

The Greylock Echo

Fall Edition

Mount Greylock - Williamstown Mass

October 30, 2020

Greylock Resumes In-Person Learning

By EMMA SANDSTROM

On Monday, October 5th, Mount Greylock commenced in-person classes for the first time since March 13th. The first three weeks of the school year were taught entirely online. Greylock has transitioned now into a hybrid model of learning.

One group of students attends school in-person for the first two days of the week, while the other half of students participate via Zoom, an online learning platform. On Wednesday, the school undergoes a deep clean and all students are virtual. This schedule is then swapped for the last two days of the week.

Cohort A, which consists of students with the last names A-M, returned to school on Monday and Tuesday, while Cohort B began in-person learning on Thursday and Friday.

There was some uncertainty as to whether Mount Greylock would allow Cohort B to return to school on October 8th, because Berkshire County was approaching "yellow" on the COVID density map.

The density map is used to determine the number of cases in any given area. The color of each county signifies how many positive cases there are per 100,000 residents.

It was previously agreed upon by the School Committee and Teachers' Union that if Berkshire County was in the "yellow" for three consecutive weeks, the Mount Greylock administration would close down the building for an additional three weeks. However, on October 7th it was announced that Berkshire County was in "gray," allowing hybrid school to continue as long as students abided by the necessary safety requirements.

Despite the unprecedented situation, students and teachers alike seem to be enjoying the year so far. Lainey Gill, a sophomore in cohort A, said that although "school has definitely been out of the norm, teachers have been doing a great job dividing and conquering between online students and hybrid students."

Junior Jack Cangelosi said, "The teachers have been doing a good job of communicating with both the kids on Zoom and in the classroom, which is something I was nervous about."

Senior Leo Rossiter said, "The in-person learning is better than I expected and I'm pleasantly surprised with the quality and effectiveness of most classes," which he finds attributable to the fact that "teachers have done a great job generally adapting to the situation and lis-

tening to feedback from students about what could be improved."

However, some believe the students in-school are given more attention than those studying remotely.

"The remote learning model was also totally workable until the switch to hybrid. When everyone is online it actually works pretty well, but when some people are in the room, the teacher naturally gives them her/his attention," said Rossiter. "The experience for the people at home is worse because of it which is frustrating."

Mount Greylock history teacher Jeffery Welch said, "I think school has been going as well as it can, if not even better. I try to speak to both groups of people [hybrid and in-person] together, and I try to talk to the people at home when they come to class on Zoom."

Welch added that he thinks having all teachers switch to Canvas so that they all have a common platform was "a good move" because it helps eliminate confusion and standardized assignments.

That being said, students seem to much prefer in-person learning to virtual.

Eleanor McPartland, a junior in cohort B, said, "It is kind of hard to pay attention over Zoom, and being in actual school has been much easier to pay attention to."

Senior Erin O'Keefe added, "It has been really stressful and hard to fully comprehend classes due to the switch between school and home. It's nice to see people again but the lack of consistency has been difficult."

Some hesitations toward virtual learning concern excessive screen time and its negative effects. Gill says, "Being on the screen for hours a day has definitely been super hard. After a day of Zoom my eyes just feel squished into the back of my head - it is not pleasant."

However, according to several student athletes, sports have been beneficial in keeping students active and positive while stuck at home during school hours.

Gill says, "Playing volleyball after school has been amazing because it gets me moving around," especially after hours of sitting in front of a screen.

Many students are also enjoying hybrid school because they are seeing friends on a semi regular basis.

Continued on Page 4

1 in 650: An Interview with Ollie Swabey

By PHOEBE BARNES



Photo courtesy of Charles Swabey

Freshman Ollie Swabey is a three-sport varsity athlete and has plans to attend a ski school next semester. The Echo sat down to chat with him about this training program and his plans for the future.

Echo: Rumor has it that you're going to a semester school?

Ollie Swabey: I'm going to Stratton Mountain School in Winhall, Vermont. It's a ski school for Nordic Skiing, downhill skiing, freestyle skiing, and snowboarding. I am going for the winter term, from November 2nd to March 26th.

E: How did you find out about this opportunity?

OS: I've always kind of dreamed about going to this school and I've raced kids from this school in various sports, such as skiing and running. It seemed like a very unique opportunity and this seems to be the year to do it.

Continued on Page 4

Are Movie Theaters Destined to Die?

Will McDonough's take on a post-pandemic world

See Page 10

Racial Education Done Right-ish

Julius Munemo weighs in on new required school reading

See Page 11

Turf War

The battle continues

See Page 4

A Letter from the Editor

Clara McWeeny begins her tenure as editor-in-chief

See Page 5

NEWS

Mount Greylock Holds Virtual Student Government Elections

By MACKENZIE SHEEHY

Just days away from the national elections, Mount Greylock geared up for their very own student government elections. However, this year's process looks quite different from years past. All aspects of the election, including in-person speeches and voting, were completely virtual.

Students have the opportunity to serve on the Student Council, become Class Officers, or participate on the School Council. Five students from each grade are selected by their peers to serve on the Student Council, an organization made up of high school students who serve as a bridge between the administration and the student body. Four students from each grade are elected by their grade to serve in the class positions of president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer. Finally, three students are elected by the entire high school to serve on the School Council, a position that requires them to work with teachers, parents, and community members in regards to the annual budget and school improvements.

Elections are typically held in the spring, but they have since been moved to the fall. Student Council members from last year have been tasked with coming up with a safe and effective virtual process.

Student Council Press Secretary Charlotte Sanford said, "We were working in limbo as technically our positions never stopped because new members were not elected, but at the same time we were setting up elections that could potentially remove us from our positions."

The Student Council also experienced a shift in advisors amid the development of a new election process. Instead of guidance counselor Jessica Casalinova, the Student Council is now working with Mary MacDonald, the previous principal of Mount Greylock and the current seventh grade social studies teacher.

Next, members had to figure out the timeline of the process and get the word out to incoming freshmen who had not yet participated in student elections. Junior Jack Catelotti, who will be running for a third term on Student Council, said, "We knew it wasn't going to be a normal election, so we first planned out how to keep everything virtual."

Members went into freshman history classes via Zoom to explain the different roles and opportunities of student government at Greylock. Senior Jackie Wells and sophomore Annie Art drew an outline for the steps of the election while Sanford created an Instagram account to get a following from 9th through 12th graders to spread announcements. Sanford said, "I knew that in order for students to really understand what elections looked like this year, they would need to see it over social media."

Once students were informed that elections would be taking place, nomination sheets and speeches had to be taken care of. Students are required to get 25 signatures from their peers in order to be on the ballot. This year, students obtained signatures by sending out a Google Sheet which was due by October 9th. Catelotti said, "Getting signatures honestly was a pain as

it usually takes one lunch period but now it took a day of asking people."

In lieu of speeches, students who were running were then tasked with filming a video of themselves as a substitute speech for their peers to view. Videos had to be submitted by October 16th and could be no longer than 2 minutes.

For many students, especially those running for re-election, the speech process brings a new challenging element. Catelotti said, "Usually you just have to be prepared for your speech but via video there is a lot more to do. It takes a lot longer when you have to do so many takes after messing up or not getting it right."

Others feel as though the speech took some of the usual stress away from presenting in-person. Caplinger said, "The setup could be more casual, nobody was staring at me, and I could always try again if I wanted. It basically just took all of the pressure out of the speech."

After the submission of both the nomination sheet and the videos, the Student Council sent out a Google form as a ballot for students to vote. Senior Student Council members Charlie McWeeny and Michael Faulkner created the ballot with links to all of the students' videos. Sanford said, "Hopefully after watching all of the videos a student will choose the individual that best matches the position's description."

Check *The Greylock Echo* website for updates on school elections and other rapidly changing stories.♦

Flu Clinic Comes to Mount Greylock

By LUCY IGOE

On October 3rd, Mount Greylock Regional High School teamed up with the Berkshire Public Health Alliance and held a clinic to provide students and local residents with the opportunity to receive a free flu vaccine. The Berkshire Public Health Alliance is a program that provides professional public health services and programs for the surrounding community, including an annual flu clinic.

In August, State Public Health officials announced that the influenza immunization would be mandatory for all children (six months or older) who are attending Massachusetts preschool, elementary school, high school and universities. Unless a medical or religious reason prevents them, students are expected to receive the vaccine by December 31st.

The Berkshire Alliance group brought a team of nurses, volunteers, EMT, and doctors to help with the clinic, which took place in a trailer behind the school. Before entering the trailer, all participants had to stop to fill out necessary paperwork and then be screened for any COVID like symptoms.

Nurse Nicole Russel, who organized and planned the event with the Berkshire Alliance program, said, "The ease of the process and the careful consideration each professional took to

keep individual's information private was apparent." Russel added, "People were lined up 6 feet apart waiting to enter the trailer to receive their vaccine and social distancing and mask wearing were maintained at all times."

