

The Greylock Echo

December Edition

Mount Greylock - Williamstown, MA

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Mount Greylock Holds Ground-breaking Ceremony for New Track

BY QUINLAN REPETTO

For most of its history, the Mount Greylock track team has had to travel to Williams College in order to practice on an official track. However, on Friday, November 17, Mount Greylock Regional School held a ground-breaking ceremony to commemorate the beginning of construction on the school's very own home track. This construction is the culmination of an effort years in the making, with people advocating for a new track in opposition to a turf field, the original plan.

The origins of the plan to build a track date back to 2015, with the bestowment of the Williams Capital Gift to Mount Greylock. Since Williams College does not pay property taxes, it has traditionally donated sizable amounts of money to significant building projects in the area, saving taxpayers from having to pay for these projects. This tradition began in 2001, when the college donated two million dollars toward the construction of Williamstown Elementary School, which is still using that money for certain repairs and maintenance.

In 2015, when plans for the new Mount Greylock building began, Williams gave the school a gift of five million dollars to add to and update the campus as needed. Since then, Mount Greylock has used this money to build storage buildings for athletic equipment, expand the parking lot, build the administrative building and construct the garage that serves as the headquarters for the ski team.

By 2021, the last big project planned with the money from the gift was an artificial turf field, which could be used by Mount Greylock sports teams year round. Advocates for the turf argue it would add flexibility for teams, especially during the transition from winter to spring when a natural field would likely be too wet to play on.

However, concerns arose about the cost of

such a field – while it would only cost approximately 1.5 million dollars initially, turf fields have to be replaced every 10 to 15 years. The money from Williams would pay for the first field, but Greylock would have to rely on taxpayer dollars to replace it in the future.

The main reason the turf plan was scrapped was because of environmental concerns. As Mount Greylock Regional School Superintendent Jake McCandless explained, the turf “is basically several tons of rubber

that you're putting into this gorgeous natural setting we have here.” Many community members had concerns about this rubber potentially running into the water supplies. Disposing of it after its replacement would be problematic, as well: there's not a single facility in North America for recycling turf. So, old turf fields tend to get stored away, where they just sit there and take up space.

“At the end of the day,” McCandless said, “the school committee... just couldn't get over the

fact that it's a hundred yards of petroleum-based product that we're putting on these grounds.”

In January 2022, the Mount Greylock School Committee decided to implement a new natural grass field instead. One of the custodians, the head groundskeeper at Mount Greylock, did coursework at the University of Massachusetts to learn how to better organically and naturally tend to the outside campus. Now more informed on how to take care of it, the school plans to implement a grass field made of sod.

From there, the school decided to also implement a home track for the Mount Greylock track team, which McCandless said is a logical decision due to the team's large number of participants.



Photo Courtesy of Peter Niemeyer

1 in 650: Interview with Vincent Welch

BY MILA MARCISZ



Photo Courtesy of Vincent Welch

The Greylock Echo sat down with senior Vincent Welch, 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: Congratulations on receiving the award.

Vincent Welch: Thank you.

E: What was your initial reaction to hearing that you were receiving the award from Dr. McCandless?

VW: I was shocked, I will be honest. I was actually in my library period, and it did not look like he was walking in to come talk to me. But it turned out he was, and he pulled me aside, and he told me I'd won the award. And I honestly didn't believe him at first, because for some reason I pictured it being this big reveal or whatever. I did not think I was going to win it, but turns out I did.

E: Many Greylock students participate in either sports or the arts, but not as many do both. Do you feel like you are the same person on the track as you are on stage?

VW: I definitely try to be the same person in both.

Continued on Page 13

Continued on Page 6

Olympian Advice

Two Olympic skiers offer advice on life, school and sports.

See Page 11

Romeo and Juliet Hits the Stage

Maggie Nichols reports on the school's annual Shakespeare performance.

See Page 2

Affirmative Action

Anabel Gonzales reflects on the future of college admissions.

See Page 14

Teacher Profiles

Meet the new faces around Mount Greylock this fall.

See Pages 7-9

NEWS

Mount Greylock Performs Shakespeare's 'Romeo and Juliet'

BY MAGGIE NICHOLS

Mount Greylock Regional School's fall performance of Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet" hit the stage on Thursday, November 9 and Friday, November 10. Directed by Erin O'Connor and Naire Poole, the play opened with a humorous rendition of the brawl between the Capulet and Montague houses. The play carried this same comedic tone through the rest of the first act before moving toward a darker and more serious second act.

Due to Romeo and Juliet's limited number of characters, the performance triple-cast Romeo and Juliet, while Friar Laurence and Juliet's Nurse was double-cast. The Romeos were played by senior Ché Guerra, senior Luka Lash-St. John and freshman Mai Dekel. The Juliets were played by senior Anabel Gonzales, senior Syllas Velazquez, and freshman Sara Ehle. Senior Quinlan Repetto and junior Claire Burrow played the two humorous Nurses. The two Friars were played by sophomore Frances Evans and freshman Sabine Guerra.

By triple-casting Romeo and Juliet, O'Connor and Poole had to get creative, often having all three of each character appear on stage at once. Each Romeo stayed "paired" with a Juliet throughout, the couples sharing a synchronized on-stage kiss that dazzled audience members.

"I really felt like the actors brought the play to life. I especially loved the humorous spin they put on it, and there were plenty of moments where I was laughing that kept me engaged," said junior Mia Patrick, who attended the closing performance on Friday night.

Guerra played one of the three Romeos, paired with Velazquez as Juliet. Dekel and Ehle

made up a second pair, with Lash-St. John and Gonzales as the third pair.

"Fall Fest is always the best," Guerra said. "Everyone is really wonderful, the directors do a lot to build the community and it's a super supportive environment. I would not have been able to survive high school without it."

Senior Levi Cohen-McFall, who starred as Sampson and Balthazar while also working as the performance's fight coordina-



Photo Courtesy of Krishiv Malhotra

tor, emphasized that the seriousness of the second act was often a challenge, compared to the more comedic first act.

"It's hard to convey those emotions, especially since we are all so used to goofing off and playing silly characters. I think we all learned a lot," Cohen-McFall said.

Senior actors included Anabel Gonzales as

Juliet, Ché Guerra as Romeo, Emma Kate Hane as Mercutio, Levi Cohen-McFall as Sampson, Luka Lash-St. John as Romeo, Quinlan Repetto as the Nurse, Storm Colandria as Lady Montague, Syllas Velazquez as Juliet and Sylvie Clowes as Lady Capulet.

Senior Grace Winters worked as Stage Manager alongside senior John Trybus as Assistant Stage Manager, and senior Macy Tidmarsh as Props Lead.

The play is part of a larger tour of Shakespeare & Company's Education Program, which sponsors the Fall Festival of Shakespeare each year. The nine-week-long festival occurs at ten high schools throughout Massachusetts and New York, including Mount Greylock. Each show performs at its respective high school and then plays at Shakespeare & Company's Tina Packer Playhouse in Lenox. All the schools put on their performances there over a four day period called Fall Fest.

Described as a "rock concert of Shakespeare," by Cohen-McFall, Fall Fest kicked off on Thursday, November 16. Mount Greylock's Romeo and Juliet performed at the Tina Packer Playhouse on Saturday the 18, following its performances at Mount Greylock the week prior. Cast and crew alike voiced their optimism and positive experience in this year's Fall Fest performance. "It's a great experience, one that I wish I could partake in every year," Velazquez said. ♦

Mount Greylock Student Council Initiatives

BY FINN CAROTHERS

The Mount Greylock Student Council, according to its constitution, serves to "bridge the gap between the student body and the administration, provide for the common defense of student interests, [and] promote the general welfare of the school." As Mount Greylock enters the second quarter, the *Echo* sat down with Student Council Vice President Caleb Low to discuss the council's upcoming initiatives and events.

Low, a senior, discussed the Student Council's most recent activity, the school Tissue Drive. The school does not fund tissues for the classrooms, and as the colder months approach the council wanted to supply students with needed tissues.

"Each directed study is responsible for getting as many tissue boxes as they can," Low said. He also detailed the rewards for classes that reach the required number of boxes saying, "...if that threshold is met, the classes will be awarded a free snack pass at lunch."

The Student Council is also working on "bathroom maintenance" – looking to restock hygienic supplies in the school bathrooms such as "paper towels [and] certain period products."

The council has already been successful in some initiatives this year. They have brought the vending machine back to Mount Greylock, which should be implemented in the next few months, as well as making sure the electric car chargers are installed in the spring.

Another current initiative for the council is adding more tables to Mount Greylock's outdoor spaces, particularly outside the cafeteria. Low explained how the Student Council is looking to provide funding for the project. "We're currently working on a SEE Fund grant to expand the quantity of the red tables outside," he said.

Low said this initiative could bolster a sense of student community. "In the warm weather months, it seems like a good idea to kind of get more people outside and back in the community," he said.

"Another thing we're definitely looking to do is start up Greylock Talks again," Low added. Greylock Talks is a program that has brought in many guest speakers to talk at Mount Greylock in past years, discussing topics all the way from politics and student motivation to travel and mental health. While Low didn't set a timeline for the reinstatement of Greylock Talks,

he seemed motivated. "That's I think the next thing on tap for us."

