

# The Greylock Echo

May Edition

Mount Greylock - Williamstown, MA

May 3rd, 2024

## Science Classes Travel to View Eclipse

BY MAGGIE NICHOLS

The Mount Greylock Physics, AP Physics and Earth and Space classes took a trip to see the solar eclipse in Middlebury, Vermont on April 8. Science teacher Shawn Burdick organized the trip. A SEE Fund grant dedicated to the Mount Greylock Science Department provided funding for the trip.

The trip consisted of 78 students and 10 staff members. Students ranged from first years to seniors, with three total science classes attending the trip. Students departed in two buses from Mount Greylock at 10 a.m., with hopes of beating the anticipated traffic.

The group arrived on the Middlebury College campus around 1 p.m. with plenty of time to spare before the start of totality at 3 p.m. Burdick and chemistry teacher Faith Manary provided special glasses for the trip so students could view the eclipse while avoiding eye damage.

Students were able to see the eclipse in 100% totality, which lasted about one minute in Middlebury.

"This was my second time seeing an eclipse in 100% totality," Burdick said. "It's completely unlike anything else I've ever seen." He emphasized a stark difference between just 99% coverage and 100% totality, citing it as "night and day."

While the last eclipse with a visible path in the United States was in 2017, this was a first experience of totality for many. Senior and AP Physics student Jude Bakija noted this as his first viewing of a total eclipse.

"It was awesome. There is nothing like seeing the things we discuss in class in real life. I am planning to go and see the next eclipse if possible," Bakija said.

Many students also said that the eclipse brought out an emotional reaction for them,

with viewing totality being a once in a lifetime experience.

"I had no idea it would be so beautiful," senior and Earth and Space Science student Anabel Gonzales said. "I did start crying, everyone just went silent when the moon was fully over the sun and everything went dark. I would absolutely recommend going to see the next eclipse in full totality if you can."

Several students who did not attend the school-sponsored trip went to see the eclipse on their own, with many taking different approaches to finding a perfect viewing spot. Seniors Lex Anagnos and Parker Smith went on an early morning hike up Jay Peak in Orleans County, Vermont to view the eclipse.

"There were no clouds at all, and we

barely had any traffic on the way back," Anagnos said. "There were quite a

bit of people on top of the mountain with us, but it was fine. We also were able to see the sunrise before the eclipse itself, which was so awesome."

Senior Bella Garivaltis, who viewed the eclipse with friends in East Montpelier, emphasized the impact the eclipse had on her. "It was life changing, I was in tears. I really would love to see the eclipse in Spain in 2026."

The next eclipse with a path of totality that will fall across the United States is set to occur in 2045, where it will be visible in totality from the western states of California, Arizona, Utah, Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas. ♦



Photo Courtesy of Tanya Panetti

## 1 in 650: Interview With Gianna Pesce

BY JACLYNN KASTRINAKIS

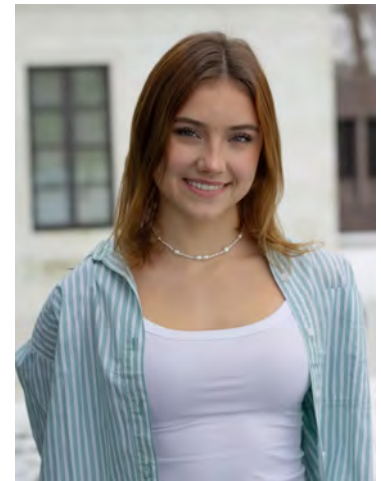


Photo Courtesy of Gianna Pesce

The Greylock Echo sat down with senior Gianna Pesce, who recently won an NROTC full four-year scholarship to Norwich University courtesy of the Marines. She is the first Mount Greylock student to ever win this award.

### Echo: How has your senior year been?

Gianna Pesce: Senior year's great... going by really fast. I'm currently playing lacrosse and I'm the captain. Overall it's been really good.

### E: How has the start of the lacrosse season been?

GP: We haven't won our two games, but everybody is working really hard and improving their skills.

### E: Aside from playing sports, what else do you do with your free time?

GP: I have three younger siblings that I spend a lot of time with.

### E: Congratulations on the award. What specifically is it and what was the application process like?

GP: So the scholarship that I received was an NROTC [Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps] scholarship... it's a marine option. They

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## "Road House" Remake

Judge Martin reviews the remake of the classic film. See Page 13

## District Names DEIBA Coach

Nora Lopez reports on the new position at Mount Greylock. See Page 2

## The School Budget, Explained

Knowl Stroud investigates the process behind the school budget. See Page 6

## FAFSA Fiasco

Anabel Gonzales reflects on the effects of the delays in financial aid. See Page 14

# NEWS

## Friends of the Arts Hosts Talent Show

BY ADELE LOW

Mount Greylock recently held the annual talent show for the second time since COVID-19 struck the community in 2020. The show took place on Saturday, April 6, with 25 acts in total. The show started off with a performance by the band Maple and Co. and ended with a theatrical tap dancing piece created by three Mount Greylock students.

The show was organized by Friends of the Arts, a group of parents who put time and dedication into supporting the arts at Mount Greylock.

A core organizer of the group and parent of two Mount Greylock students, Annaly Guerra, said, "We do the event because we think the arts can build community and we love that we have the opportunity to bring people together to share students' and faculty's many talents."

She added that the show provides a space for "students up on stage that don't necessarily participate in the arts at school, but still enjoy performing."

The planning for this event began last year, and the first notification to those who were looking to participate was sent out in January. The show took around four months to plan, and according to Annaly, all of the planning was worth it. She said she is "ready to do it again next year."

Three students emceed the entire event. Emma-Kate Hane, Macy Tidmarsh and Grace Winters filled the crowd with laughter with

their humorous introductions throughout the night. Before an act, they would come onstage and get the audience excited for what was about to happen.

"It was really cool to be asked to do something like that and it was definitely a lot of fun," Tidmarsh said. "The three of us had a great time writing the jokes."

The last performance of the first act was done by eighth grader Jackson Ducharme, and the crowd was wild. He performed an Elvis Presley tribute, calling himself "Jelvis" and impersonating Elvis Presley's renowned song and performance "Suspicious Minds."

Ducharme showed up in an all-white suit with a red neck scarf and a gold belt, completely taking on the persona of Presley. When he went onstage, jaws dropped. He showed confidence and talent, and said he thoroughly enjoyed the experience of performing.

"I started off doing Elvis in front of audiences about a year and a half ago," Ducharme said. "My grandparents had a little guitar Christmas tree ornament that played "Hound Dog" when you pushed the button. That's what got me into Elvis."

Ducharme's dance moves showed his true knowledge of Elvis and his high amount of confidence, wowing the audience. Still, many were wondering, why would someone be so into Presley?

"He [Presley] wasn't afraid to share his tal-

ent and all the types of music he loves with the world during a time when segregation and the civil rights movement was happening," Ducharme said. "Elvis wanted to bring everyone together through music... it's really hard to not



Photo Courtesy of Krishiv Malhotra

be inspired by that man if you ask me."

When asked what he would say to his newly acquired fans at the school, Ducharme said, "If I make people happy when I sing, then I feel like I've done the job, done what I'm supposed to do for people, and of course, kept people interested in Elvis and helped to make sure he's remembered."

Friends of the Arts hopes to continue this tradition of the Mount Greylock Talent Show for years to come, providing an opportunity for students, and even faculty, to showcase their talents to the school. ♦

## District Names DEIBA Coach

BY NORA LOPEZ

The Mount Greylock School District recently welcomed Shirley Edgerton to the school community as a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging and Accessibility (DEIBA) coach. In her role, Edgerton will make weekly visits to Mount Greylock Regional School to discuss social justice topics.

Edgerton has a long history of working in social justice, inclusion and equity, including founding Rites Of Passage + Empowerment (ROPE) in 2010. ROPE is a Berkshire County program that, according to its mission, serves to recognize the "need for adolescent girls to develop their voice and inner selves" as well as provide "opportunities to interact with professional women of color."

Originally, the district was not going to fill the position for a DEIBA director due to budget restrictions. While administrators recognized a need for support and coaching within the district, primarily at Mount Greylock, the budget made it difficult to fill the vacant role, leading to a stretch where the position was left unfilled at the beginning of the school year.

The unsatisfied need was evident to multiple administrators, leading to a series of meetings and proposals. Jason McCandless, superintendent for the Mount Greylock district, said that because Edgerton had previously worked with teachers and staff, she was identified as a potential resource.

