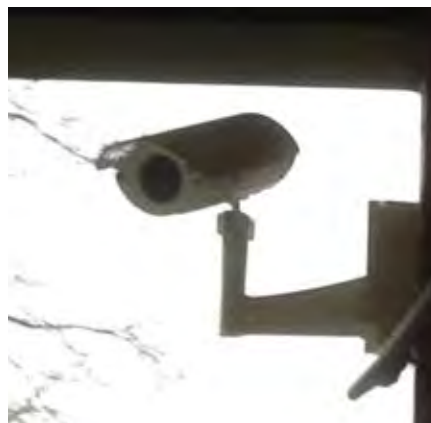


GREYLOCK INCREASES SECURITY

By KATELIN MARCHAND

On Friday, December 14, 2012, a shooting took place in an elementary school in Newton, Connecticut. Three days prior to the Connecticut shooting there was a mall shooting in Portland, Oregon. And who could forget the tragedies in Aurora, Colorado and Tucson, Arizona. Over the last five years there have been nineteen mass shootings, three of which occurred within the last five months. Such events beg the question: is it necessary for Mt. Greylock to increase security measures?

Recently a new security system was put in place. An alarm system was installed and the front doors are now kept locked. Visitors and latecomers have to be buzzed in by Patsy Worley, in the main office. At a recent faculty meeting, teachers received fobs, which are electronic keys that allow them to gain access to the building when it is locked. Fobs are useful for teachers that want to take classes outside or come in and work on the weekends. Health teacher Lisa Jennings likes the idea of the fobs: "When I taught science, the weekends were indispensable. I would always set up for Monday's class on Sunday." Jennings is accepting of the new security but sad that it is necessary. Math teacher Robert Thistle shares Jennings' view: "Security is a necessary precaution because in reality, tragedies take place. Hopefully the new security will make parents feel their children are in a secure environment." As the Mounties' basketball coach, Thistle also likes that he can access the building for practices when he needs to.



A buzzer system, left, and a video camera, above, are two of the security measures that have recently been taken by Mt. Greylock.

While the faculty seems to be excited and supportive of the new security systems, some students are not as enthusiastic. Eighth grader Robert Sutter stated, "We should buy a new school first, then get an updated security system. I don't think we should be putting work into the old building." Charlotte Rand, a freshman, admitted that she did not know much about the new security system, but she did express her belief that it was a bit over the top. Another freshman, Noah Savage, said that he was unaware of the increased security. On the whole, few students felt positively about

new security measures.

While students have their reservations, the administration is happy with the update in the building. "It is a continuous process to ensure the safety of everyone, and students and teachers are doing a terrific job with the new security," said principal Jack Kurty. "It is good that they are realizing that security is everyone's responsibility." Assistant principal Christopher Barnes explained recent changes: "Both the Williamstown and Lanesborough Elementary schools have security. It was time for Mount Greylock to follow suit." ■

1 in 650: An Interview with Emily Kaegi

By THE ECHO STAFF



Photo courtesy of Emily Kaegi

This month, the Echo decided to turn the tables and interview 1-in-650 columnist Emily Kaegi. Emily received the honor of being selected to represent Mt. Greylock on the Berkshire District Attorney's Youth Advisory Board. Each school in Berkshire County is allowed two student representatives on the board. We sat down with Emily to ask her about her experiences as a member of the board.

Echo: Why do you think the Youth Advisory Board was instituted?

Emily: The district attorney uses the board of high school students to understand student opinions on issues that affect their daily lives. As a group, we also do community outreach to try to spread good messages to students.

Echo: Do you know anything about how the selection process works?

Emily: Yes. Each school in Berkshire County has two representatives that are juniors or seniors. The board is from schools ranging from Taconic to Mt. Everett to Miss Halls to McCann. The schools pick their own reps. Some schools have a whole interview process on being chosen for the board. At Mt. Greylock, it is not a very known position and the school doesn't do much with it. So I was just nominated by last year's Greylock board members. But I know at Lenox you have to be interviewed by multiple people and it's a really big deal.

Echo: How often does the board meet, and what are meetings like?

Emily: We meet once a month in the district attorney's conference room. The meetings are 11:30 to 1:30 on school days. First we eat lunch from a local pittsfield restaurant. There is a special committee of ladies that are our advisors. They run the meetings and ask us to do different things. A lot of what we do is talk and brainstorm ideas.

Echo: What are some of the different projects the Youth Advisory Board has been or is working on?

Emily: Our first meeting was just getting to know each other. But then we started to talk about the Netsmarts Program, which is an internet safety program for elementary school students. We each had a different role in the program so we talked a lot about internet safety this fall. We went to

Continued on Page 2.

SPANISH STUDENTS VENTURE TO NEW YORK

By WILL WALTER

On December 7th, various Spanish 2, 3, 4, and 5 students and teachers woke up around 5:00 and left the Mt. Greylock parking lot at 6:00 on a bus bound for New York City. The students were in for a long trip, although the coach bus's features like individual radios in the seats and built-in Wifi kept them occupied. The bus finally arrived in The Big Apple around 10:30 a.m. and brought the group to El Museo del Barrio, or the Neighborhood Museum. After exploring the museum, the students once again boarded the bus and ate a fantastic lunch of tapas at the Spanish restaurant Sol y Sombra. The lunch included dishes such as Tortilla Espanola (a golden omelette of sliced potatoes, eggs and sweet onions), Jamon Serrano (thinly sliced spanish country ham served on toast with fresh tomatoes) and Gambas A La Plancha (whole grilled shrimp served with sea salt). After lunch, the Spanish students were met by a Spanish-speaking guide who took everyone on a two and a half hour long tour of the Spanish neighborhoods and monuments of New York City. The students found the tour magnificent and revealing: "[The tour] provided the opportunity to experience Hispanic art, culture...and parts of New York City students might normally never see," said Mt. Greylock spanish teacher Shannon Vigeant. The tour ended at approximately 4:30, and at 5:00 the gaggle of students arrived at New York City's prime shopping plaza: Rockefeller Center. Everyone was given an hour and a half to eat dinner, shop, ice skate, gaze at the famous

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LOGAR SCHOOL PROJECT UPDATE

By MIRANDA DILS

Last year, students at Mt. Greylock participated in a project to compile science lab instructions and materials for the Logar School in Afghanistan. This all-girls school, which opened in 2006 and since has been a major success, gives students the opportunity to receive an education, something difficult for women to come by in Afghanistan. Don Goodrich of the Peter M. Goodrich Memorial Foundation is involved in many ongoing projects in Afghanistan and asked health teacher and Peer Team advisor Lisa Jennings if students at Greylock would be interested in writing up and donating science labs to supplement the Logar School girls' learning experience. Thanks to help from members of

the Amnesty International Club, Peer Team and others, Afghani students will now be able to extend their learning through science labs that students at Greylock benefited from themselves.

