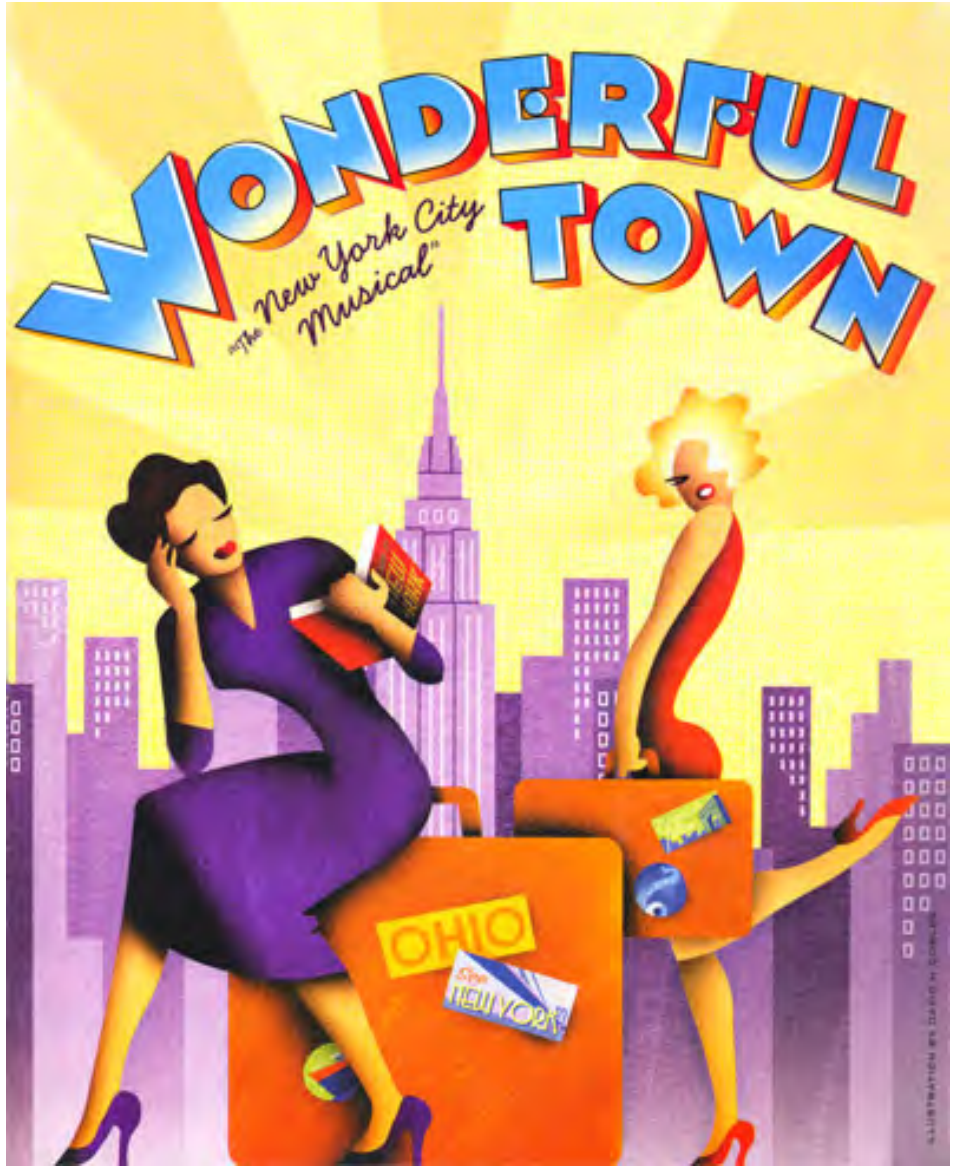
Over forty students are involved in the play, either acting, making sets, doing technical work or playing in the pit orchestra. "The best part about the plays is seeing everybody work together and plan together. It makes the plays really worthwhile and successful," says Alex Krell, who will play Frank in Wonderful Town. All six grades are represented in the play, and the cast has been working for over a month on what is shaping up to be a promising musical.