"As a result of these conversations, Mr. Blackman, Ms. Rutz, and Mr. Schutz put

together a proposal for Mr. Bergeron [Business Administrator] and me to consider," McCandless said. The compromise between the budget complications and the need for the position to be filled was a part-time coach.

Edgerton agreed to the proposal and will now "come in one half-day a week for the rest of the school year," McCandless said. The hope is that this is a feasible option for next year as well.

Edgerton previously worked within the high school and the elementary schools, coming in to give presentations, meaning there is an already



Photo Courtesy of Shirley Edgerton

established and functional relationship between Edgerton and the school district.

McCandless hopes that Edgerton can help "to address empathy, to address sympathy, to

address internal biases that we all have to help support our students of color."

The school also plans to "hold accountable... our students that really violate the Greylock Way and are not speaking in ways that... show love for their fellow students," McCandless said.

At the school, students and staff will have opportunities for one-on-one counseling and conversations with Edgerton. The community will also have options to interact and work with her.

"She's available for parents... who want to reach out and have somebody that's attached to the central administration and have a conversation," McCandless said.

Students at Mount Greylock are hopeful about the opportunities and support that Edgerton will bring. First year Sara Ehle said she is "hoping to work with her" and "incorporate different ways to spread diversity and further educate people at Mount Greylock."

Sabine Guerra, also a first year, agreed. She wants to "continue the conversation" with the consistency and reliability Edgerton can provide. Both students have met Edgerton and said that their meetings, both individually and in group settings, went well and that they appreciated her presence.

McCandless was also excited about having Edgerton work with the school. "We're just really grateful to have her be a neighbor and a colleague," McCandless said. ♦

# NEWS

## Mount Greylock Showcases Student Art

BY EMILY MOLE

Friends of the Arts hosted the Celebration of the Arts, an art and talent show at Mount Greylock Regional School on the evening of Saturday, April 6. The art show consisted of artwork produced by Mount Greylock students, while their talents were also showcased in the talent show alongside some of Mount Greylock's faculty.

The Friends of the Arts is a parent and caregiver group that supports all facets of the arts at Mount Greylock, including visual arts, music, dance and theater.

"This is the second year the Friends of the Arts have produced the Celebration of the Arts," said Annaly Babb-Guerra, a member of the Friends of the Arts.

Regina Velazquez, another member of Friends of the Arts, said, "We wanted to showcase some of the work that had been done in an after-school art program funded by a grant from the Mass Cultural Council. We thought it would be nice to invite everyone to participate."

Mount Greylock students had the opportunity to offer up pieces they had created inside and outside of school to be showcased in this event.

Sophomore Kaeya Durley submitted a number of pieces to the art show, including "a self portrait, a cloud painting, a triple display of little painterly doodles of different types of affection, a green landscape and two paintings of hands." Durley also performed in three acts in the talent show.

"There's something so wonderful about seeing a bunch of your friends from the arts com-

munity up on stage and being an absolutely hyped audience for them," Durley said. "And it's also nice to see people up there who you wouldn't usually see performing too."

While the talent and art show mainly highlighted the students of Mount Greylock, some faculty also participated.

Mount Greylock art teacher Jane-Ellen



Photo Courtesy of Annaly Babb-Guerra

Desomma performed the song "Fake Plastic Trees" by Radiohead with three students – seniors Finn Carothers, Quinn McDermott and Declan Rogers.

"Ms. Desomma approached me this winter and brought up the idea of performing in the talent show with her," Carothers said. "I was thrilled with the suggestion." He added that he is "so grateful I got to perform with one of my favorite teachers along with Declan and Quinn. All are extremely talented."

As most of the artwork displayed at the show was produced in the Mount Greylock art classrooms, the art department, including Rachel

Mueller, Karin Stack and Desomma, played a huge role in helping to make the show happen.

"We are incredibly grateful for [the Friends Of The Arts'] unwavering support of the arts at Mount Greylock," Desomma said.

"Friends of the Arts has started a great tradition," Stack added. "We're really excited about it."

Creativity flows through the art department at Mount Greylock as students produce individually unique pieces, but students don't always get the chance to display their art.

"As a parent, I've found it disappointing to get to the end of the school year and see my kids come in with a random jumble of artwork crammed in their backpacks – stuff I realized I never got to see displayed," Velazquez said.

So, Friends of the Arts decided to organize a way for students working on their artistic talents to have a place to show off.

"They're thinking big thoughts, expressing complex emotions, pushing boundaries, having fun, tapping into their creativity – that all seems like something to celebrate," Velazquez said.

The Celebration of the Arts garnered a huge turnout, and Friends Of The Arts expressed their hopes for building community through it.

Babb-Guerra said, "We believe [community] can be achieved when the arts are non-competitive and collaborative and can be shared with others. We hope the Celebration of the Arts can achieve all three goals." ♦

## Spanish Club Holds Fundraiser

BY COLE CREIGHTON

In anticipation of the Spanish Department's trip to Argentina, the Mount Greylock Spanish Club recently held a fundraiser. Club members were tasked with selling "calendar raffles," calendars with different prizes each day. Names are drawn randomly and results are being posted on the Spanish Club Instagram.

Club President Caleb Low and Vice President Jose Brito helped create the fundraiser, along with Spanish teacher Shannon Vigeant. All members of the Spanish club and everyone going on the Argentina trip participated, first year Nate Gill said.

Low, Gill and Brito were very active participants in the fundraiser and also helped spread the fundraiser's popularity among the school. Brito alone sold 54 calendars, more than a third of the club's total.

"I just talked with confidence and charisma to every customer," Brito said. "A smile on your face can always help in these situations."

The club raised \$3,290 in total, using some of it for the Argentina trip and the rest for other initiatives the club finds important.

In an email to the *Echo*, Vigeant explained the exact distribution of funds: "The Spanish Club provided about 40% of the total proceeds toward the Argentina School Exchange. Some of the funding is being used for this year's trip to provide electric adapter/converters for the trip, some incidental expenses, and the rest is in

reserves to help students who, we hope, spend time here at Mount Greylock in the next year to participate in an area excursion."

The leftover money will be distributed between the "Cuernavaca Children's Mission, [and] the Spanish Club scholarship," Gill said. The club is "working with the Cuernavaca Children's Mission and their program to support a student through their educational years."

Many people in the Spanish Club put in their own money to advance the raffle. There were many "calendar donations generously offered by many parents of students as well as from Mr. Johnson, Ms. Kirby and Ms. Vigeant," Low said.

After selling the calendars throughout March, the club has been drawing the winners for each day in April. "[We] have started drawing winners for prizes each day and are super excited to see which members of our community will win," Low said. "So far, four students and five teachers/staff members have won in our raffle, with multiple two-time winners, too. The mg\_spanishclub Instagram page posts the daily winner each day."

The club also held a movie night as a part of the fundraiser. The club provided child care for members of the community while watching "The Book of Life."

Gill said, "The movie night was awesome. The club stepped up in a big way and ran a

pretty flawless night." The club ran games, held a bake sale and gave out prizes such as lollipops and Argentinian candies.

The Spanish Club will continue holding fundraisers in the future, just as they have done in the past. According to Vigeant, "Traditionally the Spanish Club has always fundraised for service and scholarships."

The club has not decided what type of fundraiser they will hold next year, but the success of the calendar raffle and movie night indicates a promising future for Mount Greylock's Spanish Club. ♦



Photo Courtesy of Shannon Vigeant.

# NEWS

## Mount Greylock Represents at Student Government Day

BY AMELIA MADRIGAL

Junior Rafa Mellow-Bartels represented Mount Greylock at the Massachusetts Student Government Day on Beacon Hill on Friday, April 5. Student Government Day is a program designed to help students learn about the state legislature and important current events in government.

The opportunity is available to both private and public school students, and each school sends one representative to the event. The student body elected Mellow-Bartels this past fall to fill the Mount Greylock representative spot.

Seventh grade social studies teacher Mary MacDonald is the driving force behind Mount Greylock's participation in the program. She has been trying to gain traction among students for the past five years.

"It was a challenge [to find participants]," MacDonald said. "It's a one day experience and we live so far away."

Last year she appointed senior, then-junior, Ceci Malone to attend, as there was not enough interest yet to hold an election.

"[Malone] brought back a lot of good information on how [Student Government Day] went," MacDonald said.