Lisa Jennings initially asked Amnesty International and Peer Team members to help with project, and eager participants soon began surveying other students to gather information on what they found to be the most beneficial labs, taking into account what resources were available to the girls in Afghanistan. Students spent an entire day in the library last year writing thirty-one biology, chemistry, physics and

Continued on Page 2.

EXTERNAL VOICES: GUEST SPEAKERS AT GREYLOCK

By ZAVI SHELDON

In recent months, Mt. Greylock has been visited by various guest speakers, some of whose visits were made in conjunction with Williamstown Elementary School's fifteenth annual Words Are Wonderful celebration. Words Are Wonderful is a ten day festival which features events such as a Scrabble night, a book fair, and author visits.

George O'Connor spoke to 8th and 11th grade American history classes about his graphic novel, Journey into Mohawk Country. The text of the book is taken from the 1634 travel diary of an employee of the Dutch West India Company. O'Connor, the author of several picture books, illustrated the adventures of Dutch Trader Harmen Meyndertsz van den Bogaert in his search for beaver pelts. O'Connor spoke to stu-

dents about both the history of the novel and his illustrating process.

High School history teacher Jeffrey Welch was contacted last spring by Lauren Gottlieb, a parent involved in the planning of Words Are Wonderful at Williamstown Elementary School. She asked if Mt. Greylock would be interested in hosting O'Connor. Welch said of O'Connor's visit that "although the choice of book was somewhat unusual, it was fitting because American history is a part of our culture and because graphic novels are part of an emerging genre." He mentioned that he hoped the talk was beneficial not only to the history classes, but also to juniors in the graphic novel seminar class and to those

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MOVIES

A few of our writers take a look at some of the films that have recently come out.

See Page 3.

CONCUSSIONS

Emily Kaegi digs deeper into an issue that is becoming all too common in the world of modern athletics.

See Page 4.

WINTER SPORTS

Our sportswriters preview some of the promising winter teams.

See Page 5.

HOLIDAY CHEER

Evelyn Mahon entertains us with some possible responses to relatives' annoying questions.

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1 in 650

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Cranville Elementary School in November and talked to the Kindergarten about being safe on the internet. We taught them what to do if something scares them and that they should always have an adult with them when they are on the internet. The kids loved the course and were so excited to have older students come talk to them. Now our focus has shifted to planning a "youth conference" for middle school students in March.

Echo: What will the youth conference be like?

Emily: Every middle school in the county will send eight students who will listen to lots of guest speakers talking about everything from substance abuse to bullying. The Youth Advisory Board runs the conference. Our main section, however, will focus on bullying. During our last meeting we broke into brainstorming groups and discussed bullying, and how we can discuss it with middle school students. The point of the conference is to help the students with their transition to high school.

Echo: What is it like for you to be on the board?

Emily: Its been really fun to be able to talk to other students from different high schools. I've learned a lot about the ideals and makings of other schools. One of the funniest things is the fact that a lot of the students are athletes, and they hate playing Greylock because we always win. I love hearing about other schools and seeing that they deal with the same issues as we do at Greylock. The best part, however, is that a lot of the stereotypes of the different schools are put down. We can talk to each other and realize that what we've heard about others' schools isn't necessarily true.

Echo: Do you feel like you've been able to transfer some of what you've learned back to the community at Greylock?

Emily: Yeah, it has been nice to tell other Greylock students about the other schools and what they think. Especially with sports, its been interesting because on the field we see the other teams as enemies. I've talked to football players from a lot of other schools now and it's eye opening to hear what they have to say. I've even met another cross country runner. Even though on the course I want to beat Pittsfield, when I'm sitting next to her, we talk about our training, and all our rivalries go away.

Echo: Now I can't forget the famous last question: If you could replace your hand or arm with anything, what would you pick?

Emily: I'd pick a lightsaber, because who wouldn't want to be a jedi? Or a magic wand so I could be a Hogwarts student.

Echo: Wow, thats probably the best answer ever-- did you have that in mind when you originally made up the question?

Emily: Oh yes! The idea originated at my summer camp where when we take attendance the campers respond with an answer to a silly question. Someone asked this question and that was my answer.

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

LOGAR SCHOOL PROJECT

Continued from Page 1.

anatomy labs, each with a detailed procedure. The Logar School does not have electricity, except in the principal's quarters, so none of the labs required this aspect. After all of the labs were written, students and teachers created a list of all the necessary materials.

Since the students' work last year, the Goodrich Foundation provided money for the materials, and thirteen boxes have been compiled. Everything that the Logar School needs to run the labs is in the boxes, even a telescope and microscopes. Jennings said that computers were not included because it would cause too many political issues. The boxes were brought to Greylock earlier this year so the Greylock students involved from last year could take some pictures with them and write a handwritten message to go with them. Don Goodrich brought a photo album with pictures of the girls from the school, and hopefully correspondence between our school and theirs will continue.

The boxes are currently being stored in a safe place in Vermont so that the headmaster of the Logar School can ensure their arrival to Afghanistan. Hopefully, said Jennings, a friend of Don Goodrich will go over to Kabul within the next month with the thirteen boxes. They will then be shipped to the Urdu province where the school is located. But before the girls can perform these science labs, a lab building must be constructed for them. The Goodrich Foundation has provided 5,000 dollars for the building of this lab right next to the school. The plan is for the lab to be finished by March, complete with lab tables and running water. Also, Afghani students at Williams are working on translating the write-ups of the labs into the Pashto language.

