

The Greylock Echo

March Edition

Mount Greylock - Williamstown, MA

March 17, 2023

Two Mount Greylock Students Selected for All-State Festival Ensembles

BY JACLYNN KASTRINAKIS

Four Mount Greylock students attended the All-State Festival Ensembles tryout on January 21st in Shrewsbury, Massachusetts to prove their musical skills in a selective process. Juniors Emily Dupuis and Grace Winters were chosen for the All-State performance, scheduled for March 4th at Boston Symphony Hall. Because of weather conflicts, a makeshift concert was performed on March 3rd.

To audition for All-State, students must score high enough at the Western District audition. "There's always those jitters that you get right before an audition, and you get really scared, but then you're like, I can do this. Just take some deep breaths, and that really helps," Dupuis said.

This year's All-State Concert, featuring over 500 chorus, orchestra, band and jazz musicians, was the festival's 69th annual performance. The concert is sponsored by the Massachusetts Music Education Association, a group that is a part of the National Association for Music Education.

When asked about her experiences with the judges and the specific All-State audition, Winters said it was intense. "It was honestly quite scary because they have you go into this room...you have to play this piece. They just sit there, watch you and write things down. It's just always so stressful," Winters said.

The students enter a room with a judge and play scales and pieces. The judges give feedback before the student is sent on their way and the audition is over. "I think it was definitely a little bit stressful getting prepared for everything. But the audition was good. There was definitely that feeling of doubt right after the audition. But it all turned out well," Winters

said.

After being selected for All-State, Dupuis for flute and Winters for bass, both juniors got the opportunity to work with other talented musicians from Massachusetts. "I'm thinking of majoring in music as of right now...music is something that holds a lot of value and I think it should be represented, and I want to do that as best as I can," Dupuis said.

"I'm looking forward to continuing music and just seeing how far I can go with it," Winters said.

Although the steps to get performance-ready may have been challenging, Winters and Dupuis agreed that the end result was rewarding. "I think the scariness of the audition is definitely worth it in the end because you get such a good experience, whether it goes bad or good, from playing in front of the judge. And just get that experience for yourself," Dupuis said.

The incoming winter storm forced the directors of the festival to create an impromptu concert for the musicians present on March

3rd. The March 4th concert postponement was unfortunate for many, as it meant fewer audience members. However, the musicians still performed for each other and might have the opportunity to perform on a rescheduled date at some point in the future.

"This was a very difficult decision that we understand will have several impacts on our students, families and programs," the MMEA Executive Board wrote in a statement. "We do know how disappointing this decision is for the students participating but we will be working with Symphony Hall to see if we can find an alternate date to have the performance." ♦



Photo Courtesy of @mgmounties Instagram - Winters, Dupuis, Simon Shin, and Killian Scanlon Attend All-State Festival Ensembles Audition

1 in 650: Interview with Annie Art

BY ANDREW PETROPULOS



Photo Courtesy of Annie Art

The Greylock Echo sat down with Senior Annie Art who recently became the 2023 recipient of the Mount Greylock Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents Academic Excellence Award, also known as the Superintendent's Award.

Echo: How did you find out about the award?
Annie Art: I got an email from Dr. McCandless in the fall. It was very kind and said I got it and it would be presented in December.

E: When did you start at Mount Greylock?
AA: I started here in seventh grade, I think it was 2017.

E: What do you do outside of school?
AA: I really enjoy running. I'm on the Cross Country team here and I spend my springs just running on my own. I also enjoy just being outside, reading, stuff like that.

E: What do you like most about Greylock?
AA: I think it's a really cool environment and community where people like to support each other and push each other.

E: What are your plans for next year?
AA: I'll be heading up to Vermont where I'll attend Middlebury College. I'll probably be studying something environmental studies

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Boys Nordic Ski Wins States
Senior Ezra Holzapfel reflects on his time in the program.
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"AP" Gym
Students and teachers react to the new Advanced PE course.
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NEWS

SEE Fund Awards \$15,000 to Thirteen Grants

BY FRANCES EVANS

This year, Mount Greylock students, staff, and community members who applied for grants received more than \$15,000 from the Selective Educational Excellence (SEE) Fund. A range of \$200-\$3,500 each was awarded to thirteen out of the eighteen applications. These applications range from field trips to improvement of arts and extracurricular activities.

The SEE Fund is an endowed fund run by the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation that allows community members to pitch ideas for how to improve curriculum, promote a love of learning, and stimulate creative and intellectual endeavors.

"The SEE Fund is a resource for students and faculty and staff to obtain funding for programs they otherwise couldn't," said Chris McAlister, chair of the SEE Fund Board.

Anyone in the Mount Greylock community can apply for a grant to improve a part of Mount Greylock Regional School including student life, staff assistance, or community outreach programs. "[The projects] have to impact a number of students, not just a small group of students," McAlister said. "They need to meet some sort of need that can't be met through the school budget or through other initiatives ... [and] make sense cost-effectively."

One project that the SEE Fund funded this year was a library initiative involving coloring in order to de-stress. "We provided just over

\$250 this year for the Color Yourself Calm Board in the library. As a parent, I loved this idea," McAlister said.

School librarian Liza Barrett, who applied for this coloring grant, said applying is a "straightforward, easy process." Over the years, Barrett has applied and received "dozens of SEE

"[The SEE Fund] is just a great way to get extra things for the students that [staff] doesn't have enough in the budget for."

Liza Barrett

fund grants" to improve the library for students.

"[The SEE Fund] is just a great way to get extra things for the students that [staff] doesn't have enough in the budget for," Barrett said. "If I didn't get a SEE Fund grant, I would be getting [the coloring boards] myself ... out of my own pocket."

Another recipient, chorus and band teacher Jaqueline Vinette, will be using the grant money for the technical components of the Prism Concert this March that combines Lanesborough

Elementary School, Williamstown Elementary School, and Mount Greylock Regional School musicians for one group concert. "[The SEE Fund is] an opportunity for us to do something we probably wouldn't be able to do otherwise," Vinette said.

"I loved the idea of this Prism concert this year," McAlister said.

Celina Savage, senior president of the Youth Environmental Squad (YES) and recipient of a SEE Fund grant, received money for gardening supplies. Savage said the fund allowed the YES club to "expand [their] opportunities."

The SEE Fund itself relies on the community for funding. "For the last several years, our primary fundraiser is a phone-a-thon where student volunteers reach out to the Mount Greylock community to request support for the SEE Fund," she said. "Last year, we raised almost \$10,000."

Those interested in raising money for the SEE Fund and volunteering for the phone-a-thon will have an opportunity this spring. "We'll be looking to hold our event in late April again this year and are always looking for student volunteers," McAlister said.

Barrett gives the SEE Fund high praise: "It's incredibly helpful, and even essential, for teachers to think outside the box and do even more for their students." ♦

Students Create Memoir Covers in Graphic Design Course

BY MAGGIE NICHOLS

Many Greylock students spend part of their day in the library, whether that be for a class or to see friends at break. With the library decor constantly changing, students may not have noticed a recent exhibit: student-made memoir covers created by Karin Stack's first semester Graphic Design I class.

Students have created a range of projects from album covers to concert posters, according to Stack, but recently completed a project focused on creating a memoir about their lives. The memoirs, theoretically written about "what their lives would be like twenty years in the future," included aspects of both graphic design and creativity, said Stack. By imagining the "best possible scenario" and "worst possible scenario," students were able to thoroughly consider what they would write about. The memoirs attempted to address both what someone's life would be like while also working on issues in graphic design.

"I was really interested when given the assignment," said junior Gabby Quagliano, who's memoir titled "Mental Space" was on display.

The process started using deaccessioned books from the library—ones which are no longer available to read. Students designed the covers of their memoirs using a photo as a background. "Some used family photos, some used other members of the class to take photos for them," said Stack.

The memoirs were composed using Adobe InDesign, a professional page layout software. The program can be "used to create a magazine or book publishing project" and gives students the ability and freedom to create their own memoir from scratch, according to Stack. Putting together the memoirs themselves was not an easy task, as the projects "went through a bunch of changes and variations," said Stack.

Topics and themes ranged from "silly...to hilariously beautiful," said Stack. Some students chose to explore the creative parts of the project, while others worked on the logistical parts of actually designing and creating their memoirs.

Senior Clarissa Louis themed her memoir around her relationship to her twin brother and titled it Twin Trouble. Louis noted that a few people asked her about writing the memoir because the cover looked so real. The creative freedom of the project allowed students to create memoir covers that represented them accurately, making them believable enough to be real books.

"Being a twin is important to me, and this memoir is a great way to imagine my future as a twin," Louis said.

The freedom of the assignment allowed students to take several different approaches to their memoirs. "Students did not really have to care about that project the same way some cared about their memoir and how they were going to present themselves through the cover," said

Stack. For some, a school project turned into much more than just a project, becoming a representation of self.

The goal of the project, Stack said, was to "think about what you would want your life to be like, while also being open-ended." The project gave students freedom to think about their lives in an out-of-the-box way, while also exploring the creativity in designing a memoir.

"The assignment was sort of an avenue to approach design issues. There were pieces with some emphasis on what you wanted to communicate and how your design choices best communicate this to your viewers," Stack said.

The basis of the assignment gave students independence, allowing them to turn their memoirs into something of their own, beyond just a basic school project. "Students really got into it because I gave them a lot of freedom," Stack said.

