

STUDENTS EXPRESS CONCERN OVER BATHROOM SIGNAGE

By VICTORIA MELKONYAN

With time comes change, and one controversial change within Mt. Greylock has been the decision to change the signage on the bathrooms from “Girls” and “Boys” to “Urinals and Toilets” and “Toilets.” Members of the administration have repeatedly signaled both in official school documents and class meetings the expectation that boys and girls will still go to their gender’s assigned bathroom. In Mount Greylock’s “Nuts and Bolts,” the following information was published:

“The number of multi-stall and single restrooms has increased significantly with the new building, and students will have ready access to facilities. The multi-stall restrooms are designed like those in airports with strategically structured main entrances that provide privacy without a door. Individual toilet stalls have locking doors and urinals have privacy partitions. Signage for bathrooms in the new building is purpose-driven. Multi-stall bathrooms are labeled ‘Urinals & Toilets’ and ‘Toilets.’ Mount Greylock has every expectation that boys will continue to use the restrooms marked ‘Urinals & Toilets’ and girls will use the restrooms marked ‘Toilets.’”

Though there are single-stall bathrooms available, the administration has made clear that they are intended for teachers and are only to be used by students under special circumstances. This has upset a great number of students, many of whom claim that the administration is not making any actual changes to accommodate students whose



Photo courtesy of Owen Tucker-Smith.

identities fall outside of the binary genders. Upset students say that the administration is only switching what is written outside of the bathrooms and is effectively ostracizing and/or outing any kids who feel the need to use a genderless single restroom, all while claiming to be “ahead of the trend.” The idea for new signs was sparked by Mount Greylock’s Gender-Sexuality Alliance, whose own Sophie Jones pioneered the change. Jones told the Echo that “[The GSA’s] original idea for the change was to make sure all students at the school felt comfortable using a bathroom without being labeled as ‘male’ or ‘female.’” However, some students seem to believe that the change in signage has not

achieved this goal.

One of the first public protests against the bathroom signs was in senior Katrina Hotaling’s dissent, a combination of her and fellow senior Grace Miller’s opinions that was posted on Instagram. The post summed up a few important points raised by students who disagree with the new bathroom policy:

“Greylock’s attempt at new ‘inclusive’ and ‘progressive’ bathrooms is disingenuous... Changing

the words on the doors to say different things when the intent is clearly still to segregate bathrooms into a men’s bathroom and a women’s bathroom doesn’t do anything. The bathrooms can be called anything under the sun, but as long as that intention to separate by gender is there, they may as well just say ‘men’ and ‘women.’ ... Students were told that despite the new labeling, girls were expected to use the bathroom marked ‘toilets’ and boys to use ‘toilets and urinals.’ Why even bother changing the labeling if you are not going to change the way you use the bathrooms? ... While single-stall all-gender restrooms were added, students were

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1 in 650: An Interview with Xavier Vilaubi

By OWEN TUCKER-SMITH



Photo courtesy of Mars Vilaubi.

Students at Greylock have a wide variety of interests and hobbies. For junior Xavier Vilaubi, one of these interests is birdwatching. The Echo was lucky enough to sit down with Vilaubi to discuss this hobby and learn about his birdwatching experiences in Iceland.

Echo: So how long have you been birdwatching?

Vilaubi: Well, I’ve been birdwatching pretty much my whole life. Ever since I could walk my dad has taken me on hikes to look at birds. I used to live in California and there are these bays nearby. We would walk along the water and look at all these shore birds and ducks.

E: How old were you when you moved to the Berkshires?

V: I was five.

E: So, was there a dramatic shift there, from California birds to Berkshire birds?

V: Yeah, it was pretty dramatic. It’s a totally different ecosystem, like on the west coast it’s, well, coastal, so there was a completely different landscape of birds. Here it’s more forest.

E: Which do you like more?

V: Well,, I’ve been here longer, so I’ve sort of grown partial to the birds here, but there’s a great variety on both coasts, which is really interesting.

E: You talked earlier about going on walks with your dad. Is that where your interest in birdwatching originated? Was he always interested in birdwatching?

V: Definitely. He’s been interested in birdwatching for a long time. He’s a photogra
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Williams Courses Give Students a Taste of College

By SAM WHITTUM ‘19

For many years now, Williams College has given Greylock students opportunities to enroll in and experience the academic environment of a college classroom. Students can be exposed to a huge range of different subjects, from Abstract Algebra to Japanese to Psychology. If students are interested in taking a course at Williams, they have to meet a certain level of requirements, and be accepted into the class. Students experience a significant increase in reading and homework, but that’s what is expected when signing up for a college course. Once enrolled into their desired subject, students have to sign out in the Main Office and drive to Williams for their class during the regular school day. Although it is challenging at times for the students to have to miss their classes at Greylock, they are all glad they are able to have this opportunity to learn and grow as an intellectual.

Senior Karen McComish is enrolled in Sociology 101 at Williams, and absolutely loves it. She explains that the class focuses on basic social theories through famous

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Students Adjust to New Building

By CLARA MCWEENY

Two months into the new Mount Greylock Regional High School, students and teachers alike are still adjusting to the current design. In the last week of October, the new school faced perhaps its biggest test yet: spirit week and homecoming. The significantly smaller layout of the school was challenged as costumes, face paint, and glitter made their ways through the Mt. Greylock halls. On Saturday night, the downsized cafeteria squeezed in its max occupancy limit for the first homecoming in the new school. Students attending the new school have a lot to say about the layout, size and design, having had some time to learn their way around.

One of the biggest modifications from the old building is the three story layout. Freshman Livia Morales commented upon the new additions, stating that “the stairwells are a bit tight, but we are making them work. The views at each landing definitely make it worth it.” While stairs may seem like a minor change, they seem to be quite literally tripping students up. Many commented on the multiple wipeouts they have witnessed on the narrow stairwell, the impediment feature resulting in many traffic jams between classes. The tight squeeze has caused daily traffic jams in between classes, and even after a couple months, students are running late to class. Many student have commented upon

one of the more recent buildups in the hallways, coming from the cafeteria to the academic wing. Although the newly modified schedule of three lunches diminishes what would have been an inevitable disaster, 200 students trying to fit through one doorway everyday is not an ideal situations, to say the least. The stairways and narrow hallways present many more opportunities to be late for class: a third floor first period class to second period orchestra may very well have to be a sprint if one wants to be on time.

On a positive note, students seem pleasantly surprised by the emphasis on nature in the new design, coming from a school that was lacking in things like windows. This is certainly not the case in the current building. Floor to ceiling windows at each landing give students a much needed break from their hectic schedules, as the schools namesake can be seen from them, rising tall and proud over Berkshire county. Natural light floods into each classroom, brightening students’ spirits. As the most iconic season in the Berkshires peaks, fall foliage can be seen from every window, serving as a constant reminder of just how beautiful the school and its surrounding area truly are. For upperclassmen who have had to endure “the old Greylock” for so many years, the views are definitely not taken for granted. In the now demolished buildi
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DODGEBALL

Maddy Art questions a classic gym class sport.

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MIDTERM ELECTIONS

Read the Echo’s guide to the election results.

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PEARLS OF NORTH ADAMS

Gabe Gerry looks at two restaurants in the MASS MoCA area.

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WORLD HISTORY

Owen Tucker-Smith explores Mt. Greylock’s history curriculum.

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October Concerts at Chapin Come to an End

By EVA MYERS

On Tuesday, October 23rd, Mount Greylock's middle and high schoolers worked together to put on their annual Get Acquainted Concert. This was the first performance of the year, in which Mt. Greylock community members could see all band, orchestra, and chorus members perform pieces at Chapin Hall in Williamstown. Usually different groups perform separately, but during the Get Acquainted concert, some of the groups are mixed to create an even more diverse group of instruments and students of all ages. For example, in this year's concert the high school orchestra played a well-known piece called "Orpheus in the Underworld", better known as the "Can Can." It is an upbeat piece that featured students from the middle school orchestra, high school orchestra, and the high school band. "I try to perform pieces that are challenging, but can be learned in the short amount of time we have to prepare! I like to perform a combined piece if possible, like 'Orpheus,'" said chorus and orchestra teacher Ouisa Fohrhaltz about the song selection process.

On Tuesday's concert the middle school performed first; fellow classmates and parents got to hear the chorus sing the popular "Can't Help Falling in Love," originally performed by Elvis Presley in the 1960s. Next, the audience heard the middle school orchestra's rendition of "Rainbow Connection," followed by the middle school band's performance of "Somewhere" from the popular musical West Side Story. Then came the high school performances, when audience members witnessed first the high school orchestra's upbeat pirate jig and "Can-Can," and finally the high school band's grand finale, a "Sandpaper Ballet" by Leroy Anderson that put smiles on everyone's faces.

This concert was the last concert performed at Chapin by students, as the school's auditorium will be finished and performance-ready shortly. It has been a long wait; the auditorium has been closed since the beginning of the new building process in 2016. But according to teachers and faculty that have previewed the new space, it was worth the wait. Keeping its original build, the auditorium has all new seats, as well as new equipment to ensure better acoustics, making it a wonderful performance space for students to play in. When asked about the different performance spaces, Fohrhaltz said, "Chapin Hall since it has been redone is a 'state of the art acoustical space.' The beauty and the grandeur of the architecture will be hard to beat... We will be excited to hear how we sound in [the new auditorium]!" However, students will not know for sure how good the space is until it is played in by performers this winter. Musicians are, needless to say, looking forward for the grand opening. ■

Actors Present *Henry V*

By CAMMI MACUCH

On November 10 and 11, the Mount Greylock theater department presented Shakespeare's *Henry V* at Williamstown Elementary School. Tonight, the actors will perform at the Fall Festival of Shakespeare at Shakespeare & Co. This event brings together other high school casts performing Shakespeare plays in the fall to celebrate theater and the sixteenth century playwright. The festival is not a competition; rather, it gives companies the chance to watch one another perform and share what they have worked hard to create.

Greylock's *Henry V* focuses on the English king Henry V and his plans to invade France. It details the events that unfold directly before and after the 1415 Battle of Agincourt that occurred during the Hundred Years' War between the French and the English. It's a tale of kingdoms, conquest, betrayal, and humor.

One of the qualities that set the Greylock performance apart from the traditional work are the characters. Looking at the cast list, one might think there's an error, but everything is in its proper place. There are five actors taking on the role of the play's namesake character, Henry V. Elizabeth Westerdal, Felicia LaRoche, Grace Miller, Victoria Melkonyan, and Josie Dalsin each put in stellar performances working solo and in tandem with the other Henrys.