The trailer held four rooms, with a vaccine station in each room.

Mount Greylock Principal Jacob Shutz



said, "The flu clinic is a good example of local institutions working together. Especially in the age of COVID, we've definitely exercised our relationships with local, county, and state health agencies." Shutz said, "We also have had a standing agreement with the local board of health to act as an Emergency Dispensary Site (EDS) in the event there was a need to dispense medicines or vaccines. Here we put it to practice."

"Hosting the flu clinic here at Mount Greylock was a success. Our custodial staff was a tremendous help. They made sure the trailer was set up and clean," Russel said. "The Berkshire Alliance staff was knowledgeable and very easy to work with. It was clear that they have been doing this for a long time."

While the flu clinic benefited the students and community as a whole, faculty and staff also had the opportunity to get vaccinated and stay healthy. Russel said, "There were around 150 people who showed up to get the vaccine which consisted of some students, families, faculty, staff, and community members."

Russel encouraged others to get vaccinated: "Influenza is a highly contagious illness that occurs every fall and winter. Therefore, it is extremely important that we take all the necessary

NEWS

Music Classes Move Outside

By LUCA HIRSCH

COVID-19 has affected almost every aspect of learning at Mount Greylock. Perhaps most impacted, though, is Mount Greylock's music program, which is dependent almost entirely on the ability to practice as a group. Because of social distancing guidelines and mask requirements implemented by the state, it has been difficult to continue in this traditional fashion.

The first challenge music classes face is the hybrid school model. Since Mount Greylock split the student body into two "cohorts," music classes are significantly smaller than in past years. Now, half the class is on Zoom and completes asynchronous work, while the other half plays as half a band or orchestra.

With some unevenness in the cohorts, the band does not always have enough students playing each instrument, which makes rehearsals even more difficult.

Despite the challenges that come with the hybrid system, band teacher Jacqueline Vinette said, "we've enjoyed our time together, remote or in-person."

The second challenge is the state's regulations regarding wind instruments and music ensembles. The state requires all music to be played outside with students masked at all times unless their instrument does not permit being masked. On top of that, students must remain ten feet apart outdoors, regardless of mask wearing.

Senior Ruth Weaver said, "Mrs. Vinette's doing a fantastic job, but we definitely have trouble with wind and cold and hearing each



other."

Percussionists cannot share mallets and therefore have to play one instrument the whole class, whereas most percussionists are used to playing several in a given rehearsal. Along with that, students cannot play one of Mount Greylock's in-house instruments. These small details add another level of complexity to the already restricting list of approved activities by the state.

Despite these challenges, the music teachers have pivoted and adapted to make sure music continues at Mount Greylock. The biggest question coming into the year was how to involve students who were entirely remote.

Vinette's band classes have been using Flipgrid and Smartmusic to keep remote students engaged. Flipgrid allows students to record

small videos of them playing music, which Vinette can then grade or give feedback on. Smartmusic is another useful tool because it uses software to give players instant feedback on whether the notes they are playing are correct or not. These methods of learning and feedback are not ideal, but they keep students engaged and learning.

As for students who are attending school in person, they can play as a group, as long as they adhere to state guidelines. But even playing as a group is not always possible. Wind, rain, and snow not only impede the ability of students to hear each other, but it also makes them unable to stand outside and play. Senior Oscar Low said, "We are in difficult circumstances, but playing outside has been a wonderful way to reconnect with classmates and share our love for music."

With cold temperatures fast approaching, the music program must be constantly ready to adapt. When winter arrives, Vinette plans to move the in-person classes to the auditorium, with twenty foot social-distancing if the state guidelines allow for it. At the time of this writing, the state regulations have not been updated since July. As a result, music teachers must wait for new regulations to be released before making final decisions about the winter.

As for future performances, Mount Greylock will not hold their traditional three concerts this year, but will instead try to create a showcase for the students. Mrs. Vinette says that she and Mr. O'Connell, the new orchestra teacher, are in the brainstorming phase of creating that showcase. ♦

Turf Project Enters Next Phase

By LEO ROSSITTER

In May of 2019, the Phase II Capital Gift Subcommittee recommended the full subcommittee send plans for athletic facilities improvements, including a new artificial turf field, out to bid. Seventeen months later, the issue is all but settled. After initial bids came in high, the School Committee voted 4-2 on October 16 in favor of resending the plans out to bid. These include improvements to the softball fields to comply with Title IX, general improvements to playing fields for the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and a synthetic turf field with a six lane track as an add alternate, or an optional add on.

Members on both sides voiced strong opinions on whether or not to move forward. School Committee members Steven Miller and Al Terranova pushed for a vote on the issue, saying the research was complete and that it was time to make a decision. Opposition came from members Jamie Art and Christina Conry, who argued that the process was too rushed and needed more time. This opinion was echoed during the public comment section of the meeting. The deciding vote came down to School Committee member Carolyn Greene, who is challenged by Elizabeth Beck in her reelection bid. Greene voted in favor of moving ahead with the recommendation because "the com-

mittee has been stuck for a while" and she felt some progress needed to be made. She also wanted to make it very clear that she was voting on "moving ahead with a process," not on a final decision.

Two important deadlines dictate the remainder of this process. The ADA and Title IX requirements to make playing fields comparable between boys' and girls' sports and to make them accessible for people with disabilities, has a deadline of April 2022. The Title IX and ADA changes are part of the same recommendation as the new playing field, so the work on all three will have to be finished by the end of the 2021 building season. There is also another kind of deadline looming for the School Committee. On November 3rd there are School Committee elections. Three members are not running for reelection and Greene is opposed by Beck, meaning a large turnover in personnel is possible. While a new committee could potentially make a different decision, Miller and Terranova successfully argued that this group of people had all the information and the responsibility was on their shoulders.

There has been significant pushback from the public against specifics of the project. Many of the complaints were about the use of crumb rubber infill for the artificial turf field.

These complaints mostly mentioned two possible downsides: player health and environmental damage. Some community members believe that the crumb rubber has potentially life-threatening side effects, like an increased chance of developing cancer. This has been the cause for much debate, both within the School Committee and the Phase 2 subcommittee as well as with the public. It constituted most of the research that the School committee discussed while deciding whether or not to move forward at this time. The second worry that has been brought to the School Committee is the environmental ramifications of using crumb rubber as an infill. The issue arises when disposing of the crumb rubber after its cycle on the field and if it was possible to do that without being ecologically irresponsible. The solution that was recommended by the advising architect was that the field be built with Brockfill as an infill instead of crumb rubber. John Skavlem, former chair of the Phase 2 subcommittee, described Brockfill as a "sustainably harvested wood-based product" that has been designed relatively recently.

Continued on Page 7

NEWS

1 in 650: Ollie Swabey

Continued from Page 1

E: How did you come to the decision to leave Greylock for a semester?

OS: I've always loved Greylock, but I definitely think this is the year to do it since Greylock is so different from normal. We're remote half the time and it just makes sense that if this year I can be full in person, in just a little bubble, in a boarding school, I should do it. It seems to make sense more than just doing two days a week and getting half the education.

E: How did this school adapt to COVID-19?

OS: So basically, it's not quite locked in but the kids aren't allowed to travel to yellow or red zones, by the Vermont guidelines and regulations, or else they have to quarantine for two weeks. If a student gets sick then there's a quarantine period and testing, and there's also general testing every week.

E: How does a typical school day differ from that of Greylock?

OS: You train in the morning for up to four and a half hours a day and then you eat lunch and have classes from 2:00 to 5:30.

You have three one hour and ten-minute blocks. In the winter you have three classes instead of five. The education is highly packed in the spring and fall.

E: How were you accepted into this school? What was the process like?

OS: I had to write a couple small essays just about how I would help the community and that kind of thing. But also, I've been friends with many kids from there and I've worked with the coaches there quite a bit through the younger program, BKL. I knew the community pretty well and I knew that would be a good place to go.

E: If you could, would you go there year long?

OS: On a training basis, yes. But Greylock just has so many awesome people that I wouldn't want to leave, especially not forever or even a year. It would just be so tough. Also with boarding school, it's hard to be away from your family at a young age for so long. Probably, on a training basis, yes but, on an actual education-staying-there basis, probably not.

E: You also do cross country and track. How do those sports compare to Greylock's at Stratton Mountain?

OS: In the fall and spring, they have pretty similar sports to Greylock with the exception of

track. Instead, they just have road biking and in the fall they also have mountain biking. They're very good cross-training sports for things such as nordic and downhill skiing. But in the winter, it's a very ramped up version of what we would do at Greylock. The Nordic team would've gone to Yellowstone this year to ski for two weeks, which would've been awesome, but due to travel guidelines and restrictions, I don't think it'll be able to happen. Two years ago they went to Norway for the World Cup. It's pretty cool.