The ability to structure and create their memoirs how they wanted gave the project pretty positive student feedback. Louis noted that she had to think about the project in a different way when it came to having to design the cover of her own memoir: "You see a lot of books, but you don't really think about the design of [the cover] until you have to design your own."

Stack said the project is a contender for next year because of student recommendations. ♦

NEWS

Professor Matt Tokeshi Gives Greylock Talk About Midterms

BY JACK UHAS

On January 18th, Mount Greylock's REV (Register. Educate. Vote.) along with the Williams Center at MG hosted a Greylock Talk featuring Matt Tokeshi, Assistant Professor of Political Science at Williams, to discuss the 2022 midterm elections. His presentation, titled "2022 Midterm Elections: What Happened and What's Next?," highlighted four key points of the election: the landscape heading into it and what was expected, what happened, why it happened, and what it means for our country going forward.

Heading into the midterms, the Democrats had 222 seats in the House of Representatives, meaning they could lose four seats and still maintain their majority. In the Senate, Democrats and Republicans had an equal number of seats, although with Vice President Kamala Harris voting in a divided chamber the Senate was effectively Democratic. The Democrats had no leeway for losing seats in the Senate.

As Americans headed to the polls, the situation was shaping up to be grim for Democrats. Tokeshi commented that, historically speaking, the party of the president usually loses seats, on average losing twenty-six seats in the House and four seats in the Senate. He also remarked on Biden's low approval rating heading into the midterms, around forty percent. Lastly, he mentioned how Republicans had been able to leverage the economic impact of the high inflation rates in America to gain support.

Moving to the results of the election, Tokeshi explained that the outcome was not exactly what the Republican Party was anticipating. The

Republican party was able to take control of the House, winning the majority by taking ten seats, but considering the aforementioned average of twenty-six seats as well as the positioning of the



Photo Courtesy of @mgmounties Instagram

country, this was a relatively negligible win. In the Senate, Democrats were able to gain a seat, giving the Democratic party a 51-49 majority.

But why did this happen? Why were the election results different from what many professionals predicted? Tokeshi blames three key factors for this unexpected development. The first is that many Republican candidates were of "low quality," either inexperienced or controversial. The two nominee examples he gave were Dr.

Mehmet Oz, who had no political background, and Herschel Walker, a former NFL running back who was in the midst of a scandal involving Walker allegedly offering to pay for former partners' abortions while his official stance was pro-life.

The second reason Tokeshi cited was Trump's involvement in the midterms. Many saw contenders endorsed by Trump as too extreme and were thus apprehensive about voting for such a candidate.

Finally, this summer's decision to overturn the contentious Roe v. Wade court case, which protected the right to an abortion in the US, encouraged many young voters to turn out in support of Democratic candidates seeking to codify the right to abortion.

Tokeshi expects that, now that the House is controlled by Republicans, Biden's legislative agenda will come to an end as the increasingly divisive chamber will have a hard time coming to a consensus on policy-making issues. He also expects Biden and Trump to have another battle in the elections, but is confident that if Biden can frame the election as a "choice" between himself and former President Trump, Biden will most likely emerge victorious again.

Senior Annie Art, president of REV, said that the club plans to have more speakers in the following months. Anyone interested can reach out to a REV member to receive the Zoom link for their meetings. ♦

Peer Team, in Collaboration With Administration, Kickstarts Anti-Bullying Campaign

BY ARTHUR MILLET

Throughout the middle school, bullying has been a significant issue this school year. Because of this, the school's Peer Resource Team has started an anti-bullying initiative to try to decrease bullying incidents.

The initiative started when several middle school students started reporting a number of cyberbullying incidents. This included a series of inappropriate photo and video posts that brought the issue to the administration's attention.

The Mount Greylock Peer Resource Team is a group of juniors and seniors selected by administrators who come up with a number of initiatives throughout the year, mostly working in the middle school.

The anti-bullying initiative is currently in its experimental phase; a number of ideas to solve the issue are being brainstormed. The Peer Team has recently put up a number of posters around the school to educate students about the different types of bullying and how to be an upstander.

"We're looking toward creating a more streamlined way for students to report incidents of bullying either to the Peer Team or to

others," said health teacher Ted Burdick, advisor of Peer Team.

The Peer Team has always gone into middle school directed studies once a week to teach lessons regarding bias and discrimination. Their last lesson with the eighth graders had a focus on bullying at Mount Greylock and how students can focus on being upstanders rather than bystanders.

Online curriculums and speakers are also being planned for the future. The Peer Team hopes to do an assembly to help spread awareness throughout the entire middle school and make the message clear.

Recently, the administration brought in Wayne Soares, an actor, columnist, and veteran's advocate, who spoke on his experiences with bullying and the importance of standing up for others.

"It's a tough thing to get through to people. Everyone knows there's bullying but it's hard to get people to care about it. We're trying to make as many upstanders as we can who stand up to bullies," said Peer Team senior Dan Warren. ♦



Wayne Soares, recent speaker at MG, stands with a group of middle school students - Photo Courtesy of @mgmounties Instagram

NEWS

Williamstown Votes in Favor of New Fire Station

BY KRISHIV MALHOTRA

On February 28th, citizens at a town meeting voted in favor of a new \$22.5 million fire station in Williamstown. The final tally was 509-32 after a meeting with speakers about all aspects of this new project. The discussion of a new fire station in Williamstown has been going on for the past two years, and with the arrival of the new year, the plans are public and the process has begun.

The current fire station in Williamstown was built 73 years ago, but since then, the town and its needs have changed. According to the Williamstown Fire Department website, the number of calls per year has increased from 63 to 240, requiring more materials and space for the fire station. The training to become a firefighter has also evolved. According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and other guidelines, the current Williamstown station needs more space for daily tasks and storage.

The station needed a two-thirds majority on this vote in order to build the new station. It is anticipated that construction will begin in the spring of 2024, and it will take 12-14 months to complete construction.

The fire station will be built at 560 Main Street, next to Aubuchon Hardware in Williamstown. Currently in that space are building materials being used for the bridge work on Main Street.

As per the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), "Each employer shall furnish a place of employment that is free from recognized hazards that are causing or are likely to cause death or serious physical harm." Currently, according to the Fire Department's website, there are multiple places at the fire station,

such as small, tight areas between fire trucks and space in other rooms, that could cause detrimental damage to people or materials.

The room for breathing air at the station is currently not meeting the standards of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), and as per their rule, "SCBA (self-contained breathing apparatus) shall be stored in their original carrying or storage cases, or in a wall or apparatus rack designed for quick removal and protection of the SCBA." On the Fire Department's website, they have shown the current fire station's breathing room, where SCBAs are stuck behind other materials and objects and are not on racks or designed for quick and easy access.

Currently, the technology necessary to operate the building is small and inefficient, according to the NFPA. The Fire Department has also shown on its website that there is a small box on the wall containing all of the technology necessary to operate the building. In the new station, the technology will be much more accessible.

Mission Control is a department where workers collaborate with law enforcement, EMS, and other affiliates by responding to calls and dispatching messages to other departments. The current mission control room, which can be seen on the Fire Department's website, is similar in size to a walk-in closet—one-third the size of a regulation room. It can only fit up to two people and is not as technologically advanced and up to standards as it should be, according to NFPA.

"Operationally, the new station would, among other things, provide the space needed to service vehicles inside, and the room needed to do much more training on-site," said Fire

Building Committee member, Jim Kolesar, in a public Q&A. Currently, most training for the Williamstown firefighters is done in Springfield, Massachusetts. For someone to become a fully licensed firefighter, they must complete 300 hours of training—this commute can be difficult for people living in Berkshire County.

"The more training that can be done on-site, the less of a deterrent it is to becoming and remaining a volunteer firefighter. Also, the more convenient the training facilities are, the more district members will train, and the more they train, the safer they'll be, and the safer we'll be when they respond to an alarm at our home or workplace or to our motor vehicle accident," said Kolesar.

The station is planned to have a carbon-zero certification from the International Future Living Institute. Unless there is a required emergency that uses carbon and other fossil fuels, the station will have solar panels and will power itself.

On January 25th, the Prudential Committee set a maximum cost of \$22.5 million, lower than the original \$25 million. The size of the station is planned to be approximately 24,000 square feet. Using databases from the Fire District site, it is shown that the cost per square foot and the size of the station are similar to other facilities that have been built in the area over the past few years.

"There will be a continued pursuit of cost savings and alternative funding sources, like grants and gifts. In ongoing stages, the committee will work to decrease the price and size. The original design comprised 28,000 square feet. It's now projected to be around 24,000," said Kolesar. ♦

President Biden Gives His Second State of the Union Address

BY JENNAH SIMPSON

On February 7th, President Joe Biden gave the second State of the Union address of his term to both chambers of Congress. The speech was also attended by the majority of the Supreme Court Justices, most members of President Biden's cabinet, the American ambassador to Ukraine and other guests.

The State of the Union address is given yearly by the president to Congress. Constitutionally, all it has to be is a written statement from the President on how they believe that the country is doing. Since World War II, almost every speech has been given in person and broadcasted to the American public. The broadcasting has turned the speech from a simple report card to a politicized event.

President Biden's team had one major goal: convince Democrats, and the general American public, that President Biden is fit to run for reelection in 2024. One week before the speech, President Biden had a 53 percent approval rating.

The speech began with an acknowledgement of the history that was being made within Congressional leadership. Rep. Hakeem Jeffries (NY-8) is the Democratic minority leader in the House of Representatives and is the first Black American to hold any party leadership position.