By the 2023-2024 school year, MacDonald was finally able to get an election together and have the student body elect a representative and an alternate.

Similar to Model United Nations, the students emulate the Massachusetts government by taking on one of three roles: senator, justice or representative. There, students are able to

learn the process of how ideas become bills, and how bills are enacted. Each student plays their real representative on Student Government Day. Mellow-Bartels was House Representative John Barrett of North Adams.

Actual Massachusetts representatives can attend, further enriching the student's experi-



Photo Courtesy of Rafa Mellow-Bartels

ence, but Barrett was unavailable.

Student Government Day is centered around two bills that are currently in the Massachusetts House of Representatives. The two bills students addressed were for increasing access to higher education at lower costs (Bill H.1261) and educator diversity (Bill S.311).

After learning a little about the bills, repre-

sentatives have the option to share a testimony, or explain their position on a bill in hopes of swaying the vote. Mellow-Bartels prepared a testimony beforehand about Bill S.311 and testified.

"You have to fill out a Google form for which bill you want to testify on, if you want to testify on one," Mellow-Bartels said.

After the testimonies, representatives focus on debating the bills. "You can go up on the stand and just debate for [the bill]," he added.

Although some representatives may have only watched the debates and not debated themselves, everyone was able to vote. Mellow-Bartels decided to be part of the latter group and watched the debate.

In keeping with the simulation, students must wear business-appropriate attire, as Student Government Day is held in the Massachusetts State House. T-shirts, jeans, sandals and sneakers were not allowed. Mellow-Bartels said he wore a "suit and tie."

As long as Mount Greylock students demonstrate an interest in Student Government Day, elections for representative spots will occur annually. Although Student Government Day is only for upperclassmen, the entire high school has the opportunity to vote for who Mount Greylock sends to Boston.

"The Student Council is looking forward to getting many people running for the opportunity to go," MacDonald said. ♦

## YES Club Organizes Trash Pickup

BY JACK UHAS

Mount Greylock's Youth Environmental Squad (YES) club hosted a trash pickup event along the Green River at Cole Field in Williamstown on Sunday, April 7.

Speaking about her inspiration for the pickup, YES club President and senior Celina Savage said she had been collaborating with senior Phoebe Hughes to find a spot in town that needed some help when she "went for a run along the area (and) noticed a ton of trash."

After seeing the impressive amount of litter, she decided it would be the perfect area to clean.

Around 25 students, mostly club members and some students looking to earn volunteer hours, participated in the cleanup. Over the span of three hours they collected two pickup-truckloads of garbage.

Junior Vera de Jong listed some of the more interesting items they found along the river. "We found a shopping cart... a tire... a single shoe... and a milk crate," she said.

"We saw a lot of cords, bottles, cans," Savage added, "from people who were drinking the stuff and then throwing it away."

Savage said the most shocking thing she saw was "a decomposing deer, which was actually really cool."

Students also began a competition during the pickup to see which group could collect the

most trash.

"My group won," de Jong said. She attributes their victory to the Stop & Shop cart



Photo Courtesy of YES Club

they found earlier, which allowed them to store items they saw as they went.

Junior Kate Shelsy, who also participated in

the cleanup, said, "I had the time of my life."

"It felt good to do something good [for the environment]," senior Mirabel Boyer said. She added that she would do it again if given the chance.

The pickup is not YES club's first endeavor to help improve the local environment. They led the effort to bring back recycling bins to Mount Greylock and helped raise money to rebuild the garden behind the school.

Savage also works outside the club to further her climate advocacy goals. She is a member of the Massachusetts Schools Climate Action Network, a non-profit dedicated to fighting the climate crisis across the state. There she has helped inform policies to enact change and emailed representatives to make her voice heard.

The club is planning an initiative to plant an apple orchard by the girls JV soccer practice field and to bring back the raised beds to the school garden. Savage welcomed all who want to make a change in the world to join the club.

De Jong also encouraged interested students to join. "Everyone should join the YES club because it's a great way to help the environment while having fun and meeting people," she said. ♦

# NEWS & FEATURES

## Gemini Returns to Mount Greylock

BY AMELIA MADRIGAL

The “Gemini” literary magazine is returning to the halls of Mount Greylock Regional School for the first time in the past few years with a spring publication. The magazine has been a part of student life at Mount Greylock for decades, with the first publication dating back to 1962.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, however, the magazine has not had a recent publication. The magazine focuses on the extraordinary visual and literary art of Mount Greylock students and provides a platform for them to share with the community.

Sophomore Yeshe Rai is leading the revival of the “Gemini.” The spring publication, Rai said, will be out “before the seniors graduate... probably around early May.”

Past publications of the “Gemini” include a variety of literature, photography and mixed media, and similar art forms will be found in the upcoming publication.

Junior “Gemini” review board member Alec



Photo Courtesy of Krishiv Malhotra

Sills said, “There will be a good amount of photography.” He added that they will be “reaching out to painters, and there is a good amount of mixed media.” According to Rai, the publication will be around eight pages of art.

The art and literature featured in this pub-

lication will include a variety of submissions from different grade levels, providing a platform for all students to share their passions and creativity.

In terms of editing, Rai explained that there is a review board made up of a mix of sophomores, juniors and seniors. Certain sections of this editorial group focus on the different forms of art. Rai serves as the final editor before publishing.

Some features readers can look for are digital art pieces by junior Kaeya Durley and photography work done by Sills.

The revival of the “Gemini” provides an opportunity to display the creativity of Mount Greylock’s students, and the magazine plans to continue publishing next year. If you are interested in looking at past publications of the “Gemini,” head to the library, where there are archives all the way back to the original 1962 copy. ♦

## The Ebbs and Flows of Mount Greylock Clubs

BY FRANCES EVANS

Mount Greylock is currently home to 25 active clubs, though this number has fluctuated over the years as students create new clubs while others fall to the wayside. Mount Greylock used to have a Model United Nations, a debate club and a knitting club, and Mount Greylock’s Register, Educate, Vote (REV) club is disbanding at the end of the year. So, what happened to these clubs?

Williams College students organized and ran the Model U.N. club. A Mount Greylock representative went with club members to Williams College so that, according to English teacher and former Model U.N. adviser Rebecca Tucker-Smith, on “Sunday afternoons they could all gather, and Williams kids would lead them in all these activities and planning [for competitions].”

When COVID-19 hit, enthusiasm for the group died down as the meetings moved to Zoom. There were also difficulties finding a faculty member to chaperone the club members.

When clubs are run by students, the turnover of graduates can also destabilize the club.

“[With Model U.N.] a lot of the upperclassmen who were running it graduated. There weren’t really other people to take up the mantle for it,” junior Claire Burrow said.

Lack of membership is often a contributing factor to clubs dissolving. One way clubs gain members is with the club fair each fall, where clubs can recruit students in-person.

According to sophomore and co-leader of the Mechanical Mounties Robotics club Mateo Whalen-Loux, “It’s hard to recruit dedicated members. We can get anyone to put their name down on paper – that’s not the hard part. But getting people who actually show up many days a week is definitely much more difficult.”

Senior and President of the Junior Classical League (JCL) Emma Kate Hane faces a similar problem. “We have a lot of members in the

JCL and on my email list... but there’s not a lot of students who are heavily involved. There’s really only been a handful of students each year since COVID that have tried to keep the JCL going.”

“Mount Greylock students are incredibly committed,” Director of Athletics and Co-Curricular activities Lindsey von Holtz said. “And I think the reason...clubs struggle is because we don’t have enough students who have the time to be actively involved in them. We have many students who are in many organizations themselves, but if somebody is in a performance and clubs, they obviously have to miss something at some point in time.”

“You sign up for things because it sounds great,” Tucker-Smith said. “But the reality is you don’t have the bandwidth or the hours in the day or the energy for it.”

“I think we would benefit,” von Holtz said, “from a period of the day... where students could meet with each of these clubs during the school day, similar to a directed study, but the time-on-learning aspect is the challenge.”

The state requires a certain amount of time to be dedicated to learning during the school day, so “the state would have to allow that type of option,” von Holtz added.

For many clubs, finding an adviser on the faculty can be difficult.

“We only have so many adults in the school,” REV and Student Council adviser Mary MacDonald said. “Between coaching, other clubs, advising, young families and other commitments for jobs, you can only have so many hours in the day.”

When starting clubs, students help find an adviser. Once a club is established, the administration posts the position and its stipend.