This project will allow the girls to participate in labs that students at Greylock remember because of an important concept or lesson, or even because they were just plain fun. Said Jennings, "This group of American teenagers created a set of labs that ranges from making slime to the very sophisticated labs-- from the simple to the very advanced." Jennings also said that the students and teachers learned much from the process of remembering, writing, and making lists of materials for the lab, and that they felt like they accomplished a great deal by using their knowledge to create tangible science lessons.

If all goes as planned, the lab building will be built by March and the materials and write-ups will be shipped to the school. Students from the Logar School will then participate in a Skype session with the students at Greylock. This project was just an idea of Don Goodrich's last year, who was hopeful to have some kind of first-hand knowledge about labs that would help the girls, but because of Greylock and the Goodrich Foundation, students at the Logar School will reap the benefits of these well-crafted labs within the next several months. ■■

GUEST SPEAKERS

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interested in graphic design.

Recent Middlebury graduate Andrew Forsthoefel also visited Mt. Greylock and spoke with both middle and high school students. Forsthoefel talked about his recent walk across the country from Chadds Fords, PA, to Half Moon Bay, CA. He kept a blog during his journey, called Walking To Listen, and plans to write a book about it. He later visited senior English classes to answer more questions and speak more specifically about his experiences. Forsthoefel also spoke at Williams and Skidmore Colleges.

Reaction among both students and teachers to Forsthoefel's visit was very positive. Senior Sophia Dastoli said that she loved his talk. "I was so touched and inspired by his visit," she continued. Mook Khajournshaisak, a junior, said, "I thought it was amazing and couldn't believe what he did." High School English teacher Blair Dils said, "He seemed to inspire students. I think they saw a different option for between high school and college or after, that they can take a pause and go explore." Dils

mentioned that there is a chance that Forsthoefel will return to Mt. Greylock in the future. He said there have been discussions about the possibility of Forsthoefel doing a project or working with an English teacher on a seminar course.

This past month, writer Greg Jordan came to discuss his biography of baseball player Willy Mays Aikens. On December 5, Jordan visited english classes and talked about his personal relationship with Aikens as well as his own history. Jordan's biographical account, entitled Safe at Home, tells the story of how Willy Mays Aikens went from being baseball star to being a drug addict, and then back to being a hero. Jordan's visit was well recieved by many of the students who heard him speak. Soon afterwards, Jordan spoke to the Williams College community, although this time he was accompanied by his subject Willy Mays Aikens himself. Many who attended this event were impacted more than when they had heard Jordan speak alone.

Mt. Greylock students seemed to enjoy these wordly speakers, and the school looks forward to welcoming more guest speakers in the future. ■■

NEW YORK TRIP

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Christmas tree, or just hang out. Finally, at 6:30, the group boarded the bus one last time to make the trip home, and reminisce about the eventful day. It was a well spent 89 dollars.

When asked what her favorite part of the trip was, Senora Vigeant replied:

"having an opportunity to have experiences with students outside of the classroom routine. The students were fantastic." Vigeant said she is "already looking forward to next years trip." The first Mt. Greylock spanish field trip to New York City was a complete success, so look out for next year's. It's sure to be a blast! ■■



Photo: Shannon Vigeant

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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Movie Reviews

For this edition of the Echo, we decided to take a look at some of the most recent blockbusters. After you read our reviews, we encourage you to get out and see these films for yourself. We think it'll be worth your time!

SKYFALL

By MIRANDA PARK and NATE TASKIN

It's been fifty years since 007 ordered his first martini— shaken, not stirred. James Bond has been with us for half of cinema history. Skyfall marks a return to form abandoned in the bloated excess of its predecessor, Quantum of Solace. Packed with witty quips, gun fights, and inexplicable, albeit enjoyable shirtless scenes, Skyfall takes the original Bond tropes, but adds a refreshing new layer.

One aspect of Bond's character that has not been previously focused upon is his vulnerability. The James Bond of Skyfall finds himself unable to adapt in a world where his kind is no longer needed. Cat stroking villains have been replaced with cyber terrorists. On top of that, Bond himself appears to be losing his edge. He comes across less as the suave, self-assured, secret agent, and more as an old man struggling to keep up with the changing times.

While Daniel Craig does a fine job portraying the steely-eyed ladies man, the main reason to see this film is not for the titular protagonist, but for his adversary, the deranged and flamboyant Silva, embodied by Javier Bardem, a man cursed to forever play characters with terrible hair cuts. Bardem's performance captivates for the scant twenty minutes he is actually on screen. He manages to kill half of London's secret service

and still comes across as the most likeable character. His affably evil mannerisms make him the perfect foil to the stoic Bond. Unfortunately, because of his gravitas, we find ourselves rooting for him in his plot to murder Bond's employer, the unlikeable M, played by Judi Dench.

M is ungrateful and overly critical, despite the other characters' bending over backwards to assure her own safety. We mean no disrespect to Dench, as she does a fine job with the material she is given, but her character is so catty that we would rather see the rest of the cast leave her to Bardem—they'd be better off anyway.

Halfway through, the film suffers from Jason Bourne Syndrome with its hyper-kinetic editing and shaky cam directing. The tone of the film becomes less intricate, and more like a straightforward, generic thriller. However, it begins to feel like a Bond film again as it reaches its third act.

Admittedly, while there may be a few other gripes, such as Daniel Craig's robotic running and poor CGI komodo dragons, these grievances do not detract from the quality of the story. Tense, gritty, and steamy, Skyfall easily earns a spot in our top five 007 films.

Final judgement: Three shaken martinis out of four. ■■

THE HOBBIT

By EVELYN MAHON

On Thursday, December 13, 2012, I donned my hobbit apparel, picked up my sword, Sting, and drove to the North Adams Movieplex. It was the day many Tolkien fans had been awaiting since the premier of Return of the King. It was...The Hobbit.