E: How do you believe going to this school for a semester will affect or improve your future?

OS: I know obviously, it looks good on college resumes and blah blah blah, but it'll be very helpful for training and kind of just getting a sense of what really can be accomplished through training. As I said, the training's ramped up so I will be able to get much fitter and much faster in my sports. It will just be very helpful in case I were to somehow manage to get down an Olympic road or a competitive road for sports in my life. Which, again, is very improbable. Also, the academics are quite good. They'll be helpful if I were to miss stuff at Greylock this year since we're remote. I know for at least some classes, we're not getting everything that we could've gotten in a regular year. I'll be able to get everything I need to know from the classes I'm taking this year plus maybe more from Stratton. ♦

Faulkner Becomes NMS Semi-Finalist

By QUINN REPETTO

Last month, Mount Greylock senior Michael Faulkner became a semi-finalist for the prestigious National Merit Scholarship. He now has the opportunity to win a college scholarship of up to \$2500. He is one of the few Mounties to do so in recent history.

The National Merit Scholarship Coalition (NMSC) is a non-profit organization that has provided scholarships to countless students since its inauguration in 1955. This year only 16,000 of the 1.5 million contestants were selected as semi-finalists. To become a semi-finalist, you must receive a score that places you in the top 1% of test takers in your state.

Still, only 7,600 of those students will be finalists and receive a scholarship to a college. The scholarship applies to any college of the winner's choosing.

To enter the competition, interested students have to take the Preliminary SAT (PSAT) in eleventh grade. The test also doubles as the National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (NMQT). The test is administered similarly to the SAT or the AP exams. Generally taking about three hours, the test is split into four portions, two for english (reading comprehension and grammar) and two for math (calculator and no-calculator). Faulkner actually took the PSAT twice, once in tenth grade for practice, and once as the NMQT in eleventh grade.



"When I took it in eleventh grade I put a little more studying in since there was actually something involved," Faulkner said. The extra studying paid off, as Faulkner found out this September.

However, the contest is far from over. Faulkner has recently sent in his NMS application for a chance at becoming a finalist. The application, which closely resembles a college application, consists of a report of your academic history, an account of your extracurricular activities, a letter of recommendation from your guidance counselor, and an

essay.

"This was kind of like the first dry run of the college application process for me," Faulkner said. "You definitely want to take it seriously, but it's lower stakes than an actual college application. I did my best, but I won't be devastated or upset if I don't progress further." Whether or not he will progress further will be revealed after the NMSC reviews the contestants' applications in January.

Win or lose, Faulkner is still grateful for the opportunity to compete in the competition, one which has been testing the academic mettle of students for over 50 years. "This was a great opportunity," Faulkner said. "I want to take advantage of it." ♦

Greylock Resumes

Continued from Page 1

A large part of school is the social aspect of it, which is missing when students are stuck at home.

Cangelosi said, "Despite only going in twice a week, it is definitely good to be around other students and teachers again. It is a lot more fun than sitting in front of a computer all day."

While most students would agree that seeing a few of their friends is better than seeing none of them, some find it frustrating that they are unable to see their friends in opposite cohorts.

Junior Christian Sullivan said, "I like seeing my friends but it is super hard not being able to talk to anyone in another cohort during school. I wish there was a way I could talk to them."

Other students shared concerns about the health risks involved in going back to school.

Cangelosi said that he was nervous about attending school at first, but after experiencing all the safety precautions, he "think[s] it definitely feels safe."

Some of these rules and regulations include: masks worn at all times (aside from lunch), students must remain six feet apart at all times, one student to a seat when riding a bus, and no drinking water in the classroom during class.

Annie Art, a sophomore in Cohort A says, "Lunch is pretty hard because grades 7-10 are all in one spot, so it's difficult to sit near your friends and I think everyone feels slightly unsafe."

Rossiter says, "The lunch situation could use tweaking, perhaps opening up the cafeteria to seniors as was originally planned."

However, Art said, "I think overall the shift from fully remote to hybrid was better than I had expected". ♦

NEWS & FEATURES

A Look at Middle School Enrichments

By MOLLY SULLIVAN

In any normal year, eighth grader Charlotte Holubar would be playing the violin in the middle school orchestra. This year, however, due to COVID-19 and the school's hybrid model, she is required to take an enrichment class instead. Charlotte was put in the eighth grade enrichment "Bach, Beethoven, and Beyonce," taught by the new orchestra teacher, Patrick O'Connell. Holubar said that while in person, they listen and discuss music, but they also have a unique experience of learning an instrument.

"My favorite part is learning to play the ukulele. I like learning to play more musical instruments."

Middle school enrichments at Mount Greylock were designed to help students get a feel for the electives that would be offered in high school. Middle schoolers have the option of either taking an enrichment or enrolling in band, orchestra, chorus, or academic support. Enrichments give students a chance to explore other interests outside of the five core academic classes. Students switch enrichments each quarter.

"A version of enrichment has been around for a while," seventh grade social studies and enrichment teacher, Mary MacDonald, said. "It's a great way for students to get exposure, and I find it a fresh alternative to just teaching social studies."

MacDonald is teaching a seventh grade enrichment called "Outsider Art," where students study and imitate the work of artists whose styles tend to fall outside of the conventional art world. "With each finished work, students write or film an artist's statement, and we are building a slideshow of the class' work."

MacDonald said she is trying to "weave in a global perspective," so they looked at South African township found art, Ojo de Dios of Mexico, and Swiss artist Adolf Wolfli's detailed designs with colored pencils.

Middle school teachers are assigned a block of enrichments, but from there, they get freedom to choose the type of class they are interested in teaching.

"I have always tried to incorporate art and creative work in my academic classes, so running an art-based enrichment was a natural fit," MacDonald said. "The class is block 13, and it's a great way to close the day."

Some enrichments taught in the past include entrepreneurship, taught by retired band teacher Mr. Moors, mythology, taught by Latin teacher Dr. Lovell, coding, creative writing, and astronomy.

This year, eighth grade history teacher Andrew Agostini is teaching an enrichment course called "The History of Baseball." In this class, Agostini and his students are studying baseball's rich history, which dates back longer than most American sports.

"I love baseball, I love all sports really, so it's cool that I get to talk about something that I'm so passionate about," Agostini said. "The history is wild too; the game has changed a lot. It certainly has its place in popular culture in

America as well."

Agostini lets his students choose to work on projects on anything ranging from the first All-Star and World Series games to changes in uniforms and ballpark food.

"I try to open it up because I know not everyone likes sports or likes baseball, but I think there are different aspects that people can relate to," Agostini said. "My hope is that [students] leave the class with just a little bit more information about the game. I don't expect them to remember everything, but it's been fun and I've enjoyed it."

Will Igoe, an eighth grader in Agostini's enrichment, enjoys the course because there isn't a "script."

"I like that enrichment is a more laid back class, with less responsibility, less boundaries, less expectations, and more creativity," Igoe said.

Agostini said he enjoys meeting his students in a less formal setting. Because he is also an eighth grade middle school teacher, he has a chance to see some students twice a day, which allows them to build better relationships. He said the course is not as rigorous as his social studies class, but the conversations are much better.

"When you get people writing or reading about things they really care about, you do see their passion," Agostini said.

Jacqueline Vinette, the new chorus and band teacher, is teaching a seventh grade enrichment called "Explorations in Music and Theater." Vinette said that she enjoys being with the seventh graders as they are both new to the school. "We've been reading and reviewing plays via Zoom on Wednesdays. We recently watched a one act play on YouTube together and discussed it," Vinette said. "As far as the music end goes, I had them identify their own musical story as an assignment, and that was really interesting for me to see. Students made a slideshow about their musical preferences, genres, artists, and influences."

Vinette chose this enrichment topic because theater is her "specialty area." When she taught at Lanesborough Elementary, she directed the musicals and was heavily involved in the orchestra, chorus, and band programs. Vinette does think that in a normal setting, the class would look a bit different.

"We'd probably be using the auditorium space and actually [performing] these mini plays," she said. "I try to make everything engaging and make it so that we're working collaboratively. Especially now, I think that's important."

"I've always been a big believer that students have all sorts of skills and different interests, and I try not to value some skills over others," Agostini said. "There are students that may not be doing great in other classes, but they do enjoy baseball and they care about baseball, and they're doing really well here. To give them an opportunity to do something like that in a classroom setting is really cool, and it's really important, too." ♦

A Letter from the Editor

Dear *Echo* Readers,

I am thrilled to begin my tenure as the editor-in-chief. I've worked on *The Echo* for five years--as a staff writer, news editor, and managing editor. Along with the change of leadership, you'll see that *The Echo* has a new look! We hope this new format, which is more environmentally friendly, will also be more reader friendly.