The stipend ranges from a few hundred to a few thousand dollars, so advising clubs is really “a labor of love,” Tucker-Smith said.

“The biggest issue has been money,” Hane said. “Outreach to boost enrollment for the Latin department has cost us 150 bucks for the bus fee that now we have to figure out how to pay.”

Robotics, according to Whalen-Loux, “completely [relies] on outside sponsors, such as General Dynamics.”

“I would disagree that finances are a struggle for many of the groups,” von Holtz said. “Most of them we’ve been able to figure it out or don’t need much finances to meet and still be involved.”

“We do have starter funds that can help most groups out,” she added. The stipend “depends on the group and their plans and their needs.”

The Spanish Club, started this year, has been successful in garnering support and raising money.

“We [have] good activities that attract kids to the meetings,” senior and Spanish Club Vice President Jose Brito said.

Both the JCL and Spanish Club have made coordinated efforts to reach out to younger grades, helping to keep the clubs alive. The JCL went to Williamstown Elementary School to talk to upcoming seventh graders about the Classics, where they “did a catapult activity with them,” Hane said.

The Spanish Club went to directed studies to reach out to students. “You say there’s also snacks, and they instantly smile. Just be friendly to everyone,” Brito said. “And have snacks.” ♦

# NEWS & FEATURES

## The School Budget, Explained

BY KNOWL STROUD

A new year means a new budget for the Mount Greylock Regional School District. While the budget might not seem like the most riveting topic, the changes contained within this year's budget and the ways in which they are being coped with have major implications for the future of Mount Greylock and the rest of the district.

As Joe Bergeron, the district Business Administrator and one of the two main coordinators of the budget, put it, "Budgeting is really a year-round process."

The other main coordinator is Jason McCandless, who, as superintendent, is identified by the School Committee Policy Manual as the "chief budget officer."

The earliest work in creating the budget for the next year is identifying needs that come up during the year that will have to be addressed. The budget needs to be flexible – for example, if a lot of students move into the district and generate a need for a new teacher, money for that will have to be built into the plans for next year.

After identifying those needs, the School Committee looks to the school councils for new programs or initiatives they would like to see considered. Once that input has been gathered, all the principals, directors, the special education office and the superintendent's office gather to discuss what the plans for the next year should look like.

The first outline this group looks at is a "level service budget," Bergeron said. "What does it look like if we keep doing all the things that we're doing this year?"

After considering the cost increases that usually come with maintaining that level bud-

get, they layer on the ideas and concerns of the various bodies providing input on possible new areas of development. Then, once the School Committee comes up with a draft of the budget, it is presented to Williamstown and Lanesborough's finance committees and select boards. The process will culminate with each of the towns voting on the proposed budget on May 23 for Williamstown and June 11 for Lanesborough.

***"We're spending money we've saved up so that we don't need to cut anything, and that cannot happen forever."***

**- Joe Bergeron**

Early in this year's process, the school committee realized that just maintaining the same programs as last year was "going to add up to a lot more than we would like," Bergeron said. While there were increases across the board, almost 75 percent of the increase for Mount Greylock was in the "programs with other school districts" section, which includes things like school choice and federally mandated programs for students with special needs.

Those increases "kind of edged out any anything else that we might have been looking at as far as new positions or new new opportunities," Bergeron said.

While there were concerns about some

COVID-19 related funding ending, increases in costs and a constant tax base, not funding cuts, is what necessitated the current budget situation.

Despite the cost increases, the district was able to maintain most of the same programs as this year. "I'm happy that I think we're going to be able to continue to do a lot of the great things that we're already doing," Bergeron said.

However, he also expressed concern about the future if the current trends continue. "We tried to make it as clear as we could to our two towns along with the School Committee that costs are increasing faster than funding and that means at some point, either funding needs to increase or we're going to need to decrease what we do."

The current plan sees the district dipping into some of its reserve accounts to a greater degree than past years. "We're spending money that we've saved up so that we don't need to cut anything and that cannot happen forever," Bergeron said. "That's a very challenging thing to consider in an environment where we can justify plenty of areas where we'd like to be able to invest in order to do better."

While the prospect of having to cut programs or positions is painful to consider, it is an issue the district is headed towards if there are no changes in other areas. Community members will have the opportunity to voice their concerns and vote on the proposed budget later this spring, dictating whether the budget will be used for next school year. ♦

## Mount Greylock Offers First Online SAT

BY SHUBHAM DEVRE

In early March, students across the United States took the SAT digitally for the first time, including students at Mount Greylock. The SAT is a standardized examination on math, reading and writing administered by the College Board. It is taken by high schoolers, often during their junior and senior year as part of the college application process.

During COVID-19, many colleges made submitting SAT scores as a part of the student's application optional, though this practice is now being re-evaluated and some colleges are once again requiring test scores.

The College Board has now digitized the test in an effort to make it a more streamlined experience for both students and teachers. The testing materials used are also different, with pencils and paper replaced by testing devices such as computers and an adequate internet connection.

Students take the test on an application called Bluebook, which can be downloaded on student testing devices. Along with built-in tools that can be used during the test, such as a calculator, the Bluebook app was also designed to help students before the test by providing them with full-length digital practice tests,

which are similar to the actual test.

Students at Mount Greylock have mixed feelings about the test being moved online. Some prefer the older method of taking tests on paper, since that's what they're used to, while others liked taking the SAT digitally because of its ease of use.

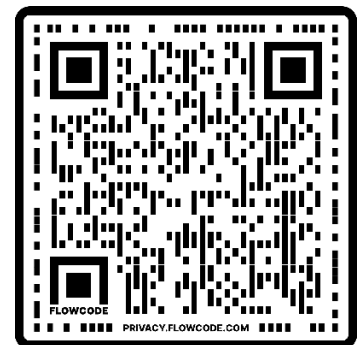
Junior Jameson Bayliss, who took the online SAT this year, said that taking the test "online [was easier] for convenience."

In addition to being moved online, the test itself has been modified. Each student receives a unique version of the test in an effort to prevent cheating and create a fair testing environment. The duration of the SAT has also been changed. The paper and pencil test was three hours long, while the testing time now is only two hours.

Calculators are now permitted for both math sections instead of just one, and there is even the option to use a built-in graphing calculator, which is helpful for students who do not own a physical one.

The difficulty of the test is not meant to have been altered, though some students feel that was the case. "The beginning was easy and then as it kept going, it was harder," Bayliss said.

The shift from paper and pencil to online is a new experience for both students and staff, and the switch to digital test-taking has brought new changes that people will need to adapt to. Having now implemented all the necessary alterations to offer the online SAT, Mount Greylock plans to continue holding the SAT at the school. ♦



Scan here to check out the  
Greylack Echo website!

# FEATURES

## Students Hold Clothing Drive for Cradles to Crayons

BY RAFA MASON

This spring, by dropping a bag of clothes into a collection box, many students at Mount Greylock have helped families with clothing insecurity through the Mount Greylock Clothing Drive.

The drive, held from March 25 to April 5 at Mount Greylock and from April 5 through 10 in the wider community, was organized by Mount Greylock eighth graders Olivia Perez and Annabelle Coody. The clothing donations, ranging from jackets to socks, went to a non-profit organization called Cradles to Crayons. This nonprofit, according to their mission, “provides children... living in homeless or low-income situations, with the essential items they need to thrive.”

Though Perez and Coody led the drive, Mount Greylock teachers assisted them. “PJ helped us a lot,” Perez and Coody explained, as did “other teachers.”

Lack of proper clothing is one of the top ten reasons children miss school, an issue that becomes especially prevalent during the cold New England winters.

In addition to helping people, recycling clothes has a positive impact on the planet. Cot-

ton is responsible for around 25% of pesticides used worldwide. The water used to make one t-shirt is enough for one person to drink for 900 days. A family of four could have all the water they need to drink for seven years with

*“A family of four could have all the water they need to drink for seven years with the water it takes to make one pair of jeans.”*

- Rafa Mason

the water it takes to make one pair of jeans. In 2015, the fashion industry used enough water to fill 32 million Olympic-sized swimming pools. That’s enough for two billion people to drink for 100 years.

Perez and Coody said the drive was suc-

cessful, with “around nine bags” of clothes collected. “We’re still working on [counting the clothes],” Coody added.

This haul “was more than our expectations,” Perez said. Coody agreed, “we met or exceeded [our goals].” Perez and Coody believe “this is something we could do again...it was pretty successful.”