The success of the show demonstrates the hours of hard work the cast and crew put in during rehearsals. There were rehearsals every day after school, usually running until five. Depending on the role, the time commitment dedicated to rehearsals varied. Students could be called in anywhere from two times a week to rehearsing



Actors of *Henry V* bow at the end of the show (photo courtesy of Cammi Macuch).

every day. The week before the show, the company undergoes tech week. During tech week everyone is called in daily and the rehearsals can go to even later times, like six or eight.

Senior Grace Miller, entertained audiences as one of the five Henrys. After their first performance concluded, she shared what she thought went well: "I was proud of myself and the presidency speech which is a very famous speech and our director, Tom, is a Henry buff and he was really pushing me to do really well on this speech because it's a very famous speech. I'm also super proud of my other Henry, Felicia,

who struggled at first with lines, but like, she's getting it every day. I'm super proud of her."

As a senior, these are some of Miller's last performances as a Greylock student. She commented on what it feels like to be a senior in this production, explaining that "I feel really sad sometimes, but then I just remember I really have to enjoy where I am at the moment: enjoy the moment and not think about the future."

The cast of *Henry V* will perform at Shakespeare & Company tonight at 8:30. The theater department's next performance will be the musical on March 15 and 16. ■

Building Update

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-ing, one would have had no way of knowing just how breathtaking the landscape is around the school without stepping outside. The opposite is true in the new building.

The modern, up to date features also allow students to catch some vitamin D throughout their school day. During the warmer months, they have the option to eat lunch at some of the standing tables out on the patio facing towards the mountains, which has had mixed results: "I love being able to eat outside, but I do wish there were places to sit down and eat," sophomore Brandon Sills commented. The option to eat outside is a practical one too, as lunch serves to be a chaotic event in the downsized cafeteria. Kids have been seen pulling up folding chairs to lunch tables to squeeze in with their friends, and some have even resorted to perching on the heater lining the room. The brevity of the cafeteria was on display a few weekends ago, as practically the whole high school squeezed in for the homecoming dance. While compact at times, the cafeteria seemed to hold its purpose for the dance, evident in that there was much positive feedback about the event.

A cafeteria feature that was not present in the old building is the snacks served at the lengthened break each day. In the six-

teen-minute gap between second and third period, students and teachers can be seen walking down to the cafeteria to purchase hot, breakfasty type snacks as well as fruit.

"The breakfast items are a nice change" said sophomore Gabe Gerry. Seeing that there is no eating in the academic wing, this is a welcomed addition for students who perhaps haven't eaten breakfast, or simply need a little pick me up in between classes. While this may be convenient for students with say, third period art, this does not hold true for many students, especially middle schoolers. There is simply not enough time to go to the cafeteria, wait in line, buy food, and then journey back up to the third floor. The foyer, which is closer to the academic wing, is also a place to eat, but no food is served there. And with the ultra strict rules about food in the academic wings, many middle schoolers are left with few options. The cafeteria has had generally good feedback, but at times seems to benefit only certain people.

While the new building itself is finished, construction seems to be far from done. Classrooms on the far side of the building don't just have a view of pretty Berkshire foliage, but also a huge construction zone. Classes are often interrupted with the sounds of dump trucks and diggers, and dust can be seen floating around. From the

front, the new school looks immaculate and picturesque, surrounded by beautiful views. But travel around back, and it's a much different story. The landscape is barren, with dirt piles piled up and construction vehicles around every turn. Construction tape lines the landscape, diminishing a school atmosphere. Early in the school year, the effects of the not entirely finished school were felt when a fire drill happened in the pouring rain for the second time that day, caused by dust triggering the alarms. The new school may look completely finished and perfect from the front, but certain instances in the school day make it glaringly obvious that there is still a lot of work to be done.

All in all, students seem to be acclimating fairly well to the brand new school, and are relishing in the modern designs and emphasis on nature that were so lacking in the old school. As time goes on, both students and teachers will ease into the current schedule and layout, working out the kinks that plague the new buildings. Some of these problems will need special attention from the administration, seeing that they are often not things that will work themselves out. That being said, from the sleek design of the building to the outdoor eating places and views, Mt. Greylock students are thankful to be in the new school after years of waiting. ■

Lynn Lyons Addresses Anxiety

By JACKIE WELLS

On Thursday, October 25th, while many fans huddled in the bleachers at the boys' soccer game, another group of community members opted for a warmer option. In the meeting room, well known psychotherapist and licensed clinical social worker Lynn Lyons returned to Mount Greylock for the third time. The author and co-author of multiple books on anxiety, Lyons delivered an informative and engaging presentation on "How to Emotionally Equip Our Kids." Mount Greylock adjustment counselor Mrs. Pardalis Johnson said, "often times, talking about anxiety can become stressful and Lyons was fabulous at presenting anxiety in a way that provided you with strategies but delivered with humor." Using many entertaining and humorous stories, Lyons addressed the growing issues of anxiety and depression among adolescents

and in families. As explained by Lyons, "anxiety, if you do nothing about it, if you just leave it alone and it festers, is one of the top predictors of developing depression by the time you hit adolescence or young adulthood." The presence of social media in almost every student's daily life is a contributing factor to increasing levels of social anxiety. Mrs. Pardalis Johnson noted how Lyons "provided a strong reminder about how social media can influence students and how they feel about themselves." Lyons offered insight for this trend by suggesting that "when you're comparing yourself to somebody else, you're comparing their outside to your inside."

So, what can we do to address this problem? Lyons emphasized the connection between treatment and prevention, referring to them as the "Olsen twins of

psychotherapy" because they can be virtually indistinguishable. She also focused on the importance of an "emotional immune system" discouraging parents from overly sheltering their children. Ultimately, she argued, "the way you learn how to experience emotions is to experience them and the less that kids have emotional experience the more crippled they become as they move towards autonomy."

Another important step in both prevention and treatment, according to Lyons, is learning how to handle situations in which things don't go as planned. This means shifting away from safety strategies like avoidance and distraction, instead focusing on problem solving ability and learning ways to manage and deal with uncertainty and discomfort. "Expect, externalize, experiment," or in other words, recognize

when anxiety begins to take hold, create distance from your worried thoughts, gain perspective, and finally, take action to shift your focus and change your reactions. Pardalis Johnson echoed this message, explaining that "in our school setting, extending Lyons messages to reach students involves first educating students on what anxiety is, identifying what some triggers are, and addressing the problem."

Oh, and fellow students: bothered by that helicopter parent who follows your every step with a tracking app on your phone (yes, apparently this happens)? Good news for you, because Lyons thinks this practice is bad for student development. Spring this info on your well-meaning parental unit and break free to be the rebellious teen you were meant to be. Just kidding. Or not. ■

UN Environmental Report Induces Urgency

By CHARLIE MCWEENY

At the beginning of October, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, or IPCC, released a report on the possible impacts of global warming of 1.5 degrees Celsius. The report uses stark language, uncharacteristic of a UN organization usually watered down by member state's political ambitions, to warn that the steps currently being taken to prevent catastrophic levels of climate change will not be enough. Under current emission trends, the warming of 1.5 degrees Celsius could occur in as little as ten years, but in no more than twenty. This timeline puts the students currently at Greylock as the ones who will be at the center of the effects outlined in the report, both suffering the consequences, and perhaps even attempting to undo the actions of previous generations.

Global temperatures have currently increased one degree Celsius since pre-industrial levels, the consequences of which have been seen in deadly wildfires in California, devastating hurricanes along the Southern and Eastern coasts of the US, and destructive droughts in Cape Town. This puts the planet a mere half-degree away from 1.5 degree level outlined in the IPCC's report, a change unnoticeable in room temperature yet life-changing for the human populace. The 34 page "Summary For Policymakers," which was approved by all 195 member states of the United Nations, outlines the consequences of this seemingly minute temperature change. A change of 1.5 degrees Celsius would affect areas such as weather, sea levels, agriculture, and ecosystems, with a huge impacts on insects and marine-life. The effects of 1.5 degree warming, opposed to those of 2 degree warming, are stark. A rise of 1.5 degrees would result in a devastating loss of seventy to ninety percent of the world's current coral reef populations, while a 2 degree rise would virtually wipe coral reefs of the face of the earth, causing a 99 percent

loss. A warming of 2 degrees would further increase the instability of ice shelves in Greenland and Antarctica, causing an additional 10 cm rise of sea levels over the effects of 1.5 degree warming. This additional ten centimeter rise could displace an extra ten-million people by 2100.

Despite these cataclysmic consequences, the IPCC report does outline paths to limiting warming to 1.5 degrees, as opposed to the 2 degrees widely accepted as necessary before. The report states that limiting temperature rises to 1.5 degrees would require "rapid and far-reaching" action that is "unprecedented in terms of scale." The report calls for a fifty percent reduction of carbon dioxide emissions by 2030, and a full stop on all carbon dioxide emissions by 2050. This would mean no gas or oil heating, no diesel or gas powered cars, and the elimination of coal and gas powered electricity. Renewable energy sources such as solar and wind power would have to make up for the loss of traditional energy sources. The report also explores the possibility of burning biomass, such as corn and switchgrass, to produce electricity. This, however, carries its own consequences, increasing the prices of crops critical to maintain an ever-growing human population. Even the advent of new energy sources would leave a huge amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. The report lays out plans to reduce this by planting forests, which currently capture about 25% of our carbon dioxide emissions. Yet many experts agree that it is unlikely we will be able to completely switch over to renewable energy sources in the near future, and argue that new technology will need to be developed in order to limit carbon dioxide emissions. Experimental ways of 'catching' carbon emissions from factories and then storing them underground are currently being researched, but so far have proved vastly uneconomical to carry out.

However, even if the technologies were available to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees, they might not necessarily be applied by all world leaders. The Paris Climate Agreement was signed in 2015 by 175 parties, including the European Union, and aims to limit global warming to 1.5 to 2 degrees Celsius. Despite this, the actions pledged by the signatories put global temperatures on the path to rise by 3 degrees, far above the 1.5 called for by the IPCC's report. The integrity of the Paris Climate Agreement is at stake as well, with US president Donald Trump and Brazilian President-Elect Jair Bolsonaro both promising to withdraw from the Agreement. President Trump has also rolled-back Obama-era emission limits, putting the world's historically largest carbon emitter's future in limiting global warming at stake. The world's leaders will move to discuss the findings of this report at the UN's climate conference in Poland at the end of this year.