Wonderful Town is about two sisters, Ruth and Eileen, who move to New York City from their little home in Ohio to make lives as a writer and an actress, respectively. Through a dozen songs and great acting, we follow these sisters as they struggle to find jobs in the 'Big Apple.' They encounter love, party New York style and are even involved in a riot or two.

"I went to see this show six years ago on Broadway with Mrs. Walt, and I really loved it," explained Welch, when asked about his choice of Wonderful Town. "I thought the characters were great and the music very vibrant. I think it is a good fit for the students." Welch and company are not the only ones with high opinions of this musical. In 1956, the year it opened, the play won five Tony Awards, including Best Musical. It was even loved enough to be revived on Broadway in 2003. The point is, it should be a very exciting play.

When asked what is so exciting about the Mt. Greylock musicals, Welch replied, "It is nice to see all of the little elements come together. It's different from the rehearsals because you can't see all of those elements coming together." He also added, "Everybody should come see the play. It will be great!" Yes, everybody from this wonderful town should come see the 2012 Mt. Greylock Musical. ■■

A WONDERFUL TOWN



2003 Revival Logo

Performances of Wonderful Town begin on March 8th and continue to the 10th.



Photo: Alina Fein and Grace Singleton

CAFETERIA CHANGES

Continued from Page 1.

supported. As Superintendent Dr. Rose Ellis says, "I encourage healthy eating – students can learn better with healthy foods." A few years ago, a wellness policy was implemented by the state, and committees were created to assess each school. The policy was based around nutritional eating and a healthy level of physical activity. The Mt. Greylock committee met at the time of the policy's establishment and then took a hiatus when they were not needed. Now this committee might be returning, because a school wellness advisory committee is required by the new MA School Nutrition Bill.

The cafeteria staff has been hard at work to enforce these changes in Mt. Greylock and provide the students with the best and healthiest lunches possible. So far, there have been no complaints from students about the changing menus. And as Ellis says, she is "very pleased with the proactive approach of the cafeteria." ■■

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COMMUNITY

ICLE VISITS GREYLOCK

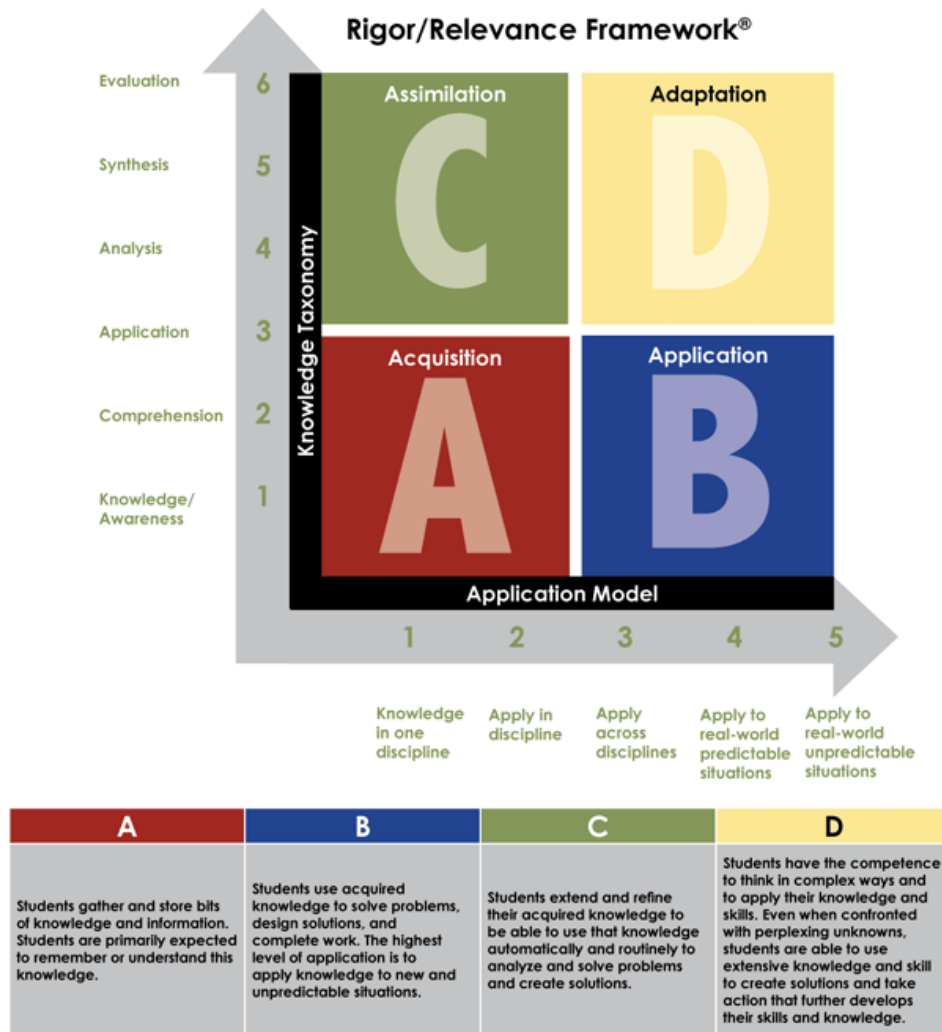
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back.”
Dr. Ellis said she was very pleased with the turnout of parents of past and present Mount Greylock students, estimating roughly fifty participants between the two nights. The discussion was guided by a list of eleven questions covering topics such as expectations of students, the discipline policy, and the availability of technology in classrooms.