While this drive proved successful, Coody and Perez are already planning the next one and looking for ways to improve, ensuring the Greylock Clothing Drive continues to help the planet and those in need. ♦

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## Student Art Featured at MASS MoCA Teen Invitational

BY LUCY MCWEENY

The Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (MASS MoCA) held its 12th annual Teen Invitational Art Exhibition from April 12 to 14. Each year, the invitational showcases student artwork from 10 schools in the area.

The exhibit, which held its opening and gave out awards the night of April 12, included 50 pieces of work submitted by Mount Greylock students.

Along with showcasing student work, the invitational gave out awards to some students, decided on by three judges. The awards were split into two main categories: the Berkshire Eagle Prize and the Gold Star Awards. Of the five Berkshire Eagle Prizes, two were awarded to Mount Greylock students Finn Carothers

and Marlee Alpi. Mount Greylock students also took home 21 Gold Star Awards.

The invitational showcased a variety of art mediums, from photography to paintings to digital art. All students received a year-long membership to MASS MoCA, and the winners of the Berkshire Eagle Prize received 100 dollars. The grand prize was given to a McCann student for a 3-D model roller coaster.

Mount Greylock art teacher Karin Stack emphasized the importance of the invitational, not only for the students but also for the teachers. “For the art teachers, this is kind of the big deal of our year. You have fabulous students who’ve been doing fabulous work for years, and they get their work on the wall and get to share it. It’s really important for all of the goals of our classes.”

Though nearly half of the Mount Greylock students who had art showcased won a prize, Stack noted the subjectivity that often comes with judging art. “There are no hard and fast rules about how you judge art,” Stack said. “Different critics, different schools of thought and different individuals will have different opinions.”

Senior Parker Smith won a Gold Star Award for his acrylic painting of a lake, “a place that is very special to me,” he said. Smith added that winning the award was “exciting.”

The invitational is always free and open to the public, and Stack encouraged community members to attend next year’s, even those whose artwork is not on display.

“We all go to sporting events,” Stack said. “We should all go cheer at art events.”

Mount Greylock students had another chance to have their artwork recognized on



Photo Courtesy of Krishiv Malhotra

Monday, April 29. “How Shall We Live?” is a juried high school art exhibition on the theme of climate change, on view from April 29 to May 12 at the Stationery Factory in Dalton.

The Echo would like to congratulate the following Mount Greylock students who were recognized at the invitational:

**Berkshire Eagle Prize:**  
 Marlee Apli, Finn Carothers

**Gold Star Awards:**  
 Photos: Everett Crowe, Molly Cangelosi, Audrianna Pelkey, Alec Sills and Kofi Roberts.  
 Paintings: Jackie Brannan, Jayne Beringer, Ceci Malone, Tessa Moresi, Parker Smith, Mia Harding, Galileo Schromberg and Syllas Velazquez.  
 Digital Art: Isabella Belleau.  
 Glass and Mosaics: Ellyona Maki, Erin Keating, Destiny Thompson, Fanny Thomas, Indira Semon-Pike and Lexi Politis. ♦



Photo Courtesy of Krishiv Malhotra

# FEATURES

## Recovery Center to Open in Former Sweet Brook

BY QUINLAN REPETTO

Just a few buildings down from Mount Greylock, in what was formerly the Sweet Brook Nursing Home, a new drug rehabilitation center is slated to open. Operated by Williamstown Recovery Realty LLC, their goal is to implement an inpatient chemical dependency and disorder treatment facility out of the former nursing home. It will supervise and aid in recovery for adults with substance abuse issues.

The original nursing home was forced to close in August 2020, after its history of abuse towards residents and multiple safety violations were revealed. Its 65 remaining residents were relocated to other nursing homes, and the building has since lain dormant.

But things began to look up for the abandoned building in the fall of 2022, when the Williamstown Zoning Board of Appeals unanimously approved an application to construct a chemical dependency rehab facility inside the former nursing home.

The property, which was acquired that same year, will require very few changes to its utilities for its intended purpose. All that it needs are a few superficial interior renovations before it can be put into action.

"It is a great place for a facility," said Rick Berger, Director of Clinical Services at Williamstown Recovery and a future worker at the recovery center.

Moresi & Associates will act as the property managers. Because they were also the property management firm for Sweet Brook, they already have a good understanding of the facility and

the land.

Berger himself feels very strongly about the project's success. "We have a public health crisis," he said. "About 250-300 Americans die every day from opioid overdoses. Addiction is a highly treatable illness and our organization wants to help lower those horrifying numbers. Plus, I have 36 years of being abstinent from



Photo Courtesy of Lucy McWeeny

drugs and alcohol. I am one of thousands of people living a successful life in recovery."

The facility plans to open their doors somewhere around the start of June. They currently have roughly 25 people working at the facility to prepare for opening and plan to employ as many as 50 people. These employees include medical staff, counselors and personal support for the residents. Medical personnel from Har-

vard Medical Centers have been interviewed for the directorial position.

As of yet, there has been little communication between the program and Mount Greylock. Berger expects there will have to be conversation soon, as part of the Mount Greylock cross country course runs onto the facility's property.

Despite its overall positive response, the program has not been met with unanimous support. Concerns have been raised about the facility's proximity to the high school, and some have claimed that the managers of the facility are not experienced enough.

However, these concerns have been mitigated by the program's involvement with Complete Compliance Consulting, LLC, a company that provides services for behavioral healthcare organizations and ensures they are following government regulations and standards, as well as its association with the Northern Berkshire Community Coalition and the state Office of Rural Health.

"We like to focus on the positive," Berger said. "We've met every expectation for the town so far and will do so for the state of Massachusetts." ♦

## Ostheimer To Retire as Girls Soccer Coach

BY BEN MCDONOUGH

As another year at Mount Greylock comes to a close, the community looks to the new year for what is in store and what is to be missed. Among the graduating seniors and anticipatory juniors, there's an added weight to the atmosphere – a farewell to one of the school's most cherished figures. Tom Ostheimer, better known as "Tom O," is saying goodbye to his coaching years at Mount Greylock for the Girl's Soccer team, marking the end of an era for the program.

Ostheimer has been running the girl's soccer program for almost two decades, and next year's program will look a little different without the "Big Game" announcements echoing through the halls.

"It is a very difficult decision to make," Ostheimer said. "With a confluence of exciting family events, a wedding of one daughter this summer and another expecting kids on the way this July, I've decided to prioritize spending more time with family, especially spending time with my daughter and the kids."

He added that he made the decision in order to not feel conflicted about where to put his time this fall. "I do not want to feel conflicted with family first, even though I feel the soccer team is a second family, which makes this decision even harder."

Ostheimer's role as head coach was to grow the players as people and as athletes. "I am con-

fident that there is a great foundation being set for the program and they will be able to move on and continue their success on the pitch," he said.



Photo Courtesy of Lucy McWeeny

As the program looks towards the future without Coach Ostheimer at the helm, there is a palpable sense of uncertainty mingled with gratitude for his years of service. His departure

leaves a void that will not easily be filled, both in terms of coaching expertise and the personal connection he fostered with his players.

Ostheimer spoke about some of his favorite memories and the success of his coaching. "Obviously a successful team makes things more enjoyable, and over the last five years we have had a bit of success – Western Mass final three times the last three years, and we have had great representation in the state tournament," he said.

He added, "Looking back on the COVID years where we played some club and Berkshire County, throwing the difficulty and challenges of playing into a pandemic really brought the team together, remaining united after that."

Looking ahead, there is a sense of optimism tinged with nostalgia as the Mount Greylock community prepares to bid farewell to Ostheimer, but he will continue to teach for the 2024-2025 school year. Though there may not be any more "Big game" announcements from Ostheimer, his legacy will remain on the sidelines and in the halls of Mount Greylock. ♦



# FEATURES

## Meet Your Neighbor: Carl Samuelson

BY LUCY MCWEENY

*Meet Your Neighbor is a column showcasing interviews with residents of Sweetwood, the independent living community next door to Mount Greylock. These interviews serve to exhibit the stories of our neighbors and the ways they have served our community. This interview is with Carl Samuelson, the former coach of the Williams mens and womens swim teams.*

### Echo: Where did you grow up?

Carl Samuelson: Middletown, Connecticut. It's where Wesleyan University is. I grew up about two blocks from a college campus, so when we moved to Williamstown, I was very familiar with the fact that I was referred to and recognized myself to be a "townie." That's a very important position, because you really display what the community is all about

### E: What brought you to Williamstown?

CS: I graduated from Springfield College and decided that I was interested in coaching. I had an interest in swimming competitively when I was in high school, and Middletown high school did not have a swim team. When I entered Middletown High as a freshman, a group of my friends made arrangements to speak with the principal. I asked her if there was any possibility of having a swim team. She thought that was a great idea, so that's how it took off.