Climate change is widely regarded as a problem of the future, rarely affecting those living in the present but having dire consequences on the next generations. Yet according to the IPCC report the time for putting off climate change for future generations may have finally come to the end. The students currently enrolled at Greylock will most likely be the first generation to become adults in the time period when the consequences of the actions, or inactions, of nations are felt. Many students at Greylock were not aware of the IPCC report, perhaps due to the lack of a climate-science class at Greylock or current events not being an integral part of most curricula. When asked about the IPCC report one student replied "we know nothing about it," while another student jokingly referenced the extent of their climate change knowledge provided by the school, "global warming is bad. Always listen to

Bill Nye." Many students, even if they were unaware of the IPCC report, still expressed worries about climate change: "it's a big concern. It's something that should be addressed more than it is," commented one student. Other students, such as Tashi Rai, said they were glad clubs like YES were available to students at Greylock, but also hoped there was a way they could do more. "It's great that we have a YES club that's doing stuff, but we should probably do more ... It's one thing to say but then it's so hard to actually put into action." Ruth Weaver, a sophomore at Greylock, expressed her concern that the fate of climate change lay mostly in corporate hands, saying that "corporations across America -and elsewhere - are using their immense [power] to destroy the planet. It's not individual people's problems - like I can't save worldwide ... famines with shorter showers, I just can't do that ... I'm not the one dumping toxic waste into the rivers."

This increase in student led calls for more stringent environmental protections is not unique to Greylock. In Sweden, a fifteen-year old student went on strike to protest her perceived lack of action on Sweden's part, inspiring solidarity strikes in Australia. In Columbia, 25 youth activists won a landmark climate suit, forcing the Colombian government to stop deforestation and institute a plan to reach net zero emissions by 2020. Most notably, however, is a lawsuit against the US federal government led 21 plaintiffs, all between the ages of 11 and 22, alleging that their constitutional rights to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" are being denied by the federal government's pursuit of policies that harm the climate. On November 2 the US Supreme Court cleared the way for the trial to go through, signaling their possible interest in climate lawsuits in the future. An exact date for the trial has not yet been set. ■

Unified Basketball Emerges

By SAM WHITTUM

For the first time in Mt. Greylock history, the school is offered a Unified Basketball team. This program is a part of the Special Olympics, and was created to let students with and without intellectual disabilities have the chance to participate in a team sport and to wear the school's colors with pride. Anyone in the school was eligible to play except for students who were already on a fall team. This opportunity allowed students from all grades to work and play together on the same team but also only required participants to practice twice a week, so students could still be involved with other extracurricular activities. The schedule was set up to only have one game per week at and against the three teams: Wahconah, Northampton, and Monson.

The two coaches, Ms. VonHoltz and Ms. DuCharme, created a fun, welcoming environment for the athletes, according to senior Clare Sheedy. Coach VonHoltz stated that she was "inspired to start a unified team after hearing about it at an MIAA [Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association] meeting two years ago." Unsure about the amount of students who would join, VonHoltz wanted the first unified team to be basketball because it would require fewer numbers. When asking some of the players about their first experience on a unified team, all were quick to respond with how much fun it is: "So far, the team has had a great time and it's honestly so much fun," says Sheedy. "I love seeing how supportive Wahconah is of unified sports, and I really hope Greylock becomes just as supportive." Feeling sad that she only is only able to play for one year, Sheedy encourages others to become involved with this amazing program because it has given her the opportunity to meet and become friends with new people.

Over the course of five weeks, the Unified Basketball team played three games against Wahconah, as well as a game against Monson and a game against Northampton. The team will play its final jamboree today at 3:30 at Chicopee Comp High School. ■

Midterm Elections: What You Need to Know

By MADDY ART and CHARLIE MCWEENY

National: Democrats Take House, Voter Turnout Reaches Record Levels

Come January 3, when the 116th Congress convenes, the House of Representatives will look more like America than it ever has before. In the November 6 midterm elections, a record number of women and minorities ran for office and, in many cases, won. Around 100 women were elected to the House of Representatives; falling far short of equal representation, but breaking the previous record of 85. Tennessee and Arizona elected their first female senators and South Dakota elected its first female governor. Other firsts included the two Native American women elected to Congress, Sharice Davids and Deb Haaland, the two Muslim women elected to Congress, Rashida Tlaib and Ilhan Omar, and the first openly gay man elected governor, Jared Polis.

A large portion of these female and minority candidates are Democrats, helping the party to win a majority in the House of Representatives. Since the 2014 midterm elections, Republicans have held majorities in both the United States Congress and House of Representatives, allowing them to push through conservative legislation and halt liberal legislation. Now, Democrats will be able to stop Republican attempts to decrease access to affordable healthcare and tighten immigration laws. Democrats will also have leadership in the committees of the House of Representatives, including the Ways and Means Committee, which local representative Richard Neal will chair. Democrats will also have control of the House Intelligence Committee, giving them the ability to reopen an investigation into Russia's interference in the 2016 election along with possible obstruction of justice by President Trump. Midterm elections are generally regarded as a referendum on the current administration. In 2010, when Republicans gained control of the House under the Obama administration, it was viewed as an indication that the country was unsatisfied with his leadership. This election in particular was seen as a referendum on not just Trump, but "Trumpism,"

the phenomenon of primarily Republican candidates using lies, racism, and whatever necessary to win. The newly Democratic House indicates that Americans are rejecting the harsh, harmful rhetoric coming from the Trump administration.

Republicans increased their majority in the Senate, gaining two seats to hold a 53-47 majority. Republican Senator Ted Cruz edged out up-and-coming Democrat Beto O'Rourke to keep Texas solidly Republican-represented. In another closely-watched race, Republican Josh Hawley beat Democratic incumbent Claire McCaskill to become a senator of Missouri. Similarly, in North Dakota, incumbent Democrat Heidi Heitkamp lost to Republican Kevin Cramer.

Voter suppression loomed large in this election, most notably in Georgia, where Secretary of State Brian Kemp ran against Stacey Abrams for governorship. Secretaries of State are responsible for running the elections, so, if they are a major candidate for office, they usually recuse themselves to ensure equity in the election. Kemp, though, did not recuse himself and even purged voters from the voter rolls and suspended voter registration applications. These actions targeted African-Americans, which is significant because Abrams would be the first female African-American governor in the country. As of the evening of November 7, Kemp is leading the race. Abrams has not yet conceded and has announced that she will not until all absentee ballots are counted, saying that a "chance for a stronger Georgia is just within reach." If neither candidate has over fifty-percent of the vote when those ballots are counted, a runoff will begin on December 4.

Despite voter suppression and rain across the country, voter turnout was unusually high for a midterm election, especially among young people. This was the first midterm election in which over one million people voted, with forty-nine percent of eligible voters voting, according to CBS News. Ballot initiatives to make voting easier passed across the country, including an extension of voting rights to ex-felons in Florida, same day voter-regis-

tration in Maryland and Michigan, and automatic voter-registration in Michigan and Nevada. With heightened voting now and likely in the future, members of Congress will better represent the needs and priorities of Americans.

State Election: Massachusetts Remains a Democratic State

Massachusetts voters turned out in large numbers across the state on Tuesday, voting on a number of ballot measures, a representative to the United States Senate, and the state Governorship. Unlike much of the rest of the nation, where some races stood undecided nearly 24 hours after polls closed, practically all Massachusetts statewide elections went decisively for the favorite. Pouring rain did not stop voters, with voter turnout expected to be well above 2014 midterm levels, and possibly approaching the levels of 2016's presidential election in some parts of the state.

In the race for US senate, incumbent senator Elizabeth Warren faced republican Geoff Diehl and independent Shiva Ayyadurai. Warren, one of the harshest critics of President Trump, is known for her fiercely liberal politics and her support of women's rights. She recently voted against the confirmation of Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh, and is said to be speculating a run for president in 2020. Warren was handily elected to her second term in the senate, capturing 60.3% of the popular vote to Diehl's 36.3%, while Independent Ayyadurai claimed 3.4%. She garnered 84% of the vote in Williamstown, 63% in Lanesborough, and 55% in Hancock. In her acceptance speech Warren criticized President Trump, saying he practices "the dark art of ruling by fear," but offered no specifics on a speculated 2020 presidential run. Warren has promised stricter gun control measures, healthcare for all, and to end forced separation of immigrants.

Despite all other statewide positions going to Democrats, Republican governor Charlie Baker was re-elected to his second term. He faced little opposition from Dem

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pher, so he takes tons and tons of pictures of birds.

E: So, the Berkshires now. Where's your favorite place to watch birds?
V: Let's see, my favorite place... well, the great thing about birdwatching is that you can do it anywhere, like I could just birdwatch in my backyard if I wanted to. But Mountain Meadow is a pretty great place. It's this trail not far from my house, and it's great because there's a different variety in habitats, and lots of edge habitats. Because that's where you see lots of the birds - they like to live on the forest edge. Mountain Meadow provides a lot of that.

E: What's your favorite memory or experience that you've had with birdwatching?

V: Well, I remember when I was little in California, there was this little California Clapper Rail, and it used to live under this pier. And a lot of days we would go out and see it, and it would go out in the mud and peck around, and it was sort of like our friend. The California Clapper Rail is a really rare bird. It was nice to be able to see it so much and get to understand its behavior.

E: Now that you're in high school, how much time are you able to spend birdwatching during the year?

V: Every day I go on a walk. Well, not every day, because some days I have so much homework that it's dark before I can go out. But most days I try to go on a walk in the woods, and I get to see all sorts of birds, like woodpeckers and chickadees.

E: What's your favorite bird?

V: Well, one bird that I really like is the Gold Crowned Kinglet. It's this really little bird. They're sort of yellowish in color and they have this gold patch on their head and they're really cute - they hop around and they flutter. They live in these big flocks of all of these mixed species of birds. And they're so nice to watch. They're so energetic.

E: So, you went to Iceland this summer. And did a lot of birdwatching, I assume. Can you talk a little about that experience?

V: Well, that was a totally different landscape of birds. Most of the birds I had never seen before! It was great to see Skuas, because I've been reading about them my whole life, and I finally got to see them. And I got to see their behavior - they're kleptoparasites, so that means they get a lot of their food by stealing from other birds. They swoop down to them and make them drop their food and then they eat it. So that was really nice to see. And all sorts of gulls, Kittiwakes... it was a really amazing experience. Even the land birds were totally different, like wagtails.

E: Now, jumping to a very different question - what kind of impact has birdwatching had on your life so far?

Well, it's gotten me really into environmental science. Like, it's sort of led me more down the science path, because another of my interests is history, but birdwatching definitely pulled me more in the science direction.

E: Does your interest in history ever intersect with your interest in birds?

V: I guess it does in some ways, more like with domesticated birds, and also some aspects of religion have to do with birds, so I guess there are some overlaps, but for the most part they've been two separate things.

