

BUILDING WOES CONTINUE WITH BURST PIPE

By KELSEY HEBERT

On January 25, during a period of extremely cold weather, a main water pipe connector burst in the back room of the boy's locker room. The event occurred after school hours at around 5:30 pm. The burst pipe allowed water to leak into the ceiling boards of the locker room and left residual water on the floors. No one was hurt or in the locker room when the event occurred. Damage was minimal, but the room was closed to students as repairsmen worked to fix the damaged ceiling and fire alert systems.

Jesse Wirtes, facility supervisor at Mt. Greylock, was quickly notified of the situation when it occurred and worked to shut off main water pipes in order to isolate the event to the locker room. He says that a joint valve connecting two pipes burst due to the cold weather, which caused the leakage of water throughout the ceiling. The pipe was located in a cavity above the ceiling panels and below the roof of the school. Since there is no insulation in these parts, the extremely cold air caused the valve joint to fail. The water soaked the ceiling panels, and this led insurance agents, who responded the next day to assess the damage, to ask that all panels be replaced to avoid mold growth.

"[The insurance agents] took no risks in having health issues come up. They had us replace all ceiling tiles instead of just portions of them in order to keep the students and faculty safe from any health hazards that could come from mold growth or other substances that thrive in wet areas," said Wirtes.



Photo courtesy of Jesse Wirtes

Ceiling panels in the boys' locker room were removed to prevent mold growth.

Unfortunately, the ceiling in this part of the locker room was fairly new, having been replaced two years ago when that ceiling, along with the one in the girl's locker room, partially collapsed. The water also compromised the fire alert systems, smoke detectors and light fixtures in the room. These fixtures had to be fixed before the room reopened. Repairs began on February 8 and continued during the February break.

Wirtes and others have also been taking

preventative measures to ensure that incidents like this do not happen again. Wirtes checked out the girl's locker room to make sure there wasn't a similar construction as in the boys room, finding that there was not. Although he cannot guarantee that a similar incident will not happen in the future, he is confident the preventative measures being taken reduce the chances significantly. Wirtes also rerouted the pipes in the ceiling so that they do not run through the cold cavity anymore, but through occupied space.

When asked if this incident would improve our chances in our quest for a new school, Wirtes said, "It could. We will certainly put it in as an example of our old building and our continued problems of older modeled construction. It may slightly help us, but since the burst was not due to old age of the pipes but simply the cold weather, I don't know if it will help us significantly."

Although students were banned from the room during construction, as of February 7 full function of the locker room was expected for the students at the end of February break. The room will look no different than it did before the incident, with the exception of the new ceiling panels. "We are trying to take steps to consider in our design new renovations and technologies that are introduced to our aging facility, but the process is slow and unfortunately the locker room won't be drastically changed when the students are allowed back in," said Wirtes. ■■

1 in 650: An Interview with Alex Cheung

By EMILY KAEGI



Photo courtesy of Aaron Ziemer

For many, chess is just a hobby, a way to pass the time on a rainy day. For junior Alex Cheung, chess is more than just an activity to cure boredom. Alex spends his weekends competing in chess tournaments. He's ranked 2000th out of 42,000 under-21 players in the nation. He has a rating of 1700 for level of play and hopes to earn the title of expert (2000-2200). The Echo was intrigued when we heard that he wasn't in first period one day because he had gotten home late the previous night from a tournament. We decided to sit down with him to hear about what it takes to be a real chess competitor.

Echo: Who taught you how to play chess?
Alex: My mom taught me how to play chess, but my dad was the one who played with me.

Echo: What got you interested in competing in chess tournaments?

Alex: This summer I was bored. So six months ago, in August, I played in my first tournament and I placed second.

Echo: Second in your first tournament! How does a tournament work?

Alex: You go to a tournament, usually near major cities like Boston or New York. They take place in hotels with an open room, like a cafeteria, with tables. They range from one or two days to four days. There can be around twenty to forty people competing. Around 10 o'clock, the tournament director will post pairings. Every round you play someone that has a rating opposite you. So then there are normally four to ten games in the tournament. After a game is done, there's half an hour to an hour and a half until the next round. The people at the tournaments are very nice. Between rounds they will help you with a new opening or play rounds for fun.

Echo: Are games timed?

Alex: Yes. The timing on each side ranges from five minutes to two hours, sometimes even three hours. I've played some pretty long chess games. When you have five minutes per side it means that for the entire game, you only have five minutes to complete all your moves. You have to decide "do I want to spend thirty seconds

Continued on Page 2.

REMEMBERING CHERYL RIGHTER

By THE ECHO STAFF



Photo courtesy of Nancy McMullen

On Thursday, February 14, the Mt. Greylock Community was saddened to receive news of the passing of paraprofessional Cheryl Righter. A graduate of Mt. Greylock with the class of 1975, Righter began working as a paraprofessional in 2005.

Her colleagues remember her as a kind person, eager to learn how to better serve the students she worked with. Special Education teacher Rachel Slovik remembers that Righter "loved the students. She was generous and understanding. I will miss her smile, wise thoughts and caring nature." Paraprofessional Jackie Watson underscored Righter's dedication to her work, saying "she loved her job, working with children."

The recollections of Righter's colleagues characterize what many said they will remember about her: a generous, ever-present kindness. Her absence will be felt keenly by a community incredibly thankful to her for years of dedicated service. ■■

NEW ELECTIVES PROPOSED FOR COMING YEAR

By KATELIN MARCHAND

The approach of March in the new year signals an exciting time for students at Mt. Greylock: course selection time. Students decide their stress load for the upcoming year and eighth graders enter the world of high school, choosing from a panoply of courses. Current juniors tailor their final year's schedule to their future interests.

This year, junior and senior English classes were offered for the first time as seminar courses, which covered topics such as J.R.R Tolkien's famous series The Lord of the Rings, the college essay, graphic novels, and baseball in literature. This year, the guidance office is expanding the choices even more, offering new

electives in several different departments.

Some of the new options that could be available for the 2013-2014 school year are: AP Latin, AP Statistics, Game Design, Medical Technology, Astronomy, Climate Science and Creative Writing.

In order to prepare for the AP Latin course Latin teacher, Marjorie Keeley, will be taking a one week workshop in Connecticut over the summer. The course will be unlike any AP Latin class in the past, covering Vergil's Aeneid and Caesar's Gallic War.

Another AP course, AP Stats, was pro-

Continued on Page 2.