### E: What brought you into the world of coaching and then specifically to Williams College?

CS: When I graduated with an undergraduate degree from Springfield, I stayed on as a graduate student. So I did a combination of assisting in the swimming program and being involved in a graduate program. With those degrees, I was somewhat automatically recommended to stay on. It was about eight or 10 years, and then we got a call from the swimming coach at Wes-

leyan. I knew him when I was just a little kid. Living that close to the college and being a townie I also experienced knowing what it was like being in the wrong place at the wrong time. I was always curious about the athletic facilities and stuff, and I was always questioned, "What are you doing here?" That's how my relationship continued with the coach at Wesleyan. When the coach here at Williams decided he was going to retire, the coach at Wesleyan called me and asked if he could recommend me for the position. So that's how I came to Williams and continued to coach. There was only a men's program at the time, and then that changed and so I had the opportunity and great fun to start a women's program.

### E: Right, I know that you were director of physical education at Williams when the college was converting from an all-male institution like, and how did you work to integrate women's sports teams into the program?

CS: The NCAA Men's organization eventually decided to help in the women's programs participating in national championships. They provided the funds to be able to do that every year. So rather than there being a separation between men and women, both were dual meets. The women's program took off and we did really well.

### E: You were named to the College Swimming Coaches Association of America list of the 100 best coaches in the first 100 years of collegiate swimming a few years ago. How would you describe your coaching style, and how did you approach challenges in that position?

CS: I was quite undone over the fact that my name was on the list. First of all, going to Springfield College, that in itself was a start

for teaching and coaching both in analytics and physical education. The swimming coach at Springfield -- who I had as my coach and who I assisted -- much of his perspective was included in my attitude and approach to coaching when I then moved on to coaching somewhere else. Those particular factors that you apply to your coaching are not just from the past but really continue to grow and improve.



Photo Courtesy of Janice Paquette

### E: What would you say has been the most rewarding part of your time coaching and involvement in the community?

CS: Knowing people. I enjoyed that a lot. I miss that part of it. I try to follow the swimming progression today, both within Williams as well as nationally, and I'm amazed at how people can move that fast and still find themselves in the water. The performances are incredible. ♦

## A Student Account of the School Argentina Trip

BY SYLVIE CLOWES

Mount Greylock students from Spanish Four and AP Spanish were fortunate enough to travel to La Cumbre, Argentina this past April break. Reflecting on the trip, I can tell you that it was absolutely worth the 25 hours spent traveling there.

Throughout the school year, we have each been getting to know a student at St. Paul's, our sister school in La Cumbre, through email exchanges. Earlier this month we finally got to meet them and their families. Not only am I now close to my "intercambio," but I also made multiple other good friends while there.

To be honest, I didn't much like the food for the first two days or so -- it is very meat and bread heavy -- but now that I am back I am absolutely craving medialunas (a type of small croissant) and empanadas. As anyone, especially Mr. Johnson, will tell you, the asados, similar to a barbecue, are amazing and occur often. We attended multiple of different sizes while there and, although I do not love morcilla, everything else was amazing.

We mostly interacted with the fifth years who were our penpals, but we also spent time with the rest of the school, especially the sixth

*"We spent much of our downtime with the other students, walking around the town or sharing mate. In many ways, these simple moments were my favorites."*

years. We spent much of our downtime with the other students, walking around the town or sharing mate, a type of green tea. In many ways, these simple moments were my favorites, and I do wish that I had had more time to enjoy

them.

My favorite day we spent there was actually a surprise: a day at the river. The parents of our intercambios had planned a full day for us -- transportation, asado, merienda (similar to teatime), etc. I spent the whole day just playing in the river and talking with others. Some of our group climbed onto the highest rock to have mate and play the guitar. Other amazing things we did included a hike up a dried river, riding horses through the hills near the town, and visiting with our intercambio's families.

I do think that this program and the trip has helped me to learn Spanish, especially in a more colloquial sense and with my listening comprehension. I got way more out of this trip than I ever expected and I hope that the trips will continue in the coming years, with the Argentians coming here next year.

Photos from the trip can be found on the Spanish Club's Instagram Page: mg\_spanish-club. ♦

# SPORTS

## Spring Sports in Full Swing

BY WILL IGOE

Spring athletics at Mount Greylock are underway and the teams are already rockin' and rollin' with success. Mount Greylock has claimed multiple trophies across the fall and winter seasons, including a few State Championships, and looks to continue this trend in the 2024 spring season.

With what seems like almost every student enrolled at Mount Greylock competing in Track and Field, you may be surprised to know other spring sports exist and are thriving so far this season.

Unified Track and Field has begun and practices twice a week. Despite the heat on April 9,



Photo Courtesy of Chicken Feather Media

the squad attended their first meet of the season at Drury High School, where all athletes demonstrated their dedication to the sport. Sophomore Preston Copely competed in the 100m and 400m and placed first in both events. "It's a good group, I like it a lot," Copely said. "It's one of the best groups in sports that I've ever been a part of."

The Girls Track and Field season began with a dual meet against Pittsfield and Monument, where Mount Greylock beat both teams to start the year off 2-0. To cap off the first meet

of the year, junior Chase Hoey set a county record for girls high jump with a height of five feet and six inches. Hoey unexpectedly cracked her previous personal record by four inches in what she called a "big jump." The team is poised for another year of personal and team achievements.

The Boys Track and Field season similarly started off hot with a 2-0 record against Pittsfield and Monument. Senior captain Quinn McDermott said, "We faced some pretty solid teams and came away with some really big wins and great performances." McDermott's goal for the upcoming season is to keep the "good times rolling." He added, "We're just getting started... pumped up for the season, and a lengthy post season to get ready for." Both the girls and boys teams recently beat Wahconah to remain undefeated.

The Girls Lacrosse team is off and running as well. Although the team currently stands with a 2-4 record, they were faced with difficult DI opponents to start off the season. Senior captain Lexi Politis believes the team is promising and holds high expectations for the upcoming games in both the regular season and playoffs.

The Boys Lacrosse team is a co-op with Hoosac Valley this season. The squad made the long trek to Belchertown, where they battled hard and came up a few goals short of the victory. With a 4-2 record to lead off the season, senior captain Liam Berryman and the team are positive about the upcoming season and the results it will hold. Berryman warns future opponents of Brady Auger's "missile" of a shot.

The Baseball team started off the season 2-0 with a crushing win over Granby and a battle at Wahconah. The squad won 7-4 in what can only be put by Tom-O and junior Cam Miller as a "very, very, big game." Miller said, "The season is looking promising as we already have as

many wins as we did last year." Miller referred to current UMBC legend Derek Paris when he said, "Big dogs gotta eat...Miller out." They now sit at 3-4 and look to defeat Wahconah.

Mount Greylock Softball began the season with a dominating 19-7 victory over Pioneer Valley. Junior Captain Malia Koffee said, "Team's looking pretty good...we have a lot of new players and they're doing really well." Koffee is excited for the season and plans to hit



Photo Courtesy of Chicken Feather Media

some bangers. They currently hold a 1-4 record and play Wahconah next.

The Girls and Boys Tennis teams began the year 2-0. Senior Captain Emily Oullette said both teams "started off strong" and are excited for the upcoming matches in their new uniforms. Their biggest competition so far has proved to be the New England rain, which has already caused two matches to be canceled. "The season's looking really good with lots of success...Lenox will be a challenge," Oullette said. Both teams stand at 4-1 now.

\*Please note some records may not be accurate due to the matches that occurred during the publishing process. ♦

## March Madness at Mount Greylock

BY MILA MARCISZ

Mount Greylock and the rest of the nation spent much of March enthralled by the college basketball March Madness tournament. From hallway chatter about brackets, upsets and matchups to in-class March Madness conversations and activities, the school was abuzz the entire tournament.

One teacher who engaged students in a March Madness bracket game was math teacher Thomas McCormack. McCormack himself is a fan of the tournament and wanted his students to be aware of what was going on, as well as gain an interest in the games.