Many parents expressed concerns regarding the school’s communication with parents, students and community members. They also spoke out about the need to make classrooms supportive learning environments for students with different strengths and challenges. Some people remembered the days of open campus, and suggested that students be given more freedom and flexibility during the school day.

The community forum was one part of a three day ‘Needs Assessment,’ which involved classroom visits and interviews conducted by Dr. Jones. Faculty, staff and representatives from each grade were all interviewed in small groups. Dr. Ellis reported that, in the student groups, they tried to represent every demographic—Williamstown and Lanesboro, male and female, and different academic and extracurricular interests. Nick Bolognia, who participated in the sophomore group, recalls being asked what he likes about Mt. Greylock, how he would describe the school, and what he considers to be some of its weaknesses.

The results collected from the interviews



and forums will now be combined with data from a survey taken by over 500 students in the Fall to create a baseline assessment of Mt. Greylock’s performance. Dr. Ellis said that it will help the school see what they do well, what their challenges are, and what they need to do better. With this information, the administration and teachers can set short- and long-term goals for Mt. Greylock.

The next step in the partnership with ICLE is to create an action plan. On February 16 and 17, a leadership team of administrators and teachers will consider all of the data and prioritize goals for the school. The last step will be to put plans in action to reach those goals.

The partnership with ICLE also puts a focus on teacher development, which will revolve around the Three R’s: rigor, relevance, and relationships. Dr. Ellis says that all lessons should include these ideas because they provide an ideal instructional model. The school will address if course content is both rigorous and relevant, and if strong relationships between students and teachers are being formed.

Dr. Ellis said that she appreciates that students and their parents could be involved in the evaluation of Mt. Greylock. She also wants students to know that her door is always open if they have a suggestion or concern about Mt. Greylock. “They were an integral part of the Needs Assessment and offered very important feedback,” said Dr. Ellis. ■■

(Left) A diagram outlining the ICLE principles of Rigor and Relevance.

STUDENT EMPLOYMENT

By EVELYN MAHON

Students at Mt. Greylock have many ways of getting the funds needed to fuel their expensive lifestyles. Many hit up their parents for cash, some do the occasional odd job around the house, but an increasing number of students have part-time, W-2 and tax involved jobs.

Greylock students work at a variety of businesses across Berkshire county, including restaurants, ski resorts, and department stores.

Restaurants offer a range of jobs, from dishwashing to serving food. Waiters and waitresses are granted some flexibility as to work hours (which is why many a starving artist in New York can be seen working in cafes). Tips also are a waiter or waitress’ best friend. Depending on the generosity of customers, a waiter or waitress can make anywhere from \$15- \$200

per night. However, restaurants are all different, and some can have more stressful work environments than others. That being said, restaurants are not the workplace for everyone.