SEE FUND SEEKING GRANT APPLICATIONS

By JAKE FOEHL

Mt. Greylock is a dominant Berkshire County school, owing to both its athletic and academic strengths. Consistently one of the top schools in Massachusetts when it comes to standardized test scores such as the MCAS and in possession of an excellent record in Math League competitions, Mt. Greylock students take pride in their school's, and classmates', successes. Such achievements are not possible, however, without the sufficient funding that some of Mt. Greylock's more expensive educational programs require. This is where organizations like the SEE Fund step in.

SEE stands for Sustaining Educational Excellence, which in the case of Mt. Greylock has been a statement of fact about the school for many years now. The SEE Fund defines itself in its mission statement as be-

ing "an endowment fund whose mission is to sustain educational excellence by providing financial support for superior educational initiatives at Mt. Greylock Regional School." The Fund supports the school in its pursuit to enhance the love of learning in the school community, leading its students towards responsible citizenship, and promoting an intellectual and creative environment in which young and eager minds can grow and develop.

These very general guidelines allow the fund to use its resources in a variety of ways. Grants from the SEE Fund generally provide money for things such as academic or athletic equipment, extracurricular activities, guest speakers, professional devel-

Continued on Page 2.

A VIEW INTO CUBA

Evi Mahon shares her experience of a visit to our Southern neighbor.

See Page 4.

PEER TEAM

Alina Fein responds to the questions she hears most about Peer Team's role in the Mt. Greylock community.

See Page 4.

IRIS GOES DIGITAL

Miranda Dils reports on the literary magazine's leap into the digital age.

See Page 3.

SPICE ROOT

Hannah Fein and Anya Sheldon review a Spring Street mainstay.

See Page 6.

1 in 650

Continued from Page 1.

on this move” or just two seconds on this move. Most games last two to three hours, but I’ve seen some people play six hour matches.

Echo: Are you allowed to get up?

Alex: Yes. There’s water and you can go watch other people play. I’ve once taken forty-five minutes for one move. I’d hope my opponent would get up and walk around during that time.

Echo: How do you practice chess?

Alex: I go to chess clubs at Mass Moca and Williams College and I read a couple chess books now and then.

Echo: How often do you play in tournaments?

Alex: Well, I’ve played in eight tournaments since August.

Echo: Have you won any?

Alex: Yeah, I won first in the Williams College Tournament and second in the New York State Tournament and I’ve won first in another one.

Echo: That’s amazing! What do you win?

Alex: You can win money, trophies, and other things like that.

Echo: What do you enjoy about chess?

Alex: It’s really just playing the game. It’s fun.

Echo: Do you have a favorite move?

Alex: Well there are different openings lines which give you a certain middle game position. My favorite is the Scotch Gambit, which is an aggressive line.

Echo: I’m not very good at chess, so I’m wondering is the pawn useless?

Alex: Oh no, no no! The pawn is not useless. There’s a saying among chess players that “every pawn is a potential queen.” If a pawn gets to the other side of the chess board, then it becomes a queen. The pawns can actually be the pieces that decide the structure of the game.

Echo: Do you have any goals for your chess game?

Alex: My goal is by the time I graduate high school to have to a rating of 2000 which would be an expert. I’ve played five national masters who have a rating of over 2200. I’ve had one or two draws and all the rest losses.

Echo: What famous person would you like to play a chess match with?

Alex: There’s a famous chess player, but he’s dead now, Mikhail Tal. He’s my chess idol. He’s famous for an aggressive strategy.

Echo: Who at Greylock can beat you at chess?

Alex: Edward Gebara can beat me once every couple weeks or something. Not really anyone has consistently beaten me.

Echo: Final question, if you could replace your arm or hand with anything, what would you pick?

Alex: I have no idea, a prosthetic hand?

Echo: That doesn’t count.

Alex: Okay, if a prosthetic hand isn’t an option, then a laser pointer. ■■

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

POTENTIAL NEW ELECTIVES

Continued from Page 1.

posed by the math department because they felt that more upper level math courses were needed at Greylock. AP Calculus and AP Stats can be run at the same time, so students that have a passion for math could take both classes.

“This course was proposed for those rare cases, like a freshman or a sophomore taking AP Calculus,” said math teacher Bob Thistle, “After they completed AP Calc they could then have one year of math at Greylock.” Game Design and Medical Technology are also being considered. “Medical Technology would be really great for those students that want to go into pre-med at college,” said guidance counselor Beverly Maselli.

Shawn Burdick, a physics teacher, has proposed two semester courses, Astronomy and Climate Science. In Astronomy, students would use a college textbook and would look at all aspects of astronomy. There would be no lab period for this subject but Burdick would consider doing labs at Williams College. Climate Science could be another option for science lovers. For this class there is no textbook, so students would be looking into the physics, chemistry, biology that goes into the study of the climate. Burdick would also like to have students studying the politics and economics of issue.

Burdick taught these courses five years ago, but until now they did not fit into the schedule. The last time the courses were taught, Burdick brought in a guest speaker who wrote a book on climate change; that speaker will probably return if that class runs. These two courses would be open to juniors and seniors, with an honors option. Those in honors would take harder tests but classes would be mixed. “The last time I taught these courses there was a student of every level in the class and each person enjoyed it in their own way,” said Burdick. Like Astronomy and Climate Science, after a few years of not being available, Creative Writing could reemerge.

New courses are not the only changes to the schedule; gym will only be mandatory for one semester. If you are a gym lover, there is no need to fear: there will still be an option to take another semester of gym. If you loathe gym, you are in luck! “It is really hard to give kids more opportunities to take electives when they have to take five core classes and gym,” said Maselli. This new policy means that most of the elective options for next year will be semester courses.

The process of adding new courses starts in December when the administration asks departments to brainstorm their ideas for new courses. Some electives will come to fruition and others may be cut for lack of student interest or staff availability. Each class must have at least ten students or it cannot be run. Students at Greylock can look forward to a bright new year with many new electives. Happy pickings! ■■

SEE FUND APPLICATIONS

Continued from Page 1.

opment days and anything else that would help to sustain Mt. Greylock’s educational excellence. In the past, the fund has even financed a whale watch for an English class that read Moby-Dick.

In order to support these activities, however, the SEE Fund must first receive. The SEE Fund relies on donations from community members in order to continue its own funding efforts. Donations can be made anytime online on the school’s website but the fund also organizes fundraising events, with the help of student organizations like the Student Council throughout the year. Student Council members, along with other student volunteers, assist with the largest fundraising event of the year, the annual SEE Fund Telethon. It will take place this year on March 14th. The three

Mt. Greylock student representatives on the SEE Fund, senior Sean Houston, junior Alex Delano and sophomore Zach Harrington, help in hosting the televised event, which will air on public access channels. This year, the Fund is also organizing a quiz bowl fundraiser, the idea behind this being that teams of two would enter themselves into the competition. In order for this fundraiser to be successful however, the Quiz Bowl will have to generate enough interest among the student body.