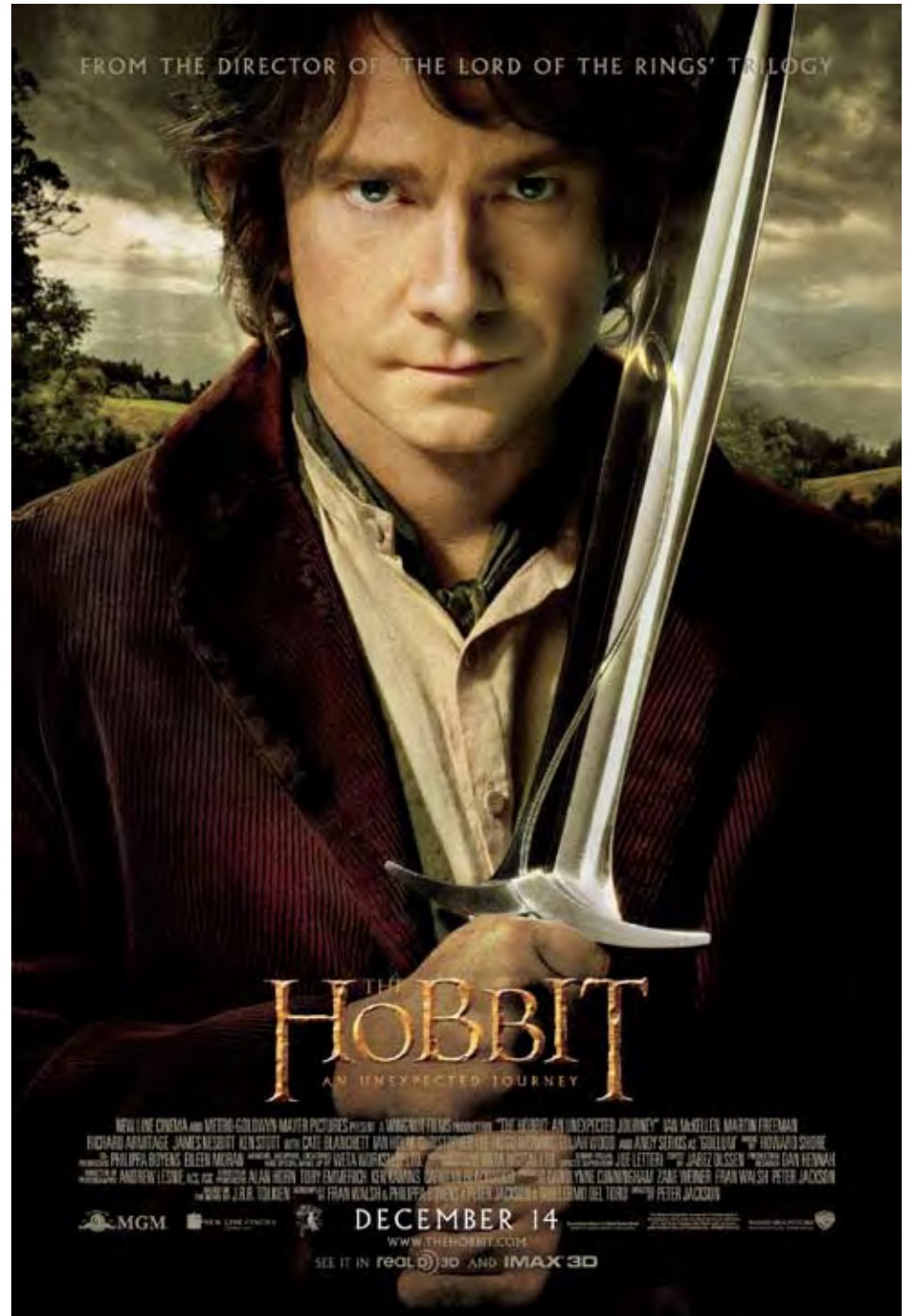
I went all out with the midnight premier thing. Bought my ticket online, made sure my costume was completely accurate, and left the house at 10 to assure my spot in line. However, I was sorely disappointed. The "line" consisted of myself and a few friends, along with some strangers playing cards in a circle who made me look like a sane, functioning, bland individual. With two hours left to wait, we stocked up on enough popcorn, soda, and various chocolate to last us through the night. The theater owners felt sorry for us and opened the theater early, so we could at least be pathetic in comfy seats with cup holders. We still had one and a half hours to go. After playing Pokemon, taking numerous staged pictures in costume, and

checking twitter about fifteen times, we began to watch the movie.

All in all, I was very impressed with the casting decisions. Everyone seemed to just...fit. The dwarves all had various personalities and made the thought of keeping track of 13 dwarves and a hobbit much less daunting. Speaking of Hobbits, Martin Freeman, who plays Bilbo, did a spectacular job. He was very true to the character, which made it all the funnier.

However, the piece d'resistance of the movie is most definitely Andy Serkis as Gollum. With the new performance capture technology, they added muscles to Gollum's eye area and his mouth, making every emotion on Serkis' face transfer all the clearer to Gollum. The conversations between the two sides of Gollum are the best part of the movie for me. The man is a genius.

Although the acting is wonderful, I was not so thrilled by the addition of Azog, the pale orc. Although he does exist in the world of Tolkien, he's not referenced in The Hob-



bit as much as the movie makes him out to be. The arch-nemesis thing he and Thorin have going on is not even close to the plot line of The Hobbit. You've been warned.

The last thing I'll tell you before you go is to beware the CGI. The film uses computer-generated images (CGI) to create all of the orcs and goblins rather than just pay a bunch of locals to wear latex makeup like they did for the other films. This makes the movie seem less "real" than the Lord of the

Rings Trilogy does. Although I personally want real people, I can understand that the CGI does make more sense for a children's movie (which I suppose this can be qualified as).

All in all, I give The Hobbit three and a half stars. Jackson added too much in while also leaving too much out. The actors were amazing, but the special effects too modern. However, I don't believe I care that much. Tolkien is Tolkien. ■■

SENIOR DISTRICT MUSIC FESTIVAL

By KELSEY HEBERT

This year six Mt. Greylock students were accepted into the Senior District Music Festival from the band, chorus and orchestra. Two students from each musical group were accepted: Eric Hirsch and Nathan Majumder from the band, Tyra Nurmi and Blake Sherman from the chorus, and Taylor Fohrhaltz-Burbank and Schuyler Fohrhaltz-Burbank from the orchestra.