I began to transition into this new role in April of 2020, which was a month that was somehow simultaneously full of news and had no news at all. It was a time of confusion and uncertainty and panic, and it became increasingly clear that the world, and Mount Greylock, needed clarity. So that's what we set out to do. For nearly three months, we published weekly content about COVID-19 and its effects on our surrounding community. We covered the school closing and the end of the spring sports season. We interviewed local business owners and doctors. We talked to Greylock students about AP exams and online learning. Our online viewership skyrocketed and our staff writers gained invaluable reporting skills. We learned how to conduct interviews during a pandemic, how to report on constantly evolving stories, and how to work as a beacon of clarity in a world of uncertainty.

We also learned of the power journalism can hold. In my time on *The Echo*, we've covered stories ranging from local elections to climate strikes. We've conducted an interview with the president of Williams College. In short, we've managed to educate and inform, while also creating conversation. That's the most rewarding part of high school journalism, after all. It's walking into school after a print edition has been published and hearing people talk. It's catching snippets of discussions in the hallway or science class about the Opinion section. It's seeing students get reprimanded by their history teacher because they just cannot stop reading the latest update on the turf field. Now, more so than ever, journalism is needed to inform, to educate, and to generate conversations.

Greylock has stories to be told. It has opinions to be heard, students to be profiled, and news that needs reporting. These stories are your stories, and we need your help telling them. If you are interested in joining *The Echo*, please don't hesitate to reach out. Shoot us an email at mountgreylockecho@gmail.com or DM us on Instagram. If you have a passion for design or photography or reporting, *The Echo* is the place for you. If you like reviewing movies or trying out local restaurants, *The Echo* is the place for you. If you like asking people questions or getting to the bottom of a mystery, *The Echo* is the place for you.

As editor-in-chief, I will strive to make sure *The Echo* is relentless in its pursuit of the truth. I will aim to produce content that is enlightening and engaging. In return, all I can ask is that you keep talking. Keep demanding that stories be told, from all perspectives. We're listening.

--Clara McWeeny ♦

NEWS & FEATURES

A Guide to the School Committee Elections

By CHARLIE MCWEENY

On November 3rd, after weeks of early voting opportunities by mail, ballot drop-offs, and in-person, Commonwealth voters will have their last chance to head to the polls. They'll vote for candidates up and down the ballot, from Senator to School Committee. Eligible residents in Williamstown and Lanesborough will have the opportunity to cast their votes for four seats on the Mount Greylock Regional School District School Committee, the governing body for Mount Greylock, Williamstown Elementary School, and Lanesborough Elementary School.

The Committee, composed of four members from Williamstown and three from Lanesborough, is tasked with crafting policy for the district, the annual budget, appointing the Superintendent, and generally advocating for the best interests of the students. Although seats are reserved for candidates from their respective towns, eligible residents of both Williamstown and Lanesborough vote for every seat. In Lanesborough, Al Terrenova's decision not to seek reelection has left Michelle Johnson running unopposed for a four year term. Another seat has also opened after Regina Delego of Lanesborough announced her resignation from the committee, saying her service was "no longer a positive experience" and the focus of the body had shifted away from "children and education." A new committee member will be appointed for the remaining two years of Delego's terms by a joint vote of the School Committee and town Selectboards.

In Williamstown, five candidates originally vied for three seats. An unprecedented coalition of three candidates, dubbed Greylock Forward, initially elicited backlash on social media. While the shared platform of Jude Higdon-Topaz, José Constantine, and Elizabeth Beck emphasized diversity, equity, and inclusion, some critics on the Williamstown Info & Issues Facebook page called the group exclusive and divisive. Although his name will still appear on the ballot, Higdon-Topaz has since withdrawn his name from the ballot, leaving José Constantine and Julie Bowen unopposed in their bids for four year terms and Elizabeth Beck challenging Incumbent Carrie Greene for the remaining two years of the term.

The Echo sat down with each candidate to get a better understanding of who they are, why they're running, and what they hope to address as School Committee members.

WILLIAMSTOWN SEAT ONE

CARRIE GREENE (Incumbent)

Greene was born and raised in Williamstown, attending Mount Greylock and later Williams College. She has one daughter currently in the school system and another who has already passed through. First elected to the School Committee in 2009, Greene has years of experience and a strong record with the district. She served as Chair of the committee for four years, worked on the Building Committee that successfully brought the new school building to fruition, and was awarded the 2016 Scarborough Salomon Flynt Community Service Award. After a short hiatus, Greene was appointed to the School Committee in May of 2020 to fill the vacancy left by Dan Caplinger's

resignation.

In a recent school committee meeting, Greene was the deciding vote on the turf field, a particularly divisive issue for the board and the community. Green ultimately voted in favor of moving ahead with preparation for putting a bid for a synthetic turf field out, but emphasized her support is "for moving ahead with a process. The committee has been stuck for a while for various reasons, all of which make a lot of sense ... but now we need to make some progress in getting information that is needed for us to move forward." Greene also said that the committee's decision doesn't necessarily preclude them from "also putting a grass field project into a bid package," although she did note that a cost of upwards of 42,000 dollars for an additional bid package would be prohibitive, if that was the case.

Throughout the interview, Greene drew on her experience with the district. "It takes a while to learn how to be a good school committee member. It will be good once we get people acclimated and trained and familiar with the budget process or our region. We also have a new superintendent. It's going to be a really exciting time for the committee to develop an identity."

ELIZABETH BECK (Challenger)

A native of Montclair, New Jersey, Beck attributes her urge to become involved in the committee with the great experience of her public education growing up. Beck teaches English at Buxton, a private boarding school in Williamstown. She has two young children.

Beck was originally drawn to the Greylock Forward platform for its commitment to "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion." Although Beck said she recognizes the grievances some have with the coalition, the "Collaborative platform has allowed me to center issues and priorities instead of continuously having to sell myself as a person."

When asked what diversity, equity, and inclusion looked like in practice, Beck emphasized the need to "strengthen bias reporting mechanisms," center "restorative justice practices that are healthy and communal," and change the culture of the current school committee "so that the community can become more involved."

"I'm not walking onto the school committee with a fully fledged plan," Beck said. "I want to have more conversations with stakeholders about what their needs are."

When asked about her decision to challenge a strong incumbent, Beck said her decision to run for this specific seat was made before she knew Greene would seek reelection. "We decided collectively to have Jude and Jose run for the four year seats. This was more of an act of deference to them."

Beck closed by recognizing the strength of her opponent and the decision voters are tasked with. "I am facing a person with considerable experience who I've very much enjoyed getting to know... If you're happy with the way the current school committee is managing duties, then you have someone to carry that forward [in Green]. If not, then you have me."

WILLIAMSTOWN SEAT TWO

JOSE CONSTANTINE

The second remaining member of the Greylock Forward platform, Constantine is a Professor of Geosciences at Williams College and has two children in the school district.

Constantine spoke about the importance of public education in his own life during an interview with The Echo, all while picking up his own child from school.

"This is a good opportunity for me to give back to the community. I grew up a poor kid in central Virginia. Public education was absolutely key in giving me the opportunity to grow up to be a scientist. I feel really strongly about that - that public education provides all kids, regardless of their background, the opportunity to achieve their dreams," said Constantine. "Our public schools, WES and Greylock and Lanesborough, are the crown jewels of life in the purple valley. For it to be that way everyone needs to pitch in and step forward."

When asked about pushback against the Greylock Forward coalition, Constantine said that the original intent was never to be divisive, and that the group was formed in "response to things that have happened in WES and Mount Greylock and in response to many families with children of color who are choosing not to send their children to public schools because they think they are unsafe"

Constantine also noted, however, that he understood the criticisms. "I get it. We're a small town. This strategy is unorthodox. Hindsight is 20/20. If I could go back and redo it, I think I would. I don't think this was the best way to do it."

With regard to the question of whether the district should install a new turf field at Mount Greylock, Constantine pointed to his scientific training as an asset. "Having a background in science trains you to be objective as best as you can be -- to look at a set of data and evaluate its quality and make decisions based on what you understand. The fact that we don't know [about the risks of synthetic turf], that there isn't enough data, means that we as a community have to decide if we're okay taking that risk."

WILLIAMSTOWN SEAT THREE

JULIA BOWEN

Bowen has over twenty years of experience in public education, working as a tutor, a teacher, and on the Mount Greylock School Council, where she leads the Diversity Equity and Inclusion working group. Bowen is also the founder of BART (Berkshire Arts & Technology) Charter Public School, a college preparatory charter school in Adams. She served as the Executive Director on the board ex officio for over a dozen years. Currently, Bowen works as a consultant for new school leaders.

In an interview with the Echo, Bowen highlighted how her experience in public education makes her a strong candidate. "I've seen a lot from a lot of different perspectives, and have developed a really great understanding of the laws and regulations that govern public education and the ethos of public k-12 education."