Other students prefer to use their athletic ability and work as ski instructors at Jiminy Peak. The ski resort employs many Greylock students, who work all over the grounds as instructors, ticket and pass sellers, and coordinators of rental equipment. Although the season has been slightly slushier than average this year, Jiminy has not laid off large numbers of its younger workers.

Another employer of a large percentage of students is the Target in Lanesboro. Students work as anything from cashiers to stock clerks. Like many large stores, Target has a minimum age requirement so

student employees can be paid the same amount of money and perform more legal jobs, like climbing up a ladder or wielding a box cutter.

Many employers have this same minimum age requirement. The laws regarding student workers under the age of eighteen in Massachusetts are pretty strict and sometimes strange. As the Massachusetts child labor law states, “all persons under the age of sixteen many not bake, cook, or

work in a barber shop” and “persons under the age of eighteen many not work as a firefighter on a boat.” Those under the age of fourteen may not work at all except in babysitting, farming, and entertainment.

Berkshire County has a surprising amount of job openings for students in the current economy. Hopefully that will continue, and we students will become less and less dependent on our parents’ money. ■■

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SKIERS GOING THE DISTANCE

By TOM DILS

Many Mt. Greylock athletes gripe about long bus rides to away games. For the most part, the extent of these trips is a weekday match down in the Valley or a dreaded haul to Mt. Everett. For some Nordic skiers, however, the drives can get much more extreme. Take six hours to a two-kilometer loop in Farmington, Maine.

In the past decade, Berkshire County competition for Greylock's Nordic skiers has dropped off significantly. Still, we have a program with over fifty boys and girls, and the fastest members are still going off to college with intentions to ski. The normal series of races in the county is not enough for our athletes as they attempt to reach a college level. So in between high school races, many travel all over New England to participate in regional events at higher levels.

This winter has been busy for Josh Harrington. His schedule consists of high school races and practices, four Eastern Cup weekends around New England, several Eastern High School (EHS) races, and a week at the USSA Nationals in Rumford, Maine. This type of schedule is typical for the top Greylock skiers. Regional races begin early with the J2 series. Older racers move up to J1s, and OJs feature the most experienced competition. At all levels, skiers are trying to qualify for their respective Junior National teams. The EHS series draws the best skiers as well. Said Luke Costley, "We send bigger groups like twelve to fifteen to J2s and EHS." This year, he said, four or five skiers are participating in the most intense schedules like Harrington.

Costley barely missed qualifying for Junior Nationals as a sophomore. That year, he competed in three major Junior Olympic Qualifiers. Every weekend was another long drive and an exhausting set of races.

This year, sophomore Warren Taylor has a decent chance of qualifying for Junior Nationals. The travel is taxing, however. Said Taylor, "Spending all of my weekends away and racing can beat me down a little, and I wish I could get in some real training during the week, but I am so tired that during the week I tend to primarily rest."

Harrington, who missed a week of school



Photo: Tamara Hitchcock

Junior Alex White skis in the Eastern High School Qualifier Race at Weston, MA.

for USSA Nationals, agreed. "It certainly makes the winter harder," he said. "You don't get a lot done on race weekends and you miss a reasonable amount of school." Both Harrington and Taylor have committed almost every weekend of their winters to races. The potential is huge, however. If either makes the top six in New England in their age groups, he will earn a ticket to Soldier Hollow, Utah for Nationals in March. The last Greylock skier to make Nationals

was Evan Dethier. Dethier graduated from Williams last spring and was a top skier for his whole career.

It seems like a huge commitment for something that is so difficult to reach, but every skier says it is worth it. Said Costley, "For kids who want to ski at the college level, Eastern Cups are a necessity. You figure out how to race on the road, how to handle two races in a row, which is similar to the college system."

The high level of competition keeps them honest. "It teaches you that you're not that good," said Harrington. "It makes you work harder."