Mitch McConnell (KY) has held a party leadership position longer than anyone in history as both the Senate Minority Leader and Senate Majority Leader. Both recognitions were met with standing ovations from the majority of both parties and guests.

President Biden commended the American people for bouncing back from the COVID-19 pandemic and used this time to highlight some of his successes, such as the unemployment rate being at a decades long low.

Biden then transitioned to calling for bipartisanship. With Republicans in control of the House and Democrats in control of the Senate, Biden will be forced to change his methods to pass legislation. Biden expressed that he wants to move past the party politics and find some common ground to legislate on.

In a section of his speech about economics, Biden spoke about rejecting trickle-down economics—a Reagan-era policy that encourages cutting taxes for the wealthy. Biden laid out his plan to raise taxes on those making over \$400,000 per year in order to directly strengthen the middle class. Additionally, Biden spoke about the impacts of inflation and rapidly rising prices. Biden pointed out that while prices

are still higher than average, the inflation rate is lower than it was last summer. Biden later blatantly stated that he would veto any bill that would attempt to make prescription drugs more expensive for Americans on Medicare.

After talking about Medicare and economics, President Biden urged the country to become more environmentally conscious. Despite attempts to use more electric and clean sources of energy, Biden said that Americans will still be reliant on gas and oil for at least the next decade, garnering claps from the Republican party.

Biden circled back to the economy and social services by stating his belief that taxes must be raised on billionaires and Fortune 500 companies. He called for both parties to stand up for senior citizens. The majority of members of Congress present in the chamber stood for this. Biden then finished the statement with "by not cutting Social Security," which led to many Republicans sitting down.

Biden briefly covered less controversial topics, like cell phone provider laws, before transitioning into his statements on the passage of the Protecting the Right To Organize (PRO) Act and the restoration of the Child Tax Credit. The former would give workers in America the right to

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NEWS & FEATURES

58th Anniversary of “Bloody Sunday” Observed in Selma

BY JENNAH SIMPSON

“Bloody Sunday” is informally celebrated on the first Sunday of March in remembrance of the Civil Rights Movement. On March 7th, 1965, 600 people marched the 54 miles from Selma, Alabama to Alabama’s capital city, Montgomery, demanding the end of voter discrimination against Black voters. The march was largely in response to the murder of a young Black man named Jimmie Lee Jackson. When crossing the Edmund Pettus Bridge on March 7th, 80 protestors were beaten by police officers and 17 were hospitalized, one of whom was civil rights activist and later congressman John Lewis. The film of these protests was shown on national TV and sparked more action nationwide. The ensuing protests were largely responsible for the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

President Biden traveled to Selma on March 5th, 2023 to commemorate the anniversary of Bloody Sunday. He was joined by civil rights activist Reverend Al Sharpton. In his remarks, Sharpton, who works closely with the Biden administration, admitted to wishing that the Biden administration had put more effort into

protecting voting rights for many Americans. Sharpton called attention to the fact that the bridge they were standing on is still named after Senator Edmund Pettus, who was a leader in the Ku Klux Klan.

Biden himself also delivered remarks. He called for the renewal of much of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which he said has been “gutted” by conservative Supreme Courts. Biden then called out the state of Alabama for their new district map—he believes that the 2022 Congressional District Map violates the Voting Rights Act because it “discriminated against Black voters by failing to include what should’ve been a predominantly Black district.” Biden believed that what would have been the majority Black district was split into other districts for the purpose of a Republican electoral advantage. Biden assured audience members that this map was being challenged before the Supreme Court.

Biden then boasted about his successes in voting rights. He reminded people that he signed the Electoral Count Act, which is intended to help ensure that there is a peaceful transfer of

power and that election results are viewed as valid. He then called for there to be enough votes in Congress for the passage of both the John Lewis Voting Rights Act and the Freedom To Vote Act, often referred to as H.R. 1. Both of these failed in the Senate of the previous Congress due to the filibuster and are viewed as less likely to succeed now that Republicans have gained control of the House of Representatives. Biden then boasted about the success his administration has had for Selma’s infrastructure and recovery from a tornado.

While in Selma, the President, joined by several key members of his administration, civil rights leaders, members of congress, and protestors, went on a symbolic walk to the halfway point of the Edmund Pettus bridge, where the attack on protestors began. On his government Twitter account, Biden said in remembrance of Bloody Sunday: “No matter how hard some people try, we can’t just choose to learn what we want to know, and not what we should know. We should learn everything. The good. The bad. The truth of who we are as a nation. And everyone should know the truth of Selma.” ♦

AP African American Studies Curriculum Debated Across America

BY CHARLOTTE HOLUBAR

The College Board released an official curriculum for its new Advanced Placement course in African American Studies. After being stripped of much of the subject matter that had angered conservatives like Florida governor Ron DeSantis, the class focuses closer on African American history than current issues and events. The College Board also removed the names of many Black writers and scholars associated with Black feminism, critical race theory, and the Black Queer experience. Current controversial topics, like the Black Lives Matter movement, were ushered out.

The dispute over the AP course is much more than just the content of a high school class. Education is at the center of this partisan issue, and the College Board is attempting to build a curriculum covering one of the most controversial subjects in the country: race in America.

AP exams are immensely embedded in the American education system. Students take the courses and exams to show their academic rigor when applying to college. Many colleges and universities grant college credit to students who score high enough on an AP exam. Additionally, more than a million public high school students graduating in 2021 took at least one AP exam, College Board Reports stated. However, the disturbances over the exam raise concern about whether the revised African American Studies course fulfills its mission of mimicking a college-level course, which usually expects students to analyze secondary sources, take on contentious

topics, and handle controversial conversations.

The pushback began in January when DeSantis announced that he would ban the curriculum after criticizing different parts of the original version. Various state education officials additionally argued it was not historically accurate and violated a Florida state law that regulates how race-related issues are taught in public schools. The attack on the AP course turned out to be the prelude to a much larger DeSantis agenda. DeSantis announced in late January his plans to enact legislation which would mandate courses on Western civilization, eliminate programs in diversity and equity training, and decrease the protection of tenure in his state. DeSantis additionally threatened to ban all AP classes from his state, but according to Nick Anderson of the Washington Post, “it is unclear whether or how AP could be eliminated in Florida. The program...is deeply entrenched in the state and nationwide.”

After the AP curriculum was released, Bryan Griffin, the press secretary for DeSantis said the state education department was reviewing it for potential corrections and compliance with Florida’s law.

The College Board attempted to stay out of the political narrative with their revisions, but the class remained controversial in Florida both before and after. The newly revised curriculum framework ranges widely with content on continental Africa, slavery, reconstruction, and the Civil Rights Movement. The study of contempo-

rary topics, including Black Lives Matter, mass incarceration, Black Queer life, and the debate over monetary reparations, was removed by the College Board. They are now offered on a list of options for a required research project.

The writers and scholars for the class include Kimberle W. Crenshaw, a law professor at Columbia, Roderick Ferguson, a Yale professor who writes about Queer social movements, and Ta-Nehisi Coates, an author and advocate for reparations. ♦

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NEWS & FEATURES

Mount Greylock Regional School District Briefly Installs Mask Recommendation in January

BY NORA LOPEZ

As we approach the three-year anniversary of the 2020 COVID-19 school closures, it is often easy to look back on 2020-2022 and reflect on COVID as though it is over. Though infections have gone significantly down since early 2022 when they reached their peak, the Mount Greylock School District decided to release an email in January, shortly after Winter Break, to families that encouraged them to wear masks for a brief period as cases spiked in the district.

The initial spike in cases was most prevalent at Williamstown Elementary School around the week of January 18. One grade at WES had 25-30 percent of the grade out with COVID. "A year ago or two years ago, we probably would have closed that grade altogether or closed the school for a couple of days," Superintendent Jason McCandless said. "I wanted to make sure that we were doing what the state wanted us to do, I wanted to be sure we were being fair to kids, and I wanted to make sure we were being fair to their families."

The school district decided to respond with a district-wide mask recommendation due to the familial connections between the students and faculty at all three schools.

McCandless and his staff spoke with the

Massachusetts Commissioner of Education's appointed staff member who handled COVID-19 in schools. "I had been keeping that individual up to date with here's where we are," McCandless said. "We decided...let's send out a message reminding people that it's okay to wear a mask. The national requirements are gone, the state requirements are gone, but we want to make sure, particularly for students and the people at home that love them, that if you're more comfortable wearing a mask...that's okay."

Though the email and its encouraged masking window has passed, some students and faculty opt to continue wearing masks at school. One student who chooses to wear a mask is Natasha Nugent, a ninth grader. When Nugent was asked about her decision to wear a mask, she said, "Wearing the mask in public gives me extra peace of mind. I don't find wearing a mask uncomfortable... so it is a simple thing for me to do that greatly reduces my risk."

When Nugent saw the email go out to the Mount Greylock community, she thought that "it was a good move because a lot more people were getting sick, and wearing a mask seems to be the best way to reduce the chance of getting COVID in crowded situations." Now that the encour-

aged masking period has passed, most students choose to not wear masks around school. "I think the school's policy strikes a good balance," said Nugent about the school's current masking choice.

McCandless was satisfied with the number of students and staff that wore masks after the email was sent out.