Continued on Page 7

NEWS & FEATURES

School Committee Elections

Continued from Page 6

With the possibility of four new School Committee members and a new superintendent, Bowen said she was looking forward to putting her professional experience into action.

"We're extremely fortunate to have a new superintendent who is as experienced [as Superintendent McCandless is]. That being said, anyone who knows the job, even if they've done the job in other places, will have a learning curve. My last three years have been coaching school leaders new to their jobs. I have direct relevant experience in how to support superintendent McCandless as he comes in the door."

Although Bowen's children attend BART Charter, Bowen said that this shouldn't necessarily detract from her candidacy. "I've never been working in a district my children attend. I'm in it for improving public education -- not just for my children. I see this as what skills do I have that I can use to contribute to this society. In this year, in this political climate, with all the traumas some of us have faced, I look for purpose. I look for ways I can contribute to our community and to this world, and I match that up with my experiences and my skills."

Ultimately, Bowen said, "It's about always about focusing on what's right for kids and believing in kids."

LANESBOROUGH SEAT ONE

MICHELLE JOHNSON

Johnson, who lost her bid for a seat on the School Committee two years ago, now stands unopposed. She described her experience with the district as "two-fold." First, she is the parent of two children who attend school in the district. Johnson is also a special education teacher in Lenox, and has served on the Lanesborough School Council and the Mount Greylock School Council.

"I'm a union teacher. I'm a parent. It creates a very rounded perspective. School budgets are not hard for me to understand because I live in them."

To Johnson, though, the most important part of the school aren't the teachers or the parents or the administration.

"It's exceptionally important for all parties to respect other parties and work together within the best interests of the students -- that's the goal of the school committee. It's not really about making the teachers union happy. It's not really about making the administration happy. It's not really about making the school committee happy. It's about providing a quality education for students that will prepare them for whatever they chose to do after high school." ♦

Debate Club Comes to MG

By CELINA SAVAGE

Juniors Mackenzie Sheehy and Alayna Schwarzer have recently founded a debate club at Mount Greylock. The club will meet virtually once a week and discuss possible debate topics, both hypothetical and political. During a typical debate meeting, teams will be chosen at random, not dependent on opinion, and each meeting will "highlight a new debating skill," according to Schwarzer. The group will then practice formulating arguments and rebuttals. By assigning teams randomly, club members get a chance to practice arguing a side or position they may not necessarily agree with. This exercise also helps to eliminate emotion in arguments.

Both Sheehy and Schwarzer want to emphasize that this club is not meant to add extra stress onto its members. The club is meant to be a fun way for students to practice debating with their peers.

Sheehy and Schwarzer started this club with their faculty advisor, Mr. Blackman, and hope to mimic the 8th grade debates at a high school level. This debate club is targeted more towards high school students instead of the entire school, as middle schoolers have the 8th grade debates. Schwarzer said that "debate in itself is incredibly important in current political context, but also tying into academics" She explains that "debate can directly impact the betterment of [ones] writing [and school work]."

The club currently has 12 members, but is looking to expand in size. Sheehy and Schwarzer plan to have weekly meetings, but the schedule is flexible as they want to alleviate the stress about extra work for their members. Despite the uncertainty brought on by the pandemic, Sheehy and Schwarzer have managed to use the time to develop a brand new club. If you are interested in joining or would like more information, please email them at aschwarzer@mgrhsstudent.org and msheehy@mgrhsstudent.org. ♦

Turf Project Enters Next Phase

Continued from Page 3

He also said that he was disheartened that more people didn't know about this switch from rubber to Brockfill. He thought the switch represented the subcommittee listening to the public's complaints and "trying to respond to the communities' concerns." He worries that the switch didn't get the attention it deserved because of everything on the School Committees plate this year but he hopes people learn about it now. Brockfill does have some downsides, of course. John Skavlem described it as more expensive than crumb rubber but "not too expensive to use," and noted that it held water unlike crumb rubber so it may get hard in the winter when it froze, but also noted that the playing fields were hardly used in the winter. Brockfill is wood-based and can be used to help enrich grass fields when its cycle is over on the turf field, as opposed to crumb rubber's potentially difficult and expensive disposal process.

John Skavlem also wanted to make clear that the turf field benefited all Greylock students, not just the sports teams. He said that gym teacher Coach Gill had expressed a desire to use a turf field to "take students outside for gym class later in the fall and earlier in the spring," something he noted was particularly important this year because of COVID precautions. John Skavlem was glad the vote happened and made sure to point out that the work supporting the recommendation began soon after the gift was made five years ago and that an artificial turf field was initially proposed over two and a half years ago, saying that the process "was anything but rushed." The School Committee will now review their documents, review and reapprove value engineering decisions, vet the process through the Williamstown Zoning Board of Appeals, and then go out to bid. ♦



Record the news through pictures and words.

Join the Echo Today.

NEWS & FEATURES

Debates Continue Over Police Presence at Local Schools

By LUCY MCWEENY

Discussions over the presence of police at WES, LES, and Mount Greylock have recently become more prominent than ever before, coming in wake of, although not entirely initiated by, the recent allegations against the Williamstown Police Department.

These discussions have been focused mainly around the Memorandum of Understanding, a document of understanding between Mount Greylock, Williamstown Elementary School, and The Williamstown Police Department. There is a separate one between Lanesborough Elementary School and the Lanesborough Police Department.

The agreement was created with the purpose to "...support and foster the safe and healthy development of all students in the schools through strategic and appropriate use of law enforcement resources." Mount Greylock has a school liaison, a Williamstown police officer who comes around once a month to greet students at the door or for special purposes such as lock down or fire drills.

The elementary schools, specifically WES, however, have a police officer most days at pickup and dropoff. Their role is to control traffic, make sure no one parks in the wrong place, and generally to regulate the process of pickup and dropoff at the elementary school.

Although the discussions and concerns over the police presence at the local schools have recently become more prominent, there have been ongoing conversations since 2014 or 2015. However, in these past few months, more and more people have begun to voice their concerns about the police presence, which has sparked ongoing discussions between the schools, the police departments, and the community members.

In a recent DIRE (Diversity, Inclusion, and Racial Equity) committee meeting, the topic of the police presence at schools came up repeatedly. Williamstown resident Meg Bossong, who has played a large part in these discussions, brought up her concerns in these past meetings. The Echo spoke with Bossong about these concerns. "It introduces a level of policing into the school day that doesn't need to exist there," she said.

Another Williamstown resident, Peggy Kern, has also been a prominent figure in these discussions. "It was always very jarring to have an armed police officer present that students are walking by," she said. "Young students are right at eye level with their weapon."

For some, the ultimate goal is to replace the police officer at the elementary schools with a civilian. At Mount Greylock, those community members are also looking to replace the liaison at Mount Greylock with more mental health resources.

But, Bossong said, "Removing them [from the schools] entirely is a pretty challenging task, but an initial step is to say that they cannot be armed when they're in school." Many are concerned about the fact that the police officer is armed, and are looking to remove the weapon. "My concern is that if we're using police officers to do a function at an elementary school,

that we really don't need an armed officer," Kern said.

For many community members, either replacing or disarming the police officers is what they are working towards, with concerns over their child's school experience driving this. Bossong said, "Police do not have an appropriate role of function in schools, whether they're doing traffic control outside or liaison work inside of schools."

The concern is not only for the students, but also other community members. Bossong noted that the presence of police at pick up and drop off give them the opportunity for writing tickets for expired registration, expired inspection stickers and expired licenses. "It's a way of approaching policing that lands disproportionately on low income people," Bossong said. "Something like traffic enforcement disproportionately funnels low income people into the criminal justice system."

Kern said, "It's worth noting that in many other places and states, we do use civilians to, for example, control traffic flow around construction sites and things like that." She added that these discussions are not just about the students being affected by the presence of police but is also a discussion of race. "Of course all of this depends upon often the color of the student and the color of the family," she said. "We have to have these conversations."

The concerns over police presence at the schools are over an array of different reasons, all coming together to cause many community members to want to replace them. Although Mount Greylock has a school liaison, and not a recourse officer, one argument in support of the police presence is in case of a school shooting. However, Bossong said, "There's very very little evidence that school resource officers prevent or ameliorate school shootings."

She added, "We see that schools that have school resource officers are more likely to funnel children and young people into the juvenile justice system. It's criminalizing bad behavior in ways that it doesn't need to be." She said, "There are behaviors that need to be dealt with as conduct issues not as criminal issues."

These discussions have involved the schools, community members, and the police. The Chief of the Williamstown Police gave this statement regarding the issue to *The Echo*: "We have heard strong opinions on both sides of the issue of having a police presence at WES during drop off and pickup, and we will request a meeting with Dr. McCandless and his team once he starts as Superintendent in an effort to find a viable course of action."