The SEE Fund is an essential cog in the Mt. Greylock machine, helping students reach their fullest potential as learners and putting them on a direct path to success in the future. Without donations it would not exist, and without the SEE Fund Greylock would be in danger of losing its excellent academic status. ■■

DODGEBALL TOURNAMENT SIGN-UPS

By EMILY KAEGI



Photo courtesy of Robert Glick

A well-dressed team of 2012 graduates at last year’s tournament.

Feeling sad that the winter sports season is over? Need something to look forward to now that Winter break is over?

Well, look no further! Mt. Greylock’s favorite March tradition is here! Sign-ups for the 6th Annual Dodgeball Tournament are happening now! Grab some friends and sign up your team of 6 at both lunches, from February 28 through March 7. The cost is only \$5 per player.

In an epic battle, only the true champion will emerge to win great prizes. You can’t throw? Don’t worry! There’s a costume prize! All teams are guaranteed at least 3 games! Will the reigning champs retain their title, or will a middle school team emerge victorious? This question will be answered on March 8 in the gym when the 8th Annual Dodgeball Tournament kicks off.

Always remember: if you can dodge a wrench, you can dodge a ball. ■■

The Greylock Echo is the student newspaper of Mt. Greylock Regional High School in Williamstown, Mass. Published monthly during the academic year, each issue is developed and edited by a team of student writers, photographers, artists, and editors. Any Mt. Greylock student is welcome to submit material or join the Echo staff.

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THE SWEET TRADITION OF FOOD OF LOVE

By ROSE SHUCKER-HAINES

Every year, many students from Mt. Greylock join with a few students from other schools at the Williams Inn to put on a performance called Food of Love for Valentine's Day. This year was the show's ninth annual performance. To celebrate the spirit of the holiday, the students perform short scenes from Shakespeare's plays, along with some more modern works, which have to do with romance. Some years have a specific theme and this year's was "Love, Interrupted." It featured many pieces about unrequited affections or love gone awry. There are songs as well, though this year only had three, a smaller number than usual.

Another major part of Food of Love is food. While watching the show in the Dining Room of the Williams Inn, the audience is invited to take part in a delectable chocolate buffet. The treats, provided by the Inn, are always delicious, and, for some actors, a major incentive to take part in the show.

Food of Love has a reputation for always being fun, light-hearted, and running much longer than expected.

This year's Food of Love, which was performed on February 9, worked slightly differently than in previous years. Besides working as actors in scenes, many of the students also took on roles as directors. Looking at students' interests, Food of Love coordinator Deb Brothers realized, "that many students wanted more control over the scene selections." Senior Miranda Park agreed, adding that "we [the students] had executive power in the past, but it was all on us this year."

As a result of the expanded leadership roles this year, and because the rehearsal period was shorter than usual, this production

felt slightly rushed and stressful for those involved. The cast also felt the absence of Deb Burns, who had run the event for the past eight years. This left Brothers as the sole adult involved in running the show. "I missed having a partner to share the responsibilities," Brothers admitted, though she continued, saying that "having the student performers taking responsibility for their scenes choices was wonderful."

Disaster struck, though, when snow storm Nemo forced Brothers to cancel the Saturday dress rehearsal. This meant that the final rehearsal, which was the first time the actors would be practicing in costume on location, was the same day as the actual play. This raised tensions among the performers.

That morning's rehearsal, despite it being the final practice run, was a bit choppy. "It was terrifying," admits freshman Kate Parks, "especially when a lot of the actors I saw didn't know their lines." After that run through there were a few hours until the performance. This period was marked by actors running around, muttering lines to themselves, or practicing songs one last time.

In the end, though, the final product ended up quite well. Scenes, and the transitions between them, ran quite smoothly, and there were almost no instances of lines being dropped or forgotten. Also, the show actually ran shorter than expected, a major first.

Food of Love is always a unique experience for any actor and very enjoyable to perform. In the words of senior Kim Dilego: "I've taken my final bite of the Food of Love, but I will be looking forward to seeing the next era of talent sweeten the stage of the Williams Inn for, I hope, many years to come." ■■

OKLAHOMA!



Photo courtesy of Aaron Ziemer

Cast members rehearse a scene from the musical after school on Monday, February 25. Oklahoma! will open on March 7th at 7:00 pm in the Mt. Greylock auditorium and run through the 9th.

NORMAN ROCKWELL MUSEUM STUDENT ART SHOW

By EMILY RUDD

On Saturday February 16th, students from various Berkshire County schools gathered at the Norman Rockwell Museum in Stockbridge for the 27th Annual "Berkshire County High School Art Exhibit". Schools across the Berkshires sent their "Ten Best" pieces of art to showcase.

Selected by Ms. DeSomma, representatives from Mt. Greylock included senior Helen Overstreet, juniors Alex Delano, Emily Kaegi, Cara Betti and Rosemarie Mele, sophomores Kevin Aliberti and Jacob Paul, and freshmen Roy Milton Malone, Sophie Gerry and Ellie Williams. The event was originally scheduled for Saturday February 9th, but due to storm Nemo, it was pushed

to the following week.

Emily Kaegi, a junior in advanced studio art, said, "When I started [my piece] I had no clue what I was doing, so I tested the materials and turned it into something I'm really proud of. It's a great experience and it feels really rewarding to have my art appreciated."

She also mentioned another exhibit coming up at MASS MoCa in North Adams. In this showcase, any Greylock art student has the opportunity to send their piece. Kaegi says that, "It's [going to be] a great show because all the schools in the area submit works and it's so cool to see what other students are creating." ■■

IRIS GOES DIGITAL

By MIRANDA DILS



File Photo

Every spring at Mt. Greylock, students can look forward to receiving a copy of the Iris Literary Magazine. In the past, these paperbound booklets contained submissions of writing, art, and photographs from budding high school and middle school writers and artists. This year, the format will be different. With the hope of showcasing a wider variety of talents at Greylock, students and teachers can now submit various forms of art to a multimedia online website. Along with literary pieces, photographs, paintings, and drawings, the new Iris is branching out to display videos and mp3s of any art form, such as dancing, singing, acting, instrumental pieces, and even rapping.