Students in high school are invited to audition for a spot in the Senior District Musical Festival every year. Middle school students are invited to participate in a similar festival called the Junior District Music Festival. Auditions are held at Westfield State college. Prior to auditions, students are asked to prepare a piece selected by the directors of the festival, along with several musical scales. There is also a piece that musicians sight read during the audition.

When students first arrive at Westfield, they are brought to a practice room where they are given time to rehearse and warm up before their audition. Then the students are called to do either their scales and sight

reading or their prepared piece in front of separate judges. During both of the auditions, judges score the student based on several different factors including tempo, melody, intonation, rhythmic accuracy and technique. The scores from the combined scales, sight reading and selected piece are added together to give the student a final score. For each musical group there is a cut off score that determines whether or not the student qualifies for participation in the festival. Senior Blake Sherman was accepted into the Senior District Chorus for the second time this year. He stated that the cut off for chorus members this year was a score of 69, while last year it was only 58, indicating that this year was particularly competitive.

Some of those who make the cut off for Districts are also invited to audition for, and if they are accepted, participate in an all-state performance. The All-State festival is in Boston and only the best from each Massachusetts district (Western, Central, Eastern, North Eastern, South Eastern) are accepted. Similar to districts, students perform a select-

ed song in front of judges and are then scored to determine if they will be accepted into the all-state groups. If accepted, students spend a weekend in Boston where they rehearse and perform at the end of the weekend.

Auditions require immense preparation. Sophomore Eric Hirsch, accepted into the band, said he practiced for at least 30 minutes a day for weeks prior to his audition at Westfield. Sherman also said that he practiced every Monday during directed study in the chorus room and spent a lot of time practicing at his house after school. Junior Taylor Fohrhaltz said she practiced for 3 hours a day while preparing for her audition. This is her third year participating in Senior Districts and also her third year as a recipient of an All State Recommendation. She also played for two years in the Junior District orchestra in middle school.

Students accepted into any of the Senior District groups practice in their ensemble only twice before their final performance. This year the chorus is rehearsing once before the concert at University of Mas-

sachusetts Amherst from 9:00 to 3:00 and not again until performance day where they will practice at the same time and perform at 3:30. Students have set up an informal rehearsal for members of the chorus at Wahconah Regional High School for those in Berkshire County. Senior District groups only give one concert, during which each ensemble performs anywhere from three to five pieces. Sherman says that although it is unfortunate that there is only one concert, the performances usually end up on online to be watched over and over again.

Participation in Senior Districts is highly recommended by Mt. Greylock's members. Sherman said, "I think this is a wonderful opportunity for kids at Mt. Greylock. I find that we tend to get used to playing and singing with the same kids in our musical groups. When I get to sing with people from all over the place, it's great. It really expands my horizons. I love it." Hirsch, although a first time participant, says that he recommends students to try out who want to play in an ensemble with serious musicians. ■■

Concussions: A Modern Epidemic?

By EMILY KAEGI

As scientists conduct research and doctors witness the severity of head injuries, interest in concussions has been steadily growing. Students at Greylock are seeing an increased focus on concussions as more people are being diagnosed. A concussion is a traumatic brain injury usually caused by a blow to the head. Because concussions have so many causes and detecting them can be so difficult, they often go unnoticed. Concussions can occur without the victim being knocked unconscious. Concussions can also be caused by a buildup of minor injuries to the head over time. Even turning your head too fast can cause your brain to jerk to the side of your head, a potential cause of concussions.

Because of new information, Massachusetts passed a law in 2010 requiring schools to set up guidelines for dealing with athletes' concussions. Schools are obligated to give annual training to students, parents and staff regarding head injuries and how to respond to them. In addition, injured students need a doctor's clearance before they can return to any sport-related activity. Parents are also required to report any head injuries caused outside of school to the school nurse.

Athletic Director Lindsey von Holtz was one of the key creators of Mt. Greylock's concussion policy. The policy lays out the responsibilities of student-athletes, parents, coaches, the nurse and the athletic director. Students have not seen much change to the athletic experience except for the fact that they and their parents have to take a thirty-minute online course about concussions before they can participate in a school sport. Greylock had multiple options about how to teach their athletes about concussions and chose the online course. "The school decided that the best way was this course because it was the most informative, the easiest to measure, and it is our way to ensure everyone is getting this information," said von Holtz. She also said she has received positive feedback about the course. Since families often take it together, it starts discussions around this serious issue.

When a student receives a blow to the head in a game, the coach is required to remove the player from play as quickly as possible and not allow him to return to the game. Coaches are trained on how to recognize concussions. When asked about what he does after a player gets hit, Boys Soccer Coach Blair Dils said: "Once someone does get dinged, I shut the person down for

that day until someone professional gets to look at them." Dils knows the procedures for diagnosing concussions but admits that "sometimes in the heat of the game, you don't have time to do that stuff. It's easier to just to say 'I'm not letting you go back in.'" After any collision, coaches have to file a report.

Coaches give the player a packet for a doctor to fill out before he or she is allowed to come back to practice. The doctor must record the symptoms a patient exhibits, recommendations about the athlete's recovery process, and any suggestions involving changing up a student's learning experience. After the hit, a parent or guardian is immediately contacted and asked to come pick up their child.

Students with severe concussions often miss school. Some even have to drop certain classes because they cannot focus. A concussion committee, consisting of a guidance counselor, the school nurse, von Holtz, and a member of Pupil Personnel Services meets every Monday to check in on how students are doing. The committee discusses if a student needs extra help and proposes modifications to teachers regarding student learning. Teachers are also given weekly reminders about concussed students by the school nurse.