Low seemed quite enthusiastic about the council's current and future work. "Yeah, we're very optimistic," he said. ♦



Photo Courtesy of Krishiv Malhotra

NEWS

Spanish Classes Plan Student Trip to Argentina

BY SYLVIE CLOWES

This year the Advanced Placement and Honors IV Spanish students have the opportunity to go on a class trip over April break to Argentina. According to the organizer, Spanish teacher Joe Johnson, this trip has been in the works for awhile.

In the past he has “done two student trips to Argentina” which were “really special.” As anyone who has taken a class with Johnson could tell you, he loves Argentina and feels that it is a great place to do an exchange program with because it is “quite stable and has a lot of prosperous families.”

The 27 students who have signed up for the trip will spend a week in the small town of La Cumbre, in Córdoba, Argentina. The trip will cost about \$2,700 overall and will include horseback riding, a tour of an old mansion, a visit to a nature reserve and multiple other activities, including a traditional asado (barbecue) with students from a school in La Cumbre, as well as a visit to their school.

Sophomore Yeshe Rai said he is “looking forward to zip lining,” while junior Alec Sills is “looking forward to getting to know Argentinian cuisine better.” Johnson is most looking forward to watching the students meet one another because “the Americans really quickly realize how much they can understand and how much they can say.”

The students from Mount Greylock and La Cumbre have been emailing one another as part of the exchange program. These emails are done in both Spanish and English and students

are enjoying getting to know their partners and find them helpful in learning the language.

Senior Luka Lash-St. John said that this exchange is making them think about “what it means to have two languages... and which versions of words are more used based on our different history,” as well as teaching them “more ways to use the language casually.”

Some students, like senior Phoebe Barnes, have even talked to their partners outside of

“I have always wanted to go on an immersion trip like the one being offered this year.”

- Senior Ava Anagnos

school assignments. Barnes has been texting her partner on Instagram and is finding that their exchanges are “making me exercise my Spanish in ways I wouldn’t have in a classroom.” Sills agreed, saying that working with his Argentinian partner has “contextualized my Spanish... [and] causes me to look up words I wouldn’t think to use in an academic setting,” although the exchanges have been “a little awkward at points.”

One of the students from La Cumbre, 15-year-old Tiziana Goñi, said she cannot wait

to meet the Greylock students and introduce them to her friends. When asked about what parts of La Cumbre she most wanted to show the visitors, she spoke about the “mountain in front of [her] house...or the Río Pinto.”

Johnson said he is “happy that what we envision for the trip also appears to click so well with what students were hoping for.”

“I have always wanted to do an immersion trip like the one being offered this year,” senior Ava Anagnos said. “I know this trip will fulfill my hopes to challenge myself with the Spanish language in less of an academic setting and to provide a first-hand view of a different culture from what’s familiar.”

Johnson said he was only hoping for maybe ten students to go on the trip. “To get this kind of excitement is really, really gratifying,” he said, especially given the time that he has put into making the trip possible.

Sills said he decided to go because “of my desire to use and cement my Spanish, and I’ve never been to South America, so why not go with friends?”

Johnson first spoke with the English teacher in La Cumbre who is organizing the exchange there while “doing some research for graduate school class,” and they hit it off. They hope to continue this exchange into the future and plan for the students in La Cumbre to come to Williamstown next year so that they can experience this small town, just as the Mount Greylock students will be experiencing theirs. ♦

Mechanical Mounties Place Second At Robot Rumble

BY DYLAN CLOWES

The Mechanical Mounties Robotics Club placed second at the Robot Rumble, an annual high school pre-season competition in Ballston Spa, on November 4.

Robot Rumble is an un-official competition that reuses the challenge from January of 2023, and is a way for younger members of the club to gain experience.

Though the team lost five of its seniors from last year, it has seen a resurgence in interest recently, with many new members joining and revitalizing the club this year. With seven new recruits to the Mechanical Mounties, the club’s future is looking bright.

This year has seen not only the club’s remarkable growth but also notable success, placing second at the rumble.

Every year, the club participates in two competitions. These competitions are organized by a company called FIRST, which combines science, technology.

In this year’s competition called Energize, robots score points by placing cones and cubes in their designated spots. The matches last two minutes and 15 seconds. During the first fifteen seconds of the competition, the robots must be autonomous, but after that students are allowed to control them. At the end of a match, teams work together to try and put as many robots as

possible on a balanced platform.

The club suffered a major technical difficulty with their robot when its arm failed to work at the rumble. However, as one of the captains, Mateo Whalen-Loux, explained, they were able to move it by relying on Newton’s first law of momentum to swing the arm up, leading them to success.

The next season for the team will start in January, and they will have their next competitions in March.

The details of this next challenge the Mechanical Mounties will face are entirely unknown until the “kick-off” date, when all information regarding the challenges the teams need to prepare for the competition are released.

“It’s always really pretty secretive. For like 30 years, there hasn’t been a single leak,” Whalen-Loux said. This year, Whalen-Loux added, “Many people are speculating that the event might be water based.”

In his opinion, Whalen-Loux said with a laugh, “I think that it is a horrible idea to mix teenagers, electronics and water.” ♦



Photo Courtesy of Krishiv Malhotra

NEWS

Priced Tickets Return to Mount Greylock

BY RAFA MELLOW-BARTELS

Prior to this year's fall sports season, Mount Greylock Regional School decided to reintroduce an entrance fee for any non-student to attend outdoor night sports games. This is a fee that has not been required for outdoor athletic events for the past several years, and its reintroduction has created some controversy.

Selling tickets for sporting events was a decision made by Berkshire County superintendents and school committees, according to Mount Greylock Athletic Director Lindsey von Holtz. The initial ticketing policy started approximately 20 years ago. Schools with lights would charge adults \$5 and students \$3 for football games, basketball games, and night time soccer games. However, this policy got complicated when two new sports, volleyball and lacrosse, were added to the county and not every school charged a fee to attend these games.

According to von Holtz, "Mount Greylock was planning to begin consistent indoor and night outdoor ticketing during the 2020-2021 school year" but this decision "was put on hold due to the pandemic." During COVID the entrance fee policy for outdoor athletic events was suspended, in hopes of promoting the events as outdoor, safe community gathering places.

Beginning this school year, however, the policy has been reinstated, and non-students must now purchase tickets for all indoor sporting events and night athletic events. Students, however, do not have to pay. The main reason the school began charging for tickets again is to create revenue.

While von Holtz did not share how much revenue has been raised this season, she explained, "The revenue generated is used for student uniforms, team equipment and trans-

portation, student leadership events and various other needs that come up during the school year."

Many students and community members recognize these are important and necessary expenses, but some would prefer alternate ways of raising this money.

"We should want as many people as possible -- not just parents and siblings but grandparents, community members, neighbors, teach-

"The revenue generated is used for student uniforms, team equipment and transportation."

- Lindsey von Holtz

ers, Williams tutors, whomever -- supporting Mount Greylock boys and girls on the pitch, court, stage, wherever," one Mount Greylock parent said. "Especially in a town with, frankly, not all that much to do, there's an opportunity to make Mount Greylock a hub of civic engagement and social capital and, well, community life. Those are unambiguous social goods, in my opinion, and I fear the current practice may inhibit them."

Some people, like girls soccer coach and Mount Greylock teacher Tom Ostheimer, are also put off by the registration fees students must pay to participate in sports. Those fees "really changed what I think is meant by public school education," he said. Instead, as a public school, "We should fund sports, we should fund

the performing arts, everything," he said.

If the payment itself is an obstacle for any families, the school is able to waive the fee. However, the way the payment is collected raises another potential barrier. Whereas at other schools, payment is collected in cash, Mount-Greylock uses an app called TicketSpicket which requires a credit card and charges a processing fee.

Discussing the steps needed to purchase a ticket, the parent said, "Simply put, the more hurdles you erect, the less likely people are to engage."

Though von Holtz acknowledged that both the cost and the steps necessary just to purchase the tickets were a concern for some, possibly decreasing attendance at athletic events, she also emphasized the importance of this revenue. Without it, there would be less money available for the needed uniforms and equipment of sports teams.

For now, the school plans to continue requiring non-students to pay for these athletic events. Students will continue being able to attend the events for free for the rest of the school year, as this is covered by a SEE Fund grant. However, this grant does not extend into next year, so it remains to be seen if students will have to pay for tickets in future years. ♦

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Students Attend MIAA Sportsmanship Summit

BY COLE CREIGHTON

On November 9, athletes from all over the Bay State met at the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) Sportsmanship Summit at Gillette Stadium. The annual event focuses on leadership, motivation and sportsmanship for highschool students. This year was the 29th meeting of the Sportsmanship Summit and was attended by eight members of the Mount Greylock community.

The summit teaches team leaders across various sports about how to positively influence their teams and places an emphasis on skills needed to pursue a career in sports. This year's speaker, Mark Leinweaver, was a Major League Baseball agent whose talk provided the attendees with information about how he got his job and the education, experiences and skills students will need if they decide to pursue a similar career or other position in the sports world. Along with the talk by Leinweaver, the attendees participated in workshops and activities with fellow student athletes from across the state.