Kate Brown, a high school English teacher and the advisor for the Iris, came up with the original idea to transfer to a website, and received great support from the senior editors, Celeste Venolia, Helen Overstreet, and Crystal Haynes. The inspiration for the switch came from the goal of reaching more students and having greater accessibility to the magazine. Now, parents and students alike can view different forms of art through Wordpress on the Greylock website. The online display will always be available, and can be added to and changed continuously. An added perk is the elimination of publishing costs. The Iris may also try to highlight the faculty and community by showing stained glass samples from around the building.

Brown said that many colleges now boast "Webzines" on their websites and, with the expanding role of technology, it seemed only fitting for Greylock to join in. She believes that the new online edition

of the Iris will "speak a language which is more common to us now" and may inspire more students to submit.

Another new change in the Iris is the inclusion of middle schoolers on the editing board. Previously, middle schoolers could submit work but could not serve as editors. The seniors thought it would be more of a collaborative effort if middle schoolers could help with the process of reviewing submissions. The hope is that they will take on larger roles once the seniors graduate. Currently, no seventh and eighth grades are on the board, but they are encouraged to join. Junior Rose-Marie Mele and freshmen Roy Malone, Kate Parks, and Nicole Jones are also assisting with the development of the online Iris.

So how can students submit their work? By April 1st, students and teachers should send their works of art to iris.online.art@gmail.com. Also, students who wish to help out with the editing process of the Iris can still do so; they should contact Ms. Brown or one of the senior editors. Venolia says, "Don't be afraid to be creative and submit!" She also encourages students to convince their friends to submit and spread the word about the new format. Any person can submit work anonymously if they choose.

With plenty of exciting ideas, and many more to come, the shift of the Iris from paper to a multimedia display is headed in a bold new direction. With the participation of the Greylock community, students can anticipate the release of the new online edition in the near future. ■■

NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY

By SAM KLASS

A.R.I.S.E: the Greylock Way, our school's motto, and a general guideline for life. If you don't remember the acronym, here's a quick refresher: Accountability, Respect, Integrity, Stewardship, and Excellence.

The goal for every high school student is to achieve good grades in order to make it to a good college and hopefully gain their dream job. The one thing that they don't always focus on is themselves as a person. That's the thinking that the National Honor Society strives to promote.

Since its formation in 1921, the National Honor Society has recognized outstanding high school students for not only fantastic grades, but also for showing great character within their community. The requirements in order to join are a minimum GPA of 3.7 and outstanding character shown within the school and community. These students are not only recognized for these things, but also continue to work with the National Honor Society to benefit the local community.

Since the beginning of the NHS, students were accepted at the end of their junior year heading into their senior year. With changes coming to the NHS, both juniors and seniors are now accepted.

Rebecca Green, the NHS advisor at Mt. Greylock, feels optimistic about the effect

this change will bring, stating that, "juniors will now have time to experience being a part of the NHS before taking on leadership positions in their senior year," she explains. "Secondly, it allows seniors who did not meet the requirements for membership as juniors, but were close to meeting them, a chance to improve their GPA, character, service or leadership and be inducted in the fall of their senior year."

Green wants us to understand that this isn't a "super honor roll." Rather, it is a way "to honor students who have demonstrated excellence in the areas of scholarship, leadership, service, and character."

Green explained some of the activities members of the NHS perform: "Mt. Greylock's NHS, at a minimum, organizes a college experience panel and reception for seniors, helps prepare 8th graders for high school, meets with juniors to discuss the college application process, and runs the NHS induction ceremony," she explains, "The NHS also has to complete at least one community service project, in addition to these other responsibilities. It's a busy group, and members will be expected to get involved."

Interested in joining? Get those grades up and follow the Greylock way. ■■

Editor's Note: The views expressed in opinion pieces do not reflect the collective views of this newspaper, but of the individual authors.

A View Into Cuba

By EVELYN MAHON

This January, I travelled to Cuba with a group of Williams alumni in order to get a closer look at the country most Americans believe to be almost as communist and iron-curtain surrounded as the former Soviet Union.

The process of obtaining our visas began in early September of last year. My father and I both had to send copies of our passports and health records, but the travel agency, Academic Arrangements Abroad, took care of most of the bureaucratic business. Because the United States has an embargo on Cuba, only certain people are allowed in for certain reasons because our government does not want to “help” the Castro regime by stimulating their economy with tourist dollars. The embargo has loosened over the years. Today, American citizens can travel to Cuba if conducting research or travelling with an educational group. Citizens or residents of the United States who have family living in Cuba may also visit. All travellers must sign a document stating they will not purchase any non-essential items in the country.

The embargo was set up in the 1960s to weaken the Castro government. The plan, however, has backfired. Instead of making the Castro government weaker in Cubans' eyes, it has grown stronger. Cuba now markets the embargo as a “blockade,” implying that the United States is laying siege to the island with our navy, preventing any trade (which would be problematic as Cuba imports 80% of its food and receives \$2.8 billion worth of oil from Venezuela per year). Billboards line the highways, reading “bloqueo: el genocidio mas largo de la historia”, or “blockade: the longest genocide in history.”

As soon as we arrived in Havana, the



Photo courtesy of Evelyn Mahon

This shot overlooks the border between Old Havana and Central Havana. Tourists are carefully shielded from the grittier Central Havana.

wide gap between rich and poor became obvious. Cuba has a dual-currency system, which holds part of the blame for the incredible poverty. Government workers (doctors, lawyers, professors) are paid in Cuban Pesos, or moneda nacional (\$1 MN = \$0.04 USD). The average doctor is paid 1300 Cuban Pesos a month, which is equivalent to about \$50.00. Artists, taxi drivers, wait staff, and hotel workers are paid in Convertible Pesos, or CUC (\$1 CUC = \$1 USD). The average taxi driver, maid, or waiter can make as much as \$600 CUC a month, and some artists make as much as \$10,000 CUC per month. If a Cuban can get access to CUCs (in tips or artistic commissions), he or she will be able to live very comfortably.

As tourists, we were only shown part of the city called Old Havana: the charm-

ing, colonial, tourist-riddled streets full of street performers and vendors. Outside of Old Havana lies the “real” city: condemned buildings, hole in the wall restaurants which charge in moneda nacional, and bodegas (the stores where Cubans pick up their monthly rations). This is the Havana that tourists are quietly shepherded away from, where everyone knows each other and the police have little presence.

The strange thing about Cuba is that the police force is not there to so much combat crime as to “protect” tourists from Cubans. Before 2005, people who looked “Cuban” (anyone with a skin tone darker than your average caucasian) would be stopped from entering a hotel or any other establishment catering specifically to tourists and the upper class. The police keep a watchful eye over the tourist areas, and as long as Cu-

bans don't heckle the tourists, they won't have any trouble.