This year there have been twelve concussions at Greylock. Five in gym class, five during school athletic events and two outside of school. Symptoms and severity have a huge range. Common symptoms include headaches, trouble focusing, memory loss, slurred speech and vomiting. The impact of a concussion can range from a couple weeks of no physical activity to a lifetime ban of contact sports. Students at Greylock have covered the spectrum. Here are five different student-athletes with five different stories:

Sophomore Lucy Barrett was a starter for the girls' soccer team. She was playing in the semi-final Western Mass game against Hoosac when she went for a ball and collided with their forward. "My head started to pound and I didn't play the rest of the game. I had the weekend off and when I went back on Monday the headaches came back when I tried to run. I took a few days off and tried again, thinking I'd be ready to go but I got a bad headache." Barrett went to the doctor and they diagnosed her with a minor concussion. Lucy's concussion was not caused by that one hit, but rather by small hits leading up to that one. Even

just heading the ball repeatedly can add to a concussion. On the option of wearing a concussion band, Lucy said "I have but I really don't want to during basketball. I don't want it to always be on my mind and worrying about hitting my head. Wearing a concussion band will do that. I just want to play the game that I love and not think about it. I don't want it to affect how I play."

Coach Dils says there are ways you can limit the chances of a concussion: "I can limit how much heading we do in practice. If there are a lot of air balls and guys are challenging in training there is a greater likelihood of concussions." Coach Dils also gave his opinions on concussion bands, "They do have those soccer helmets, the 'Full 90s,'" but the studies are not conclusive about whether or not they prevent concussions...If those helmets worked I would say to my players, 'Hey, you are wearing these, I don't care what they look like.' But again, studies just haven't proven them to be successful."

Senior Alex White was playing in his last soccer game during the Western Mass boys' soccer finals. White made contact with the Belchertown goalie but did not realize any damage had been done: "I thought I was just a little shaken up, and seeing that I was

a half-day school schedule, and his days consisted of school, homework, eating and sleeping. He had awful headaches which gradually became less frequent. He saw a specialty doctor and took regular IMPACT tests to monitor his process. "This year I am doing much better, and though the headaches still hang around here and there, they are to a minimum." Walter still feels the effects a year later. He advised students: "Don't mess around with [concussions]... If you think something happened, you took a big hit in football or soccer, or you fell while running, even hit your head on the car, tell someone... Trust your body. Missing a few weeks of the season is much better than going back out before you are ready and ending up missing the whole season."

Senior Andrew Leitch knows all about not going back before you are ready. He had a concussion going into his freshman year of football. The doctor cleared him to play again, but after two big hits in practice he sat out the whole season with a severe concussion. He then received another one that year during baseball season. Leitch didn't return to football the following year after his doctor warned against it. He spent his sophomore and junior falls playing hockey, but returned to the football team this year for his senior season. During his concussion Leitch had bad symptoms: "I hated the effects I had in school... I fell asleep in class a lot... trying to focus on my school work for a long period of time was a struggle. I couldn't process things very quick and still sometimes have to read things over and over again to understand them." However, Leitch did not let this unfortunate situation get him down. "My dad told me after it happened everything happens for a reason... I was able to focus on hockey more and become a better player. [Having a concussion] made me work harder in school and pick up that habit as well." Although Leitch can see the positives in his situation, he missed out on memories from football and still feels its effects during school. "No one should think they can be the tough guy and keep playing through [a concussion] because it can only get worse."

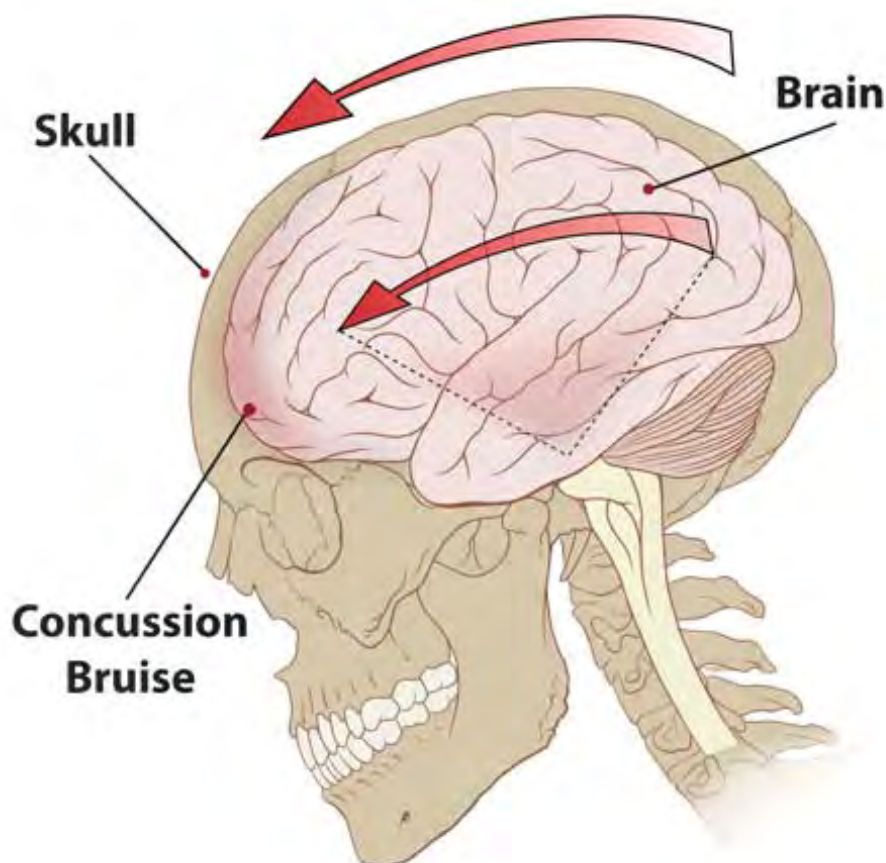
Senior Alex Majetich has suffered many concussions whose effects have changed her life. She suffered a concussion her eighth grade basketball season and another in tenth grade. For a short period of time, she tried to play more passively to avoid another concussion. She even wore a concussion band to take extra steps towards avoidance. Majetich, during a well choreographed dance number at PEP rally this fall, was kicked in the head. "I didn't want to tell [my coach] because I knew the team needed me, and I didn't think it was that bad," she said. Many students fear that if they complain of a headache they will be benched. As a captain and a starter, Majetich felt that she would let the team down if she did not play. But the blow during PEP rally was not the final cause of her concussion. She was hit a couple days later in her soccer game against Wahconah. Majetich describes the moment after she was hit as "surreal and confusing. Your vision is off and every little noise and bright light hurts your head. I was really forgetful and had memory loss." After her most recent concussion she missed around ten days of school and left after fourth period during her first three days back. From now on, Majetich cannot play any contact sports—not even in gym.