Taylor summed up the commitment, saying, "I haven't ever considered not doing any of this because it is just part of my life." It is the life of a skier with the dream of competing in college. That dream will never go away, and neither will the faraway races. ■■■

GIRLS BASKETBALL

By ALEX WHITE

When the Lee Wildcats girls basketball team came to Mt. Greylock gymnasium they boasted an undefeated record and viewed the Mounties as just another opponent on their way to another perfect season. The Mounties, however, had other ideas in mind. One quarter in, the Mounties had gotten off to a hot start leading the Wildcats by a score of 13-10. Lee fought back in the second quarter and went into halftime with a three point lead. The Mounties were not intimidated, and they came back in the third quarter to tie it up at 36. A tough fourth quarter ultimately led to a 53-38 loss, but this game illustrated the Mounties' potential. Senior Sierra Holland led the team with four 3-pointers and 16 points. Accompanying her was freshman Lucy Barrett who knocked down twelve of her own.

The Mounties lead a balanced attack. Barrett provides the scoring touch, averaging twelve points per game. Dishing her the ball is senior captain point guard Kaylene Lemme who leads the team in assists. Down low, Caitie Benoit collects her fair share of rebounds while also contributing both with her scoring touch and solid defense. Sierra Holland provides the outside

threat that forces teams to guard the perimeter. The 2012 Mounties combine experience with a number of promising young faces. There is no doubt: they have the talent to go far. They look forward to continued success in their season and hopefully a spot in the Western Mass tournament. ■■■



Photo: Jonah Majumder

Freshman Guard Lucy Barrett drives past an opponent.

LESS THAN IDEAL CONDITIONS FOR ALPINE SKIERS

By BEN KRANT

With these atypical weather conditions, Mount Greylock's alpine skiers are all wondering the same thing: where is the snow? The first alpine race was postponed until early January due to the lack of snow. Senior girls captain, Kate Guittard, remarked, "the [weather conditions] have been by far the worst I have ever seen."

Even with these conditions, an elite Greylock boys' team is continuing to show their dominance and a small girls team is showing great promise. Kate Guittard and Heidi Kurpaska are the captains of a girls' team which consists of only six members. With the graduation of key skier Kristina Chesney, they have had their work cut out for them. Fewer racers puts more pressure on each individual to score solid times. Yet, Kurpaska said, "we are a very close team with good chemistry so I

could see us pulling some upsets later on in the season."

Despite the graduation of Connor Krell and Zach Hanson, the boys' team has had a great season so far. Anchored by senior captains Kent Hanson and Eli Burnham, they are on their way to another impressive season. Senior Ben Kobrin has also made tremendous leaps, placing well in his first three races. Greylock won their first race and came in second in their next two, and now are on track for a stellar season.

"Some goals for the season would be to win Berkshire County and to bring some of our skiers to states," remarked senior Kent Hanson. With hopes for a hefty snow fall in February, the Mount Greylock skiers will hit the slopes and with the determination to continue their dominance in Berkshire County. ■■■

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THE OSCARS

Nate Taskin analyzes the Academy Award winners, and Maggie Crane reveals why the Oscars are often meaningless.

By NATE TASKIN

Ah, the Academy Awards. There's nothing I love more than to watch 3-4 hours of Hollywood trying to convince me that it cares about art, only to later shove more explosions and fart jokes down my throat. Are they important to the film world? Not really. Is the telecast well executed? Rarely. Are they fun to watch talk about? Unrealistically so.

Best Picture

Will Win: *The Artist*. It's silent, it's an underdog tale and it's French. This is Oscar bait at its finest.

Should Win: *The Artist*. Did I say "Oscar bait?" I meant "masterpiece." This gorgeous film is touching, funny, sad, captivating and superbly acted. And don't even get me started with that dog...

Best Actor

Will Win: Jean Dujardin-*The Artist*. Dujardin has been racking up awards all season. Expect to see a witty speech from Dujardin and have the music cut him off.