E: Sometimes we end these interviews with asking you what your spirit animal is. However, in this case it seemed more appropriate to ask you what your spirit bird was...

V: My spirit bird, let's see... well, maybe the brown creeper. It's more of a shy, retiring forest bird that you don't see much, and, well, I guess I'm a little more shy and retiring. ■

Sizeable Science Rooms Enhance Learning

By LAURA DUPUIS

When designing the new building for Mount Greylock, the science lab layouts were a major factor. To enhance students' learning experiences, it was decided that a bigger classroom with more space and learning potential was the way to go.

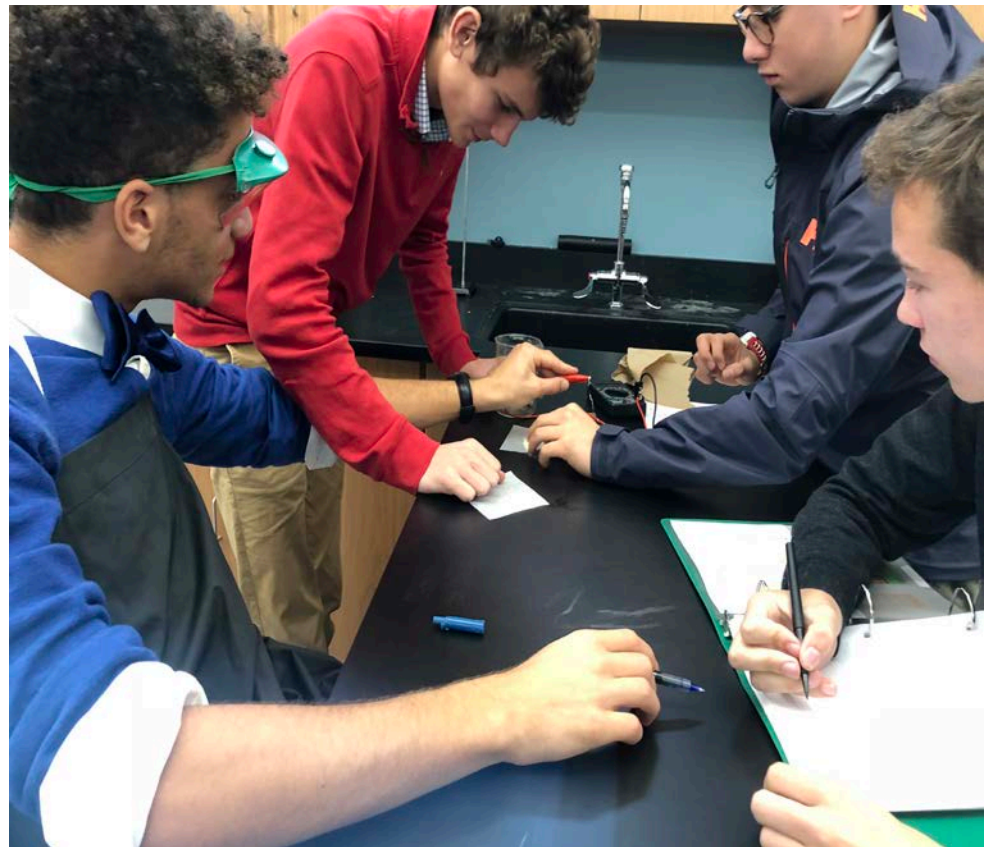
The science labs in the old building were small and did not have adequate power supply. To make the labs as educationally beneficial for students as possible, the science classrooms are now much bigger and contain substantially more storage space. "There is more storage room, many more sinks, more outlets, and outlets in the middle of the room," explains science teacher Shawn Burdick. These features allow students to do different labs and to have adequate room to do so. With outlets around the room, students can use scientific tools, such as microscopes, for labs without having to worry about where to plug them in. Also, if students need to use these tools at their tables, they can do so as there are now plenty of ceiling outlets as well.

With new labs comes new equipment. In the old building, there were restrictions for labs based on the fact that there simply were not enough outlets and working sinks. Now, every outlet and sink is now fully functional. As Daniel Louis, a Mount Greylock science teacher, said, "the fact that everything works is probably the best part about the new labs." This gives students the opportunity to get the most out of their class experiences.

In addition to having enough space for labs, the larger classrooms also provide a better learning environment. Teachers have the flexibility to move around the tables accordingly, as they are now on wheels, to make the lesson most suited for students. Also, having a bigger space allows for students to be able to complete different activities at the same time. Louis explains "There's room to have labs set up and to teach as well." This lets students get the most out of the lesson. To add, students also have more flexibility in regards to group work. With such big classrooms, students can sit together and collectively work on labs, projects, and assignments without bumping into one another.

Another great advantage to the sizable classrooms would be the fact that there is plenty of room for different clubs and other extracurricular activities. For example, the robotics club meets in Louis' room and before the new building, there was never enough room to be able to spread out. This made it difficult to properly plan and execute the building of a robot. Now, with a much bigger and more resourceful classroom, students in the robotics club have the space and the means to design and build.

On the other hand, having such big class-



Four sophomores enjoy the new lab spaces in a chemistry room (Photo courtesy of Charlie McWeeny).

rooms have disadvantages. During lectures and lessons based on the whiteboard, students sitting at the tables in the back of the room often have trouble properly viewing the board, due to its large distance between the front and back of these classrooms. However, pros seem to outweigh the cons, and the extensive capacity of the new science rooms have mostly been educationally beneficial.

In addition to classroom size and equipment, there are several other new and improved features within the current science rooms. Smart projectors serve as an excellent example. "Although I haven't used the smart projectors much yet, they're great to have and I look forward to using them more," states Burdick. The new smart projector technology allows teachers to project images and important documents onto the board much more easily than before, providing many opportunities for teachers. Furthermore, all of the tables are on wheels, allowing teachers and students to move them according to what the day's lesson requires. This allows the learning environment to be much more flexible and purpose-driven.

In the old school building, the middle school science classrooms did not have nearly enough outlets and when teachers tried to use all the outlets at once, the cir-

cuit would be overloaded, knocking out the power to the west hallway. Now, the middle and high school classrooms are designed the same way, allowing middle schoolers to partake in in-class labs using microscopes and other tools without worrying about overloading the circuit. This allows the middle school students the same education opportunities as high schoolers.

Another middle-high school discrepancy present in the old school building was the amount of sinks available. Before the new building, the middle school science classrooms did not contain enough working sinks. At the most, there was one semi functioning sink. This greatly restricted the in-class labs, projects, and assignments that the middle school could engage in. Now, with the new science labs, all students have same the opportunity to get the most out of their lessons and experiments.

With an abundance of outlets, working sinks, tables with wheels, and lots of extra counter space, students can partake in group activities, do labs, projects, and assignments without having to worry about the restrictions that come with not having adequate equipment. The new and adequately designed science labs make it possible for students to get the most out of their time in the classroom and to reach their full learning potential. ■

Bathroom Signage

Continued from Page 1.

told they were mainly for teacher use but students could use them if circumstances made it necessary. Think from the perspective of a closeted trans student or a student that is simply uncomfortable using gang bathrooms. This student should not have to be singled out from other students in order to make themselves feel comfortable."

This sentiment is not only felt among upperclassmen, but younger students as well; sophomore Priya D'Souza says that "administration claims it is a step towards progress when it's literally three steps back... the way administration worded it was clear, too: If you are a girl, you HAVE to use the toilets bathroom; if you are a boy, you HAVE to use the urinals/toilets bathroom. It's no longer the student's prerogative to choose how they identify anymore. If transgender/genderqueer students weren't comfortable using the bathroom of their assigned sex, they have no choice but to use a gang bathroom, or ask the school for 'special permission' to use a gender neutral teacher's bathroom - therefore immediately outing themselves to their peers. How is that fair?"

With so much controversy surround-

ing the choice around new signage, it is difficult to imagine an easy solution, especially considering the fact that the administration has already told all of the students the intent of the labeling. However, a few solutions have been offered by students; Hotaling says that "to make it come across better, the single biggest thing admin can do would be to announce publicly that the all-gender restrooms are for anyone who wants to use them and normalize students using those so that trans students could use them without feeling uncomfortable/singled out." Hotaling further notes that "beyond that, I personally would advocate for changing the way the bathrooms are talked about, so rather than saying things like 'toilets for girls, urinals for boys,' because that's not progressive, talk about the bathrooms in a gender-neutral way, just like the signs are." Similar to this, D'Souza says that the best solution is to "just make gender neutral bathrooms - it's obvious there's enough space for them, considering how many teacher bathrooms there are."

According to principal Mary MacDonald, "people have given pushback, to say, 'why can't we just have open bathrooms?' And it's like, no - this is a school. We are looking to have an opportunity for priva-

cy and division." MacDonald explains that the purpose driven bathrooms were a way "to achieve that separation without actually attributing gender to it." However, upset students have expressed that the way that bathroom separation was explained to them in September makes it seem like now bathrooms are segregated by biological sex as opposed to gender identity, which may be a step backwards.

Another way to diffuse the issue could be to explain the purpose of the new signs better. As Jones puts it, "With the purpose-driven bathrooms, trans and nonbinary students could use whatever bathroom they felt comfortable using as they were not labeled as male or female. I think moving forward the G.S.A. and I would like to see it explained less as 'girls are expected to use the toilets bathroom and boys are expected to use the toilets and urinals' and more of the idea that you are expected to use the bathroom that you feel comfortable using. We understand that it is a high school and middle school and that this new system may be taken advantage of, but we believe that the students will use it respectfully and trans and nonbinary students will feel more comfortable if the bathrooms are explained differently." ■

Global Citizenship, the World, and History Curricula

By OWEN TUCKER-SMITH

This past summer, students, teachers, and parents made an abundance of attacks toward the College Board. Perhaps the most significant of these attacks did not concern the highly controversial SAT or the “not-for-profit” company’s business model as they usually do, but the Advanced Placement World History Curriculum. In June, the College Board announced that the scope of this curriculum, which previously covered over ten thousand years of history, would start in 1450 for the 2019-2020 school year.

Teachers were not happy. Throughout the month, they protested against the elimination of what they saw as countless events crucial to a full understanding of world history. At a public forum in Utah, several of these teachers were given the opportunity to express their concerns regarding the curriculum to Trevor Packer, director of the AP program. One protester was Amanda DoAmaral, who had previously taught history but was unable to continue as a result of a lack of pay. DoAmaral told Packer that providing a full scope of World History would “[show] our black and brown and our Native students that their histories matter, their histories don’t start at slavery. Their histories don’t start at colonization. You’re just another person of authority telling my students that they don’t matter, and you need to take responsibility for that.” Starting at the rise of the major European powers in the fifteenth century, claimed DoAmaral, would put the West at the center of history instruction.