"I was happy to see the number of masks that were distributed. People need to feel comfortable to do things that make them feel safer," McCandless said. The boxes of masks kept in storage in the school were all used up once put out in the main office.

"Selfishly, as a husband, as a dad, as just a guy, I would love to pretend that COVID is over. But it was a good reminder," McCandless said. "If you feel more comfortable in a mask or if you feel safer in a mask, please continue to feel free to do so." ♦

English Language Learner Class Focuses on Cooking Unit

BY QUIN REPETTO

Among the wide variety of classes Mount Greylock offers, it also provides an English Language Learner (ELL) program for multilingual students, especially those who have moved here from another country. The class focuses primarily on the acquisition of the English language, but it also helps students adapt to a new culture.

The program is currently run by Greylock teacher Elisa Paoloni, who started at her position in October. According to the description in the MG Course Catalog, the course tries to "foster English literacy" and helps students "gain confidence in their ability to write the English language" through the use of vocabulary and examination of texts and materials. There is also an additional emphasis on grammar and spelling. The course teaches language acquisition through content learning, including classroom activities and support for student's regular classes.

The class is currently in their Food unit, and one of their most recent projects for this unit involved writing down an English recipe for Salchipapa, a typical Colombian fast-food. The recipe, as written by the ELL class, is attached.

Jose Brito, a junior from Colombia, enjoyed this project because not only did it help him learn English, but it also gave him "nostalgia about [his] culture."

"It helps us remember moments that we had," Brito said. "Salchipapa is a traditional Colombian dish we ate in my culture... every weekend."

Brito said that the course is a "very interesting class" with a variety of subjects and projects that range from "how to make food to the history of the United States." He believes that this is an important class at Mount Greylock, as it helps students from other countries adapt to a new lifestyle while still celebrating their heritage and culture.

Salchipapa Colombiana Recipe From the ELL Class

Salchipapa is a traditional dish from Colombia. This dish is a street food that can be found across the country in different variations. It is the perfect dish to be shared with friends when hanging out. Salchipapa can be compared to hamburgers.

Ingredients - Serves 4

Vegetable Oil for frying
1 medium bag of Frozen French Fries
4 Hot dogs, diagonally sliced
2 Chicken breasts, sliced in strips
2 Hot sausages, diagonally sliced (Optional)
Bacon bits (Optional)
Mozzarella Cheese, grated
1 can of Corn, drained
1 small head of Lettuce, julienned
Rosada sauce for garnish (50/50 ratio of Ketchup and Mayonnaise)
Salt

Steps

1. In a frying pan, heat the vegetable oil.
2. Prepare another pan with some oil to cook the meat.
3. Start by cooking the chicken strips and hot sausage (If you decide to use it) first, then the hot dogs.
4. While the meat is cooking, start frying the French fries.
5. Once ready, place the French fries on a tray with a paper towel to drain the excess oil.
6. On a serving plate, place the cooked French fries on the bottom, add the meat, and the corn.
7. Sprinkle the mozzarella cheese.
8. Top with the lettuce.
9. Drizzle the Rosada sauce
10. ENJOY! ♦

NEWS & FEATURES

Teachers who Attended Greylock as Students Reflect

BY LUCY IGOE

A small group of the staff at Mount Greylock Regional School attended the high school as students and have returned to teach. These teachers, having spent a large portion of their lives in Williamstown at Mount Greylock, have watched the school environment change. Teachers such as Liza Barrett '82, Brian Gill '89, Faith Manary '07, Lindley Bell '08, Ted Burdick '12, and many others have chosen to give back to the community that educated them.

The new Student Support Center teacher Lindley Bell reflected on her time as a student at Greylock and how the school has changed in the past 15 years. Bell said her favorite thing about Greylock as a student was the community environment. "Students had a lot of school spirit; our pep rallies were a blast. I loved the small school feel. Everyone knows each other and you are like a big family," she said.

Bell admitted that when she moved back to the area she wasn't looking to teach at Mount Greylock, but librarian Liza Barrett reached out to her and told her she should come visit. "I visited her one day and I immediately realized I needed to be here," said Bell.

Barrett, now the school librarian, graduated from Greylock in 1982 and came back first as a seventh grade English teacher. Barrett shared that while she was at Greylock she ran cross country, played basketball and ran track.

"Academically, I loved my teachers and I was close to all of them," Barrett said. "We did a lot of team dinners at our coach's houses and it helped the team and school community feel tight knit."

Barrett also loved the English classes as a student at Greylock. "We had electives in English," she said. "I enjoyed delving into a different topic each quarter. I loved that flexibility."

PE Coach Brian Gill graduated from Mount Greylock in 1989. "My reason for returning was as much coming back to Williamstown as it was Greylock," said Gill. "My dad passed away about two years before I moved back. My mom was in Williamstown and Greylock didn't feel like just my dad's school anymore. My wife also wanted to move back here and so the transition felt relatively easy."

As a student, Gill enjoyed the relationships with his teachers. "I felt like they were really invested," Gill said. "Part of that may have been that my dad was a teacher here and I knew a lot of people to begin with."

Gill commented that student autonomy has changed the most since his time as a student. "There is a lot more direct supervision now," he said.

Barrett talked about the size of the school changing since she was a student. "We are about half the size. We went from 200 in a class to 100

in a class," Barrett said. "I also think the stress level of students is much higher now. We were less competitive with each other and there was less pressure about college and jobs post-graduating."

Bell said that her favorite thing about Greylock as a teacher is building relationships with kids. "I love getting to know students and finding out the best way to help them succeed."

"As a gym coach, I get to see students every year for six years," Gill said. "I love the consistency of relationships and watching the growth of students from seventh grade to senior year."

Barrett added that her favorite thing about Greylock and teaching is the relationships with students and interactions with colleagues. "I love my job in the library," Barrett said. "I love knowing the whole school and putting the right book in the right kids hands. I really enjoy getting extra time with juniors and seniors."

After teaching middle schoolers English for so many years, Barrett now mostly has upper-classmen in the library periods. "My first years in the library have been all the kids I taught in middle school so it has been really fun to have this full circle moment." ♦

Tips on Combating Seasonal Blues in the Winter

BY ANABEL GONZALES

As we stand in March and are nearing the end of the long winter season, it can be difficult to find positivity and stay motivated. I am one of winter's biggest haters. I don't like how dark it is all the time, I don't like how congested I get, I don't like how I wake up and my skin is dry no matter how much I moisturize, and I don't like when we get long periods of cold, but no sugarcoating snow. It is the longest season of the year, stretching from late November to sometimes early April. That is four months of harsh air, low sunshine, and sickness that spreads wild, impeding people's airways and ability to do work.

So what do we do to stay up when the weather is down? And what is it about winter that people struggle with most?

It might be that we are just growing up. "As I've grown into a teenager, I have kind of stopped liking winter just because it's cold and I don't have the time and energy to enjoy what winter can bring," junior Phoebe Hughes said.

As students grow older, the responsibilities they shoulder grow just the same. "As I've aged, winter just lost its magic," Hughes said.

Another common factor that seems to be difficult for students and teachers is the amount of sunlight we get. "When you wake up it's dark and when you get home it's dark; missing all the hours of sunlight is hard," said freshman, Yeshe Rai. Rai seems to suffer from a lack of vitamin

D, and is certainly not the only one.

Seventh grader Morris Israel said that the dark and cold affect his morning routine: "Getting out of bed sometimes is hard."

"It's very gloomy out which makes me gloomy," senior Bella Jannini said.

This problem of sunlight is not isolated to the student body, and is shared among some of the faculty. Rebecca Tucker-Smith of the English department said the thing she hates most about winter is the darkness: "When it gets dark way before even dinner, that makes me sad."

Robert Thistle of the Math department is also struggling with the reduced hours of sunlight. "It's so dark and I wanna get out and do things," he said.

Because of the dark and cold, Thistle, Jannini, Tucker-Smith, Israel, and Rai are all struggling to get outside and be active. "Sometimes it's hard to go get out and hang out with people," Janini said.

"I don't go outside enough and going outside is important so when it's too dark or too cold, I am very much inclined to stay inside," Tucker-Smith said.

To combat this lack of vitamin D, Rai has been getting a little extra help. "I've been drinking a lot of orange juice; get your vitamins people," he said.

Tucker-Smith has been swimming at the YMCA. "It's a way for me to exercise inside, and

it's even bright in there so I can get more 'sunshine.'"

Other common methods for battling winter blues have been making sure people are busy and doing things for themselves. "Having a set time for myself and being able to do whatever I think is fun is important," Hughes said. "I'll have an hour to myself and I can do whatever I want in that hour. I'll feel better after focusing on myself."

Extracurricular activities especially help when it's hard to get outside and be with people. "One thing that's really helped me is the musical, and just being able to hang out with people after school is fun," Israel said.

Thistle, the varsity boys basketball coach, has been using his coaching as an outlet. "I've been breaking up winter by coaching basketball. Having a hobby really helps me tackle the winter season."

If all else fails, I encourage everyone who might be affected in any way by the winter season to remember that even though it is cold and dry and dark and hard to get out, you can hopefully still find people and things to care about and devote time to. Phoebe Bridgers is right: "It is so hard and it's cold here." But we will get through it together. Here's to spring, let's hope it comes soon. ♦

FEATURES

Parental Leave at Mount Greylock and in the US

BY MOLLY SULLIVAN

Currently, 193 countries belong to the United Nations, and over 150 of them mandate paid parental leave. The United States government does not. The current policy under the US Department of Labor is 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave per year. According to a study done by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Canada mandates 16 weeks of paid maternity leave, Spain mandates 16 weeks of paid paternity leave, and in the United Kingdom, citizens receive two weeks of paid paternity leave or a resounding 39 weeks of paid maternity leave.