Should Win: George Clooney-*The Descendants*. I love Gary Oldman, and although I think he gave a great performance in *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy*, his presence here is more of a "We're Sorry" nomination than one he actually deserves. Clooney is different. He is pitch-perfect as a man bogged down by family, work and life itself. Every crack in his voice evokes newfound emotion in the audience.

Best Actress

Will Win: Meryl Streep-*The Iron Lady*. The Academy has a quota to keep up. They are the sandwich. Streep is the mayonnaise.

Should Win: Rooney Mara-*The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo*. Streep is great in her role, but one performance alone cannot carry an entire film that has nothing to say about her character. Mara on the other hand is marvelous as the misanthropic cyber-punk Lisbeth Salander. All of the pain and trauma of her life can be seen with just her eyes. But if Shame was too scary for the Academy, then Mara has no chance in hell.

Best Director

Will Win: Martin Scorsese-*Hugo*. There is no definite winner in this category, so when Academy voters are in doubt, they turn to the giants.

Should Win: Martin Scorsese-*Hugo*... And they're called giants for a reason. This award may have well have been called the

"We're Sorry That We Steal from You All the Time, Marty" Award. A bit lengthy, I know, but accurate nonetheless.

Best Original Screenplay

Will Win: *Midnight in Paris*. If the Academy thinks you're old and dying, your chances of winning go up. Coupling with the fact that Woody Allen is an Academy favorite and *Midnight in Paris* is his highest grossing film to date, he has the lock.

Should Win: *The Artist*. Because it is a silent movie, people do not speak in *The Artist*. That however doesn't mean that it doesn't have anything to say. Screenwriting is more than just saying words. It involves plot, character, story, mood, theme and raw emotion. *The Artist* has all of that and more. Yes, it's that familiar story of a wash-up afraid of being forgotten, but isn't that part of what makes it so endearing?

Best Adapted Screenplay

Will Win: *The Descendants*. Since it won't be taking home "Best Picture" or "Director," this is another way for the Academy to apologize. Should Win: *The Descendants*. This apology is fine by me. The writing of *The Descendants* is positively sublime. Equal parts morosely funny and bitterly sad; it's another gem for Alexander Payne to add to his resume.

Best Cinematography

Will Win: *The Tree of Life*. Where *The Tree of Life* is a failure in storytelling, it is a triumph in filmmaking. When the Big Bang is occurs, the brain almost explodes at the meticulousness and splendor of what is being witnessed. Your synapses rearrange themselves and your eyes bleed out honey. It's so good-looking that you're almost convinced that it's a good movie.

Should Win: *The Tree of Life*. Seriously, the colorrrrrrrsss. ■■■

Now that you have read the will-be and should-be winners of this year's Academy Awards, you are in the know. Congratulations! You can impress people with your deep knowledge of film while smoking thin cigarettes and pretending to read *The New Yorker* (everyone knows you only read it for the cartoons! You're not fooling anyone!). So now is when I burst your pretentious little bubble.

The Academy Awards are a lie. (Gasp!). They are an excuse for pretty, rich, often semi-talented people to congratulate each other on being pretty, rich, and often semi-talented. Now don't get me wrong, the Academy Awards have bestowed honors onto some brilliant films and performances. But they have also bestowed the same honor on Sylvester Stallone.

This year was a rather weak year in Oscar films, with several standouts but even more upsets. This year is so predictable that you only really need to see four films to be educated: *The Artist*, *Hugo*, *Midnight in Paris*, and *The Descendants*. The rest will fade with time. If the Academy Awards were really all about films, these would be the only movies nominated (add *Drive* to that. Seriously why is that not on there? No one of woman born can resist Ryan Gosling. NO ONE). But instead we have to have nine movies nominated for best picture. It's all about selling tickets.

Among the mediocre films nominated are *Money Ball* (Baseball and math! Every film buff's favorite things!), *War Horse* (I have nothing snarky to say about this one. That's how boring it was), *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (Haven't seen this, but I know what happens from the trailer), *The Help* (Story

of black oppression through the eyes of white people. Classic Hollywood) and *The Tree of Life* (This was so pretentious it physically hurt me).