Principal Schutz, the newly appointed principal of Mount Greylock, commented on the relationship between the schools and the police departments. "The police liaisons to MG from both Williamstown and Lanesborough Department's are invaluable," he said. "They serve as a conduit of communication between the school and the department. We often call them at all hours of the night and weekends to help us help students and families."

He added, "I think we've developed great

working relationships between the school and the liaisons which helps keep our campus, and inherently our students and staff, safe." When asked if he saw any issues that could come from the police presence at the schools, he said, "We have a police presence at Mount Greylock when we ask them to come. It's essential that our students and staff know the role of the police on campus, as much as the police understand and know the students and staff. The best way to build that understanding is to develop a relationship."

Schutz also commented on the conversation around removing the police officer's weapons when they are in school. He said, "I don't see it as the school's role to dictate the uniform of a police officer."

The Echo spoke with Greylock students to see what they thought about the police presence at the school. Erin O'keefe, a senior at Mount Greylock, said, "I would say that although I don't notice the police presence much, I don't think it's necessary at Greylock." She added, "A mental health resource would actually be helpful, considering that the guidance office always seems to be full. I think having extra help on campus would definitely be utilized."

With the school liaison not coming into the school often, some students don't notice the presence as much. Freshman Ollie Swabey said, "I think in some cases it could be helpful to have more of a presence, but personally I don't really notice it."

Sophomore Annie Art, however, said, "I think we should move to have less police presence in schools. If the resources could go towards mental health resources or something like that, I believe it would be more beneficial for the students." She added, "The presence of the police officer, especially if they are armed, can lead to students feeling unsafe and intimidated, so I believe we should use those resources in a more beneficial way."

Others feel more communication is needed. Freshman George Munemo said, "I'm not sure how much the police officers affect the school, or how long they are actually at the school. But I know that a lot of people are scared of police officers because of what they've seen on TV or heard." He feels that "we should have school wide meetings or conferences with police officers and let everyone share their opinion. The only way we can change our fear of police is to talk with them."

As discussions over the police presence at local schools proceed, there is no final decision in sight yet. This is a developing issue, and the conversations may lead to any number of outcomes. This topic will continue to be a prominent one in the coming weeks. Check *The Echo* website for more updates. ♦

SPORTS

Unified Basketball Adjusts to COVID-19 Guidelines

By ALAYNA SCHWARZER

With the COVID-19 pandemic prompting the implementation of new safety protocols across many areas of daily life, high school sports teams have had to adjust and even postpone parts of their sports season.

One such sport that has been impacted is Mount Greylock's Unified Basketball Team. Their season traditionally takes place in the fall, but it could not continue this year with the dangers that come with playing basketball in an enclosed indoor space. As of now, the team will have an all-practice season consisting of six 90 minute practices. The team will also not play games at this time, but there may still be a possibility of doing so during the MIAA's additional "Fall II" season.

Coach Liza Barrett and assistant coach Camlyn Hoss have had to shift team dynamics and practice structure in order to meet health and safety protocols. During practices players are broken into "cohorts within the team to make social distancing easier," said junior Henry Art, a member of the team. Breaking into the cohorts allows for a pod-like system with respect to the state's social distancing protocols. The sharing of basketballs and equipment has not yet occurred, but sanitization policies are in place in the event of players sharing a ball.

"[It] is not that hard to follow," Barrett said. "We're able to keep our distance and use all of the baskets."

Scrimmages have also become a thing of the past under the new guidelines from the state. There are limitations on person-to-person contact in order to properly facilitate social distancing policies. "So much of the fun of a basketball practice is you do all the drills and you end scrimmaging," said Barrett. "We don't have that."

Many players, like Art, find this focus on the "development of individual skills" to be "a major shift" amongst the team dynamic. The team's past practice structure allowed them to focus on team-centricity. Art said, "Unified is all about inclusion and total team involvement."

"We're doing the best we can to keep the emphasis on team," Barrett said.

Although the given circumstances have forced the team to modify, Barrett emphasized that the social bonds that the team cultivates are still very much thriving: "What's been incredible are the new friendships between students who otherwise might not have interacted or met each other."

Art articulated his own appreciation over the team's relationship both before and during COVID, saying it "extends beyond us as players too."

Even though the Mount Greylock Unified Basketball Team has had to change many of their normal procedures this year, Barrett said, "I am grateful considering everything going on, that we're able to get together, safely, and spend time in the gym together as a team." ♦

Athlete Spotlight: Delaney Babcock

By PABLO SANTOS

The Echo sat down with Delaney Babcock, a senior captain of the Greylock Girls' Soccer Team, to hear a bit about her experience playing soccer at Mount Greylock and how that had changed due to COVID-19. While there is no competitive highschool season, athletes have the opportunity to compete in the Berkshire County Youth Soccer League.



Echo: How has this season been for you compared to other seasons considering COVID-19?

DB: It's been different. Due to being a captain, it's been weird, but it feels great to be outside and playing the sport. To be a part of that team environment has been great so far as well.

Echo: How do you think your play this season has been so far?

DB: My play this season has been good as of now but I feel like I can step up my playing. I love playing rapid fire in practice.

Echo: What do you think of the Fall I vs the Fall II situation?

DB: Fall I is a good thing because it allows us to go outside and it's more of a calm and not so stressful type of situation. Unfortunately, our games do not make a difference in anything and not being able to play on our own fields is a negative as well. I am also dreading that we will not have a senior night, which I have been thinking about for years now. Fall II has me excited because it allows for the possibility of a normal season, and would give me a chance to play a sport that I enjoy twice!

Echo: Do you ever feel at risk when you play other teams?

DB: I am always worried because I want my friends and family to stay safe as well as myself, but I cannot control whether the other team wears their mask as well as when they wear it during the game. Being in the goal makes me feel secure though because I am not near people as much.

Echo: Where do you think the season will go from here on out? And how do you think the other sports will be affected?

DB: I am hoping that the season continues all the way through, as we only have a few games left. As for future sports, I think that this was a trial run for outdoor sports and will help be able to create a plan, but for indoor sports such as basketball I don't think they can really plan for it.

Echo: How do you feel about your senior year overall? Is this what you were expecting?

DB: Oh definitely not, although it really has changed me over the past six months with everything going on. I like being able to get outside and play a game that I have been playing since I was growing up without the extra stress of always having to win. That being said, I do miss being able to play in a game full of intensity and being in a crowded environment. ♦

Fall Sports in Brief

By JOHN SKAVLEM

Although the majority of fall sports at Mount Greylock have been limited to a six week practice program, the Mount Greylock cross country running and golf teams have still been able to move forward with a competitive, while modified, season. According to Massachusetts state regulations, both teams qualify as "lower risk" sports. Lower risk sports are defined by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs as "sports and activities that can be done with no social distancing and no physical contact." The only two sports offered at Mount Greylock that fall beneath this category are cross country and golf.

Both teams have gotten a chance to com-

pete against other Berkshire County programs, and have proved that at least one thing has remained a constant this year: the dominance of our Mounties sports teams. The Mount Greylock golf team tied Wahconah for the county title this past weekend, with a score of 170-170. Mt Greylock senior captain Ben Prescott, along with Xander Axt, Owen Petropolis, and Cayden Conry, led the team to the championship, despite the season's unconventional nature. "It has just been a weird year," said Prescott. Golfers are required to wear masks on the tee boxes and greens. Their season has also been severely reduced.

Continued on Page 10.

SPORTS & OPINIONS

Fall Sports in Brief

Continued from Page 9



Photo Courtesy of Ann Marie Swann

The team will not get a chance to compete in Western Mass, meaning that they must settle for the Berkshire County title.

Both the boys' and girls' cross country teams

have also seen success in their respective seasons. The girls' team is currently sitting at 4-0, after defeating Mt. Everett, Wachonah, and Monument twice. Senior captains Jackie Wells and Hazel Scullin, as well as junior Kate Swann, have been leading the pack.

The boys' team has a record of 2-1-1, coming off a recent loss to Monument this past weekend. Their top runners include Senior captain Charlie McWeeny and freshman Ollie Swabey. Both teams are already more than half way through their season due to the new limited schedule and no postseason.

Other modifications have made the season look a bit different from past years. Masks are required to be worn at the start of each race and the team has been limited to 40 participants. Races that typically would have up to 3-6 teams competing against each other have now been limited to dual meets, meaning one team versus another. No fans are allowed. Mass starts have also been eliminated, so runners are having to find entirely new strategies when racing this season. Thankfully, the teams have been keeping a positive attitude.

"We have really dedicated this season to having fun and focusing on mental health," said Swann. "I also know that in my pod we are all getting closer which is really great." The "pods" of runners have also been a new addition to practice this year, implemented in order to make

sure the team social distances.