Although one of the richest countries in the world, the United States falls far behind in parental support. However, this doesn't mean that smaller communities haven't supported new parents.

"For me personally, I felt well supported," Mount Greylock math teacher Crystal Williams said about the support from the MGRS administration. "I know that in the beginning, even before the leave, just trying to figure out all of that paperwork, I felt the district office was very helpful."

Despite the support, none of the parental leave that any Greylock teachers take is paid. "Essentially our jobs are protected for 12 weeks, but it is not paid leave," social studies teacher Andrew Agostini, who is currently on paternal leave, wrote in an email. "In order to receive any money, we needed to use our sick time."

Agostini is currently on the second portion of his paternity leave. He took four weeks off immediately after his son, Chip, was born in October, and is currently off for eight weeks from early February to March 30th. Williams has gone on two maternity leaves for two different children; she took her first in September of 2018 for 14 weeks. Her more recent leave started right at the beginning of this school year for 12 weeks. She returned to school in December.

Williams said that a lot of decisions regarding leave are usually based on access to childcare and job policies. "We were lucky that [my husband] worked from home and he was granted some leave," Williams said. "So we ended up shifting our schedules around to make it so that he stayed home with the baby during the days."

Agostini had a similar sentiment in terms of his family's luck with parental leave. "We were fortunate to be able to take the first month together to bond as a family. Splitting the remaining time made the most sense in regards to childcare...Being able to extend our time at home with Chip, without having to look/pay for someone to care for him, was a priority."

In 2018, a Ball State University sociology professor, Dr. Richard Petts, released research and data about paternity leave in the US and found that fewer than five percent of fathers take two or more weeks of paternity leave. "I'm appreciative of the time we got off. Both my wife and I were able to get 12 weeks off. From what I understand, that is relatively new, as I have friends and colleagues who in the past were given significantly less time for paternity leave," Agostini wrote.

Paid parental leave remains a controversial topic in America, especially in the midst of war spending and government debt. "It's disappointing to see how the United States values parental leave," Agostini wrote. "We've given over \$25 billion dollars in military assistance to Ukraine, and spent over \$5 trillion in Iraq and Afghanistan. Surely there must be some spare change in the couch for parental leave."

Even though the absence of paid parental leave is a tough reality for many parents, both Agostini and Williams were thankful for the teachers who stepped in during their absences and helped the transitions go smoothly. Former social studies teacher Shannon Dupee is currently subbing in Agostini's class. While Williams was on maternity leave at the beginning

of this year, the math teachers each picked up a few of the classes that Williams is now teaching.

"I love my job, so leaving school is tough; I feel totally out of the loop. I have great respect for the 9th graders and their ability to adapt and deal with the situation," Agostini said.

"It's always a hard thing to let someone else take control of your classroom," Williams said. "I knew that my fellow department members would be checking in, making sure everything was good."

Agostini and Williams talked about the difficult experiences of returning to school after parental leave as well.

"It's always hard to go back to work in the sense that you go from seeing your baby all day every day to seeing your baby for a few hours every day," Williams said.

"When I first came back in November, it was an emotional day," Agostini wrote. "Little Chip was less than a month old, my wife was going to be alone with him all day, and I was trying to sort through what had been happening in class. It was really the students that made the transition back a lot easier. Whether it was wanting to see pictures, ask questions, talk sports, etc., it felt like we didn't miss a beat. Shoutout 9th grade!"

At the end of the day, parental leave is all about watching your child grow and supporting your spouse in the life-changing process of raising a child together.

"The positives for that time period are really seeing the baby grow and being there with the baby," Williams said.

"It's just amazing hanging with [Chip] and seeing him grow and change. He can almost sit up and he's getting ready to crawl. He's so cute, smiley, and happy. I'm never going to get time like this with Chip again so we are trying to make the most of it," Agostini said. "It will be tough going back, but I am excited to see my students." ♦

Mount Greylock Theater Department Presents *Oliver!* Performances in Early March

BY MOLLY SULLIVAN

Students at Mount Greylock, led by director Jeffrey Welch, put on three performances of *Oliver!*, a musical based off of the written works of Charles Dickens. The performances were in the Mount Greylock auditorium in early March. Musical director Jacqueline Vinette worked along side accompanist and senior Sam Tucker-Smith to create 19 musical numbers. Senior Kiersten Simpson served as state manager and senior Elena Caplinger was head of choreography, assisted by Levi Cohen-McFall. ♦

Cast List

Oliver Twist - Morris Israel
Mr. Bumble - Caleb Low
Widow Corney - Claire Burrow
Matron - Jennah Simpson
Mr. Sowerberry - Che Guerra
Mrs. Sowerberry - Olivia McKeon
Charlotte Sowerberry - Lucy Igoe
Noah Claypole - Cole Wetherell
Artful Dodger - Yeshe Rai
Fagin - Vincent Welch
Nancy - Frances Evans
Bet - Mai Dekel
Bill Sikes - Cailean Fippinger
Mr. Brownlow - Quinlan Repetto
Dr. Grimwig - Alec Sills
Mrs. Bedwin - Juliet Kornell

Ensemble: Sam Beck, Dominique Bernier, Alex Briggs, Elena Caplinger, Levi Cohen-McFall, Maddie Craig, Ben Dingman, Kaeya Durley, Anabel Gonzales, Sabine Guerra, June Holzapfel, Katharine Mercier, Kelsey Santolin, Ash Steward, Syllas Velazquez, Jenry Wall, Sunnie Warax, Fiona Whaley



Photos Courtesy of Bryn Angelini

SPORTS

Winter Sports Review: Boys Basketball, Nordic Ski Excel in Post-Seasons

BY MOLLY SULLIVAN

Boys Nordic Ski

Accomplishments: MIAA State Champions for the second year in a row; beat second place Newton South 25-32

Individual Accomplishments: Junior Quinn McDermott wins individual state title for the second year in a row; junior Ollie Swabey (4th), senior Foster Savitsky (8th), junior Jude Bakija (12th), and junior Declan Rogers (15th) all place in top 15 as well

Girls Nordic Ski

Accomplishments: Placed 3rd at MIAA State Championship race; first Berkshire County team in results

Individual Accomplishments: Junior Annie Miller (7th), 8th Grader Nellie Swabey (8th), and Lauren Miller (9th) all place in top 15

McCann-MG Co-Op Hockey

Final Record: 3-13

Notable Moments: On December 12, junior goalkeeper Abby Fuls won iBerkshires Athlete of the Week; Fuls had 33 saves in a 3-1 loss to Southwick and, later that week, had 15 saves in a 5-2 win against Mount Everett

Boys Basketball

Final Record: 17-7

Accomplishments: Earned 22nd seed in state tournament; pulled off two upset wins on the road to Salem Charter (11th) and Westport (6th) in the state tournament

Individual Accomplishments: Seniors Chase Doyle and Seamus Barnes selected for Berkshire County All-Star Game; Doyle selected for Western Mass Senior All-Star Game at the Basketball Hall of Fame

Girls Basketball

Final Record: 7-13

Accomplishments: Finished season 3-0 with senior night win against Southwick; placed 33rd in the state, missing the state tournament by .0025 of a point

Individual Accomplishments: Sophomore Charlotte Coody and Senior Molly Sullivan selected for Berkshire County All-Star Game

Wrestling

Accomplishments: Placed 8th in the regional Division III tournament

Individual Accomplishments: Aiden MacPherson (2nd), Nick Bellora (4th), Logan O'Connell (5th), Aiden Ford (5th), Emery Rotter (6th), Quin Whaley (6th), Seth Blanchard (6th) and Hunter Marceau (6th) all placed top six in their class; MacPherson and Bellora competed at the MIAA State Tournament meet ♦



Photo Courtesy of Chicken Feather Media

“AP” Gym Members Reflect on Trial Semester

BY KNOWL STROUD

This past semester, the Mount Greylock Physical Education department introduced a new class, Advanced PE, to provide students an environment to compete at a more intense level in gym class.

Fondly known as “AP Gym” by many students, the new class was created with sports-loving students in mind. Last year, the gym coaches felt there was something missing from their otherwise extensive PE program. According to longtime PE teacher Brian Gill, they felt the program was “lacking an opportunity for advanced play...for kids who wanted that experience.”

“We want a place for students who are interested in playing games at a more intense level that would be inappropriate in a general population, a place to display extra effort,” Gill said.

By all measures, that experiment seems to have gone well. Most students said they enjoyed the class as a whole. PE teacher Robert Jutras said that one of the goals of the course was to “play lots of different games,” something that students clearly appreciated with a wide range of Mount Greylock favorites, including Innibandi, Sabakiball, Volleyball and Flasketball.

As for the competition level, junior Annie Miller said, “There were times I wished it was more rigorous, but it was overall good.”

Senior Ainsley Abel said that she enjoyed the class, especially because the students had the opportunity to vote on units or games they wanted to focus on. “I enjoyed being with other students who wanted to be in gym and wanted to participate,” Abel said. “There was always a lot of freedom with what games we got to play and as seniors our vote always got a little more weight.”