Juniors Mia Filiault, Malia Koffi, William Igoe, Noah Klompus, Mai O'Connor, Devika

Sharma, Ezekiel Singer, Knowl Stroud and Cole Wetherell all attended the summit. They were chosen because they are leaders in Mount Greylock's athletics program and are interested in growing as team leaders and as individuals.

According to Igoe, the attendees were surprised about what the summit entailed -- while they expected that the program would focus on sportsmanship, they soon realized it would be more focused on careers in sports. Like Mark Leinweaver, working in sports "is something that I want to do," Igoe said. He was pleasantly surprised about all he and the attendees from other schools learned throughout the day.

Along with teaching the attendees about sports careers, Leinweaver stressed the importance of character in everyday life, and how external factors like social media impact character development.

O'Connor said Leinweaver talked about "social media's role in everyday life." In addition to the speaker's interesting points, O'Connor highlighted the fact that the organizers at MIAA tried to find things the attendees would relate to, in order to advance the key



Photo Courtesy of Lindsey Von Holtz

points of the summit. "They used the prospect of becoming the next Taylor Swift as a big talking point," O'Connor said.

"The summit was clearly carefully planned and well organized. I'm really glad to have been a part of it" O'Connor said. The summit is an opportunity for budding leaders, and Mount Greylock is hoping to continue sending students to the summits for many years to come. ♦

NEWS

Student Musicians Attend Senior Districts

BY FRANCES EVANS

On Saturday, November 18, student musicians from Mount Greylock boarded a bus for Westfield State to audition for the Massachusetts Music Educators Association's Western District Senior Festival, or, as it's more commonly known, Senior Districts.

Senior Districts is a music festival for high school students that takes the top musicians in the Western Massachusetts area and groups them together in different ensembles. Entry to Senior Districts is on an audition basis.

Students are given music and a list of scales to prepare for the audition, where they also have to sight-read. Auditionees are called into a room with a judge and perform their prepared materials and the sight-reading piece.

The results are announced a couple of days after the audition. The festival itself will take place on January 13.

"We have a ton of kids auditioning, which is really exciting," said Mount Greylock band and chorus teacher Jacqueline Vinette. "I think we have 25, which is way more than we usually have, which shows that we're recovering the music department from COVID years."

"Given our small band," said senior saxophonist Vincent Welch, "it will be exciting if I make it and get to go [participate] in a well-balanced band."

For many Mount Greylock students, Senior Districts auditions, as well as the festival itself, provide a great opportunity to meet and play with other student musicians.

"I think it's really valuable to just have different experiences with new conductors and new people to play with," senior and double



Photo Courtesy of Krishiv Malhotra

bass player Grace Winters said.

Senior cellist Caleb Low said, "It's a great opportunity to meet musicians from across the area and to connect with other people who share similar interests [and] have fun playing music for a couple of days."

"It's kind of like a stepping stone," said junior alto singer Jacyd Cohen-McFall. "I'm

looking forward to stepping outside of my comfort zone."

"I was super nervous about doing this for a while," said junior french horn player Julian Rudin. "I didn't think I was good enough for it. But after looking at the piece and playing it for six months, I'm in a much better spot competence-wise than I was. So if you're planning on doing it but are nervous about it, just go for it."

"It can be a little scary, especially when you're in the room and there's judges looking at you, but I think it's a good process," Low said. "As someone who has spent a lot of time auditioning for this, and actually didn't get in one year, it's still a great opportunity. The audition process will help you become a better musician."

The difficulty of getting into Senior Districts "depends on the instrument and it depends on the year," Vinette said. "It depends on who shows up for that instrument grouping or vocal part." She added that she is optimistic about the results, though, and believes "students are prepared."

The top fifty percent of accepted students for Senior Districts also receive a recommendation to audition for All State. ♦

Dr. Singh Speaks to Mount Greylock Community

BY ADELE LOW

On Wednesday, November 8, Dr. Simran Jeet Singh, who is currently the executive director for the Aspen Institute's Religion and Society Program, made his way up to Mount Greylock to share his story and to try and educate and connect with the students there.

Singh focuses heavily on anti-bullying, specifically ways to fight against racism and harassment against minorities. He spoke to the students about ways to combat bullying faced in everyday life, giving personal examples of ways he deals with those situations. He hopes to provide ways for students to know how to approach these situations in the future.

Singh, who grew up in Texas, now lives in New York City. He expressed that even though his move from the south to the north could be thought of as a way to escape racism and prejudice, it was not. Singh spoke of stories from both his childhood and his adult life where he faced hatred and prejudice, trying to make his words relatable to connect with students.

Singh came to Mount Greylock on November 7 as well, to speak with the faculty and staff. The staff split off into small breakout groups, meeting with Singh in those groups for smaller-scale discussion.

Regarding the differences between speaking with the staff and then speaking with the students, Singh said, "In terms of approach, it was very similar. I try to talk to high school [students] as adults."

Singh does note some differences though, based on the training that teachers across the globe have had compared to the lack of training that high schoolers have. He refers to it as social and emotional learning. "The nice thing about that for me is I can go a lot deeper with the adults... so our focus for the visit was around value-based living, value-based leadership, and I suppose teaching as well" Singh said.

After Singh gave talks to all of the Mount Greylock students, he met for a smaller discussion with the Student Council and the Greylock Multicultural Student Union (GMSU). There, the students were given the chance to meet with Singh and be able to go much more in-depth in terms of what he was talking about in the assemblies.

One of the main questions students asked was "How do I have a productive conversation without shutting down and tuning everything out, and how can I really listen, when the person who I'm talking to has the opposite beliefs than I do?"

Singh then opened up and spoke about one of his best friends, who leans towards the opposite side of politics. He talked about how they did not avoid discussing politics -- instead, they engaged often about political issues, trying to have productive conversations by really listening to one another. This, Singh said, does not mean their minds are going to change, but these discussions can help maintain the respect that



Photo Courtesy of Krishiv Malhotra

they have for each other, which is crucial in any relationship.

Students also spent time discussing how to respond to discrimination. Sophomore Krishiv Malhotra said, "I've been the subject of micro-aggressions, and I wasn't sure how to deal with it. So this gave some clarity, but it's still hard to get the right answer."

Much of Singh's work centers around activism and having these conversations with students. "I think part of what I'm seeing all around the country is that there's so much frustration, so much confusion and uncertainty about what to do when it comes to people who are looking at the world differently," he said. "The real skill of life is learning how to live alongside people who don't just agree with you, and no one really taught me how to do that." ♦

NEWS & FEATURES

New Track Cont.

Continued from Page 1

"It's a program that's renowned across the state," McCandless said. "But they do not have a home track other than the college track." This new plan will remedy that.

However, as McCandless understands, "There are still some people in town who are rightfully incredibly disappointed that this decision was made." Many prefer the turf field, liking the flexibility it provides for athletics. Some would also like gym classes to have the ability to go outside during warmer days in the winter. Ultimately, though, the cost and environmental setbacks have prevented a turf field from being implemented.

Mount Greylock students have responded to the new track with overwhelming positivity for a variety of reasons.

"I love our little grass track," said senior track captain Phoebe Barnes, referring to the track the team currently practices on. "But also, considering the amount of times I've fallen try-

ing to hurdle in the rain, I'm glad it's going to be made safer."

Other students are glad they will no longer have to travel to Williams just to practice. "I'm really looking forward to having a track that's so close to the school so that it's more easily accessible," junior Silas Sims said.

Even students who would be positively impacted by a turf field understand the school's decision to build a track instead. "The track is more helpful," said junior Noah Klompus, who does both soccer and track. "I love a nice soccer field, but, in my opinion, it's better to run on a bad soccer field and have a nice track than to run on a bad track and have a nice soccer field." He also pointed out how, due to the large size of the track team, more students will be impacted by this decision.

McCandless predicts the track will be ready for use by the spring of 2025. However, even though they are rolling out sod, which makes

the process quicker, he thinks the new field will not be ready for use until the year after.

The track will be open to the community as another place to walk and enjoy the school's campus. The field, on the other hand, will be less accessible to anyone unaffiliated with the school, as the school wants to preserve it primarily for student use.

"Our entire school community is so grateful for our partnership with Williams," McCandless said. "[We are] incredibly honored to get to do this project for the good of our students, the community, and a track team... where every student-athlete knows they matter and knows they belong. The track family is extraordinary...and we are thrilled we can provide them all with a home track. This project is a win for the entire community." ♦

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Teachers Reflect on Path to Mount Greylock

BY NORA LOPEZ

What do you want to do when you grow up? A question that has been asked for ages, for highschoolers it is often a scary, nearly impossible one, full of societal pressure to have one's life fully planned. Despite this expectation, people often end up with different occupations than the path they had in mind while in high school. The *Greylock Echo* sat down with teachers at the school to ask about what they, as teenagers, had thought they were going to do after graduating from high school.