Students sometimes joke about being "concussed," but concussions are serious. Three thousand concussions were recorded by just one third of the schools in Massachusetts. Such a statistic suggests totals of around 9,000 concussions per year in our state alone. Within three months of school, Greylock has already reported 12 concussions. Students and adults need to be mindful. Even professional sports leagues, such as the NFL, are dealing with the effects of damage to players' brains. Concussions have the dangerous potential to change the way a person's brain works for the rest of his or her life. ■



Some have proposed that student athletes be required to wear the "Full 90" protective headgear, pictured above.

Concussions occur when the victim suffers a sudden impact to the head. The brain jerks around within the skull, often causing dangerous and permanent damage to the brain.



**THE FALL SEASON
AT A GLANCE:**

Golf

Record: 0-13

Result: Did Not Qualify for Tournament

Volleyball

Record: 7-9

Result: Did Not Qualify for Tournament

Girls XC Running

Record: 12-3

Result: Western Mass Runners Up
and 7th Place at States

Boys XC Running

Record: 13-2

Result: Western Mass Champions
and 14th Place at States

Girls Soccer

Record: 12-4-3

Result: Western Mass Semifinalist

Boys Soccer

Record: 16-4-1

Result: Western Mass Semifinalist

Football

Record: 11-1

Result: Western Mass (Super Bowl)
Champions

A THREE-PEAT

By GRAY KAEGI

Great excitement swept through the Greylock community on Saturday, December 1, when the Mt. Greylock football team hoisted up their third consecutive Super Bowl trophy. It was the first "three-peat" ever in Berkshire County. The Mounties could count on their defense every possession as they shut out Belchertown 24-0.

Eric Leitch stood out on the defensive end, with two interceptions, one of which led to a touchdown by Ethan Ryan. Ryan had three on the night, giving the Mounties the points they needed to come out victorious. On the defensive side, Tyler Picard had a key sack late in the game, preventing a potential touchdown. Freshman quarterback Brodie Altieri also did his part, throwing for 87 yards and running in a two-point conversion.

This thrilling victory finished off another fantastic Greylock football season. The football team has made winning a tradition over the past three years and looks forward to the prospect of continued dominance in the years to come. ■■

Senior Andrew Leitch and junior Nick Disanti hold up the Super Bowl trophy.



**Cross-Country Skiing:
No Snow, No Problem**

By ERIC HIRSCH

It feels all too familiar to last year. The Cross Country skiing season has begun and the grass remains visible. Last year the first race of the season was postponed due to improper race conditions. On the bright side, most varsity members are used to it. They know that other types of core, endurance, and strength training will ultimately pay off in the long run. The boys and girls are both looking to defend their state championships from the previous year. Many spots will have to be filled however, due to the loss many talented graduating seniors. The remaining members from last year's championship teams have been working hard to obtain similar successes this season.

On the boys' side, Alex White and Will Kirby lead a superstar tandem. Following close behind are seniors Sean Houston and Jonah Majumder and sophomores Will Nolan and Jake Foehl. The team, which has unbelievable team chemistry, has already bonded through a few games of a hybrid sport called "speedball." That chemistry has caused the undeniable annihilation of other Berkshire County teams for the last few decades. In fact, some of the top skiers look right past the county competition and into more individualized races such as J2's and Eastern High School Championships. The individual nature doesn't stop the team from having a good time. Cross country skiing allows 7th grades through 12th graders to all participate on the team, but age difference has never been a problem. Some would say that being on the cross country team is a great way to make new friends and bond with a team while participating in a fun competitive sport at the same time.

The girls' team is led by seniors Kat Chenail, Stephanie Adamczyk and Alexa Adams. According to Chenail, the team includes a, "really strong freshman class. Grace Smith, Ellie Williams, Holly Fisher, Greta Savitsky, and Sophie Gerry are going to be the core of the team in the near future." The team, which has both experience and new talent, has been training despite the little snowfall. Some of the workouts include running and strength circuits. Possibly the most effective training is roller skiing which basically entails skiing on wheels. Chenail also said that she can't wait to, "get on snow, because [the lack of snow] last year was kind of a letdown." All they can really focus on is getting their work in every day and preparing for what will hopefully be a sixth consecutive state championship.

One interesting thing about the cross country ski team is that practices are a combined effort by the boys and girls teams. Unlike the running teams, the skiing team is more or less a single unified team. Both teams have the same goals both on and off the course. They obviously hope to win titles, but more importantly they hope to improve both as individuals and a team. Athletes tirelessly work on form and technique as well as strength and endurance. All of their hard work shouldn't go unnoticed. Both teams usually have a couple of home races which take place at Mt. Greylock Regional High School. The trails behind the school allow for an outstanding course to complement superb racing. If all goes accordingly for both teams, they will be well on their way to more success. ■■

BASKETBALL

By GRAY KAEGI

GIRLS

Attendance to Mount Greylock winter sporting events should be high this year especially due to the strong Girl's Basketball team. Leadership is present within this team with sophomore Lucy Barrett and junior Mackenzie Flynn as the team's captains. The team will be strong with the addition of eighth grader Sarah Stripp and senior Margot Besnard to the lineup. Games should be exciting, specifically ones against rival Hoosac Valley due to a number of close games between the two teams last season. The Mounties played hard but lost a thrilling game against Hoosac on December 10th. The girls are also very determined, with the Western Massachusetts Tournament as their goal. A successful season is certainly possible with this impressive team. ■■

Sophomore Lucy Barrett, pictured here taking a free throw in a game last year, is sure to play an important role on the team this year.