For the most part, this is what Cuba is like. A socialist country we read about in our AP US textbooks, the diabolical Batista and the Cuban Revolution immortalized on every corner, while rich Europeans leisurely roam the streets.

Since our group mainly consisted of wealthy, older alumni, our tour visited the higher-end places. We stayed in a beautiful hotel, visited well-known artists, and even spoke with the Former Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs. Occasionally, someone would ask a controversial question, and our tour guide, Yune, would gracefully dance around it. Since she has a job working with a tour agency (a very sought-after job, since the pay is excellent), anything she might have said that was against the “official opinion” could put her job in jeopardy.

This was the case everywhere. A few Cubans were willing to talk to us more candidly, although they still stuck very close to Raul Castro's official statements.

A common misconception among Americans (and most of the world) is that Raul Castro was chosen as Fidel's successor because he was his brother. In reality, Raul was just as much of a revolutionary as Fidel. He was there for all of the meetings with Ernesto (Che) Guevara. He was on the Granma when it landed on the shores near Niquero in December 1956.

The current questions for Cuba are: What next? Will relations with the U.S. become more friendly? Will the two currency system be phased out? Will the oxymoronic state of a socialist country that caters to the bourgeoisie finally become reconciled? We'll just have to wait and see. ■■

Peer Team: A Guide

By ALINA FEIN

“What does Peer Team really do, anyway?”
“Has anyone actually ever come to you for help?”
“What kind of training does Peer Team get?”
“Why do you miss class so much?”

These are questions that I, as a Peer (or as some prefer to affectionately say, “Disappear”) Team member, hear regularly. Questions like these are frustrating to hear, but I understand where they come from.

Peer Team consists of a select group of students who are offered special educational opportunities. This naturally causes some to question the group's legitimacy.

The purpose of this article is to address these questions and concerns on behalf of a group of students that cares deeply about the school community.

What does Peer Team do?

I can't answer this question fully because Peer Team is constantly taking on new projects of all kinds. What we do depends on the year's group of students, requests and opportunities we encounter and what is going on in the school community.

Originally, Peer Team was implemented to serve as a resource to students going through a difficult time and who wished to talk through their issues with a peer. From its start in 1986, Peer Team's purpose has always to improve students' experiences, security and happiness at Greylock. One thing that has changed, however, is the Peer Team's involvement in the middle school. In the past few years, the Peer Team's presence has increased, through their leadership of an Exploratory course for seventh graders, “moving up” days for incoming seventh graders, activity/team-building days for the middle school students, as well as a “Girls' Group” for middle school girls. Peer Team regularly goes into middle school and tenth grade health classes to speak about relevant issues and to give the students an opportunity to ask questions to older students rather than their health teachers.

Everyone in high school knows how tough middle school can be, and Peer Team members are especially proud of the positive relationships they have fostered with younger students. We have been praised by faculty, the administration and parents for our work in reaching out.

Has anyone actually ever come to you for help?

Every single member this year reports having been approached for help. These interactions have taken place both in and out of school, and both in person and over the computer or phone. During any given month, many members will have a “contact,” which is a person who comes to or who is referred to him or her to work through an issue. Members of Peer Team have given students access to help with and information about depression, relationship and friendship problems, bullying and abuse, and birth control and sex. Each team member reports feeling that he or she made a difference in someone's life through these interactions.

The reason people who are not on Peer Team don't feel aware of a lot of what we do is because we have to be confidential. Confidentiality is one of the most important concepts instilled in the members of Peer Team. Administrators, faculty and students talk to us about issues that are not appropriate for the whole school to know, and they can trust that the information will remain private. This is true on an individual basis as well. If I talk to a student about something confidential, I am not allowed to talk to the other members about it. So, yes, people do come to us in all contexts, but we keep these instances private.

What kind of training does Peer Team get?

We go through mediation training in order to be effective when a teacher or guidance counselor asks us to help talk through a conflict between students. We learn about our school's resources including the school psychologist and school nurse, as well as connections to outside facilities and phone numbers for students we encounter who are struggling with a difficult situation.

We also go through extensive trainings on topics including eating disorders and nutrition, sex and sexuality, drug and alcohol abuse, and stress and depression. We attend lectures and workshops led by experts on these subjects. These training sessions pertain to relevant subjects, and we are called the Peer “Resource” Team because we serve as a resource to students when these issues become relevant to them. Our role is to give them access to the information we have been introduced to.

Why do you miss class so much?

The rest of the world, unfortunately, cannot always cater to our one-period-a-day schedule. Thus, opportunities for trainings, events and meetings sometimes require our participation during other times of the school day and even after school or at night. As much as “getting out of class” seems an appealing concept to some, we are then faced with the burden of making up all the work we've missed. Teachers do not give Peer Team members special treatment. Our passes from class are limited, and academics always come first. If a teacher does not allow us to leave class, we don't.

That said, we do sometimes have “catch-up” days, which is where I think the misconception that Peer Team is a free period or study hall comes from. After we have had to miss class or had a particularly busy couple of weeks planning for an event or tackling an issue, we have days during which members can use the time to catch up on missed work, talk to teachers, and work on individual projects.

With being a part of any “club” or exclusive group comes criticism. To that end, I could probably write an entire book talking about what Peer Team means to me, what we do and aim to do, and the extremely personal and serious situations we have found ourselves involved with. Former Peer Team members have reported how grateful they are for their time and experiences on Peer Team and that what they have learned has helped them in various situations and groups in college, and current members feel more comfortable taking initiative as leaders in and out of school because of Peer Team.

The purpose of this article is simply to clear the air and acknowledge that we recognize what a privilege it is to have special opportunities and trainings as Peer Team members. We also take to heart the great responsibility that comes with such privileges. Our goal is to make Greylock a better, happier place for the people in it, and when criticism comes specifically from those people, we want to improve how we're doing things. We always welcome positive suggestions. Peer Team is constantly evolving and improving, and we hope it will continue to do so in the months and years to come. ■■

SQUASH

By GRAY KAEGI

Every season, Mt. Greylock fields many thriving sports teams. There are, however, sports that Greylock students play which are not organized through the school. One of these sports is squash, which is played by numerous students of all grade levels.

Squash is played in an enclosed court with two players. Players take turns hitting a ball against a front wall in the court using rackets. Points are won when the ball bounces twice on the court or when the ball is hit out of bounds. Squash is a fast paced game that requires agility and quick thinking.

Although it is not a school sport, squash has captivated many students' interest at Greylock. Among these students are seniors Carlos Ames and Ben Krant.