Math teacher Ann Marie Barber had a clear idea of what she wanted to be from a young age. While attending Taconic High School, Barber originally wanted to be an elementary school teacher. However, after graduating, she attended college to pursue becoming a high school math teacher. Barber said she switched within the education field because "My high school principal said that there were no high school math teachers and that it'd be much easier to get a job."

Ideally, knowing what you love can lead to a profession that follows that passion. This was the case for Shawn Flaherty, a paraprofessional at Mount Greylock. Flaherty said that he always loved working with kids and wanted to continue to do so. After graduating from Mount Greylock, he began taking additional classes and eventually began working in the North Adams school system, later transitioning to the

Mount Greylock school system.

His passion for working in education was evident for him in high school, but he said he did not know what he wanted to do after graduating. "It just found me in a sense...I just knew that I like working with kids and then I got into education," Flaherty said.

Similarly, social studies and computer science teacher Peter Niemeyer said he knew that teaching and education interested him but had no clear plan in high school. "I was a little bit of a train wreck in high school. And yet, somewhere throughout my life there were these

***"Plans are worthless, but
planning is everything"***

- Scott Burdick

moments where I thought teaching would be interesting," Niemeyer said.

Niemeyer said he was inspired by a few of his own teachers. "There were a handful of teachers who were really really instrumental in giving me a second chance," Niemeyer said, going on to explain that he "thought that would be good work."

Sometimes, a set plan in high school does not align with what people end up doing, which was the case for former chemistry teacher and

current substitute Scott Burdick. He said he knew he wanted to be a chemical engineer during high school, and after graduating Mount Greylock he began a chemical engineering program in college.

However, during his sophomore year, Burdick temporarily returned to Mount Greylock to fill in as a substitute for the chemistry teacher of his sister, school librarian Liza Barrett, who was still a student at Mount Greylock at the time.

"I really liked it," Burdick said about teaching, "so I switched my major." Burdick said he believes that following your original set plan is not always necessary. "Plans are worthless, but planning is everything," he explained. "I kind of had a plan, but then I didn't rigidly follow it. I was open to other things."

Part of transitioning into the working world is the expectation that one should know what they want to do, but as experiences and environments shape our outlook on life and our goals, ideas and professions can change. Teachers and staff around Mount Greylock are living evidence that even with a plan, situations change, and that even if there is not a clear path, there are still fulfilling jobs and opportunities. Just a small idea or passion can lead to rewarding careers that you love. As Niemeyer says, "I still love the job and I'll keep doing it until I stop loving it." ♦

NEWS & FEATURES

English Department Welcomes Igoe

BY AMELIA MADRIGAL

English teacher Kathleen Igoe is Mount Greylock's latest addition to the sophomore faculty. After beginning at Mount Greylock in September, Igoe quickly demonstrated her humor and commitment to the school community by volunteering to get "pied" in the junior class pie-a-teacher fundraiser and raffle.

Igoe is a Williams College alum, where she majored in English and volunteered at the local elementary school. There, she also took a Winter Study course, during which she spent time with the district superintendent and expanded on her experience in education.

After graduating, Igoe said, "everyone assumed I would go into teaching, but for some reason I said 'No, I am going to try other things.' That summer, Igoe led a summer biking trip for Overland, a Williamstown-based camp that specializes in outdoor experiences. When she came back from the trip she realized that she did want to teach after all. "What was I thinking?" Igoe asked.

In 1992, Igoe started a one-year internship at Emma Willard, a boarding school in Troy, New York. At Emma Willard, Igoe was able to immerse herself in life as a faculty member at a boarding school. "I lived in the dorm, I coached basketball, and I met once a week with the dean and two other interns," Igoe said.

After Emma Willard, she taught for six years at Roland Park Country School in Baltimore, Maryland, and then at the Packer Collegiate Institute in Brooklyn, New York. Igoe moved back to Williamstown and taught eighth grade English part-time at Pine Cobble School, then

decided to take a break from teaching to start a family.

Igoe returned to teaching in 2020, shortly before the COVID-19 pandemic. Although she had just gotten her certification to teach in



Photo Courtesy of Kathleen Igoe

public schools, there were no openings, so she began teaching at Pine Cobble School again.

"I had always sort of thought I would come to Mount Greylock to teach," Igoe said. This dream became a reality in the spring of 2023, when English teacher Jessica Cook announced she was leaving Mount Greylock and Igoe stepped in to take her place.

A former Mount Greylock student, Igoe has a special connection to the school, although it looks very different today. Igoe loves the new school building, though, and said, "It's so won-

derful to have views to the outside whereas, in the old building, all of the windows faced into the courtyard." Igoe added, "I definitely think about all my former English teachers. Even though it is a new building, I feel like their spirit is here."

Igoe could not make any major changes to the sophomore curriculum, but says she feels very positively about the curriculum as is, and is excited to teach "Things Fall Apart," "Their Eyes Were Watching God" and "Othello" because she has prior experience teaching these texts. Over the summer, she also familiarized herself with "Exit West," by Mohsin Hamid, another novel in the curriculum. "I really fell in love with it," Igoe said.

The one book Igoe was able to choose for the curriculum is the honors class summer reading book. She chose "Circe" by Madeline Miller, which is a modern, mythological retelling of the character Circe from Homer's "The Odyssey." "It was a challenging text, and I was really impressed with how my honors classes worked with [it]," Igoe said.

Pulling from her time teaching Overland writing courses for four summers, Igoe puts an emphasis on feedback so students are really able to grow. Igoe strives to foster her students' confidence while supporting and challenging each person, and said it is important for her to "have everyone feel safe and comfortable and be able to share their ideas." ♦

College Board Announces Digital SAT

BY BEN MCDONOUGH

Beginning in the 2024-2025 school year, U.S. students will take the SAT digitally, the College Board announced. The SAT, traditionally taken on paper, is the most popular form of testing for college admissions and is taken by junior and senior high school students worldwide.

Priscilla Rodriguez, vice president of College Readiness Assessments at College Board, is quoted on the College Board website. "We're not simply putting the current SAT on a digital platform—we're taking full advantage of what delivering an assessment digitally makes possible," she said.

Along with moving online, the test will be about an hour shorter, giving students more time for each question. Additionally, students will be able to use a calculator for all math sections.

This isn't the first time the SAT has been digital – when COVID-19 hit, the SAT was offered digitally for people who needed to take it from home – but a digital SAT will become the new normal next academic year. This move raises questions about how Mount Greylock will adapt to these new changes.

One of the main topics surrounding the new digital SAT is how it will impact the testing experience itself. Having the SAT online

changes the logistics of test-taking, including things like monitoring the students and ensuring the test will load and submit on their computers. Standard pencils and paper are no longer in the cards for schools. Instead, they will need to invest in new technologies, including a highly reliable internet.

Many students, juniors in particular, have strong feelings about this switch to digital. Some prefer the traditional paper and pencil approach, while others are looking forward to the new system.

"I believe it will be hard for the upcoming year because it is easier to concentrate on paper than a computer, at least for me," junior Emily Alvarez. But, she added, "The more that kids start preparing for it online and take practice exams with a computer, I think it will make it more comfortable when the time comes to take it."

This move to digital may also bring up challenges of equity and accessibility. Not all students have access to the same resources, especially to technology. This means some students may not have reliable internet access, so preparing for this online SAT may be more difficult. Mount Greylock's approach to addressing this new system will be crucial for the 2024 school year.

The shift to digital SAT testing comes with lots of challenges, but also new opportunities for Mount Greylock. The school will have to reevaluate their testing procedures when they hold the SAT. Mount Greylock will also have to create a new approach for preparing students for the SAT, ensuring everyone is well-versed on the digital layout of the test. As long as the school ensures their students are prepared, keeping students up to date on any new information, they hope to see a successful transition to an online testing format. ♦



Scan here to check out the Greylock Echo website!

FEATURES

Rutz Assumes Assistant Principal Position

BY JACK UHAS

Among the many new faces at Mount Greylock Regional School this fall, Samantha Rutz has joined the administration as the new assistant principal. The *Greylock Echo* sat down with Rutz to learn more about her and her vision for the school.

Rutz has an extensive background working in the education sector, having been a teacher in multiple schools prior. Before coming to Mount Greylock, Rutz worked at Mohawk Trail Regional School as a teacher and administrator, and before that worked in Springfield and Boston public schools.

Most of her time was spent teaching science in seventh through twelfth grade. When asked what she wanted to be as a kid, Rutz said, "I wanted to be a teacher, and I [also] wanted to be a ski instructor."

Rutz said she chose Mount Greylock as the next step in her career because "It's a beautiful community with outstanding academics, strong athletics and a commitment to the arts."

Rutz enjoys spending time with friends and playing outdoors with her kids. She also co-advises the Greylock Multicultural Student Union and said it was "a nice way to meet

students." Speaking about the clubs at Mount Greylock, Rutz said, "I like all of the options here... you have to support diversity and inclusion... to provide opportunities for all students, regardless of their background."

Within the school setting, "I've always seen my role as an educator to support students. I do work for [them]...even though not all my choices are probably popular. I'm here to support the student body in any way that I can," Rutz said.