The coaches presented a similarly positive viewpoint about the program’s success. “It’s gone really well,” said Jutras. “Each class is a little bit different as far as what they tend to like and enjoy, but it’s been great...High energy and lots of fun.”

In fact, the only problem they’ve had so far is that there are more students who want to enroll in Advanced PE than there are spots, according to Gill. The large disparity between the interest and the number of slots in the class has led to discussions regarding the implementation of a recommendation system, where gym coaches would recommend students for Advanced PE after they perform in other high school gym classes.

“As there are recommendations across every other academic discipline, there is the possibility that there could be going forward recommendations toward Advanced PE,” Gill

said.

These recommendations could be based on grades for previous years of PE and help to give spots in the class to students who have demonstrated the effort and discipline required to succeed in Advanced PE. However, these changes would not be coming into effect for at least another year so, for now, the class remains equally open to all 11th and 12th grade students.

Abel spoke of the competitive nature of the class and the benefit of being with people who are enthusiastic about sports and athletics.

“I would also say that it is a group of kids who want to be in gym and enjoy having a little fun and definitely being competitive,” Abel said. “There was never any judgment if there was a mistake and it was usually a pretty fun environment.”

For the foreseeable future, “AP Gym” will continue to be offered as a place for students to exercise and hone their sporting skills as well as have some fun.

“Compared to regular gym, we got to have more fun,” Abel said. “We never got involved in a unit that students were completely bored of by the end, and we just played something different everyday.” ♦

SPORTS

Boys Cross Country Skiing Repeats as State Champs, Girls Place 3rd

BY EZRA HOLZAPFEL

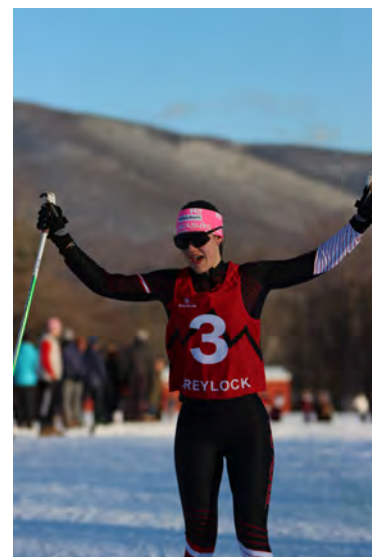
The Mount Greylock Nordic Skiing team finished up another successful season this past February. The team coached by Hilary and Hiram Greene, along with assistant coaches Ian Nesbitt, Tyler Hallenbeck, and Mark Santella, achieved high placings in the MIAA State Championships held at Prospect Mountain, VT. The Mountie boys team secured another first place finish keeping their long streak of victories alive. The girls team achieved a third place finish beating out perennial rivals Lenox Memorial.

The boys team, led by captain Foster Savitsky, skated along the hilly five kilometer course to achieve a score of twenty-five points, beating out Eastern Massachusetts heavyweight Newton South. They placed five skiers in the top fifteen. Individual highlights included Quinn McDermott's performance, who successfully defended his individual title from last year. The girls team, led by captain Effie Skinner, overcame Acton Boxboro to clinch the third-place spot with sixty-seven points. The girls team

placed three skiers in the top 15, including Annie Miller at 7th.

While there was some doubt regarding the conditions of the race, as the previous league race had been canceled, the racers were treated to clear blue skies and calm temperatures for this race.

The teams had a successful standard season, regularly taking home wins across skate and classic disciplines. Although a couple of races were canceled due to insufficient snow, the league still held races throughout the season. One such race was moved to Butternut, a ski mountain in South County, which resulted in a tough uphill course. However, many skiers rejoiced that they even had a race to compete in. Thanks to the expansion of the league to reach schools in the Northampton region, the meets provided exciting racing for all skiers. ♦



Junior Annie Miller Celebrates Finishing a Regular Season Race - Photo Courtesy of Chicken Feather Media



The Mount Greylock Ski Teams After Competing at the State Championship Race - Photo Courtesy of Foster Savitsky



State Champion Quinn McDermott skis in a regular season meet at Mount Greylock - Photo Courtesy of Chicken Feather Media

Senior Ezra Holzapel Reflects on His Time in the Skiing Program

Behind the long-standing dominance of the ski team is a group of dedicated coaches, parents and athletes who all contribute to the success of the team. It is easy to wax poetic on the accolades of the team, but some readers might wonder how exactly the team achieves such success.

As a skier of four years, I have a unique perspective on the team and its vibrant community. On a scorching day in the summer of 2019, I was introduced to the sport through the affiliated summer program BNSC. I was situated with a pair of roller skis—essentially long roller blades—and coached through the motions of striding. As I shuffled along the road, I was pleasantly surprised to see Coach Hiram Greene following along behind me in his red

truck. From his Chevrolet, Coach Greene stayed by my side, offering technique tips and Gatorade to me. A couple months later when I was rolling up Mount Greylock, he followed behind me as well, offering me support when the grade increased. If I had not heard the calm purr of the engine behind me, I might have given up on the spot.

During this past season, my senior year, an injury sidelined me from competition, so I was unable to practice with the team. While I was disappointed at first, I began to see that the ski team is more than just skiing. Through team dinners—which almost always involved copious amounts of pasta—I continued to build relationships with my teammates. I even attended some races and helped out with waxing skis. I found

that the bonds I forged with my teammates on the trails could also be built up outside of practice.

Despite being forced out of racing and training, I found that this year was the most connected I had ever felt to the team. I believe that the power that this community has to bring people together has made it such a lasting and powerful force in competitions. The chemistry that we build off the snow helps us race because we know that even if we can not race to our full potential, our teammates, parents, and coaches will have our backs. ♦

SPORTS & OPINIONS

NFL Referees Hold Too Much Influence on Game Results

BY DREW SCANLON

NFL referees have a difficult job. There's no denying that. They are being made to police a game that at its core doesn't seem like it has many rules. Beyond the game itself, the individuals playing it are tough strong guys with large egos that are being paid millions of dollars. You have to make calls that players won't agree with and you'll likely get yelled at multiple times every game.

But recently, there have been a lot of reasons to say that there has been a case of calls that seriously affected a game's result. And these moments have often happened in the NFL Playoffs.

There are two main kinds of bad calling in games; one-sided calling and no calling. I will start with a classic example of a no call. In the 2019 NFC Championship game, Saints quarterback Drew Brees threw a pass towards wide receiver Tommylee Lewis. Before the ball reached Lewis, however, Nickell Robey-Coleman collided with him head-first. This wasn't called pass interference, and if it was, the Saints would've been at the 7 with the opportunity to run down the clock before kicking a winning

field goal and going to the Super Bowl. Pass interference has caused a lot of problems in the NFL by itself, but even as someone who isn't a Saints fan, I have to admit they were cheated out of going to a Super Bowl.

The sad thing about the one sided calls in the last couple years of NFL playoff football is that they come later in the game after mostly decent refereeing. In last year's Super Bowl, Bengals linebacker Logan Wilson was called for defensive holding, which gave the Rams a fresh set of downs and ultimately led to the winning touchdown.

In this year's AFC Championship game, a failed third down play by the Chiefs was wiped out due to a clock error. As it turned out, a member of referee Ron Torbert's crew tried to stop the play before it started after noticing that the game clock was running.

And in this year's Super Bowl, the Chiefs were favored yet again. On third down with 1:54 left, Patrick Mahomes threw an incomplete pass. However, Eagles cornerback James Bradberry was called for defensive holding, which gave the Chiefs a new set of downs and time to run down

on the clock and kick the winning field goal (sound familiar?).

The call was heavily criticized by fans, and even by FOX analyst Greg Olsen who said, "That is a game-altering penalty. To me, it looks like [Bradberry] is in good position. It changes the entire complexion of how this fantastic game is going to end."

And that's the problem. Up until these calls, the game had been pretty good, and the end was ruined by one call. ♦

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The MG Library: A Safe Space for Students

BY EMILY MOLE

The environment in school can be a stressful place. However, there are few places in the building that are considered a safe space during the long lasting school days. Ever since the new building of Mount Greylock Regional School was finished in 2018, the library has turned into that special spot for the student body.

Five years ago, I started my journey at Mount Greylock, and ever since then, I have seen the library do nothing but blossom. From participating in TA positions for librarian Liza Barrett, spending break and lunch in this area, or taking online courses, students, especially upperclassmen, spend a lot of time enjoying the library experience. Barrett, our wonderful librarian, never fails to make sure everyone is comfortable through her organization, coloring walls, enormous amount of books, and support.

Prior to pursuing the role of becoming the Mount Greylock librarian, Barrett was an English teacher. "It is hard to say [which position] is better or worse but right now I like this position better because I was ready for a change. I absolutely love being the librarian and the tech person and the Williams Center at Mount Greylock person along with many other roles that I play."

However, Barrett cherishes the time she spent in the classroom. "I would not trade anything for my 34 years in the classroom, it was exactly where I was meant to be, where I wanted to be. If I wanted to remain happy and loving my job, I needed to find a way to work with students but not take home the same amount of work."

When I think about the library, the first few words that come to mind are welcoming and homey. Barrett describes the library as a "safe

space" for all students who spend time in the environment. Many may assume that going from a teaching position to a librarian position is a struggle and major shift, but Barrett describes it as "incredibly exciting."

"If you had interviewed me ten years ago, I would have told you all the things that made teaching the absolute best job in the world." However, she said, "putting the right book in the

Barrett, our wonderful librarian, never fails to make sure everyone is comfortable through her organization, coloring walls, enormous amount of books, and support.

right kid's hand at the right time, there's just no better feeling than that."