It has certainly been an untraditional year, but the boys' and girls' cross country teams along with the golf team have been able to make the best of a difficult situation. ♦



Photo Courtesy of iBerkshires

Are Movie Theaters Destined to Die?

By WILL MCDONOUGH

Ever since streaming services have risen to popularity, the way society consumes entertainment has drastically changed. Cable television viewership has been declining as people turn to subscriptions such as Netflix and Hulu. News shows have been replaced by quick Google alerts or social media updates. Even live sports can now be viewed on services such as Hulu for an extra price.

Perhaps the biggest change, though, is the rise in blockbuster level movies released on these streaming services. The COVID-19 pandemic has forced many big studios to release films directly to the "small screen," which has only served to aid something that may be inevitable: the death of the movie theater.

As the pandemic began, many major films saw delays and those who were in the middle of filming had production halted. Some movies that would have already been released by now are still delayed, seemingly indefinitely. Black Widow, a Marvel Studios superhero film starring Scarlett Johansson, was set to release on May 1st, 2020. Now it is scheduled to release May 7th, 2021, over a year after it was supposed to be in theaters.

Many studios, likely out of fear of losing money from a lengthy delay, have opted to release movies either direct to video or on a streaming service. The at-home releases serve as a bit of a test run. Studios can see if releasing big budget movies on streaming will have the same success. So far, it appears as if it might. Disney released their live-action remake of

Mulan on Disney-plus -- but even subscribers to the service had to pay an egregious 30 dollars. The current box office domestic total is 66.8 million dollars, which is a large loss compared to a 200 million dollar budget. But the total proves that people will still pay to see movies even if they are sitting at home.

Blockbuster type movies have been coming out on streaming since before the pandemic. One of the most notable is Bird Box, a movie that proved streaming services could produce a

There is a sense of community that comes with sitting in a dark theater.

high quality movie with big budget actors.

Fourteen time Oscar nominated director Martin Scorsese even released his 2019 movie The Irishman on Netflix. It eventually went on to earn ten Oscar nominations. Five years ago, something like that would have never even crossed most people's minds.

But now, in the current pandemic-world, many people just don't feel safe going to theaters. This has caused many local theaters to go out of business or remain closed. If studios discover that they can still turn a profit by sending their movies straight to streaming, it is incredibly likely that fewer and fewer movies will come to theaters. Independent movies that don't usually have large box office turn outs will likely turn to streaming services to release and,

in many cases, produce their films. Television consumption has already primarily switched over to bingeing on streaming services, and it looks like movies follow suit.

Plus, the convenience of streaming is something that could impact this greatly. It is much easier to pay a monthly fee of twelve dollars to access thousands of movies and new releases, than to pay fifteen to walk into a theater and see one.

With all that being said, I'm unconvinced that movie theaters will ever truly die. The biggest part of seeing a movie in the theater is the experience. There is a sense of community that comes with sitting in a dark theater. For a small moment in time, you all have something in common. Hearing other people react to events on screen and seeing beautiful visuals on a large screen are things most people can not get at home.

In a post-pandemic world, we are likely going to crave more social interactions, and cinemas are one of easiest to experience this sense of community. Directors like Christopher Nolan (Inception, The Dark Knight) are notably refusing to release their movies on streaming services, as they believe no one can get a full movie watching experience without the theater. While independent movies and lower-budget films will likely move to streaming, blockbusters and franchise movies will stay in the theater. Cinemas will remain a place to watch movies in their purest form. They won't be disappearing just yet, even if that seems to be the case. ♦

OPINIONS

Racial Education Done Right-ish

By JULIUS MUNEMO

While it may be difficult to look back to a time before COVID and the most recent Black Lives Matter boom, let me take you back to the start of the year. Doctor Adolf Brown was coming to Mount Greylock for what was presumably meant to be an informative performance on race and privilege. However, many students of our high school were unable to look past Doc Brown's scandalous and frankly sexist treatment of women during his performance, while many others became concerned about the cost of the endeavour and questioned the purpose of inviting Doc Brown to Greylock in the first place.

An entirely separate contingent of students found his actual message to be worth the money and the time. They thought the problems found within it by their peers simple distractions from his desired point. The bottom line is, his message wasn't for many of us, as the level headed among us pointed out. Everyone was distracted by something, rightly so, and any possible good of Doc Brown's message was lost in the weeds.

Fast forward nine months. Widen your scope globally. Millions of people across our nation and the world have been stuck home due to the outbreak of a novel coronavirus, communicating through electronics to stay sane. And then, halfway between Doc Brown and now, George Floyd was murdered on video by police officer Derek Chauvin in Minneapolis. We all saw it. We were all enraged. And suddenly the electronic world we had been curating for a good few months to supply us with the correct memes and provide us with a base level of sanity was turned on its head. In a time of outrage and seclusion, the era of online--and in-person--activism exploded. As rioters began to burn down cities, as peaceful protests began to chant out demands, as the All Lives Matter folks pushed back, our country split down the middle. Did I mention we have a presidential election in just a few weeks?

This chaos, this division, this movement is the backdrop for Jason Reynolds' virtual read aloud, a session every single student at Mount Greylock tuned in for on October 9th. Our attendance to the read aloud was paired with an announcement from Mrs. Barrett and the administration that every student in the school will read Jason Reynolds YA adaptation of Ibram X Kendi's book *Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You*. And while my computer doesn't think that "antiracism" is a word, we have all been trained in the past nine months to know exactly what it means. It's been on everybody's lips or Instagram stories lately. We should all understand that word by now. It's about being more than not racist, it's about fighting back.

While I found Reynolds' breakdown of the three types of racists a tad confusing, I think because of the virtual nature of the conversation, this is what I wrote down in my notes during the read aloud: Segregationists are the old fashioned racists who want to keep the different kinds of people apart. Assimilationists are a more recent form of racist whose goal is to merge every culture together to amass one colorless form. And antiracists are what we want to be, what many of us have been trying to be; the black squares on Instagram, the donation links

in the bios, etc.

I'm not sure how well this breakdown represents the racism we face in this country, or if it presents the best solution to fix it, but I do know a couple things. Racism is very real and very bad. I don't really feel like that point needs much clarifying. Additionally, having a school wide conversation about being an antiracist is good. Especially at our school. For all the same reasons that Doc Brown's message went over many of our heads (richness and whiteness), this message is tailor made for Greylock students, especially now.

Let's get something straight. I don't think Black Lives Matter is really about black people anymore. At least not in this town. I remember being a seventh grader when Dylann Roof killed nine church going black Americans at a worship session in Charleston South Carolina. I remember Black Lives Matter then. It looked like me standing at the town rotary holding a sign. While my dad and my brother weren't there, many of the town's few minorities were. There were white people at the protest, lots of them, and in no way am I saying their attendance was wrong or that it would ever be better to have segregated lanes for discourse. But I can't help but focus on the difference between my feelings then and my feelings now. Then, as uncomfortable as I was, I knew that Black Lives Matter was about me, or people like me. All I had to do was look at the signs or listen to the chants. Now I feel just the opposite. My brother and I drive by the vigil at the rotary every Friday night on the way home from soccer practice and I look at the faces of all the white people holding up signs that should make me feel like I matter. But I always feel the same as I do when I walk into a diner with my family and see all the eyes flick up to us at once. Out of place.

And I think that's how I am going to feel when I read *Stamped*. I'm sure it's great. I'm sure the message will mean something to somebody and that is all that a book has to do to be worth reading. But I don't think it's really for me. That isn't necessarily a bad thing. I don't have to be who the book is for, I'm not that selfish. But it seems weird that a movement called Black Lives Matter, and the media it has spawned, are leaving certain black people behind.

Maybe it's my own fault. Maybe I've done too much to diverge the way I think from the majority of people in the town, white or black or otherwise, or maybe not. Maybe a movement which has been taken over by white people is starting to produce media for white people.

Now, I don't want to belittle my guy Jason Reynolds, nor do I mean to offend any of you dear readers. I want you all on my side because we should all be on the same side about racism. Undoubtedly. But I can't shake the feeling that this is Black-ish all over again. That this is the exploitation of the very real black struggle for the market of the very rich white hands.

And I think that icky feeling is why I am tentative to be excited about a school-wide mandate to read this book. It feels unnatural to add the same book into six different curriculums and say "Look, we're woke, we did it!" Maybe we are woke. Maybe we did do it. But the promotion of this book alone as a guide to the hun-

dreds of confused students trying their best to navigate the divisive and dangerous world that this school is supposed to prepare them for seems ignorant. It seems like we've written off all other perspectives.