Focusing more specifically on the new cell phone policy, which prohibits students from having their phone out in class without the permission of their teacher, Rutz said, "The cell phone policy was really to recognize that it is a tool that can be used for learning, but that students need to be responsible with it. It's [still] their property, but there's a time and place for cell phone use."

Rutz dedicates a large portion of her day to the emotional well-being of the school. "I have a very open door policy for students, as you can see," Rutz said, gesturing to her open office door. "It's always revolving and much good communication [happens]."

Rutz also shared her strategy regarding con-

flict resolution, something assistant principals often must deal with. She said, "I always like to hear the student's perspective because every story has many sides to it. I also like to help people who are in conflict come to their own conclusions and solutions." ♦



Photo Courtesy of Jack Uhas

Meet Your Neighbor: Mary Lovvorn

BY LUCY MCWEENY

Meet Your Neighbor is a new column in the Greylock Echo, consisting of interviews with residents of Sweetwood, the independent living community next door to Mount Greylock. These interviews serve to showcase the stories of our neighbors and the ways they have served our community. Echo reporters will be interviewing a different neighbor every month. Our first interview is with Mary Lovvorn, a board member of the League of Women Voters in Williamstown, where she works to register and inform voters of the town.

Echo: Where did you grow up?

Mary Lovvorn: I grew up in Columbia, South Carolina. And then once I was grown up, I moved to Hilton Head, South Carolina, and that's where my children grew up. Once my youngest went to college, I set out to further my own career, and I ended up in Aiken, South Carolina and retired as a principal of an elementary school of the arts. I really loved those 10 years and, all of that time, my daughter and her family were living up here. So when I retired, I moved to Williamstown and never looked back.

E: You're very involved with the League of Women Voters, which I know does a lot of work in the community and at the high school. How did you first become involved?

ML: I guess I started out when someone asked me to help pass out the "I Voted" stickers at an election. I began to get to know some of the women that were involved, so then I got involved with some voter registration drives, particularly at Mount Greylock. And then REV

[Register, Educate, Vote] came along, and I had some connections to REV, and we began to do sort of a little partnership with the League of Women Voters. Now I'm on the board, so I'm involved with everything we do.

E: Could you talk a little more about the specific types of activities the League of Women Voters does?

ML: When it's election time we do the forums that are recorded by WillieNet. It's not exactly a debate, but the candidates are all at one table with a moderator, and questions come from the public. It's very helpful if you don't know the candidates and you don't know what they stand for. We try to get involved in any community activity that involves other organizations. Just to get people more aware, especially if you need to register to vote. That's probably our number one thing, and just to have a presence in the community.

E: What would you say is the most rewarding part of this work? What encourages you to do this work in the first place?

ML: I think the most rewarding part has been working with the high schoolers at both the voter registration and when I've gotten high schoolers to come help and give out stickers. I really enjoy working with the students and signing the little form that has your volunteer hours. Because I'm an educator, I love having a connection with the kids.

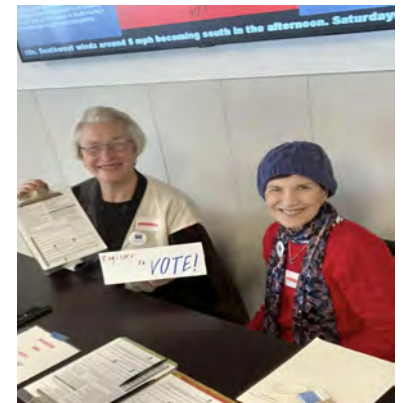


Photo Courtesy of Mary Lovvorn (right)

E: Were you involved in any sorts of similar community work before you moved to Williamstown?

ML: I was not a member of the League of Women Voters just simply because of time. You need to be retired to do a lot of these things. But, I've always had these same interests and gotten involved where I could. I was always a member of the Teachers Association, or the Administrators Association, which lobbied the state legislature for education and for teachers. So whenever I would get emails and information about things people needed to contact their legislators for, I would spread that around the school and try to get other people involved.

Continued on page 9

FEATURES

Hatch Blauvelt: New School Counselor

BY EMILY MOLE

Courtney Hatch Blauvelt joined the Mount Greylock community this year as one of the school's new guidance counselors. She has replaced Kathryn Pratt, who left Mount Greylock this past summer.

Hatch Blauvelt began her career in financial aid, which led her to work in the college setting. She went back to school, where she received her degree in school counseling. With her years of experience working in the financial aid world, along with her counseling degree, Hatch Blauvelt secured a position as a college counselor at Miss Hall's School, a private boarding school in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, before coming to Mount Greylock as a guidance counselor.

Hatch Blauvelt worked as a college counselor at Miss Hall's School for six years. "I loved doing only college [counseling] for a while because it is more focused," Hatch Blauvelt said. But while she enjoyed this focused role at Miss Hall's, she always wanted to play a broader role in students' lives.

"I really wished I could've gotten to know students from an earlier age and be more involved in their day to day lives and academics," she said. "[I wanted] to provide more holistic support and not just college support." This prompted her move to Mount Greylock.

Hatch Blauvelt recalled the difficulty of getting into this line of work to begin with. "I tried to get jobs in colleges, specifically as an admis-

sions officer, but they weren't hiring," she said. "I went to a temp agency and they were like, 'all the financial aid offices are always hiring.' I got into a career in financial aid to pay my bills and avoid school for a while, and then eventually I did go back to get my degree in school counseling."

While Hatch Blauvelt helps students with all their guidance needs, she is particularly helpful for students going through the college process. "At Miss Hall's, my position was to help the 11th graders prepare and help the 12th graders actually apply in the fall," she said. "At a boarding school, almost every single kid knows they want to go to college when they're in 9th grade," she said. As a result, Hatch Blauvelt has experience advising students early on in the college process.

While Hatch Blauvelt has only been at Mount Greylock since this summer, her first impressions are very positive about the school. Comparing her time at Miss Hall's to now, she said, "There's a lot of diversity at Miss Hall's in ways that are different from the diversity here. I appreciate the different types of diversity at Greylock."

Hatch Blauvelt is eager to help high school students with all aspects of their academic experience, using not only her expertise in college guidance but also her familiarity with the area. "I have wanted to work as a public school

guidance counselor since I was twenty four years old," she said. "I'm from the Berkshires and I live here now but it's not been my whole experience. After working at Miss Hall's where people come from all over the world and the country, I just want people to know that I get the Berkshires, but I also want us all to remember the wider world out there." ♦



Photo Courtesy of Courtney Hatch Blauvelt

Mueller Joins Mount Greylock Art Department

BY ADELE LOW

Rachel Mueller, a new addition to the Mount Greylock Art Department, began in September as the mosaics teacher. Mueller, who moved to the Berkshires from Texas two years ago, loves to make art and hang out with her puppy.

Mueller filled the empty spot in the art department left by Lisa Mendel and teaches grades seven through twelve at the school. Mueller said she believes that it is her job to "show kids what they are really capable of," and to "help them truly be proud of themselves."

She added that she is really enjoying being able to see the students evolve and is looking forward to watching every student be able to grow as an individual throughout their years here. "It's nice to see such a span of different abilities and ages and interests because I've had jobs before where I only teach one grade," Mueller said.

Mueller, originally from Illinois, moved to the Berkshires from Texas when her partner got a job as a librarian at Williams College. During Mueller's first year living in the Berkshires she worked as a math teacher at Drury, which was not her first choice, as she has always wanted to work in the arts. Mueller had worked as an art teacher previously and knew that her future should be in the arts rather than mathematics.

After her year at Drury, Mueller saw that the mosaics job at Mount Greylock had opened up and she jumped on it with no hesitation. "I was looking for art jobs that were opening up and this one opened up and I had really only heard the best things about Greylock. So I was super excited and I applied," she said.

Now that Mueller has been here a few months, she said that her favorite parts of Mount Greylock are "the views and the community."

Mueller said she did not take many art classes during high school, though she was always very involved in theater. She further discovered her passion for the arts when she attended the University of Illinois, where she took many art courses. There she realized that she wanted a career in art.

"I've always been artistic, even as a kid I was very involved in the arts. I was a theater kid in high school, and I think that it is a unique subject area because kids connect with it differently," Mueller said. "You can bring certain things out of a kid that they had no idea that they could do." ♦

Meet Your Neighbor Cont.

Continued from Page 8

E: What do you feel is the importance of being involved in your community?

ML: I would say that helping other people is the most rewarding thing you can do. You help yourself when you help other people. I always feel better myself after I've been out and done something that involved other people. Whether it's coming to a place like a nursing home, or independent living like Sweetwood, or going to the food bank and helping there. There are so many opportunities, and they're all rewarding in their own right. Helping other people is what we're here to do.

E: Do you have specific suggestions for how students should get involved with their community?