In response to these protests, College Board pushed the start date of the curriculum back to 1200 - an extra 250 years for students to understand the development of non-Western cultures. Many teachers were grateful, but many were unimpressed. Valerie Strauss of the Washington Post pointed out after the amendment that many of the crucial events that protesters were angry about losing would still be missed or brushed over. There were a few important events referenced by a Change.org petition against the initial change, which included creation of the first civilizations and development of classical empires. Even starting at 1200, these phenomena would not be covered sufficiently.

It is against this backdrop of curriculum-based controversy in conjunction with modern-day political and social divides that a look at Mt. Greylock’s history curriculum is fascinating and necessary. As teachers across the nation protest - rightfully - against the changes in the AP World History curriculum, students at Mt. Greylock are not able to take the course at all.

The current school year is Mt. Greylock’s second year in a new curriculum - one that does not focus on survey-based world history instruction but instead semester-long thematic courses, including “Migration and Movement” and “Subject to Citizen,” that zoom in on specific historical trends and their significance. History teacher Andrew Gibson said that the department and administration decided to make the change largely because “more intense learning will happen when you dig deep into a specific area.” However, Gibson personally advocated for survey-based instruction when the curriculum was being debated, as “if you have students who are completely ignorant of huge swaths of world history, you have to start somewhere. What I liked about the survey is that it laid down a basic foundation (or muddsill, if you like) for students to continue to learn about these countries, peoples and stories”

Many students, however, will not ever take one of these thematic courses that dive into specific themes in world history. At the end of the day, both survey-based world history instruction and the thematic courses that are currently offered provide students with more world history than no world history. As history teacher Thomas Ostheimer points out, a large demographic of students go down the AP route. This entails taking the required freshman American History II course (or “America in the World”), followed by AP European History in sophomore year, AP US History in junior year, and often Ostheimer’s AP Psychology course in senior year. Psychology has evolved into a substitute for history among seniors and some juniors, according to Ostheimer, as evident in the two large sections of AP Psychology in addition to one of Honors Psychology.

Mt. Greylock is the home of many extremely motivated students who would like to pursue every AP class that they can. Taking these three AP courses allows them to do this and gain the half of a point GPA boost that comes with AP. One thing remains missing from this sequence: world history.

Jeffery Welch, another history teacher at Greylock, told the Echo that “The AP offerings predate my tenure here, however World History is a relatively new offering from the AP; one which, with the current schedule and course offerings, we haven’t seriously debated offering.”

Nevertheless, many students argue that an AP World History course would be a welcome addition to the Greylock history curriculum. “I think that AP World should be offered, because why do other schools

have it and we don’t?” asked senior Grace Miller. Fellow senior Katrina Hotaling agreed, stating that “If we’re going to offer Euro and APUSH then we should definitely offer World too.”

Some students complained about the Western focus of the “AP Track.” Referencing the Euro-APUSH-Psychology sequence that many high schoolers elect to take, one student said that “none of [the curriculum] widens your worldview to other countries that you aren’t necessarily familiar with.” Some students who are on this “AP Track” will go through a few years of vigorous study of history but they will not be exposed to crucial information. “I don’t know if I can even form an opinion because I know so little about what I’m missing out on,” junior Charlotte Rauscher pointed out. “I’ve enjoyed the history classes that I’ve taken here, but is there more? Probably. Should I know more? Probably? Do I know enough? Probably not.”

If a student takes AP US history and they attend middle school at Greylock, they will have taken three years of United States history by the time they graduate. “While [US history] might help cultivate good national citizens, it doesn’t help to create good global citizens necessarily,” said junior Jimmy Brannan. According to Brannan, being a global citizen is important because “it’s one planet - we all share it. If we can’t get along, then we’re all screwed.” Junior Nicole Overbaugh suggested an integration of other countries’ histories into Western-focused classes like AP European History and AP US history, claiming that it “would be beneficial to all of us, as we would gain a broader understanding of the world.”

The need for world history is not only backed up by student calls for it but by teachers that have seen the benefits of it. Michael Sheehan, the AP World History teacher at Pittsfield High School, explained that at the time of course selection, “[members of the history department] were drawn to AP World’s appeal of having a curriculum that was truly global in scope that provides an equal amount of content from all world regions. No more of Africa and Asia getting only the sad colonial story of the 19th and 20th centuries. We felt this was truly an important course to help make PHS students good global citizens.”

This last idea - the development of global citizens - is an interesting one. Many Greylock students, when asked, recognized the importance of being a global citizen, which was defined by Bianca Mariel of Voices of Youth as “an idea or person that inherit a sense of belonging to a community of hu-

man beings, regardless of specific identities.” However, senior Josh Cheung argued that global citizenship shouldn’t be the first priority. “The first objective of any country and its education department is to educate that person to be successful citizens in that country first, and then from there you can branch off to the world,” claimed Cheung. “I think it’s important for Americans to understand American history and American politics first.” According to Cheung, what does need more emphasis is civics and politics, as “many people in this country aren’t educated... in how our government actually works, how they need to vote, and how a citizen should vote in a democracy.”

Additionally, the Greylock history curriculum might help students become global citizens in other ways. Welch explained that “I always seek to incorporate contemporary and local examples, to demonstrate that history happened here and that history often reverberates throughout the global community.” This example supports the argument that connections to world history may be able to be made in any class. However, students like Overbaugh would want this integration of other countries’ histories and cultures to be a much larger part of the curriculum.

Considering that the lack of world history arises primarily on the AP Track, dependence on AP courses could also be a root of the problem. Senior Josie Dalsin said that “I don’t really like the focus on the AP History classes. I really think it’s important that everyone can be exposed to different kinds of history without having to be afraid of the AP exam at the end of the year.” According to Dalsin, less focus on AP’s could welcome students to take classes regarding “how to be a global citizen,” as opposed to just the AP courses.

Elyse Wallash of the West Valley College Global Citizenship Center said in 2014 that “global citizenship is having and acting on an additional feeling of connectedness that encourages people to think globally, and allows them to diversify and expand their communities.” Whether or not this sentiment is important or not is a matter of opinion. However, what is clear is that many Mt. Greylock students do not feel that they have been given this sense of connectedness by the classes that they take. Whether it is a problem having to do with the AP culture or with the course offerings, world history is not an integral part of a large portion of students’ educations. How this hole contributes to students’ places in a twenty-first century global society is, at the very least, something to be considered. ■

Alumnus Spotlight: Eli Ostheimer

By MADDY ART

Eli Ostheimer, Mount Greylock class of 2018 and University of Vermont class of 2022, writes and records music under the name 30. He has music out on SoundCloud, iTunes, Pandora, Amazon, and over 25 additional music platforms. The Echo reached out to hear about Eli’s music experience.

Echo: When did you become interested in music, and when did you start writing and recording your music?

Eli Ostheimer: I’ve been interested in music my whole life. I remember writing poems when I was like five years old. As I got a little older and started listening to Hip-Hop, I began writing raps instead of poems. I bought my first mic setup when I was 15, and I’ve basically recorded everyday since.

Echo: What inspired you to release music? Does anything in particular inspire each song?

EO: At first, I was so nervous to release my music to the public. I showed my parents, and they strongly encouraged me to post it and promote it on Facebook. I’m super grateful they pushed me to put myself out there, cause I may not have ever gained the confidence by myself.

Echo: Is it difficult to balance college work and life with your music?

EO: Yes, it’s very difficult. I have two

roommates, so it’s challenging to find periods of time where I can record without interruption. In terms of the work, students have to be pretty disciplined in using their free time to study... 99 percent of my free time I spend working on music, but I’m getting by.

Echo: Which song or project are you proudest of?

EO: I am most proud of “The Yellow Heart Project.” It is my first true body of work. I feel like it’s really cohesive, and people seem to appreciate that. A lot of people have messaged me saying that it’s helped them through some stuff, so that’s incredibly rewarding.

Echo: When you reflect on your music career, are there any milestones that stand out as feeling like you “made it?”

EO: It’s pretty cool to look at my stats on SoundCloud and see the top cities and countries that my music is popular in. This week I got like 500 streams in Phoenix, AZ... or like 400 streams in Germany. It’s

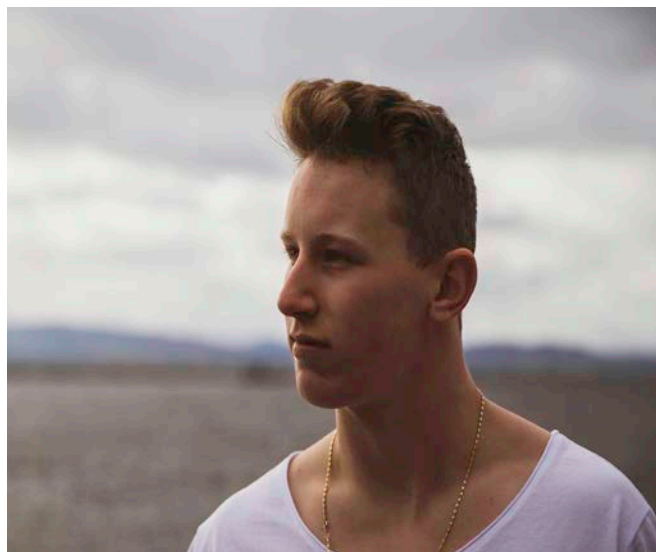


Photo Courtesy of Eli Ostheimer.

just crazy to think this all started in my basement. I definitely haven’t ever felt like “I made it” though. That’s soon to come.

Echo: What can we expect from you in the future?

EO: For the future, you can expect much more new music. We’re actually working on some music videos right now too. I’m really excited about that. Also, in the next year or two I hope to go on tour. ■

Williams Courses

Continued from page 1.

theorists including Marx, Weber, Giddens, and Bourdieu. While learning about the roles of class in culture and how that fosters an individual, McComish has felt “welcomed and treated like an equal by the other intellectually engaged students in the class.” She mentions that although the class requires a lot more reading than she’s been used to, she highly encourages Greylock students to take a class in the Humanities at Williams because it has opened her mind to different subjects and has let her create new connections with the students and professor. Like McComish, senior Jacob Fink has enjoyed his class at Williams class thus far. After taking AP Psychology with Mr. Ostheimer last year, Fink found great interest in the subject and wanted continue with it further at Williams this year. He is taking a class that focuses on the cognitive processes, which studies the way we think and memory as a whole. Fink explains that the course is lecture based, and that he is “loving the class so far and learning a lot.”