And unfortunately it's clear to me where that comes from. That's all 2020 has been in terms of social progression, uncompromising absolutes. This or that. You back Black Lives Matter, or you must be a racist. You say All Cops Are Bastards, or you're a part of the problem. Here it feels like the option the school was faced with was, read *Stamped* or continue to ignore the racial injustice in America. It will never be that simple, and if you've felt lost or confused or angry, as I have when faced with these yes or no questions, understand that we can change the narrative whenever we like. We can expand the parameters of our demands to include the opinions of our reasonable countrymen and women, or we can decide that those opinions are garbage and should never be given a platform to spread. But we have to decide that as a culture, as a team, and that can't be done with binary questions.

I know this entire piece has been negative but I didn't set out for that to happen. I wanted to support this decision, I wanted to at least be able to weigh the pros and cons. I don't hate the message of the book. I really don't. I think segregationists are bad, but I don't know that antiracists are the only good option we have, at least not with the goalposts where they are now. I don't know that replacing black shame with white guilt will do anything to help our country.

And maybe that's not the goal. Maybe that's just a necessary evil, a single bullet point on a list that I am focusing on more than the list's writers want me to. But then again, how can we say we're making any real change if all we're doing is playing volleyball with a lump full of negative emotions and stereotypes? One side lobs it to the other, back and forth forever. That can't be the path we take forwards, it just can't. We need to be able to talk about this stuff, and I don't see how that can happen if we have only one definitive and divisive guidebook. Starting this conversation with *Stamped* is a good place to begin. But it cannot be where this conversation ends. We can't have one side given the green light to reach every brain in the school and not allow other sides a chance to respond. It feels as though the introduction of *Stamped* hinges on an understanding that we are at the mercy of binary choices, an understanding I see to be incredibly dangerous.

I know that this is an opinion piece, I know many of you surely have counter arguments in what I'm saying just as I do in everything I read. Good. If I can give you any advice, one humble idiot to another: open yourself up for criticism. It's coming if you are as serious about "fostering conversations," as these Instagram posts claim. If we really want to make change, we can't write off all outside perspectives. We all have demands, we all have wishes. It's naive of us to think that ours are the most valuable ones.

Continued on Page 12.

OPINIONS

Sylvie's Book Corner: *The Westing Game*

By SYLVIE CLOWES

The *Westing Game*, Ellen Raskin's 1978 Newbery Award-winning novel, is a dark and twisted mystery which simultaneously manages to be a hilarious comedy that reveals the multiple facets of the human psyche. What sets this book in motion is a Halloween dare: to enter the abandoned Westing mansion. The plot centers around the late Mr. Westing, who personifies the American dream, and a cast of sixteen characters who are drawn together by the reading of his will. Seemingly chosen to represent various facets of a diverse American society, at first the sixteen appear to be simply pawns in his game, but they eventually grow to be multidimensional protagonists. In the first chapter Raskin introduces some of them as "[a] dressmaker, a secretary, an inventor, a doctor, a judge. And, oh yes, one was a bookie, one was a burglar, one was a bomber, and one was a mistake."

The will is what both brings these characters together and rips them apart. In it, Mr. Westing sets up the rules for his last game. He has created a puzzle based on sets of clues that are meant to allow the players to find his murderer and thus inherit his fortune. At first glance, Mr. Westing appears to be a powerful, kind, eccentric business owner, but each character has a different idea of who he was—for some he was a generous man, for others he was a thief. Was he really the ideal of the American dream, and did he truly want those present for the reading to have a chance at sharing in it? I do not know, and neither do any of his potential heirs. Their very connection to Mr. Westing is mostly based on his legacy, rather than any direct experience with the man. Even the reader is left to wonder who Mr. Westing truly was.

Indeed, the biggest question the novel seems to pose is who? Who are these people actually and are they who they claim to be? And why is this mix of people with no obvious ties to Mr. Westing being brought together to play a sick game of trust, random words, and greed? Because the book is told from the point of view of all the protagonists, it initially seems easy to figure out who they are, but often they do not know themselves. People have a tendency to not only hide their secrets from others, but also from themselves. The novel's plot is genius, but it's what the characters do with the clues that makes the book interesting. They twist the mystery to become their own drama, and in doing so the game becomes each of theirs, not just Mr. Westing's. As the story morphs, their pasts are brought to light and their lives become forever altered.

In *The Westing Game*, her final novel, Raskin builds a perfect last puzzle, and with it, manages to weave a conniving, witty, and satisfying tale that stands the test of time. She is frank with truth, yet that only serves to make the story more perplexing. She leaves all the clues to solve the mystery in plain sight, but it is only when you reread the novel, as I have done numerous times, that you can see how they all fit together. ♦

5 Movies I Need to Watch

By DREW SCANLON

We've all been there. You're chatting with a friend, or a relative, maybe, and they bring up their Favorite Movie of All Time. You nod, smile, and try to match the excitement they are so clearly exuding. Soon, though, you must break the news: you've never actually seen it. A shocked expression, followed by a look of pity, almost, graces the face of your companion. And then, typically out of obligation, you promise to put it on "your list." Now, for most of us, these lists aren't real. We won't have the time to watch these movies, or we simply aren't interested.

But for many people, movie watching has become a new pastime during the COVID-19 pandemic. With plenty of free time on our hands, we've all gotten a chance to sit down, enjoy a few of the classics, and check some of these movies off our "list." Inevitably, though, we all still have movies we've just never gotten around to seeing. Below you'll find my list: movies that I've promised many people I'll see, but never have. Hopefully, you'll add them to your list, too, and maybe we'll both get around to eventually watching them.

5. *Five Feet Apart* (2019)

Until I saw an episode of *Riverdale*, I never understood why Cole Sprouse was such a big thing. After seeing it, though, I came to the conclusion that Cole Sprouse was a great actor who perfectly plays the part of the dramatic and angsty high school boyfriend.

4. *Jurassic Park* (1993)

I've already gotten some heat about this from my friends outside of school, who haven't really said a word to me since out of shock. In all honesty, I kind of forgot about it until it came across my Netflix feed during quarantine.

3. *Titanic* (1997)

I can't even begin to explain the things I've been told about this movie. When I first heard about it, I'll admit I wasn't interested. Thirteen year old me thought, "I know exactly what happens to the Titanic. Why would I watch a movie about it?" Then, in orchestra, I played the film score and became a bit more intrigued. However, after seeing Leonardo DiCaprio in *Romeo and Juliet*, I have my doubts.

2. *Spiderman: Into The Spideverse* (2018)

Some say this is one of the best animated films ever. For me, this is a movie I've been dying to see for months. As a huge Spiderman fan myself, I absolutely have to have a movie that is considered to be one of the best in its franchise on my watch list.

1. *Avengers: Endgame* (2019)

I'm sorry, everyone. Truly, I am. I have not seen *Endgame*. Now, in my defense, I only started watching the movies in the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) last June. I haven't even seen all of the MCU movies yet and could probably make a list of ten that I need to watch right now, including this one. That's all there is to it. I'm gonna watch this as soon as I can. I promise. ♦

Racial Education Done Right-ish

Continued from Page 11

I don't want my words to add to your confusion as a reader, as a student, and, most importantly, as an American during these heart-wrenching and divisive and infuriating times. We are facing a batch of challenges vastly different from anything ever faced by a generation, and we have a lot of weight on our shoulders. I think if 2020 has proven anything, it's that we are going to have a lot of work to do. I want the best for us, as a class, as a school and as a country, so believe me when I tell you that I wish talking about this book were as easy as saying, "it's written from a black perspective and therefore we should listen to it." It pains me to write what I am about to: that's not enough. When we all read this book, we all have to decide on our own whether it should be heralded as a cure for racism.

I haven't read it yet, and although I don't know for sure, I have a feeling it won't be a cure for much of anything. Few things ever are. It's not going to be as easy as reading any one book and deciding to follow what it says, because the black experience, the white experience, the American experience is more complex than any one author can summarize. Which is why my final request of you, dear reader, is that when you talk about this book as you are mandated to do this year, do not hold back. Be bold in your classrooms and your essays, disagree with what your classmates think if you have reason to, and never let anyone tell you that your right to an opinion is less important than theirs. The only way to get a holistic view of this nation and its very real problems is to talk and to disagree and to find common ground. That can never be done if you allow yourself to be silenced. That can never be done if we allow ourselves to be told what to agree with and what to find fault in.

The truth about the American experience relies on you as much as it does on any book we will ever read. Your voice matters. Use it. ♦

Greylock Echo Editorial Staff

Editor-in-Chief: Clara McWeeny '21

Managing: Emma Sandstrom and Mackenzie Sheehy '22

Associate: Laura Dupis and

Charlie Mcweeny '21

Layout: Hazel Scullin

and Gabe Gerry '21

Advisor: Peter Niemeyer

Mt. Greylock Regional High School

1781 Cold Spring Road

Williamstown, Mass. 01267, USA

Questions? Comments? News tips?

Please contact:

mountgreylockecho@gmail.com

Visit our website!

greylockecho.mgrhs.org