ML: Especially this time of year, there's so much with Thanksgiving and the holidays. There are so many different drives, like coat drives or gift drives or giving to Toys for Tots. There are many, many opportunities to show that you're grateful for what you have in order to help other people who may be not as well off. ♦

FEATURES & SPORTS

The Booster Clubs, Explained

BY CHARLOTTE HOLUBAR

At Mount Greylock Regional School, a vibrant spirit of collaboration and community support extends far beyond the walls of classrooms and the bounds of athletic fields. Here, one of the avenues through which this collective enthusiasm finds expression is in the dedicated efforts of the various booster clubs. According to Lindsey von Holtz, the athletic director at Mount Greylock who oversees the clubs, most programs and teams in the school boast their own autonomous booster club, driven by the passion and commitment of parents who seek to enrich the experiences of their children in both athletics and the arts.

In many schools, booster clubs are often composed exclusively of parents whose children are members of the respective teams. However, Mount Greylock's approach is distinctive, particularly in its treatment of the arts program. Led by parents whose children engage in a variety of artistic performances, Friends of the Arts, the booster club for all of the arts at Mount Greylock, stands out for its collective approach. Rather than focusing solely on individual contributions, this group of dedicated parents is committed to elevating the entire arts program, fostering an environment where creativity and artistic expression can flourish.

The booster clubs at Mount Greylock can provide opportunities in leadership and organizational skills. Parents who take on roles within these clubs often find themselves navigating complex logistical challenges, managing budgets and coordination. These experiences provide not only practical skills but also an understanding of the importance of effective collaboration and communication. As parents volunteer their time and expertise, they may model qualities of leadership and community

engagement for the students, reinforcing a culture of giving back and active participation in the broader community.

One noteworthy aspect of Mount Greylock's booster club structure is the level of autonomy afforded to these groups. To ensure transparency and accountability, each booster club is mandated to establish organizational structures and adhere to specific bylaws. Additionally, they must submit relevant financial information for tax purposes.

However, despite these checks and balances, von Holtz said, "The school does not control the groups [or the funds], though we do provide overall guidance and structure to ensure we are still meeting all school financial requirements." This balance ensures that booster clubs can tailor their support to the unique needs of their respective programs while still operating within the school's broader financial framework.

At Mount Greylock, the inclusivity of booster clubs is a defining feature. Any individual, whether a parent, student, or community member, has the opportunity to contribute to a booster club. The funds managed and accessed by these dedicated groups of parents become the lifeblood of various initiatives aimed at enhancing the overall student experience.

"Most of the programs were created well before I became the athletic director or the director of student programs," von Holtz said. This acknowledgment speaks to the longevity and enduring impact of booster clubs at Mount Greylock. Their presence and influence have transcended changes in leadership, emphasizing the sustained commitment of the community to support its students.

The collaborative nature of the relationship

between booster clubs and the broader school community is evident in the process of bringing forth proposals. Von Holtz explains that if a student, coach, or advisor envisions a valuable addition to their program, they can approach the booster club with their proposal. This collaborative process ensures the booster club can effectively evaluate and determine how best to support the aspirations of the student body.

Student testimonials offer glimpses into the tangible impact of booster club initiatives. Junior Kylie Sweren, varsity volleyball and track athlete said, "The booster club provided [the girls volleyball team] with new uniforms this season and it was really nice to have."

Junior Mai O'Connor, varsity soccer and tennis player said, "This soccer season, the booster club paid for our dinner after an away game and it really helped team bonding."

The impact of booster clubs at Mount Greylock extends beyond the immediate benefits of financial support and enhanced experiences for students. The collaborative efforts of parents, students and community members in the booster clubs create a network of individuals who are not only invested in the success of specific programs but are also woven into the broader fabric of the school's identity. Through their active involvement in booster clubs, individuals forge connections that extend beyond the school years, fostering a sense of enduring camaraderie. ♦

Volleyball Team Wins State Championship

BY LUCY MCWEENY

The Mount Greylock Volleyball Team became MIAA Division 5 State Champions with a victory over Bourne High School on Saturday, November 19. The Mounties ended the match in three straight sets, 25-22, 25-19 and 25-14.

For most high school sports teams, the season ends with a tournament loss -- but not for the Mounties. Clinching both the state and western mass titles, the team also ended their season undefeated with a 26-0 record.

The Mounties also made it to the state finals last season, but lost to Frontier, making them all the more determined to secure the title this year.

"We've been waiting for this, second year in the finals, it was only a matter of time," senior captain and Tufts commit Celina Savage said. This is the first State Championship win for the volleyball team in the school's history, making it a particularly exciting accomplishment for coaches and players alike.

"It just means so much to make it here," senior Jackie Brannan said. "All the hard work

we have put in this last year, and even the past few years, all came down to this."

This state title was also the first for Greg Geyer, who has been coaching the Mounties for six years. "The senior class was in 7th grade the year I started at Mount Greylock, and I have had the privilege of watching them grow as people and as student athletes," Geyer said.

"I'm so proud of this team...incredible work ethic and determination," he added. "Personally, I could not ask for a more caring, close, hard working group of student athletes. Each is very special and together the whole is far more than the sum of its parts."

The Volleyball team is the only Mount Greylock team to win a state championship this fall, and the only volleyball team in Berkshire County to ever win the title.

Brannan said, "It's a very validating moment to see your time and effort pay off, and even greater to be able to do it with such a fun and connected team." ♦



Photo Courtesy of Judge Martin

SPORTS

Fall Sports Recap

BY ANDREW PETROPULOS

As December approaches, the fall sports season has come to a close for the Mount Greylock Mounties. The highly-ranked teams going into the season were the Girls Volleyball Team and the Boys and Girls Cross Country Teams. However, every team had its own memorable moments, stand-out players and striking performances.

The Girls Cross Country Team finished the regular season with a 16-0 record. In their first championship meet, Western Mass, they brought home the silver, only two points behind first-place Lenox. On Saturday, November 18, the team raced in Fort Devens for the Division 3 State Championship, where their biggest competition was Bromfield and Lenox. There, the Mounties finished fourth in the state.

Looking to the future, head coach Ann Marie Barber said, "We're looking forward to seeing what we can do, and hopefully enact some revenge on some other teams."

The Boys Cross Country Team finished with an undefeated record. Unforeseen injury struggles hindered them for championship meets, but the team still managed to finish second at Western Mass, behind Lenox, and third at their Division 3 State Qualifier. Senior captain Ollie Swabey placed first for the Mounties every race. The team placed 8th overall in the Division 3

State Championship to end the season.

The Girls Soccer Team finished their season Saturday, November 11, with a 2-0 loss to Douglas in the State Tournament Quarterfinals. Despite the bittersweet end to the season, they finished with a record of 18-3 and remained undefeated within Berkshire County. Senior Lily McDermott led the Mountie's attack this season, with nine assists and 19 goals.

The Boys Soccer Team also recently ended their season, losing 3-0 to Boston International in the State Tournament Round of 16. They did not end the season empty-handed, however. The Mounties beat Ware 2-1 in the Western Mass Class C Championship Game to take home the title. They finished with a regular season record of 9-7-3. The Mounties were led in goals by senior captain George Munemo.

"The season was a success," Munemo said. "We grew a lot as a team. The highlight definitely has to be the Western Mass game. To win the final after being there and coming up short the past two years, it was special."

The Golf Team had its ups and downs this year. For the first time in years, they managed to beat dominant Berkshire County force Wahconah in a regular season match. They also tied Wahconah for the Berkshire County league title, as both teams finished with a record of



Photo Courtesy of Krishiv Malhotra

13-1. The Mounties finished second in the Berkshire Classic behind Wachonah and missed out on qualifying for the state tournament by four strokes.

The Greylock-Drury co-op football team finished the season with a 4-5 record. Although they had a rough start to the season in September, they turned the season around in their fifth game against Smith Vocational, winning 32-20. They proceeded to win three out of their next four games. Despite their strong end of the season, the team did not qualify for the postseason tournaments.

Continued on page 13

Olympians Offer Advice

BY KNOWL STROUD

On September 25th, the SMS T2 professional Nordic Skiing team visited the Memory Clinic in Bennington. Afterward, the Greylock Echo sat down with two Olympic skiers, who offered their advice on sports, life and everything in between. Besides both being members of the 2022 U.S. Olympic team, Julia Kern is a World Championship Bronze Medalist and four-time U.S. National Champion, and Ben Ogden is a two-time NCAA champion and was the fastest under-23 male skier on the World Cup circuit this past year.

Echo: How do you approach balancing school, work and life with your sport?

Ben Ogden: It's been an ever changing scale for me...in my experience, if you get out early and go train in the morning you kind of get your head in a good spot to be productive. If I embarked on homework before training, it would be much less effective than if I went and ran or did a rollerski first. I really try to focus on using the training and sport to my advantage and just understand that you can't always do it all. Sometimes, you're not going to have a perfect day of training because you had an exam or you are not going to have a perfect homework assignment because you have to get to bed because you have intervals in the morning. For me, I never strove for perfection, but I just always kind of strove for the balance and was proud of myself for that. It's easy to feel like, when you're an athlete and in school, the two are at odds and in order to be a successful athlete you have to be bad in school and in order

to be good in school you can't be an athlete. That's not true. If you want to be a high achieving person you can achieve well in both if you are diligent and you play your cards right.