For all his classes, McCormack set up brackets and randomly assigned student teams. If a student's team advanced to the final four, they would win a prize. "That fact that there is the chance of a prize got [students] more interested than they would typically be," McCormack said.

In addition to drawing students who may not have otherwise been inclined to keep up with the games, the brackets fueled the light compe-

tion between students who were already dedicated fans, and who had strong opinions about the teams.



Photo Courtesy of Krishiv Malhotra

This is not the first time McCormack has done the in-class bracket. While teaching at Lee, he would do the brackets as a way to engage students who were basketball fans,

as well as those who were not. McCormack mentioned that March is often seen as a "long stretch of school without any breaks" and doing fun activities like this "keep things interesting."

The women's tournament seemed to garner more attention than previous years, in the microcosm of Mount Greylock, as well as in the broader public, especially during the final four and final. From jerseys to hallway conversations and arguments, the growth of the women's game is palpable and seems to only be on the up and up. ♦

## SPORTS

## Enhanced Games Offer Alternative View on Doping

BY ANDREW PETROPULOS

The Enhanced Games has been making waves in the international sports community during this Paris Olympics year. Set to take place in 2025, the Enhanced Games is an Olympic-like competition where athletes use performance enhancing drugs that are typically illegal in the Olympics. Its out-of-the-box view on doping in sport has garnered much attention for fans of Olympic sports.

Despite its growing popularity on social media and various news sources internationally, the entity is still vague on many aspects of how it will work. For example, the competition is said to include just five general sporting categories: Athletics, Aquatics, Gymnastics, Combat and Strength. No specific event has been listed as an official competition, however. The games also claim to offer “a base salary and compete for prize winnings, which will be larger than any other comparable event in history,” although no prize money amount has been indicated yet.

A big focus of the games is on sports safety. The website for the company claims that drug testing will be utilized in the games for safety instead of the presence of a certain drug. A pre-screening process will involve various tests to give information about the athletes’ health and ideal training.

The games have highlighted the fact that, according to the World Anti-Doping Agency’s estimates, over 40 percent of Olympic athletes have likely doped in the past year. The Enhanced Games claim to keep athletes safe by

ensuring athletes are taking appropriate doses.

The Enhanced Games President Aron D’Souza told the White House, “President Biden, please trust the science and recognize that the Olympics will never be clean until there is an Enhanced Games. This is why we are offering to cooperate with the IOC [Inter-

pretty unhealthy.”

Senior Ollie Swabey said, “I’d probably watch that. It sounds interesting in the same way a zoo is. I wouldn’t take it as seriously as the Olympic games, but it still would be cool to see. I also think the athletes would compete on a similar level to that of olympians, just because many olympians are already doping.”

To grow popularity for these new games, D’Souza has allowed for a documentary covering these games to take place. Actor Rob McElhenney has agreed to direct this documentary, which will follow ten athletes and their journey through the Enhanced Games. The organization has been very forward with their need for athletes, using the documentary as a reason for more athletes to join the program. The games openly ask for ten athletes to volunteer in the documentary on social media and their website.

Many in the sports world, however, disagree with the appeal of an “enhanced Olympics.” World Athletics President Sebastian Coe has called the whole situation “bollocks.” ♦

*“It sounds interesting in the same way a zoo is. I wouldn’t take it as seriously as the Olympic games, but it still would be cool to see.”*

- Senior Ollie Swabey

national Olympic Committee] and the White House in order to make the Olympics truly clean, natural and fair. The Enhanced Games are no competition to the Olympics, but an entirely new event.”

Some Mount Greylock students are intrigued by the prospect of these new games. “I think something like that would be pretty entertaining,” senior Declan Rogers said. “Seeing people who are doped-up compete like super-humans would definitely be interesting. I guess that doesn’t make it a good idea, though. I’m sure allowing athletes to dope would be

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## Athlete Spotlight: Chase Hoey

BY DYLAN CLOWES

Mount Greylock junior Chase Hoey is a star member of the Track and Field team. Hoey excels in jumping, and competes in both the high jump and triple jump events. In a meet against three other teams held at Monument Mountain on April 10, Hoey broke the current record for the high jump at Mount Greylock Regional School when she cleared 5’6” vertical. At that competition, she also won the triple jump with a mark of 32-3. In her excellence in this field, she joins her parents, Kris and Nate Hoey, who both competed themselves before coaching – her dad is currently a head coach of Women’s Track and Field at Williams College, focusing on sprints and hurdles.

**Echo:** Tell us about your career in sports so far.

Chase Hoey: So, I’ve kind of done track all my life. Both of my parents were track coaches at one point and my dad still is, so I grew up around it. In seventh grade I started running cross country and then in eighth grade I started doing track because we didn’t have a season in seventh grade because of COVID. So, eighth grade it was still kind of weird because of COVID but then freshman year I started to do some stuff. Last year I qualified for All States and went there and competed. And then this year I qualified for UMass Nationals, which is exciting.



Photo Courtesy of Gillian Jones-Heck from the Berkshire Eagle

to it. But I’ve been high jumping for a while. It’s probably my favorite.

**E: And have you enjoyed track so far?**

CH: Yeah, it’s definitely a pretty big part of my life and I’m starting to do college recruitment stuff now. So that’s kind of the spot I’m at now.

**E: Tell me about this season so far.**

CH: Well, we had a scrimmage last week but this week was our first actual meet.

**E: Is there any advice you’d give to people who are starting track?**

CH: I mean, I feel like you should really try out every event because there’s so many different things, and you can see what you really like to do. ♦

**E: I saw that you got first in a couple of jumping competitions recently. Could you tell us some more about that?**

CH: So normally I do high jump and triple jump. Those are the two that I do. I just started triple jumping last year, so I’m still kind of new

# OPINION

## The Rise and Fall of Portland's Drug Decriminalization

BY FINN CAROTHERS

In November 2020, Oregon voters passed by referendum the Drug Addiction Treatment and Recovery Act, colloquially referred to as Measure 110. A landmark proposal, this measure set out to address the harms of drug criminalization by decriminalizing possession for personal use and instead prioritizing a treatment and health-based approach.

This measure was not only intended to reform a long-neglected and ineffective aspect of the American criminal justice system, but also to expand addiction resources and drug education in the state. However, in the three years after the institution of M110, the state of Oregon – and, most notably, the city of Portland – had witnessed dramatic escalations in overdose deaths and increased levels of crime and homelessness.

In late March of this year, following years of public outcry, Oregon governor Tina Kotec passed into legislation a measure reestablishing the criminal status of drug possession. It is fair to say that the institution of this measure was not a success (even experimentally). But was Measure 110 always destined to fail?

It is my belief that from its very outset, M110 was fatally flawed in both implementation and theory. Supporters of the act have cited COVID-19 as responsible for the experiment's failure, as resources meant to be put toward rehabilitation centers instead had to be used for handling the pandemic. However, I don't believe that COVID was primarily to blame for the collapse of Measure 110, instead merely serving as an accelerant for the demise of an already doomed piece of legislation. Ultimately, it was the botched implementation of the statute that assured its failure.

Despite knowingly not having sufficient treatment resources in place, Measure 110 went into almost immediate effect after being passed, putting immense strain on an already underfunded and poorly devised system.

The mayor of Portland, Ted Wheeler, acknowledged this oversight in an interview with the *New York Times*. "There's no question the state botched the implementation," he said. "With the benefit of hindsight [the state] would have built up its behavioral health services, and

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***“While decriminalization itself is not fundamentally flawed in nature (and in my belief possible in the future), Oregon’s implementation undoubtedly was.”***

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when it reached a certain threshold, then they would decriminalize.”

While decriminalization itself is not fundamentally flawed in nature (and in my belief possible in the future), Oregon's implementation undoubtedly was. This abrupt and radical transition was destined to be cataclysmic. To choose to prioritize and pursue a treatment-based approach without the appropriate infrastructure in place is recklessly negligent.

While Portland is home to many “harm reduction” programs, including needle exchanges and safe use centers, they remain

underfunded and ultimately do little to break the cycle of addiction, instead teetering on the fine line between empathy and enablement. While these places do offer referral to addiction and behavioral resources, studies show that less than 20% of people who are referred to treatment follow up with the suggestion. Existing modes of rehabilitation, referral and harm reduction are ineffective and we as a nation need to move toward seeking alternative methods of treatment and harm reduction that do not simply enable the destructive paths of addiction.