Both Fink and McComish, along with the other students taking Williams’ classes, all encourage others to take a Williams course if possible because it is an opportunity that not many high school students are able to experience. ■

OPINION

On the Toxicity of Dodgeball

By MADDY ART

A few weeks ago, my gym class played dodgeball. Usually, the game is offered as one of several options for a "Fun Friday," but, on this particular day, we only had use of one section of the gym, so we were all bound to the same activity. After splitting into two teams, we began. Those who are drawn to this type of activity rushed to the center to whip balls at their opponents with the sole purpose of hitting them, while the less aggressive clung to the back of their side, hoping to make it through the game without being completely humiliated. I was in the latter group.

The precursor to dodgeball as we know it was played with rocks, with the goal of knocking players on the other team to the ground in a simulation of battle. When, in the early twentieth century, the game was brought to America and popularized through intercollegiate games, the standardized rules that we are familiar with today were drawn up. At this point, the game was played with leather balls -- less harmful than rocks, but more so than the soft balls that we play with today. Now, dodgeball has become an integral part of high school culture as a staple gym class game.

The prevalence of a game rooted in violence, even if it is no longer played with rocks, perpetuates the idea that, if you are more able to hit and hurt someone, you are superior. The skills necessary for dodge-

ball are good aim, a strong arm, and a tendency to lean toward the fight, rather than flight, instinct. For those of us for whom it is stressful to have balls flying at you, thrown by people with a better arm than you with the intent to hit you, dodgeball is frustrating and even humiliating.

It is bizarre to be subject to this stress -- gym class should be an outlet away from school anxieties, with the dual purpose of having fun and increasing physical activity. While, for the latter purpose, the ability to throw well is a skill that should be developed in gym, it could be done so more productively in a game like baseball, with a purpose beyond assailing the other team and a more relaxing atmosphere.

Dodgeball is also physically dangerous! When the sole purpose of a game is hitting someone with a ball, people whip the ball really hard. Again, although it's not as harmful as it would be with rocks, injuries still occur. Recently, a local pediatrician told me that she saw a patient with a concussion from playing dodgeball. The reason that my gym class was confined to one gym, forcing us all to play dodgeball, is that, in the class before ours, a student got a nosebleed from... you guessed it, dodgeball. Even if intentional "headshots" are not allowed, the nature of the game ensures that players inevitably get hit on the head.

It is true that I am not a huge fan of gym class in general. As a ballet dancer, I'm certainly athletic, but the coordination and dynamics of team sports is not where I shine. In my opinion of dodgeball, however, I am not alone: the National Association for Sport and Physical Education agrees that "being targeted because they are the 'weaker' players, and being hit by a hard-thrown ball, does not help kids to develop confidence - certainly not the student who gets hit hard in the stomach, head, or groin. And it is not appropriate to teach our children that you win by hurting others." Chairman of the physical education department at Eastern Connecticut University, Neil Williams, expressed concerns about physical education teachers potentially facing legal pushback, calling the game "litigation waiting to happen."

Granted, dodgeball is not a dreaded experience for everyone. Perhaps, for those who do get a thrill from the game, it's a relatively unharmed outlet for anger that potentially satisfies the instinct to fight instead of suppressing it. It is hard to determine, however, whether providing this outlet is productive or ultimately fosters and encourages hurting your opponents. What is undeniably unproductive, though, is forcing students who are prone to flight and have no interest in being human targets to play. ■

On Division and Hate

By SAVILLE KEYES

As I write this, three hate crimes have taken place in seventy-two hours in our country - a country with changing values, increased violence, and a greater lack of respect for people with varied beliefs and lifestyles ever since a certain President was elected. These crimes consist of a 56-year-old man named Cesar Sayoc from Florida who sent out a total of fourteen pipe bombs in the mail this past week to prominent Democrats, none of which detonated, but all of which were intended to do harm. As it turns out, this man had numerous stickers with pro-trump, anti-CNN, and anti-liberal messages plastered all over his van. Next, a white man named Gregory Bush, who, after a failed attempt to break into the predominantly black First Baptist Church in Kentucky, shot two black men in a grocery store for no apparent reason, other than the evident racism. The final disturbing event of the week (it's extremely sad that it's come to 'of the week') occurred this past Saturday, the 28th, when a man shouting anti-Semitic slurs entered the Tree Of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh and opened fire, killing eleven and injuring six.

When will it end? Where is our national integrity? Enough is enough. While it is always unacceptable, the amount of hate in this day and age has become overwhelming and it's time we join forces to put an end to this once and for all. We need people to start embracing and appreciating diversity. If we stand together despite our differences - whether they be political, religious, or social - and treat each other with kindness and respect, we can rectify some of the damage that has been done. We the people, with these ideals, will be the ones that make America great again - not those full of antipathy, superiority, and useless propaganda. According to a Boston Herald article published on October 28th, a recent report by the Anti-Defamation League states that "incidents of antisemitism have climbed a staggering 57 percent in the past year." Furthermore, the ADL says that the synagogue shooting "could be the deadliest attack on the Jewish community in the history of the United States." The incessant bigotry of our President alone directly trickles down to his supporters, furthering the notion that it's okay to treat people this way. If he needs a note card in order to comfort the victims of a hate crime such as the Parkland shooting, how do people expect him to lead us down the right path? If our leader is making fun of our veterans, our law enforcement agencies, victims of hurricanes and crimes alike, reporters, scientists, regular every-day citizens... (the list goes on and on) how can there be anything but division? People mimic what they see, especially when it's coming from the highest positions of our government.

Listening to other people and letting them express their opinions as well as their rights to peaceful demonstration in a respectful manner is crucial. How we treat others in day-to-day life matters whether it be through personal interaction or on social media is crucial. Our leaders should be courageous enough to stand up and do what is right - because I shouldn't have to write about this type of hate in this decade. If you're angry: listen, speak, be kind, and vote. Voter turnout two weeks ago was higher than it has every been. Be a part of what The Atlantic has called a "youth wave," because hate and division are unacceptable. ■

You Need to Get Your Flu Shot - Now

By CLARA MCWEENY

During the week of October 6th, a pediatric flu death in a child who was not yet vaccinated was reported in Florida. Flu season is officially upon us, and now more than ever is it important to get your flu shot. Already flu-related deaths have been reported, some as early as the first week of October. Getting a flu shot is quick, easy and fairly painless, considering what the alternative could entail. Stop by your doctor, local Stop & Shop, or school today to get what could be a life-saving vaccine.

A flu shot will cause antibodies to develop in the body about two weeks after the original vaccination, according to the Center for Disease Control. These antibodies will then fight off the incoming infection with viruses already in the vaccine. The flu vaccine changes year to year according to research done on what virus will be most common that season. The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recommends a flu shot for everyone six months and older, ideally by the end of October. But, if not gotten by the end of October, it is still crucial to get the shot, even as late as January. This will help prevent any other viruses. Your body will not immediately respond to the vaccine, as it takes two weeks for the antibodies to develop. Getting a vaccine before flu season is in full swing allows those antibodies to develop, and then be ready to fight off the influenza

virus.

The benefits of getting this seemingly basis vaccines are countless, from maintaining your own well being to helping others stay healthy. The CDC states that "during 2016-2017, flu vaccination prevented an estimated 5.3 million influenza illnesses, 2.6 million influenza-associated medical visits, and 85,000 influenza-associated hospitalizations." This statistic alone proves just how valuable getting this vaccine is. One trip to the doctor, or even supermarket, can prevent many more visits to the doctors. The flu vaccine saves time and lives! While a flu shot is obviously most beneficial for your own health, it also protects the people around you. You are most contagious in the first 3 to 4 days of infection, a time when symptoms may not have presented themselves yet. This can lead to the virus being spread throughout an office, school, or workplace. Individuals getting a flu shot dramatically affects the healthiness of whole communities.

Despite these shocking statistics, many people still abstain from getting their flu shots. Some believe that they or their children are otherwise perfectly healthy, and therefore don't need a flu shot. While certain children are at more of a risk to get the influenza virus, it threatens every child without proper immunization. Another reason why people may avoid getting a

flu shot is because lack of education and myths around the effects of the vaccine. A common myth that circles around flu shots is that they actually lead to the flu. Flu vaccines are either made with inactivated viruses or single gene flu viruses that produce an immune reaction without causing an infection. So, while flu vaccines to enter a tiny bit of the flu virus into your body, it does not actually cause the flu, as the virus is too small to actually cause an infection. Instead, it just prepares your body to fight off the incoming actual virus. More in depth education around flu shots will aid communities in rallying around the importance of everyone getting the vaccine.

Please, for the sake of your own wellbeing and the wellbeing of others, stop by and get a flu shot. The Stop & Shop in North Adams offers flu shots with no co pay under health insurance for everyone over the age of nine. Mt Greylock even offered a flu shot clinic for teachers. Your own doctor would be more than happy to administer the shot. A less than thirty second procedure can drastically lower your own chances of hospitalization this flu season, as well as prevent any missed time from work or school. It will not only protect you, but others around you. Flu season is here, and we must all take the necessary steps to preserve our own health and our peers. ■

Twin Advice: Twice as Nice

By CHARLIE and CLARA MCWEENY

Dear twins,

I am a sixth grader coming to Greylock next year. I've always enjoyed playing youth soccer, but have stated to run a little bit on my own. I am torn between which sport to do next year: join the cross country running team or play soccer. I need your advice!

From,
Undecided Ursula

Thanks for the great question, Ursula. Having been in your position myself, I totally get how you feel. Seventh and eighth grade is a great time to figure out what you want your high school career to look like, and for you it sounds like you want sports to be a part of this. You probably won't be able to play soccer in seventh grade anyways, so why not give cross-country a shot? Despite being considered by most non-runners an individual sport, the Greylock cross-country team is about just

that - team. There's a great sense of camaradery among the runners, and everybody there is more than willing to help a new runner out. As opposed to soccer, where your happiness rests mostly on your team's results, Cross-country is not only about your team but also your individual performance. Regardless of how your teammates performed, if you gave your all in a cross country race you can walk away satisfied. Everyone contributes to the team in some way, and that's what makes the sport so great. It's this sense of support that makes the team so good, as evidenced by the boy's eight straight western mass titles and the girl's state title last year. Sure, running is fun, but winning is even more. This is something the cross country team can provide you that soccer clearly can't. Remind me, when was the last any of the soccer teams won a western mass title? Besides all the glory running on the cross-country team will bring you, running has also been shown to have significant, beneficial,

health impacts. Numerous studies have shown that running increases happiness, and in some cases can even cure depression. A 2006 study by Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise showed that even just 30 minutes of running could significantly increase the mood of someone suffering from major depressive order. Running has also been correlated to increased life expectancy, with runners living an average of three years longer than their non-running counterparts. A University of Arizona Study also showed that running forms brain connections required for higher level thinking, making runners smarter. Don't believe me, or this University Of Arizona study that I could've totally made up but didn't? Think about all the great men and women who were also runners; Nelson Mandela was known to run 45 minutes everyday, even while imprisoned on Robben Island, and Bernie Sanders took third

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OPINION

Opinion pieces represent the views of individual writers, not the publication as a whole.