Julia Kern: For me, it's setting priorities and then based on those priorities, allocating my



Photo Courtesy of Knowl Stroud

time, realizing I'm not going to be able to do everything I want to do and prioritizing the things that are most important and then doing those really well...just being honest with myself of what's my priority today. Also, celebrating the small victories, whether it's getting a good grade on a homework assignment or it's getting to go for a run."

E: What is your favorite pre-race meal or snack?

BO: "I'm a big fan of the good 'ol peanut butter

and jelly...it's something that you can assemble pretty much anywhere. You can always find bread, but sometimes it's hard to find the peanut butter in Europe."

JK: "Whatever's around when we're traveling. You can't always have your favorite, but it's really easy to travel with some toast, a banana, some almond butter or some eggs. But usually it's toast with something on top, whatever I can find. Sometimes it's just honey."

Echo: What's your mentality towards big events and races?

BO: I personally, almost to a fault, try and just keep it light and try and take a 30,000 foot view of the situation, try and put things in perspective. I try to laugh and make a joke out of it. Even though I'm still nervous, I want to perform, my goals are on the line and I want to impress. What I'm projecting is kind of a light hearted, almost happy-go-lucky if that makes sense. I find that I perform the best when I'm kind of in the flow state and not really taking myself too seriously."

JK: "Hopefully, if I'm approaching a really big event or big goal like World Championships last year, I feel competent in what I've done to get there -- knowing all of the hard work has been put in and now this is my chance to go and perform just like in theater. It's like game day. All the hard work has been put in and now it's my time to show people. It's a reward and if there's going to be nerves, that nervousness means I care and I'm really excited about it." ♦

SPORTS

Winter Sports Preview

BY MACKENZIE ALCARO

The Mount Greylock fall sports season came to an end shortly before Thanksgiving break. Now, the school turns its attention to the 2023-2024 winter sports season. Here are brief recaps from last season and some previews for the upcoming season.

Girls Basketball

The Girls Basketball team ended with seven wins and 13 losses for the 2022-2023 season. The team has lost three seniors and one player due to transfer. We hope to see returning stars like seniors Jackie Brannan and Phoebe Barnes. The 2023-2024 team looks like it will be a fairly young one, with many underclassmen stepping up to fill the shoes of graduated seniors.

Boys Basketball

2022-2023 State Quarterfinalists

The Mount Greylock Boys Basketball team ended the 2022-2023 season with a 17-7 record.

Their previous season, led by former Coach Robert Thistle, was quite successful. The team has now lost seven seniors, as well as Thistle, who left Mount Greylock this spring. The team is going to have a fairly different season this year, with significant loss of players and a new head coach, Tommy Verdell.

Wrestling

After a successful 2022-2023 season, Mount Greylock wrestling will be losing one senior. The wrestling team is a co-op with McCann Technical School, meaning students from both schools are on the same team. After their success last year, we hope to see returning success from top performers like junior Nicholas Belora.

Boys Cross Country Skiing

2022-2023 State Champions

Mount Greylock Boys Cross Country Skiing

finished the 2022-2023 season as State Champions. The team was led by coaches Hilary Greene and Hiram Greene. The team will be starting the new season without the return of two graduated seniors. The team is looking to have another successful season with the return of many of their top skiers, including 2022-2023 State Champion and Williams commit senior Quinn McDermott.

Girls Cross Country Skiing

2022-2023 State Champion Finalists

Mount Greylock Girls Cross Country Skiing ended the 2022-2023 season with a third place finish in the State Championships. The team was led by Head Coach Hilary Greene. The team had a strong overall season, despite a minor decline in members. The 2023-2024 season looks promising with returning stars, freshman Cornelia Swabey and senior Annie Miller. ♦

Tommy Verdell: New Boys Basketball Coach

BY BEN DINGMAN

The 2023 winter sports season is rolling in, and the Boys Varsity Basketball Team has a new coach this season: Tommy Verdell, who replaces former coach Robert Thistle. Verdell is the current Associate Athletic Director for Inclusion and Compliance at Williams College. He was previously the assistant men's basketball coach at Bates College for five years and the head coach of the men's basketball team at Johnson State College. The Greylock Echo sat down with Verdell to discuss his plans for the season.

Echo: Given the team's strong seasons in previous years, how do you plan to attack your first year as coach?

Tommy Verdell: Coach Thistle has done a really good job in building a strong program that has achieved and has an expectation in achieving on-court success. Even with a rich tradition, each and every single year is a new year, and it will be important to recognize that this has been a successful program. However, with a new coach coming in, there will be a learning curve for one and all. I plan to come in and be myself and lead with the vision that I have for building upon the strong foundation that Coach Thistle has left behind.

E: The team has lost many senior varsity players. How do you plan to work with a growing and relatively young varsity team?

TV: Yes, they did. We really are a brand new team, and that's going to be a lot of fun as there will be a ton of learning, growing, and developing for all the players in the program. Player development, both on and off the court, is a passion of mine. We will prioritize the development of our players on a daily basis, as young men first and foremost off the court, as well as practices that will be designed to develop them as basketball players on the court.

E: What are you most excited for during this coming season?

TV: Basketball-wise, definitely practice. I absolutely love practice – that is my happy place. But my favorite part will be working with a group of players on a daily basis. Using the sport of basketball to build lifelong relationships and a community fills me up.

E: What are your expectations for this year? Are you seeing this year as a transition period?

TV: My expectation is that at the end of the season we will be the best version of ourselves, and be playing our best basketball, whatever that may look like at that time, all while having fun in doing so.

E: Who was your favorite player or favorite coach growing up, and who influenced your coaching style?

TV: My favorite player growing up was Patrick Ewing who played for my favorite college team and pro team as well, those being the Georgetown Hoyas and New York Knicks. My favorite still to this day is the late great legendary John Thompson who was the head coach of the Georgetown Hoyas for many years, and coached Patrick Ewing there as well. One more coach I have to mention that influenced me greatly was my grandfather Tom Verdell. He coached football, basketball, boxing, wrestling and track & field at Howard University and Virginia State University. He was inducted into the Virginia State University Hall Of Fame. He is hands down the reason I fell in love with coaching.

E: What qualities do you want to build in a team?

TV: My coaching philosophy comes down to one word I actually made up: famiLTLy. The LTL stands for Loyalty, Trust, and Love. To me those are the foundation upon which any and all



Photo Courtesy of Tommy Verdell

relationships should be built. So our program will be looking to develop the members of our program to represent that, both on and off the court. If that is all that anyone who I am fortunate enough to coach walks away with, well then I have more than done my job.

E: How do you plan to use your past experience in sports and apply that to a high school team?

TV: Sports have the unique power of bringing us all together. So the best way for me to answer your question is to take a peek into the future, 20 to 30 years from now. If we are creating the environment and experience on a daily basis in the vision we desire to have for our program, then 20-30 years from now, these young men will still be connected. They'll sit around and talk about this time with joy, and have lifelong memories that stick with them and they remember with the greatest of detail, as if they just happened yesterday. ♦

ETC.

Review: 'Love in the Time of Cholera'

BY SHUBHAM DEVRE

Set in the 1870s in the Caribbean, Gabriel García Márquez's romance novel, *Love in the Time of Cholera*, follows protagonists Florentino Ariza and Fermina Daza in their fifty-year-long love story.

In the beginning of the novel, young Florentino and Fermina fall in love, passing notes and meeting up in secret until they eventually agree to marry one another.

Disapproving of this, Fermina's father, Lorenzo Daza, takes Fermina on a long and dangerous trip along the countryside, hoping she will forget Florentino. When Fermina finally returns to the city, Florentino has trouble recognizing her, since she is now a mature adult. Fermina sees Florentino and, now disgusted by him, breaks all ties with him.

Fermina's father forces her to marry Dr. Juvenal Urbino, a young and accomplished hero. They spend 51 happy and unhappy years together, during which time Florentino has many affairs with various women.

Many years later, Dr. Urbino dies in an unfortunate accident. Florentino confesses his love to Fermina again after a long time, and Fermina eventually gives him another chance.

The story's plot is entertaining and engaging. Márquez's masterfully crafted plot tells the story of love through ordinary characters. The powerful wording paints the picture vividly for those reading the novel, thoroughly describing places, people, and their emotions. With strong imagery, the author provides many layers of depth and symbolism that add

to the meaning. Márquez skillfully balances telling the story from the points of view of three different characters, giving the novel more flavor and variety.

While the novel has many good aspects, it still has certain parts that I disliked. Although the words are powerful for conveying the story, they can sometimes be hard to understand. It may be an easy read for a person with a well-developed vocabulary and attention to detail, but for younger people it can be hard to understand the meaning of some words without having to look them up.

Márquez also does not write the story chronologically, so it can be difficult to follow the story when he is always jumping to different parts of the timeline. At the start of the novel, the story is slow and does not introduce the main theme until much later on, which may make readers disinterested early on in the novel.

Because of the slow start of the novel and the need for an advanced vocabulary, I would not recommend the novel to younger people. The beginning was very boring, and I had to continue reading for a while before the main theme was introduced.

However, I would recommend this novel to people who enjoy reading about romance and to those who love happy endings, with Márquez's expertly woven story using love and perseverance to shape an ending that leaves readers in awe. ♦

Fall Recap Cont.