Walking into the library, students don't only see the hundreds of books that fill the room. The library holds many comfortable blue chairs that students including myself enjoy relaxing in. Along with that, there is a whole bulletin board dedicated to coloring at any time of the day. Students are also summoned by the plenty of board games and puzzles. Plants and greenery too are scattered about in the space.

A library is extremely more than just a room filled with books, which is proved in the Mount Greylock library. "You can change the way a

student learns by what's on the walls, the way you treat them when they enter the room, the way you treat them when they exit the room," Barrett said.

An interesting and intriguing take that Barrett has considered and studied was the climate of a room. "My entire career I have consciously tried to foster and establish a climate of comfort which allows learning. It's conscious. I want people to feel at home in here and that involves not just seeing things but I've been very conscious about doing interactive things."

Barrett's love and comfort that she puts into the library makes it a safe space for the students. "I'm not kidding when I say I love coming here everyday. Sure, everyone has a bad day here and there, but I mostly have good ones, and seeing [the library] full of students...nothing could make me happier." ♦



Check out our website!

OPINIONS

Course Selection Process Takes on New Requirements

BY OLIVIA MCKEON

This February marked the beginning of a new online course registration process for all rising high school students. While some changes to this yearly process were positively received, other changes caused concern, especially among the rising senior class at Mount Greylock.

As a senior, I was not originally privy to these new course selection changes until I heard a few rumors surface about the process. The most common complaint around the school, mostly from juniors, was the prospect that, from now on, students would be limited to taking only two elective courses.

After talking with counselor Kathryn Pratt, I discovered that there are in fact three major changes to the course selection process this year: registration is now completed online, teachers now suggest classes before students choose instead of approving them after students choose, and students are only allowed to take two non-MGRS instructed courses per semester.

There are a number of reasons that explain the shift from manual course selection to an online format. “Doing it this way lets students, one, get information directly about the class as they’re looking at it and, two, we also have teachers make recommendations for classes ahead of time, so now as counselors we know what the teacher is truly recommending, not if they’re just agreeing or disagreeing with the student,” Pratt said. These benefits—along with the added bonus of saving paper—seem to present a pretty strong argument in favor of the new system.

When discussing the online format with stu-

dents however, I received some mixed feedback. “I like the online format because it was very easy to read all the courses,” junior Gabby Quagliano said.

On the flip side, some students missed the in-person aspect of course selection. “Basically, I didn’t really like the online because it took away the connection between teacher and student—that conversation that you’re supposed to have,” junior Jackie Brannan said. “This year the process also felt very rushed.”

Despite this criticism, perhaps the more controversial issue is the topic of elective courses. Students are still allowed to take more than two elective courses if instructed by MGRS teachers, but they are not allowed to take more than two courses in the library per semester. Some of these “experiential learning” courses could be Virtual High School (VHS) classes, dual enrollment college courses, Independent Studies or Plato Courseware.

This decision was made by the counseling office for a number of reasons. “We are finding that a lot of students in their senior year are choosing to elect more independent and experiential learning courses. So we have students who are signing up for lots of independent and experiential learning opportunities and they are not in front of licensed teachers as much,” Pratt said.

There are also some important logistical concerns involved as well. Pratt mentioned the amount of learning space in the library as an important factor. “Our library is very very full every single period with students who are not

in front of teachers and we’re finding there are more classes that aren’t running because more and more students want to do these experiential learning things,” Pratt said.

These are all completely valid reasons that might explain a change of this nature. After all, students will still be able to take electives taught by MGRS teachers, as well as two other opportunities in the library. Still, some of the concerns expressed by students are also important to take into consideration.

“I think it’s annoying because I have all my credits for science and history to graduate and I don’t really want to take a science or history class and I could have taken an elective during those classes and now I can’t,” junior Ece Karakaya said.

Similarly, junior class President Vincent Welch expressed his concerns on the new changes. “It is especially annoying as a junior with two older siblings since I have seen so many other people take such easy classes as seniors and now I can only have two library periods,” Welch said.

The real question comes down to whether or not students, and especially seniors, should have certain guidelines in place for what courses they can take, or if they should be able to decide what classes they want to take without restrictions. But regardless of this particular change, overall, I believe that the new online course registration process is a positive improvement and will aid in a much easier selection process in the future. ♦

Harmful ‘Humor’ on TikTok and Social Media

BY KIERSTEN SIMPSON

One of the most common brands of “comedic” TikToks are “basic white girl in class” TikToks, typically created by their basic white male counterparts.

Of course, these videos take minute details such as a style that relies heavily on LuluLemon and Brandy Melville and taunt young girls when they get their licenses and when they gossip during independent work time.

I often find myself frustrated with these videos, even if I also find myself slightly annoyed when my peers waltz into my library block jangling their keys loudly or gossiping while I am trying to ask a question.

These videos, however, are not making fun of young women for getting their licenses or for spreading rumors. These videos are, more often than not, making fun of women’s excitement.

This is not just present in TikToks about school; Video Game bros on Twitter insist that the HBO’s *The Last of Us* is ruined because of women with fan crushes on Pedro Pascal.

The standard that women are held to online is one that requires them to not be truly excited over things; it is cringey when a woman shares her disappointment over not getting Taylor Swift tickets, but when a man weeps on IG Live over his team losing the Superbowl, it garners sympathy.

What also makes this dichotomy interesting is the difference in levels of excitement between men and women online. When Phoebe Brid-

gers’ “Waiting Room” was taken off of Spotify, the reaction on Twitter and Instagram from fans was disappointment, but it was very rarely genuine violence or disgust. When Bella Ramsey, a 19-year-old genderfluid actor, was cast to play the 14-year-old Ellie in *The Last of Us*, many male fans threatened violence to both Ramsey & the casting directors, lamenting that she was “not hot enough” to play the role.

Of course, it is not just women that are subject to harsh criticism online: the “Band Kid” personality that runs rampant across short form comedy relies heavily on neurodivergent tendencies and stereotypes, and amongst many of these communities, the go-to joke regarding non-binary people is still “I identify as an attack helicopter and my pronouns are ketchup/mustard,” a joke that is completely original and totally has not been around since 2013 Social Justice Warrior (SJW) cringe commentator YouTube.

This criticism is increased ten-fold for BIPOC: the “Hot Cheeto Girl” stereotype still focuses primarily on making fun of Hispanic and Latina women. In this sense, the criticism is focused on making Hispanic and Latina women seem like loud, obnoxious, and dependent on food like Takis and Hot Cheetos. These stereotypes are less about making fun of women’s excitement and more focused on taunting women of color for traits that make them different from the typically white, cisgender men.

Oftentimes, these videos are given the same

write-offs that shows like *South Park* and *Family Guy* are given: “It’s satire! It makes fun of everyone.” While these videos meet the definition of “satire”—humor used to exaggerate and expose vices and flaws—they are seldom interesting satire. At the very least, *South Park* allows for its satire to say something original, even if it relies on stereotypes and shock humor. Making the same six jokes—girls who watch nerdy shows only do it for the hot actors; Latina women are loud; Taylor Swift fans and fangirls in general are insane; band kids are smelly and socially inept and love Minecraft—does not add anything to the world. Anyone can find those jokes if they just type “Band Kids” into a TikTok search bar.

More often than not, these videos focus on punching down as opposed to punching up. Given that they are made by cis white neurotypical men and are taunting anyone who is not a cis/white/neurotypical/man, it is kind of like beating up the little guy. It does not read as “subversive” or making a commentary on a specific group; it reads as teasing.

This is not to say that all TikToks making fun of people are bad; I have seen many poking fun at people that make me giggle. But when a TikTok, or any type of content, is reliant solely on stereotypes and punching down, it is not particularly useful. ♦

ETC.

Oliver! Crew Focuses on Sustainability

BY CELINA SAVAGE

This year's winter musical, *Oliver!*, has successfully shown the student body how sustainability on a budget and creativity can go hand in hand. The musical, directed by Jeffrey Welch, has utilized old sets in order to save money and eliminate excess waste.

Kiersten Simpson, musical set director and MG senior, shared her wisdom on this process. "Our ability to refurbish and recycle old materials has been vital to the success of our current set. Due to the time constraints, it was more practical and ethical to reuse rather than purchase new materials," she said.

The only new material purchased this year was lumber which was required to create a new railing and to reinforce older pieces from past sets. Simpson also said that any new costume pieces will be added to storage to be reused.

Historically, theater productions at Mount Greylock have implemented the mentality of exhausting current materials until they are no longer usable in creating a new set. This prac-

tice aids in maintaining the production budget and making sure materials are appreciated, not wasted.

While watching the musical, you may have noticed similarities in the set pieces between *Oliver!* and *Hello Dolly*. Both shows had the same main structure that the set is centered around. Doors and wheels have been reused and refurbished from past sets.

The creativity of the crew and set management to incorporate these older sets into the current one is inspiring, as sustainability is a practice where both pocketbooks and the environment are positively affected.

Even though the Mount Greylock theater department's set isn't going to solve the climate crisis, it helps remind us that we have to put one foot in front of the other. Small, sustainable actions add up to larger change. The recycled set is a good example of environment-friendly thinking and shows the importance of sustainability to our school. ♦

State of the Union, cont.*Continued from Page 4*

organize and the latter, an increase in the amount a person with children gets back on their taxes.