Please send all letters to the editor with your name and grade to mountgreylockecho@gmail.com. Letters may be condensed and/or edited for space reasons. The Echo will not publish anonymous letters.

The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society

By SOPHIE JONES

This summer I watched a movie that I feel has slipped under the radar - and it doesn't deserve to. With blockbusters like *Mamma Mia 2* hitting theaters, a period piece released as a Netflix movie didn't have all that much of a chance.

However, Lily James, star of *Mamma Mia 2*, starred in this movie as well. *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society*, based off a novel by Mary Ann Shaffer and Annie Barrows, is a movie set in post World War II England. With a title that pretentious, you would think the movie would have an equal level of over-the-top quirks and annoyingly odd characters. It kind of does - but it also kind of pulls it off.

Lily James is a young author, Juliet Ashton, who finds herself wanting to interview the Society for her new project, and on her journey she finds less of a possible story and more a group that becomes family to her. The love interest, played by Michiel Huisman, is a caring yet hidden man who slowly discloses his secrets to Juliet. The movie does not revolve around their relationship, however. It spends significant

time on developing the bonds between Juliet and the other members of the Society, as well as establishing all of their ties to the place in which they live. The movie does a great job of intertwining the story of the past with the repercussions of the present, something that can be tricky to do with so many main characters and relationships.

The movie is supposed to be cute. It is not supposed to be about World War II and its lasting effects; it simply uses this setting as the catalyst for an exploration of human interaction. It has a classic romantic comedy ending - I won't spoil it, but it's happy - and while there are some tragic elements, most of the characters do end up happy. You shouldn't watch this hoping for a meaningful introspective drama, but it is fun to watch when you need a good pick-me-up. The scenery, too, is beautiful, as the movie is set in an island off the coast of England.

While I think it is a tad shallow, I think anyone who likes Lily James (who doesn't?), period pieces, or romantic comedies should give this movie a chance. ■

Bohemian Rhapsody

By SOPHIE JONES

I've always loved Queen. They were the first band I actively chose to listen to after discovering them through a greatest hits CD tailor-made for our karaoke machine when I was eight years old. Ever since then I've listened to their music hundreds of times over. I even saw them in concert at the Hollywood Bowl during the summer of 2017, with Adam Lambert taking the place of Freddie Mercury and doing a magnificent job.

When I was younger, however, I could only appreciate their music. Now, I've come to see them for the legends they are, especially Freddie. I can appreciate his iconic looks and the fact that he was (and is) a hero for thousands of people in the LGBT+ community.

So you could guess that I was pretty excited for *Bohemian Rhapsody*, a Freddie Mercury biopic. I knew going into the theatre that it would probably not be the most

amazing thing I'd ever seen, but I was definitely anticipating something fun and exciting.

The movie was pretty good, but without these three things it would have been

awful: Freddie (Rami Malek), his outfits, and the way in which they showed his sexuality.

Rami Malek was unstoppable. He completely embodied Freddie's abilities as a performer, his quirks, his oddities, and his charm. He was Freddie - I lost myself in his character and forgot that it was an actor playing him, and not just Freddie himself. Malek's darting eye movements and whitty proclamations of "darling" only added to the experience. The prosthetic teeth he wore as an attempt to replicate Freddie's extra-large overbite were a little excessive, but in the end he looked almost exactly like him.

The outfits were also amazing, as they were taken from what Freddie wore during his performances. Every concert seemed

to have a Malek in a new and even more stunning skin-tight suit, leather jacket, or fur ensemble. Freddie's outfits have always been over-the-top, but they really captured his tendencies toward flamboyant and extravagant clothing. The best outfit replication occurs during the Live-Aid concert, with Malek appearing in the simple and yet instantly recognizable white tank top, blue jeans, and studded armband.

I don't know why I thought they would shy away from Freddie's sexuality, but they didn't - at all. I guess I'm used to television and cinema that whitewashes and queerbaits, so I was truly expecting the worst. What I received was the best. The movie centers around it, highlighting his struggle with being a bisexual man in a time where his fame would have been inhibited by his sexuality. The ending is both a culmination of his success and his self-acceptance, as he plays to Wembley stadium while his

boyfriend, Jim Hutton (Aaron McCusker), looks on.

The other aspects were, like I said before, ok. All of the other members of the band were

funny, but most of the time the dialogue was shallow. There were some cute scenes, such as when they were recording *Bohemian Rhapsody* for the first time, and some very moving scenes, like when Freddie tells the other members he has AIDS. The music did not stop the progression of the plot from flowing smoothly, but I wanted something more than just the most popular songs. Everything seemed like a set-up for the next big hit to play, and I would have liked to have seen a little bit more of the details. All in all, however, I thoroughly enjoyed it - even if the movie was complete trash, as long as Malek was there to play Freddie Mercury, I would have enjoyed it - just to see him reanimated as his wonderful, excessive, charming, and beautiful self. ■

"I'm used to television and cinema that whitewashes and queerbaits, so I was truly expecting the worst. What I received was the best."

Pearls of North Adams: Public and Bright Ideas

By GABE GERRY

This is going to be a double review. I know - pretty exciting. Both of the two restaurants are in the heart of North Adams, only a minute walk away from each other.

I'll start with Bright Ideas Brewing. It's in the outskirts of the massive Mass Moca compound, although it is not affiliated with the museum. Bright Ideas Brewing is its name officially since it is mainly known for its beer, but at the brewery there is a small pizza corner called Crisp. It seems to be done by Hot Tomatoes, but the pizza has its own, distinct taste. The inside of the brewery is beautiful, with a large bar which is about a third of the seating along with tables surrounding it. Since it is in the old mill, it has a great vibe that fits it perfectly with the industrial furnishings. If all the tables and bar are full then it can probably sit around 40. Only a minute away is the well known Public Eat and Drink which is similarly furnished but a bit more upscale. It does, however, always seem to be very dark inside, making it tough for some people to read the menus. It is not very large with one main open room with a bar and then a side room. In total it can sit about 50-60.

As I have said, Bright Ideas is known for the beer. Of course I have never tried it, but I have heard that it is quite good. For all of those under 21s or non-alcohol drinkers, Bright Ideas has the best root beer I have ever had. That may not seem like much, but at most restaurants I get root beer so I have had a lot and can say pretty clearly that this is the best. It has the classic root beer taste that I love that itself is fairly average. What sets it apart is the creaminess. It is even creamier than any cream soda I've had and the way it flows down your mouth is unlike any other soda. Although most people go for beer, there is a small pizza oven operated by Crisp, where there is only one person working but it doesn't seem to usually be busy enough for this to be an issue. You can choose whether you want a specialty pizza or just to make your own. Also, you can choose between a half and whole, but they are not very big so a hungry student could easily eat a whole. I got a half with pesto, fresh mozzarella, and chicken which was incredible - it had tons of taste and was one of the better pizzas I've had this year. A minor issue is that the pizza comes out of the oven super hot, so I would let it sit for a moment unless you enjoy burning your tongue. I have also in the

past gotten a half with caramelized onions, fresh mozzarella, and pepperoni, which was equally as good but equally as hot. In general, Bright Ideas has very good drinks and even better pizza and has a nice quiet location being in the same area of Mass Moca. It's perfect for families with parents who have had a long week.

Gabe's Rating: 7.4/10 \$\$\$

Public is a staple in my family, so this may be a biased review. This is one of if not my favorite restaurant in the area. It is not in the best location because the intersection to get to it is a huge hassle, but parking is manageable considering there is a lot right in the back. The entrance is fairly awkward since there is only one small entryway and then you're right in the restaurant. There is a small waiting area with a couch but it can only fit two or three. It is very busy especially on Fridays and Saturdays. It's best to arrive early if you choose to go on those days - probably around 5-5:30. The menu itself is not huge and is split up into smalls, mids, and bigs. Along with burgers and flatbreads. The smalls include salads and soups, both of which are great. Splitting the Public salad is absolutely recommended, and the warm bread and butter that is brought to the table is amazing. The mids have items like falafel and barbecue sandwiches, while the bigs consist of a huge Mac and cheese and things like steaks. The Mac and cheese is amazing, as it is extremely gooey and has bacon bits in it. The flatbreads are okay, and there are often excellent seasonal ones with toppings like local squash. The highlight of Public is the burgers. There are usually four to choose but one is new since the menu is always evolving. There is the basic burger, which like the Crisp pizza can be totally customized. Other regulars include the veggie burger and the Public burger. I always get the basic burger with cheddar, caramelized onions and sometimes bacon. Overall, anyone can find something that they like, and whatever it is, the food is going to be incredible. You do, however, need to be careful about time since it gets so busy, and it's fairly expensive but not too terrible if you get things that aren't too extravagant.

Gabe's Rating: 9.6/10 \$\$\$\$

Recap: Overall, both of these restaurants are excellent and are positive additions to the food scene in North Adams. ■

A Prayer for Owen Meany: Heartbreaking and Timely

By SAM TUCKER-SMITH

A Prayer for Owen Meany is a truly wonderful book. Please read it.

John Irving's 1989 classic never truly loses its sense of place, but never really gives away where it's going, either. It concerns young (and eventually old), John Wheelwright and his dear friend, Owen Meany, switching back and forth from John, as an English teacher in 1987 Canada, to memories of him and Owen growing up in the 50s in the tiny New Hampshire town of Gravesend.

Owen Meany is quite a peculiar character. His voice is permanently stuck in a shrill high position, so strange that it is not attempted to be described in writing, and written in all capitals, if you can imagine that. Owen will permanently be of a very tiny size. He believes he is God's chosen instrument, and sets himself on a very, very specific path he has prophesied himself. He is quite frankly one of the strangest characters I have ever encountered.

So why am I urging you so to read this? *Owen Meany* isn't only heartwarming, heartbreaking, and a captivating read. It's also relevant, and in these troubling times we could all be a bit more like Owen Meany, as strange as he is.