Ames has been playing since he was little but began to really take the game seriously in eighth grade. Since then, he has played in many tournaments. "Tournaments are where I get to really put all my training to work, because not that many people play squash in the Berkshires so I get a lot of quality matches and play," said Ames. "I guess I really love the intensity of squash. The pace of the game is fast, so you're always moving. I also love that there is always room for improvement. When I step on the court I know that I can always work on fitness or a certain shot."

Krant also began playing squash at a young age. Through hard work and dedication, he has been very successful in tournaments. He was ranked 11th in the country in the U13 Division, 21st in the U15 Division, and 54th in the U17 Division. He plans to continue his squash career by playing for the varsity team at Middlebury College, which he will be attending in the Fall.

As it is not a school sport, many students are unfamiliar with squash and have made uninformed speculations. Ames, however, uses this uncertainty to his advantage. Ames said, "People always used to say squash isn't a sport, but at the end of the day if they were to play or even watch it, they would completely change their thoughts on it, so I use that as my motivation. That's my favorite part." ■■

GIRLS BASKETBALL

By ERIC HIRSCH

The season may not have turned out quite the way they wanted it to, but the Greylock girls' basketball team certainly went down fighting. The Mounties finish 6-13, a record that did not qualify the team for the Western Massachusetts tournament. This said, the team's young talent, including 8th grader Sarah Stripp and freshmen Arianna Walden and Cheyanne Alcombright, is a bright spot for the up and coming Mounties. The team returns every player except for senior captain, Margot Besnard. Although Besnard's incredible shot blocking and leadership will be missed, the future looks good for the team. Each game this season was an opportunity to improve both individual skill and team chemistry. The experience that the young members of the squad received this year can only help towards a playoff team down the road.

With one final home game remaining against the St. Josephs Crusaders, the Mounties looked to provide senior, Margot Besnard with one final home win. Although Besnard was new to the team this year, she stepped up right away and gained captaincy. Besnard shined with jaw dropping blocks and steady play on the offensive end. Sophomore Lucy Barrett said, "Margot was a great addition to the team, and I wish it wasn't her senior year because we wouldn't have had the success we had without her." When the Mounties stepped on the Greylock hardwood one final time this year, they weren't just playing for themselves-- they were playing for Besnard. They jumped out to an early lead in the first quarter, a lead they would never relinquish. When Besnard was subbed out in the waning minutes of the contest, the crowd responded with a standing ovation. The 61-31 win was an awesome one for everyone in the Greylock community, including Besnard.

Behind the play of Mackenzie Flynn, Heather Tomkowicz, Lucy Barrett, Kelsey Orpin, Arianna Walden, Cheyanne Alcombright, and Sarah Stripp, the Mounties will be a dangerous team in the future. Barrett said that the team is looking to take down rivals Hoosac and Drury next year. Although those wins would be nice, nothing would be better than a berth into the Western Massachusetts tournament. ■■

13 is the Magic Number for Nordic Skiers

By WILL WALTER



Photo courtesy of Ken Kuttner

Senior Alex White leads teammates and fellow seniors Will Kirby and Sean Houston up a hill during a January 19 race at Prospect Mountain in Vermont.

Although the number thirteen has negative connotations to the superstitious, for the Mt. Greylock Nordic Ski Team, the number has another meaning: the team, boys and girls combined, has won thirteen Massachusetts State Titles since 2006. The boys skied away with their seventh title in eight years at the state meet on February 18th. The girls' team has been equally impressive, winning six state titles in the last eight years and placing second this year.

By winning gold and silver at yet another State championship, the Mt. Greylock Nordic Ski Team has placed itself among the Berkshire County teams of the decade. It has continued an era of dominance only matched by Greylock Football, Cross-Country Running, and Boys' Soccer. In a season locked out by uncooperative weather, the Mounties hit the trails looking better than ever. The boys team, led by seniors Alex White, Will Kirby, Sean Houston and Jonah Majumder, went undefeated in league races and completed an incredible year at states, totaling points in the low forties from top ten finishes by Kirby, White, and Houston. They also got help from other sources, as five year veteran and current junior, Caleb Raymond skied an outstanding race, finishing at a solid 26th place. The Greylock girls, led by seniors Kat Chenail, Sophia Dastoli, Alexandra De Veaux, Stephanie Adamczyk, and Alexa Adams, ended another great season with silver at States. All in all, it was another successful year for Mountie Nordic Skiing.

Every race won and trophy hung by the team, whose winning era began in the late 1990s, can be attributed to their deeply ingrained cultures of support and success. Coaches Hilary Greene, Mark Santella, Matt Voison and Hiram Greene have invested the team with a comfortable, hard working, team-first atmosphere. As deftly

put by senior captain Alex White, "Our coaches really stress building up a community within our team, and as a result we are more comfortable pushing each other in practices and races to maximize our potential." Some of the ways that the competitive, yet family-like, team culture is built are with Friday speedball games, weekly pasta parties hosted by team members, and team trail cleanup days. Team parents also contribute to the atmosphere by volunteering at concession stands, driving back and forth to team rendezvous Prospect Mountain and cheering on racers in spite of the frigid winter weather.

The most amazing aspect of the Greylock tradition is that with every passing year many top skiers graduate, yet the team's success continues. They are continually replaced by younger skiers, who always step up in big ways to carry the team. This year's boys' team lost top skiers Luke Costley, Josh Harrington, Aaron and Warren Taylor. The current seniors rose to extend the team's dominance, and next year, current juniors, Caleb Raymond and Derek Wood and freshman Matt Wiseman, will hope to do the same. The girls team also endured a heavy loss when Mackenzie Hitchcock and Laura Nolan graduated, but seniors Chenail, De Veaux and Dastoli continued the team's success. Junior Zavi Sheldon and freshmen Sophie Gerry and Grace Smith filled gaps this year and will be big players in the future.

Next year's task of filling the gaps made by Kirby, White, Houston, Chenail, and Dastoli may be as hard as ever, but the team's captains have no doubt the newcomers can handle the job, "I have no doubt that the younger guys will step up to the challenge next year", said White. "They're going to be really tough to beat." ■■

BOYS BASKETBALL

By IAN CULNANE

Under the guidance of second-year coach Bob Thistle, the boys' basketball team has continued last season's unprecedented success. This year's stellar starting lineup of Hank Barrett, Nathan Majumder, Tyler Picard, Tyrell Thomas and Brett McCormack has fulfilled expectations. They fin-

more determined going into the playoffs. Hopefully the loss will focus us, so we enter the tournament playing together and not thinking we're unbeatable."