Also lacking this year are great performances. Sure there are some good ones, but nothing like last year's array of knock your socks off performances like Christian Bale, Melissa Leo, Colin Firth or Natalie Portman. The best performance this year didn't even get a nomination, and that is Uggie, the dog from *The Artist*. He was wrongfully snubbed and I for one am outraged. Leonardo DiCaprio's J. Edgar and Albert Brook's wannabe gangster from *Drive* were also snubbed.

I know what your thinking: "but Maggie! Meryl Streep is nominated this year, and everything she does is perfect!" to which I say "Calm down!!" Yes, I love Meryl (first name basis) just as much as any gay man from the East Village and swear by her name and not so secretly wish to be her. But I get it! The Academy is obsessed with Meryl. This year she is nominated for *The Iron Lady*, a film about Margaret Thatcher. Streep's performance is indeed good, but not enough to carry the whole film, which is kind of all over the place. If someone filmed Meryl Streep reading the phone book she would get a nomination. (Fun Fact: If Martin Scorsese made a movie with Meryl Streep and Morgan Freeman about boxing during World War II, written by Aaron Sorkin, Hollywood would literally explode.)

Citizen Kane, Alfred Hitchcock, *The Wizard Of Oz*, *Pulp Fiction*, *Taxi Driver*. What do all of these things have in common? They all did not receive Oscars. The Academy Awards are not the be-all and end-all of film. See the movies nominated for Oscars, it's certainly a great start. But go find your own movies! Underrated is so often the best. Impress your hipster friends with movies THEY have never heard of! Don't just watch the same old Oscar bait, or whatever God awful 3D robot just came out. *Transformers whatever-number-we're-on* was nominated for three Oscars this year. Three. If you listen closely you can hear Orson Welles weeping in his grave. ■■■



The 2012 Academy Awards marked the 84th anniversary of the Oscars.

CROSSWORD: "LET THE PUN BEGIN"

By BLAIR DILS

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
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ACROSS

- Deodorant
- Get by
- "___ Your Enthusiasm"
- Sugar suffix
- "___ curtain has descended across the Continent..."--Churchill
- Anthem starter
- State with many AARP folks
- Aid
- Late night host now in prime time
- Reason the dog near the road got a ticket?
- ___ a million
- "The ___ El Dorado" - 2000 animated film
- Assessment of the radio repairman's wedding?
- Underwater sandbar
- Creepy
- Scottish cap
- Spanish I verb
- MCAS test subject
- Skilled
- "Never ___ boy to do a man's job"
- Reason the fidgety toddler got put in jail?
- Modern car safety accessory
- Cannoli filling
- Cost for dead batteries?
- Modern miner's find

- Claimed he helped create the Internet in 1999 while campaigning for President
- Subj./v. error
- Kind of exam
- Featherer's partner
- Each
- American ___ doll
- Golfer Sam, and others
- Adult ending

DOWN

- Extremely successful
- "___ As You're Mine" - "Wicked" song
- Closer
- Lake ports
- "Writing free verse is like playing tennis without ___" - Frost
- Payne's Red and White Day attire
- Great Lake
- Not a talker
- Hot
- Sox play-by-play man Joe Castiglione's alma mater
- Application
- Headed
- Restaurant without a liquor license
- Fabricate
- Informal negative
- ___ straits
- Work
- First in an outline
- Article
- Roma footballer Daniele de ___
- Was devoured
- JV basketball practice sound?
- Tropical plant root food
- Somali pirate haunt
- Kind of hall
- 90 mg of Vitamin C, say
- Drawback
- Russian leader
- Cupid and Robin Hood
- Halloween booty
- Pleistocene, for example
- Blanket worn as a garment
- Artist who uses Krylon
- Like the wives of Windsor
- Flair
- Fairy tale villain
- "___ good time call..."
- Authority, informally
- Pester
- Gold of "Entourage"
- Toxic chemical in cigarettes

Think you can make a better crossword puzzle? Submit yours to mountgreylockecho@gmail.com and we just might run it.