BOYS

After losing in the semifinals at The Cage last year, the Mt. Greylock boys basketball team is ready to return to The Cage and finish the job. The team is lead by captains, Hank Barrett, Tyler Picard, and Nathan Majumder. Barrett, recovered from a recent injury, is revved up to play. Other key returning players include senior Brett McCormack and junior Tyrell Thomas. New additions, including senior Ethan

Ryan and junior Jack Thistle add depth to this already formidable lineup. The team's biggest rivals this year are Lee, who Greylock lost to in the Western Mass semifinals, and St. Joe, last year's Western Mass champions. Under the direction of second year coach, Bob Thistle, the goal is clear for the team: win Western Mass. Be ready Mt. Greylock, because this team is ready to make its mark. ■■

The abnormally large number of familiar faces on this year's boys team bodes well for this season.



News in Brief

JCL UPDATE

By EDWARD GEBARA

During the past few months, there have been several JCL events, the most significant of which being the Catapult Day at Mt. Greylock and the recent Classics Day at Boston University. Catapult Day was the first state event for the JCL this year and included many different activities such as Latin Jeopardy (commonly known as Certamen in the Latin community), hula hooping, and of course the launching of catapults. Mt. Greylock took first place in the catapult contest, taking a slight lead in the state standings. For the more recent Classics day, students from different schools traveled to Boston University for the unique opportunity to hear several college level lectures about Ancient Greece and Rome and how they connect to today. Be on the lookout for more JCL events to come in the future. ■■

S.M.I.L.E. FUNDRAISER

By SOPHIE LEAMON

Thanks to the efforts of the SMILE Club, Mt. Greylock raised a total of \$501.09 to benefit the Lukemia and Lymphoma Society, the world's largest voluntary health agency. The Lukemia and Lymphoma Society funds the treatment and research of blood cancers. The Pennies for Patients drive collected change and bills from English classes. The seventh grade collected \$156.05, the most money of all classes, and will be rewarded with a pizza party. Second place went to the main office who raised \$132.44.

We would like to congratulate Mt. Greylock and specifically SMILE for a successful fundraiser. ■■

MIDDLE SCHOOL CLUBS

By EMILY RUDD

Middle school students have been kept busy as of late by the wide variety of extracurricular clubs now offered at Mt. Greylock. With a new name this year, SOC, or Students Organizing Change, is a large diverse group of both seventh and eighth graders. They come together to formulate ideas to make a difference at Mt. Greylock and within the community. Another opportunity is the Middle School Outing Club, run by sophomore Thomas Schoorlemmer. It involves seventh and eighth graders in various outdoor activities like hiking, biking and snowshoeing. From Sam Culver's perspective, "It gives people a chance to get outdoors and do cool things. Also you get to know new people who have similar interests [as you]." A new club this year is the Writing Club, headed by two Williams College students. Advisor Mrs. Barrett says that the students "explore and enjoy language, and discover their voice in an ungraded, non-judgmental environment."

STUDENT COUNCIL UPDATE

By DAN FINNEGAN

With the month of December comes the famous candy cane sale at middle school and high school lunches. Who

doesn't want to send a nice peppermint sweet to their upperclassmen crush, best friend or favorite teacher? Thanks to this sale, students get to send treats to one another, indentifying themselves or anonymously. With record-high revenue from middle school lunches, profits are through the roof. The Student Council uses these funds to do great things in the school, like starting the Red Zone. There was originally a possibility that candy canes would not be sold this year due to new health codes. Nevertheless, the Student Council found a way to save the perennial fundraiser and once again bring happiness to the hearts of many Mounties. ■■

OKLAHOMA!

By SAM KLASS

This year's musical has been chosen: it will be the heartfelt Western romantic comedy "Oklahoma!". The play, which takes place in the early 1900s in Oklahoma territory, will be directed by high school history teacher, Mr. Welch. The vocal director will be chorus teacher Kate Caton and the pit orchestra will be led by band teacher Lyndon Moors. Cast and crew will be hard at work up until the doors of the Mt. Greylock auditorium open for performances on Thursday, March 7th, Friday the 8th, and Saturday the 9th. ■■



Mt. Greylock students stand on stage during the recent Classics Day at Boston University.

WHAT TO RESPOND TO YOUR RELATIVES

By EVELYN MAHON

Congratulations! You survived the onslaught of awkward conversations with relatives that is known as Thanksgiving. Time to put your feet up in a dark room, watch terrible lifetime movies, and speak to absolutely no one about your personal life— well, only for two to three weeks. December, the month of various holidays which involve seeing more relatives, is here! Do you always feel yourself struggling to find appropriate, censored responses to your relatives' prying questions? The answer has come. Use this chart of biting sarcastic replies, and your great aunt will never know if you're actually a juvenile delinquent or just an obnoxious jerk!

Question

How's School?.....

Possible Responses

It's going pretty well. Figured out how to synthesize a new element, but the chem teacher wouldn't let me. Something about "legal issues." Whatever.

Are you doing any sports?.....

Well, I find organized sports too controlling, so I've actually become interested in amateur dressage. However, since horses are too expensive, I train cows.

or

Well, our football team just won the superbowl for the third time in a row. Oh, I don't play. I cheer them on from my climate-controlled, sound-proof snack room in the stands.

Do you like any music in particular?.....

Well, I'm currently getting really into some of those renaissance pavannes and banchettos. Nicki Minaj is also awesome. Her incredibly subtle lyrics amaze me.

or

I actually prefer to hum incessantly. Music is too mainstream.

In any new shows?.....

I'm currently starring in The Gentleman who came to Dessert. It's an absurdist drama about two walruses who debate the realism of a potato. Eugene Ianesco's finest work, actually.

or

Funny you should ask that. I just auditioned for Macbeth and got the role of third shrub. It's going to take a lot of character development, but I think I'm ready. It's a major step up from the tiny role I had last year, King Lear or something. Very little acting necessary, and too two-dimensional.

Are you looking at any specific colleges?.....

Oh, I'm not going to college. My 47 year old boyfriend Floyd and I are flying to Tibet and participating in a craftsmanship program. We're going to weave ponchos for deprived yaks. The poor things are forced to wander the foothills wearing nothing and eating grass! Can you imagine?

or

Well, I don't have my heart set on anything, but I'm thinking of applying to University of Phoenix online and majoring in underwater basket weaving. That's my dream, but I might add on an origami major so I have something to fall back on.

Please Note: This article is written purely for entertainment purposes. It is a joke and is not meant to be taken seriously.