This year's team should have a good chance in the tournament. Many players have been to the tournament before and



Photo courtesy of Jonah Majumder

Members of the varsity boys' basketball team listen to Coach Bob Thistle at halftime.

ished regular season with a record of 17-3. One of their three losses was to Lee, the team that knocked them out of the playoffs last year. This loss could serve as a reality check for the team and a motivator going into the upcoming tournament. Majumder, a senior captain, said the loss "will make us

know how to handle the pressure. In addition to the great starting five, the team has a deep bench, including senior Ethan Ryan, juniors Cole Jackson, Robby Buffis and Jack Thistle, and sophomores Eric Hirsch and Ian Brink.

As senior captain Barrett said "we have

complete confidence in our bench for sparks, scoring and not, and being able to go eight, nine or ten deep is great. Any guy can step up any night." Besides the team's deep bench, generally four out of the starting five players have point totals in the double digits on a given night, giving the team a great scoring advantage. The opposing team has difficulty focusing defensively on one person because so many Greylock players are offensively strong.

Ever since Thistle's takeover, the team has been on the up-swing. Two years ago, the team went 4-16 overall. When he stepped in last year, the team had a quick change of pace, ending with a record of 17-5. Going from having a losing record, to being one of the best teams in the county is no easy feat.

Thistle has molded his individual players into a team with a heart. He guides his team with three words: attitude, effort and enthusiasm. On and off the court, he makes sure the players exemplify the idea of "team

first". Thistle attributes the success of this team to the "talent of the team, and also to the chemistry that kids have been working on every day at practice, this bond that they have. Getting to the cage last year made them hungry, and they left unsatisfied."

When asked for the reason for the near reversal of the team's record, Thistle didn't attribute it to one player or coach, but to the team as a whole. Beating one of the best teams in the county, St. Joe, was a big achievement for Greylock players and this assured them that they could compete with the best. Thistle brought the varsity team to Springfield on February 23 hear their seed, 3rd, be announced.

Thanks to many strong underclassmen players, the future of the boys basketball team in the coming seasons looks promising. With one of the best records and the first solid win of the south division in a long time, who knows how far the legacy of this year's team will extend. ■■

Spice Root

By HANNAH FEIN & ANYA SHELDON

If you are a Williamstown resident, chances are you've either heard of or dined at Spice Root on Spring Street. For you, we hope this will revive good memories. For those of you who may not have visited yet, we reviewed the authentic Indian restaurant to give you a glimpse inside this Williamstown eatery.

Walking into Spice Root felt like stepping into India. Leaving the blustery February night behind us, we entered a glowing orange room adorned with abstract paintings and hanging lights in vibrant hues. We were greeted by a charming waiter who invited us to a table in the back. Instead of the typical American bread basket, our waiter presented us with an assortment of crunchy Indian chips. There were two types—one was more of a salty cracker, and one an airy, flaky snack. They came with delectable dipping sauces.

The extensive range of menu options made it challenging to decide what to order. Vegan, vegetarian, seafood, chicken, and lamb selections filled the pages. The main dishes ranged in price from \$7.00 to \$20.00. There was also a children's menu, as well as a discounted menu for Williams College students. We eventually chose an order of plain Naan (\$2.95), an order of samosas (\$4.25), a bowl of mulligatawny soup (\$3.95), and chicken Sag Wala (\$13.95).

As we awaited the arrival of our food, we took another look at our surroundings. Decorative Indian statues lent an air of authenticity to the restaurant, and a television playing Bollywood movies was another nice touch. Our samosas arrived promptly. Filled with steaming potatoes and green peas, these deep-fried, triangular delicacies tasted fresh and slightly spicy, with a distinctly Indian flavor. We thoroughly enjoyed this appetizer and would highly recommend it. The wait between the samosas and our entrees was not long at all, and soon several tantalizing dishes were laid out before us. We shared the four pieces of naan—flaky, leavened flatbread—and agreed that although it was simple, it was delicious.

We eagerly began on our entrees. The mulligatawny soup was very tangy, with a hint of lemon, and was smoothly pureed. Its name translates from Tamil to "pepper water," and was originally developed for British soldiers stationed in India, eventually spreading all over the world. Although it was a filling and enjoyable dish, it would have been better had it not been pureed.

The Sag Wala, described by the restaurant as "mildly spiced chicken with creamy spinach sauce tempered with ginger," was a bit confusing in the beginning. It seemed to be a sea of savory yet overabundant spinach sauce with cut up chicken hidden inside and a small bowl of rice on the side. All of the components were very satisfying and tasty, but the correct way to go about eating the dish

was a bit unclear. Noticing the slight confusion, our waiter kindly came over to our table and showed the correct way to eat the dish. He demonstrated by putting rice on the plate, then putting on the spinach sauce and juicy chicken. We were certainly a bit embarrassed about eating incorrectly beforehand, but were very grateful to the compassionate waiter who displayed the proper Indian technique.



Photo courtesy of Anya Sheldon

Spice Root is located on Spring St. in Williamstown

The dish was, in fact, much more pleasant to eat after the waiter had enlightened us.

Our overall experience at Spice Root offered us a delightful immersion in authentic Indian cuisine. The exquisite decor, warm lighting, good service, and friendly ambiance made our satisfying meal feel high-quality and exciting. We would most definitely recommend Spice Root to anyone and everyone, as you will certainly find a dish you enjoy at this Berkshire County favorite. ■■

Movie Review: Warm Bodies

By MIRANDA PARK and NATE TASKIN

Let's list the ways that a zombie can be killed: bullet to the brain, machete to the head, bat to the temple, and... THE POWER OF LOVE! According to Warm Bodies, the latter can be just as effective. Apparently, the cold, cadaverous heart of a zombie can be resuscitated by kindness and affection. As ridiculous as this premise may sound, it does provide a backdrop for an enjoyable film.

Stop us if this sounds familiar: a zombie named R (Nicholas Hoult) meets a human named Julie (Teresa Palmer), and despite their differences grow to be star-crossed lovers, much to the chagrin of Julie's disapproving father, played by a poorly utilized John Malkovich. There's even a balcony scene to hammer it home. If you slept through ninth grade English, we're talking about Romeo and Juliet.

Despite its familiar roots, Warm Bodies is unlike other romantic comedies. In a dead horse genre that's close to decomposition, this film stands out with elements such as a witty script and a strong soundtrack. For a character who spends the majority of the film grunting, Hoult gives a compelling performance as R. He's oddly charming for a guy who has just devoured the brain of James Franco's little brother, who is Julie's boyfriend. This act would be a turnoff for most girls, and Julie's indifference to the situation adds to the overall weakness of her character. Her blandness does not reach Bella Swan proportions, but Palmer's dull expressions only drag the film down. The film is rectified, however, by Rob Corrdry, who provides most of the comic relief with his zombie one-liners.