Owen Meany, even at the age of 8,

gives indispensable advice. He manages to be completely selfless while at the same time thinking the world of himself. He is unbelievably kind, and yet carries the principal's car onto the stage of the auditorium. He takes everything completely seriously, but has a biting sense of humour (when he is told to see the school psychiatrist, he says "FATHER, FORGIVE THEM, FOR THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO"). Owen Meany is an almost perfect human being.

The book is also, as I've stated before, timely. The boys are becoming men in wartime, which leads to many political discussions, John expresses that "it is history that holds you accountable, and I've already expressed that Americans are not big on history." In *Owen Meany*, Irving also makes the point "that to criticize a specific American president was not anti-American; that to criticize a specific American policy was not anti-patriotic ... but these distinctions were lost on many of the citizens of Gravesend; they are lost on many of my fellow Americans today."

So, to reiterate, pick up a copy of *A Prayer for Owen Meany*, whether it's your first time or your seventh. You won't regret it. ■

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Midterm Elections

Continued from Page 3.

-ocrat Jay Gonzalez, who received 33.1% of the vote, and came away with almost 70% of the popular vote. He is widely viewed as the most popular governor today, if not in US history, with the approval of 69% of the population, and a disapproval rating of only 16%. Despite this, he still fell behind in the Williamstown vote, receiving only 40% of the vote to Gonzalez's 60%. Baker did, however, receive the majority of votes in both Lanesborough and Hancock, taking 60 and 63 percent of the votes, respectively. Baker has been seen as a counterbalance to the state's liberal legislature, being fiscally conservative while socially liberal in a state that is economically sound. Baker ran on a platform of strong bipartisanship, and looks to continue this as well as maintain a balanced budget in his next term.

Massachusetts is split into nine congressional districts, each of which elects a congressperson to the US House of Representatives. Amid widespread cases of gerrymandering across the US it should be noted that these districts were last redrawn in 2011, and received an "A" grade from the Center of Public Integrity. Democratic candidates won in all nine of these districts, and in three of them Republicans fielded no candidates at all. One of the more notable races took place in Massachusetts district seven, comprising of about half of Cambridge and Boston, which Ayanna Pressley won. This makes her the first black woman Massachusetts has ever elected to congress. It is, however, the congressional race in the first district, made up of much of Western Massachusetts including Berkshire County and Springfield, that may

have the largest impact on national politics. In this race 15 term incumbent Richard Neal ran unopposed, after defeating Tahirah-Amatul-Wadud in the primaries. Neal is expected to be chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, which is viewed as the most powerful committee in the House of Representatives, if not all of congress. The Ways and Means Committee is the oldest US Congress committee, and is the chief tax-writing committee of the House of Representatives. Neal, if elected Chair of the committee, would be in the unique position of being able to demand the release of the President's tax returns. Neal would be one of only two people in congress with the power to do this, and the only Democrat. President Trump's tax returns have been a subject of contention after he refused to release them in their entirety, the only president in recent history to refuse to do so. Neal told CNN in a recent interview that although he hopes President Trump will release his tax returns voluntarily, he is willing to demand their release.

A number of other State positions were up for election, including Attorney General, Secretary of the Commonwealth, Auditor, and Treasurer. The position of Attorney General, the chief lawyer and law enforcement official in the state, was won by Democratic incumbent Maura Healey, who defeated Republican James McMahon seventy to thirty percent. Democratic incumbent William Francis Galvin will continue to serve as Secretary of the Commonwealth, Massachusetts version of Secretary of State, having defeated Republican Anthony Amore and Independent Juan Sanchez handily. As secretary of the Commonwealth, he will continue to serve as the chief public-information agent, re-

cord keeper, and election officer. Another Democratic Incumbent, Suzanne Bump, won a four way race for Auditor. Deborah Goldberg, yet another Democratic Incumbent, will continue to serve as Treasurer, having defeated Republican Keiko Orrall and Independent Jamie Guerin.

Massachusetts voters also saw three statewide ballot questions. The first, ballot measure one, would place limits on the number of patients nurses could care for at a given time, varying based on the hospital and department. Proponents of this measure said it would add to patient safety as well as protect nurses, while opponents claimed it would be unnecessary and inefficient state oversight, as well as force the closure of small hospitals. The measure failed to pass, with seventy percent voting "No," and thirty percent voting "Yes." The second ballot measure proposed a citizen's commission that would recommend a constitutional amendment to limit corporate campaign spending. This measure passed, with 71.4% of voters voting in favor. The third and final ballot measure would repeal a 2016 state law that added gender identity to the list of groups protected from discrimination in public places such as restaurants and hotels. Confusingly, a "Yes" vote would keep the law in place, while a "No" vote would repeal it. Massachusetts voters kept the law in place, with 67.8% in favor.

In local elections, Berkshire county voted a representative to the state House of Representatives, State Senate, and a District Attorney, among other positions. Elected to the First Berkshire District, comprising of Adams, Cheshire, Clarksburg, Florida, Hancock, Lanesborough, New Ashford, and Williamstown, was incumbent John Barrett, who ran uncontest-

ed. Barrett, who served a nine-month term after a special election, was the mayor of North Adams for 26 years. He is looking to secure six-million dollars for Greylock Glen in Adams, and said in an iBerkshires article that he is looking to write a bill funding computer-science curricula in high-schools. It should also be noted Barrett is a Mount Greylock graduate.

In the race for State Senate, Democratic incumbent Adam Hinds ran unopposed, and will represent Berkshires, Hampshire, Franklin and Hampden counties in the Massachusetts General Court. Hinds serves on the central Ways and Means Committee, as well as Co-Chairing the Joint Committee on tourism. Hinds graduated from Mohawk Trail Regional High School, and spent ten years with the United Nation brokering peace in the Middle East. Hinds looks to continue working on bringing high-speed internet and rail transportation to Western Massachusetts during his next term. In the race for District Attorney Democrat Andrea Herrington won, defeating sitting District Attorney Paul Caccaviello who, though not on the ballot ran a strong write-in campaign. Harrington received approximately 31,000 votes in her favor, while only about 18,500 write-in votes were cast.

On a national scale Democrats regained control of the House of Representatives, a decisive victory allowing Massachusetts Congressman Richard Neal a central spot in federal Politics. Despite a national partisan split, with Democrats regaining control of the House of Representatives and Republicans retaining the senate, Massachusetts reaffirmed its commitment to being a deeply Democratic state. ■

Twin Advice

Continued from Page 6.

place in the NYC indoor mile race while in high school. High school runners have also been shown to have higher GPAs than soccer players, or at least in this household that's true.

To make a long advice column response short, the choices you make in seventh grade can very well set you up for your life ahead, and by choosing running you'll ensure that's one filled with happiness, healthiness, and success.

Your once seventh grader who chose running over soccer, Charlie

I'm sorry, did you say sport? Last time I checked, doing something that most people only do when they're being chased does not qualify as a sport. Running literally has no point, except if to stay in shape for another season. If you're not going to win, what's there to do? I mean, if you think you can beat Ollie Swabey, by all means join the team. But otherwise? Do

a sport that will actually make you happy, surrounded by friends and classmates that are not trying to beat each other, but work together for the same common goal. No one actually likes to run. They might say they do, but they don't. Even Jackie Wells, star runner of the Mt. Greylock running team has admitted that running can really, really suck (despite her misleading Not Running Sucks t-shirt). The feeling of accomplishment that comes after a long run might be great, but that feeling is only present because you know you'll be faster on the soccer pitch, right? Not to mention the fact that runners are quite possibly the most uncoordinated people I know. Have you ever seen Charlie McWeeny play basketball? And don't even get me started on the uniforms that come along with cross country. Also, great news: soccer involves running! A lot of it! But this time, you're doing it with a goal in mind (no pun intended). Soccer is the best of both worlds (although I'm not sure what the best part about running is). But enough about running. I'm here to convince you why soccer is the far superior extracurricular (because

we've already decided that running is not a sport), and soccer can speak for itself. Playing soccer at recess at WES everyday suddenly becomes playing league rivals under the lights, with fans pouring into the stands. Or it becomes a rainy game vs Mahar with no fans, and a two hour bus ride to greet you after a loss. But you're with your team. It's 16 people who have been together from boiling hot early mornings in August to below freezing afternoons in late October, and you guys have been through it all together. The bond that soccer creates is one that no other can rival: it is a like a second family. Literally nothing can break that bond once you come back from being down 3-0 to tie Wahconah. Or 2-0 to beat Monument (shameless plug). It truly is the beautiful game: celebrating a goal with your teammates, whether a sub or a starter, knowing in some way or another you helped score that goal is the best feeling in the whole entire world.

From someone who is most happiest when she is on a soccer field, Clara ■

Senior Spotlight: Margo Smith

By SAM TUCKER-SMITH

The Echo reached out to one of Greylock's many senior athletes to learn more about her experiences with Greylock sports.

ECHO: How long have you been running for?

MS: I've been running since seventh grade, so six years.

ECHO: Wow, the entire stretch. What inspired you to join?

MS: Hm... well, I was never good at soccer or anything like that, and then my mom has always been a runner, so I would go on little runs with her. Also, my older sister had always been on the running team, so it seemed like an easy thing to do; I mean, it's what I wanted to do!

ECHO: So, a few years ago, you won the All-Berkshire MVP for Girls' Cross Country. Can you tell us a bit about that?

MS: Yeah, that was really exciting! That was when I was in, um, ninth grade, I think it was? And I just trained really hard, and had a really good season, so that was exciting.

ECHO: Besides that event, what have been some other highlights of your running career?

MS: I would say, last year, winning Western Mass and States was really exciting for our team, because we had never won states before, so that was awesome. Just being part of the team has been a really good thing, because it's just been such a good way to make friends, and I've met so many older kids through doing it, and I think that stands out more than, like, actual titles.

ECHO: That's great. Are there any people that have helped you be the runner you are today?

MS: Yeah, I would say my mom, and Hillary Greene, who's been our coach this year, has been really awesome. Also, past seniors, like Emily Kaegi, who was like my big sister when I was in seventh grade, she was very inspiring.

ECHO: Do you have any advice for people thinking of joining the Cross Country team?

MS: Yeah, I would say just go for it! Try it out, because it's, like, you'll probably have fun, and it's a really nice group of people. And even if you don't think you'd be a good runner or whatever, with it you'll get better and it's just a fun thing to try. The people that do it, they make it so fun. ■

The Greylock Echo is the student newspaper of Mt. Greylock Regional High School in Williamstown, Mass. While the Echo posts most content online, print editions are published periodically. Any Mt. Greylock student is welcome to submit material or join the Echo staff.

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