Continued from Page 11

The Unified Basketball Team completed their sixth season, beginning and ending their season with a tie. The team participated in a final jamboree at Wahconah Regional High School on November 17, playing in shortened half-court games against the Wahconah, Pittsfield and Frontier teams.

The four seniors, Savannah Mabey, Kaylie Bryan, Cole Narey and Jason Jaros have all been on the team for most of their Mount Greylock careers. In the Red versus White senior night scrimmage, the "White team," led by Maybey, beat the "Red team," led by Bryan.

Head Coach Liza Barrett, who has coached the team for the past five years, said, "We love to win, but we don't really focus on the wins and losses." Ending in a tie, she added, "feels pretty perfect."

The Girls Volleyball Team has been the team to watch this year. They finished the regular season undefeated, with a record of 26-0. On October 28, they won the Western Mass Class C Championship title in four sets against county rival Lenox. The team went on to win the State Championship against Bourne in three straight sets. Senior captain and Tufts commit Celina Savage led the team with a staggering 378 kills. Junior Kylie Sweren led in aces and assists, with over 500 assists this season. ♦

1 in 650 Cont.

Continued from Page 1

VW: I see it as a unique opportunity to be able to reach all aspects of the school. And I mean, they're just different experiences, but I don't see myself having to change in either setting.

E: Do you have any teachers or classes that made a big impact on you during your time here?

VW: Definitely teachers. The teachers who I look up to the most are the ones who can turn a student's least favorite subject into a class that they look forward to throughout the day. Mr. Polidoro always comes to mind because I've had conversations with students all the time, and they're always like 'Mr. Polidoro should win the teacher's award every year.' I have him now and I can totally see why. And before Mr. Thistle left, he was someone who everyone loved for their class. And there's just teachers who, no matter the subject, can just make the kids look forward to the class.

E: What is it like to be a student at the school your father works at?

VW: It is exactly as you think it would be like. Ever since I was in elementary school, I've always had older kids come up to me and go, 'Are you Mr. Welch's son?' And I've never

really known how to react to that, whether it was going to be positive or negative. And I've always been out with my father in Williamstown and he goes, 'Oh, yeah, that kid was my student.' And it's like, how do you remember that? But as I get older, and I've actually been in the school, I realized how positive that actually is because kids seem to just love him. And I mean, having his class two years in a row, I can certainly see why. But it's been helpful. You know, if you forget to get a signature last minute, I can just run into his room and get it.

E: What advice do you have for underclassmen trying to make the most of their time at Greylock?

VW: Get involved. And if you want to see a change, join something that can make the change. I have always believed that the school community is one of the most important things, and school spirit. And it's certainly harder, being a smaller school. But it really is make the most of your time here. I can remember when I was in eighth grade, my sister was a senior and she sat me down in her car on her last day of school and she's like, 'You think it's going by slow now, but just wait, you'll be a senior.' And now here I am, a senior. And thankfully, looking back, I went to

as many games as I could. And my senior year, it's been a great first semester. I've been trying to bring back as many things as I could and get people just as excited as I can. And obviously I'm in an easy position being the President and having the PA, but it's just get involved.

E: Are there any particular events you are looking forward to this year?

VW: I mean, obviously, I'm looking forward to the play. It's my last one. And it's just going to be a lot of fun. I don't think there are any in particular, I just love going out and seeing everyone cheer for our school, because we're a seven through twelve. You can see all the seventh graders in the hallway and they always wave to you and they're excited to see you. And so it's just all events at Greylock usually have a good vibe around them, and it's always great to see. ♦

ETC.

The Future of College Admissions

BY ANABEL GONZALES

Following the United States Supreme Court’s decision to end affirmative action, a system put in place to diversify college campuses and give marginalized students new opportunities, many Americans have raised a related question: Should colleges also be forced to end the preferential treatment of “legacy” students (those who have family members who attended the school) in the admission process? For many high school students, this raises questions about the impact of the court decision on their own college admissions process. Here are my thoughts.

To begin, it is important to give a bit of context for both systems. Here’s a summary: In late June, the Supreme Court issued a decision regarding the legality of race conscious affirmative action in college admissions. In a 6-3 ruling, the conservative-dominated court decided that considering race as a factor in the admissions process violates the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. What this essentially means is that colleges are no longer allowed to consider race as a factor in college admissions. While seniors applying to college may have noticed they are still able to note their race and ethnicity on the Common Application, colleges are able to “hide” that section from the application they review in order to comply with the new court decision.

By August, new debates surrounding legacy admissions had gained traction. Detractors have called the practice “affirmative action for the white and wealthy,” and a contributor to less diverse campuses.

Many schools with reputations for taking legacies into consideration released statements to students, faculty, and staff on why they use legacy admission. The most common reason is because it promotes a very supportive community and culture. Familial ties to a school create a shared love of the institution between alumni and students, a circle that continues to benefit those in the system. But this circle can also lead

to more insular, isolated schools.

Let me share an example. Imagine, probably a few generations ago, someone applying to and gaining acceptance at an elite school. If we assume this person is wealthy enough to afford the elite school (scholarships several decades ago were less common), then the odds are this person will continue to have wealth, and in turn support their school years after they graduate. Maybe this graduate loves the school so much they stay or move back to the town or area the college is in. Now this graduate has a kid, who applies to that school, and because of legacy

While speculation continues about the impact of legacy admissions, we already have examples of how ending affirmative action undermines racial diversity and equity in higher education.

preference, they have a better chance of getting in. The circle starts anew, and can potentially continue for generations. If these families do move back to the college towns they love so much, they are raising kids in a highly academic environment with many resources, giving them, in addition to their last name, a further leg up.

Whether or not you realize it, Mount Greylock is part of this story. I sent a poll out to all Mount Greylock juniors and seniors, and received 57 responses (representing approximately 25% of the upperclassmen population). Here’s some of the data I collected: 64% of students have parents who went to an elite college in the Northeast (Williams College, Swarthmore, Amherst College, Wesleyan, Middlebury, Bowdoin, Vassar, or any Ivy League school). The same percentage are in the National Honor Society. Mount Greylock is made up

of extremely high achieving, academically-minded students, many of whom have grown up in close proximity to a college, which has had a dramatic effect on the school environment, as has the fact that many of our classmates are legacies from elite schools.

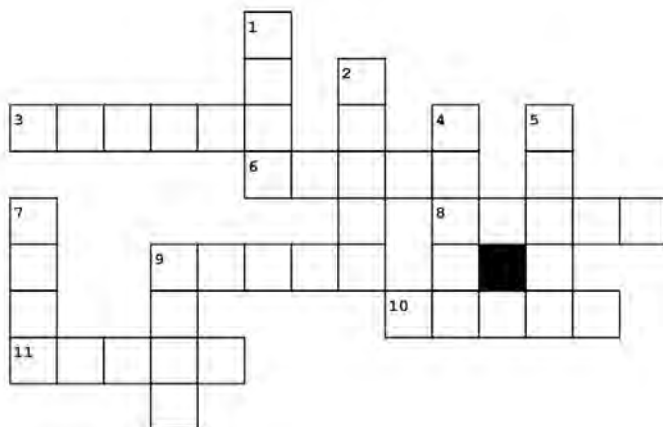
While speculation continues about the impact of legacy admissions, we already have examples of how ending affirmative action undermines racial diversity and equity in higher education. A National Public Radio article published after the Supreme Court decision showed what happened in the California state public college system when affirmative action was ended in the 1990s. According to the article, “Enrollment among Black and Latino students at UCLA and UC Berkeley fell by 40%,” acting as a deterrent to other BIPOC students who were discouraged from applying to schools where they were underrepresented.

Mitchell Chang, Associate Vice Chancellor of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion at UCLA stated in the article that “most do not want to attend a university where there’s not a critical mass of same race peers’ because it “puts them at greater risk of being stereotyped and being isolated.” These factors are further compounded by the continued preference of legacies, many of whom enforce the elite culture seen in universities and college towns. Let’s also not lose sight of the fact that being a legacy does nothing to hurt a person in the world outside of college admissions, whereas racial identity is proven to be an impediment in our society.

This debate will continue in colleges across the nation, with some institutions making statements that they have disbanded the legacy system, and others continuing to defend it. Almost all schools have added supplemental essays that ask about applicants’ backgrounds as a loophole of sorts. I wish all seniors luck as we enter December, and encourage all to do further research into affirmative action and the way it might be affecting the colleges you are applying to, as well as your own application this year. ♦

Mini Crossword

CREATED BY CALEB LOW AND ANABEL GONZALES



Across:

- 3. king__conan doyle
- 6. princess__ross
- 9. washington__champs
- 10. army__bay
- 11. daniel__louis

Down:

- 1. lady__seed
- 2. milk__spear
- 4. salt__fountain
- 5. brandon__chopper
- 7. kill__murray
- 9. friend__wreck

Instructions:

Fill in the blank to find the answer. Each answer can be used in two ways -- to complete one phrase when coupled with the first word, and to complete a second phrase when coupled with the second word.

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