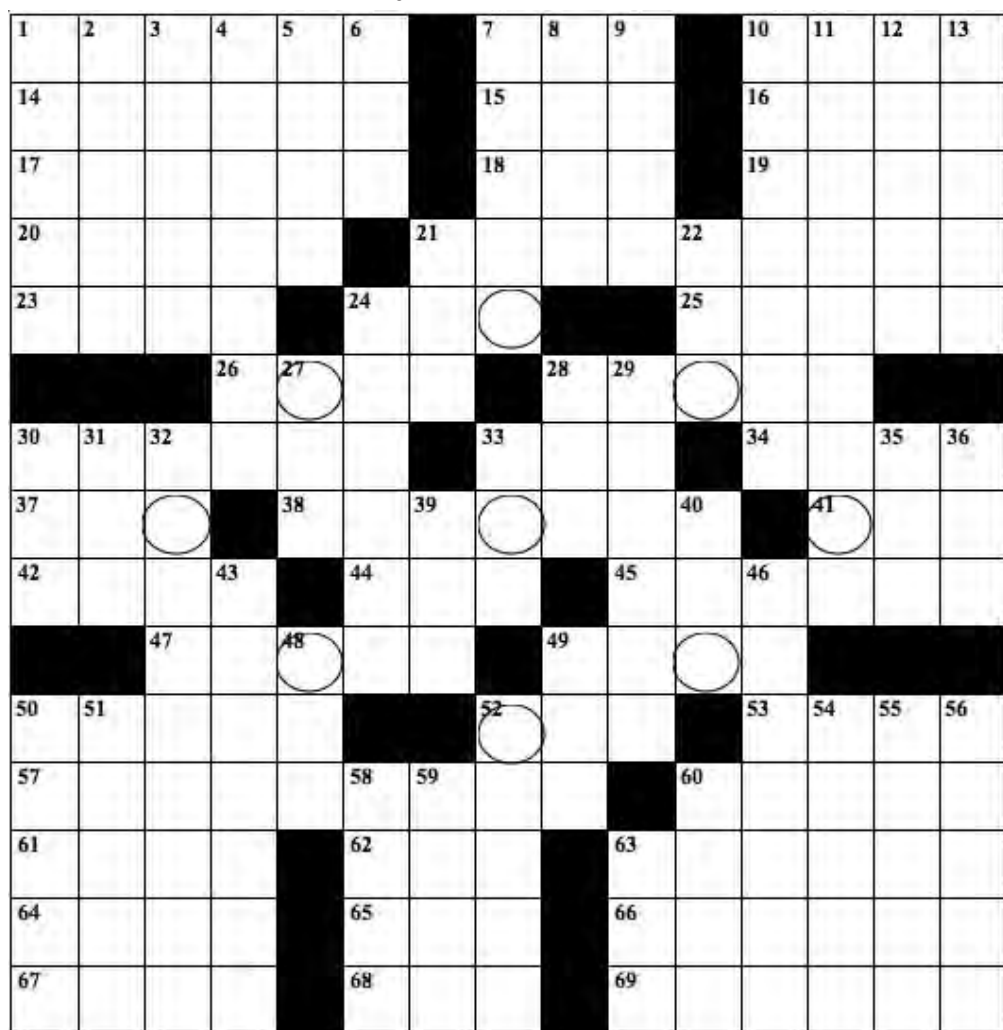
One of the biggest problems that the film faces is that it leaves a dangling plot point in the question of "what will zombies eat if they give up humans?" The film builds up this question as if it will have a part in the climax, but it is forgotten, leaving the audience confused and cheated. Another problem is that it presents a conflict solution that is too insipidly sappy to take seriously. It's too simplistic an idea that a zombie horde can be stopped by rainbows and friendship. The film creates problems that could be compelling, but is too afraid to follow through with them in case it should endanger the happy ending.

While the film has its disappointments, its charm exists in that it is, in fact, funny, quirky and sweet. Even though it was over the top in its cuteness, we're glad that it didn't end in the same way as Romeo and Juliet.

Final Verdict: 3 Brains out of 4 ■■

CROSSWORD

By BLAIR DILS



ACROSS

1. Glare reducer
7. Pilsner alternative
10. Overnight flight
14. John or Ringo
15. Bagel spread
16. ___ aries, scientific name for domestic sheep
17. Diatribe deliverer
18. Sticky stuff
19. Washing place, in Barcelona
20. "___ by land, ..."
21. More attractive
23. Insect at the bottom of the bottle
24. Copper, for one
25. "___ of Exploding Mangoes," Mohammed Hanif novel
26. Charlotte Bronte heroine
28. Menino's title
30. Lost concentration
33. Shaq is one
34. Bread made into chips
37. Way kind?
38. Occasion for "Auld Lang Syne"
41. Long time
42. Absorbs (up)
44. Help
45. Salad choice
47. Strunk and White's area of expertise
49. Mesoamerican civilization
50. French 101 verb
52. Piercing site
53. Gruel
57. Peruvian tourist destinations
60. Oteri, formerly of

DOWN

1. Piercing site
2. College football analyst
3. Narrow road, with "one"
4. Occasionally
5. G or C follower
6. Jill ___ Conway, author of "The Road from Coorain"
7. Pond scum
8. Bird on Maine's license plate
9. Bk. about Moses's departure from Egypt
10. 1987 movie about Enforcement Droids
11. Actress Saint and others
12. Eats (out)
13. The one dilapidated house in the neighborhood
21. Middle Ages power, for short

22. "The ___ Hey Kid,"
23. Willie Mays' nickname
24. Prolonged test
27. Craving
28. Actress West who said "Anything worth doing is worth doing slowly."
29. 2009 James Cameron flick
30. ___ Angeles
31. Enero to Diciembre
32. Product not seen during the 2010 Super Bowl, for the first time in 23 years
33. 50s actress Charisse
35. ___ the line
36. Common linker
39. Youngest woman to play a PGA Tour event
40. The Scottish Robin Hood, Rob ___
43. Get ready, with "on"
46. Sushi alternative
48. "Get ___ Ya-Ya's Out"—1970 Rolling Stones live album
49. Rainey and Joad, for examples
50. Type of lens
51. Starts the pot
52. Scandalous company of 2001
54. Admit
55. Dirt Devil rival
56. Conjunctivitis
58. Space ships
59. Gaels of the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference
60. Guitarist Atkins
63. Randy Moss and others, for short