Biden then transitioned back to some of the most controversial American issues: education, racial justice, gun violence, abortion, and LGBTQ rights. He argued for free pre-kindergarten education, two free years of community college, and raising public school teachers' pay.

Biden spoke about how different the experiences of Black Americans and white Americans are and called for more investment in social work programs, to both help with the problem of police brutality, where police are called into mental health situations they do not know how to handle, and to alleviate the pressures on police departments in America. This section also gave Biden a chance to highlight some of his achievements, especially his law via executive order which banned the use of chokeholds and limited the use of no-knock warrants.

Biden touted some of his pre-presidential accomplishments with regards to gun violence, including the 1994 ban on assault weapons. The president called for the renewal of the assault weapon ban, which expired in 2004 and was followed by an uptick in mass shootings.

Maybe the most relevant topic of the night was immigration because of Biden's recent work on border laws and regulation. The president called for immigration to become a bipartisan issue again, which inspired negative cheering from the Republican party. One of Biden's greatest challenges this presidency has been controlling immigration from the Southern border. Many liberal members of his party believe that Biden has been too tough on immigration, while most Republicans believe that Biden is being too lenient on the issue.

President Biden discussed how he would like to see the right to an abortion codified into law. Political theorists believe that one of the main reasons that Democrats exceeded expectations in the midterms was because of the decision by the Supreme Court to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, a court case that protected abortions in the US. Biden then discussed passing the Equality Act, which

would protect LGBTQ Americans from discrimination.

As this month marks the beginning of the second year of the war in Ukraine, President Biden took some time to highlight America's role in NATO's response to the war. He spoke about how this was a show of American strength. Biden made this speech about two weeks after the United States committed to sending more tanks to Ukraine.

The president discussed the need for the stigma surrounding addiction to end and cited the stigma as part of the reason for the Fentanyl epidemic. This earned some shouts from Republicans, many of whom believe that the epidemic is caused by drug trafficking across the Southern border and blame President Biden for it still being a problem.

Biden pushed through the last leg with a few more non-controversial issues. He discussed the way that many social media companies seem to prey on children for advertising. He earned resounding applause for saying that the amount of money allocated to veterans needs to be increased, especially as it relates to mental health. And finally, he explained his plan to donate more money to cancer research, a cause close to his heart as he lost his son to cancer.

Biden ended with a discussion on political extremism and the threat he believes that it poses to American democracy. In the First Lady's box was Paul Pelosi, who was assaulted in what was a politically motivated attack against his wife, then House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

Biden called democracy an American issue and told the American people that he believes that the state of the Union is strong.

It is traditional for the opposition party to give a rebuttal. This year's was given by Sarah Huckabee Sanders, Governor of Arkansas. She argued that the American Left is caught up in culture wars and that both Democrats and Republicans are ready for a new era of leadership. ♦

Sylvie's Book Corner

BY SYLVIE CLOWES

The Lunar Chronicles by Marissa Meyer explores a world where the moon was colonized a long time ago and there is a plague spreading on Earth (kind of like with COVID). The people on the moon have genetic adaptations separate from those on Earth, some of them gaining the power to control how they appear or control others actions. Each book in this series is based on a fairytale: Cinderella, Little Red Riding Hood, Rapunzel, and Snow White. The fairytales are given a sci-fi twist to fit in with the world Meyer has created. For example, Cinder (Cinderella) is a cyborg and Cress (Rapunzel) is isolated in a spaceship.

The first book, *Cinder*, sets the stage for the rest. While New Beijing is being torn apart by Letumosis, a plague from Luna (the moon), the prince, Kai, still must find a wife. It is expected that he will marry one of Luna's royal family, to signify a peace between Earth and Luna. He worries, correctly, that marrying Levana, Luna's queen, will give her too much power over Earth. Instead he begins to search for Luna's missing princess, Selene. At the same time, Cinder is dealing with her adopted sister dying of Letumosis and continuing to hide that she is a cyborg. After being forced into a trial for a cure to Letumosis, it is discovered that Cinder is immune to the plague. Kai and Cinder cross paths when he goes to her to get his android fixed. As you likely know the story of Cinderella, I am sure that you can guess the ending.

The rest of the series explores the tensions between Luna and Earth, surrounding the plague and the worry of Lunars controlling people using their powers. These tensions build into outright fighting, maybe better described as massacres, when Levana unleashes a secret army of men, genetically modified with wolf DNA, onto Earth, hoping to force Earth into letting her takeover.

While I understand that this is an overall trashy series, I do think that it is still an interesting read. The characters are well developed and the plot is quick paced. Also, the reimagining of the fairytales is done well, keeping the elements that make the stories recognizable while still altering them to fit into the world being created.

Fairytales are meant to be altered and retold with the times. Part of what makes them recognizable is that the main plot points for different versions of the story stay the same, while everything else changes. That is why there are stories from all over the world that are recognizable, even though many of the details have changed (do you know how many versions of Bluebeard there are? A lot). I think that this is a great series for anyone who wants a fun read at the end of a long day, but is also looking for an enjoyable plot line and good world-building. ♦

ETC.

Pandemic Messages in *Glass Onion*

BY KIERSTEN SIMPSON

Most people would probably not love spending a day of their own COVID isolation on the couch watching a movie that is basically about pandemic isolation.

Conveniently, I am not most people.

Glass Onion, the sequel to Rian Johnson’s 2019 mystery film *Knives Out*, dropped on Netflix a few months ago after a limited run in theaters. This film is only tangentially related to the original *Knives Out*. Much like most detective series—Sherlock Holmes, Murder She Wrote, Hercule Poirot, and the like—the only thing that ties *Knives Out* and *Glass Onion* together is the appearance of the detective, Benoit Blanc, portrayed excellently by Daniel Craig. While *Knives Out* followed a family murder, Johnson’s new film follows a group of socialites at a May 2020 island party as they try to uncover a series of murders.

This movie is undoubtedly a product of the pandemic. It alludes to this constantly; one of the earliest scenes is the world’s greatest detective, Blanc, playing *Among Us* with characters played by famous celebrities such as Stephen Sondheim, Natasha Lyonne and Angela Lansbury. At another point, the Elon Musk-esque billionaire & self proclaimed genius Miles Bron, played by Edward Norton, invites his friends for a “little bit of normalcy.” Another character refers to her “pod” in reference to having a party.

At this film’s pandemic based core sits a deeper message, one of privilege and selfishness during the pandemic. After a particularly terrible moment at the party, politician Claire Debella, played by the ever delightful Kathryn Hahn, proclaims, “I can see the headlines now: Governor goes on vacation to Greece during the pandemic with a men’s rights activist.”

At another point in the film, Ethan Hawke from Dead Poets Society administers all of the travelers oral vaccines, which not only allows Johnson to make the directorial choice to forgo masks, but also allows for viewers to watch rich people exist in a world where they no longer worry about medicine. To me, both of these moments sum up the messages that Johnson is trying to show in this film—that the concerns of the rich were not real concerns. While

people were dying, those more fortunate than us were more concerned about their image and ability to hug.

This message about the pandemic is only further proven by his characters, none of whom we are supposed to like, save for maybe Kate Hudson’s character Peg. Although all of these characters are seemingly “disruptors” who broke glass ceilings in their fields and are the faces of progressivism, Johnson showcases them betraying their progressive ideals to go to an island in Greece during the pandemic.

Some may argue that it is too soon for a period piece about the pandemic. I do not need to be educated about the selfishness of celebrities during the pandemic; I was refreshing Twitter alongside Johnson when Dua Lipa decided that the pandemic was her time to travel the world. However, this movie is not a “pandemic” period piece, because the pandemic is still going on. The fact that I write this from COVID isolation should prove as solid evidence of that. It is, instead, an early pandemic film. It showcases the celebrity attitude surrounding the pandemic with grace and satirizes the celebrity pandemic mindset, punishing the characters who engage with it. ♦

At this film’s pandemic based core sits a better message, one of privilege and selfishness during the pandemic.

1 in 650, cont.

Continued from Page 1

related. I might join the running club and play some intramural sports. It seems like a really great community and everyone just loves the place.

E: Do you have a favorite memory at Greylock?

AA: They all include the times when I felt part of a community. Things that stick out are different sports teams victories or just cheering on other teams.

E: What will you miss most about Mount Greylock?

AA: I think I will miss the teachers I’ve gotten close with. Seeing the same familiar faces in the halls is nice. ♦

Mini Crossword

CREATED BY EZRA HOLZAPFEL

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

ACROSS

- 2. Bad result in a race (abv.)
- 5. Super Bowl interruptions
- 8. This ___ that
- 9. Lebron shoes
- 11. The boy who asks for more
- 13. What you turn in to Turnitin

DOWN

- 1. Kayak relative
- 3. Snoopy synonym
- 4. For Real
- 6. Greylock Snow Day CEO
- 7. A State Championship was recently won on ____
- 10. Besties 4 ____
- 12. Beatles drummer

Greylock Echo Editorial Staff

Editor-in-Chief: Molly Sullivan ‘23

Section Editing Team:

Lucy Igoe ‘23

Sylvie Clowes ‘24

Quin Repetto ‘24

Layout: Elena Caplinger ‘23

Advisor: Peter Niemeyer

Questions? Comments? News tips?

Please contact:

mountgreylockecho@gmail.com

Visit our website!

greylockecho.mgrhs.org