Another oversight lies in the fact that Oregon was the only state in the U.S to decriminalize the possession of hard drugs, while the majority of the nation seemed to be tightening its grip on drug enforcement policy. This unintentionally made Oregon a tourist destination for users of such substances.

Drug legalization, while it does provide opportunities for harm reduction and the destigmatization of addiction, is ultimately limited in its efficacy, as it fails to address many of the root causes behind substance abuse and the drug epidemic themselves.

Given our nation's evolving focus on criminality and criminal justice (with mainstream attention shifting from the mere enforcement of policy to individual and communal rehabilitation) in contrast with the failure of Measure 110, an act meant to be a landmark in the modern criminal justice reform movement, one has to ask what the future prioritization of rehabilitation and criminal policy reform will look like in America. ♦

## Book Review: “The Inheritance Games”

BY SYLVIE CLOWES

“The Inheritance Games,” by Jennifer Barnes, is a captivating, fast-paced mystery series that centers around Avery Grambs, a poor teenager who is called to the reading of a will for a man she has never met. The deceased Tobias Hawthorne was one of the richest men in the world, and his will makes Avery his sole heir.

The plot of the first book centers around finding out why the “old man” left his fortune, house and companies to Avery, rather than to his grandson Greyson, who has been groomed to take over. Avery must navigate the family home, Hawthorne House, which is littered with secret passages and puzzles, while also attempting to learn how to handle the class that she is now a part of.

One of the best aspects of this book is the focus and intricacies that Barnes gives to all of her characters, especially the grandsons. Nash, the oldest, has a penchant for saving others and would love to never have to play another of his grandfather's games.

Greyson has been trained to be the perfect heir: cold, calculating, and brilliant. Of all the

brothers, he hates Avery and what she means for the family most, but he is also the most willing to help her find out why his grandfather left everything to her.

Jameson loves puzzles and bad decisions. He and Avery become very close as they race to solve the puzzle, and their dynamic is definitely my favorite. The youngest, Xander, is always cheerful and by far the smartest of the brothers.

The plot itself is complex and sets up a double mystery: Why did Avery inherit and what secrets are Greyson and Jameson hiding? Although these secrets are cleared up by the end of the first book, throughout the story new mysteries appear, leading smoothly into the main mystery of the second book. Although the puzzles presented are not extremely difficult, they are fun and they do require readers to think, both of which I feel are important in any good mystery.

“The Inheritance Games” has been compared to “The Westing Game,” by Ellen Raskin, which is my favorite book. Although I do not think that they are equally brilliant – “The Westing Game” is obviously superior – they

are both lovely, complex mysteries with a large, well-constructed cast, lacking murders and bloodshed.

“The Inheritance Games” was far better than I expected to find in a random, trope-filled mystery. This book is complex and enjoyable, perfectly suitable for any student at Mount Greylock.

Finally, and I think this is the most important characteristic for any mystery, “The Inheritance Games” does not rely solely upon its mystery. The characters and their motivations are complicated and unique, providing a strong base that makes this book re-readable. Although I am not yet done with the series, I already know “The Inheritance Games” will be on my re-read list for this summer. ♦

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# OPINION

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## “Ghostbusters: Frozen Empire” Review

BY BEN DINGMAN

For the diehard “Ghostbuster” fans of the world, Gil Kenan’s “Ghostbusters: Frozen Empire” is the perfect film. Putting aside a bit of cheesy acting and corny jokes, this new installment in the “Ghostbusters” franchise is a fun watch and allows us to immerse ourselves in the world of the “Ghostbusters” brew once more.

This new film follows Jason Reitman’s 2021 hit “Ghostbusters: Afterlife,” which revived the original Ghostbusters saga after 32 years. “Afterlife” gave us a new look into the Ghostbusters world with McKenna Grace playing the late Egon Spangler’s granddaughter Phoebe. Upon discovering his old house and ghost hunting equipment, Phoebe is able to combat a new paranormal threat facing the world.

“Ghostbusters: Frozen Empire” sees Phoebe and her family restart the Ghostbusters business, even taking back the infamous firehouse. But after a series of costly accidents while hunting, Phoebe and her family face the close scrutiny of Mayor Walter Peck. When a new wave of evil paranormal spirits are unleashed, it is up to Phoebe and the Ghostbusters to save the world once more.

If you go into this movie expecting the spectacle of cinema that was the original movie, you will walk away disappointed. But if you go in

as a fan of Ghostbusters and watch the movie for what it is, you will have so much fun. This movie is a funny, nerdy story that gives any Ghostbusters fans that giddy feeling once more.

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*“We get to see a fresh, modern look of Ghostbusters, and even though much of it strays from the original Ghostbusters saga, it still holds true to the spirit of the original films.”*

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Aside from the humorous callbacks to the original film, the story offers a compelling and very well thought-out plot that explores exciting new topics. We get to see a fresh, modern look of Ghostbusters, and even though much of it strays from the original Ghostbusters saga, it still holds true to the spirit of the original films.

While many revivals of classic films have failed to meet expectations, “Ghostbusters:

Frozen Empire” rises to the occasion, depicting passion and appreciation for the franchise. The story of the Ghostbusters gang still holds true and the giddy feeling that all Ghostbusters nerds get from the original movie can still be felt today. It is not often that a film is able to portray such a classic story with a wise, fun spin. The film highlights many modern themes, which make for a new lens that gets people thinking.

All around the film delivers and stays true to its roots. Nowhere does the film feel out of place or cheesy. It is made for Ghostbusters fans, though anyone can certainly enjoy it. As a major Ghostbusters fan, I am happy to say the revival of this franchise does not disappoint.

When revving a beloved and classic saga it is easy to pack it with unnecessary easter eggs or quotes from the original series in order to “give the people what they want.” This film patiently adds in the classic tropes and gives you a few new ones to fall in love with. The film is not heavy-handed, and any form of nostalgia is perfectly placed in very subtle and unexpected ways. All in all, the film stands out in modern cinema and will definitely become a part of the beloved saga, making the late Harold Ramis proud. ♦

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## “Road House” Remake Balances Homage With Reinvention

BY JUDGE MARTIN

“Road House,” the 1989 cult classic starring Patrick Swayze, has been remade for a new generation and recently debuted on Amazon Prime. The movie stars Jake Gyllenhaal as bouncer and protagonist James Dalton. This 2023 remake attempts to balance homage with reinvention, creating a new yet familiar viewing experience for audiences, old and young.

“Road House” is directed by Doug Liman, best known for “The Bourne Identity” and “Edge of Tomorrow.” He incorporates the original film’s key elements, such as bar brawls, personal reflection and a loner hero. However, Liman recontextualizes them for a contemporary setting. The new “Road House” changes the backdrop from the rowdy Double Deuce bar in Missouri to a more bougie venue in the Florida Keys, showing a shift in tone and aesthetic that aligns with more modern film.

Gyllenhaal steps into Swayze’s shoes, which are very hard to fill, with a performance that balances physical skill with emotional depth. His James Dalton is powerful and confident, a former UFC fighter who now uses his skills to maintain order rather than create chaos.

One of the things I found most impressive about Gyllenhaal is how well he prepared to play this role, not only acting-wise but also the work he put into achieving the shape he was in for the role. Gyllenhaal’s portrayal respects the spirit of Swayze’s character while adding in his own unique blend of vulnerability and intensity, making the role his own. Importantly, though, he is still not able to top Swayze’s original performance.

The supporting cast includes Billy Magnussen as the antagonist, a role that mirrors Ben Gazzara’s portrayal of Brad Wesley in the original. Magnussen brings a cocky, annoying charm to the part, serving as a perfect enemy to Gyllenhaal’s grounded Dalton. Magnussen’s character reminds viewers of a frat boy with a punchable face, making the villain easy to dislike. The dynamic between the characters is filled with a tension that helps the narrative build, maintaining engagement through the whole film.

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*“While the remake contains nods to the memorable lines of the original, it often veers into overly-familiar territory.”*

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One of my favorite supporting cast actors has to be Conor McGregor. McGregor makes his acting debut, playing a character not too far removed from his real-life persona – a charming yet volatile fighter. His presence adds an authentic touch to the fight scenes, which are incredibly well choreographed. The fight scenes contain many different camera effects and angles, including first-person points of view. Along with McGregor’s addition to the action, he is also the most comical character, adding a

laugh or two into the script, even if not planned, solely because of his accent and movements.

While the film excels in action and a little humor, it struggles with pacing and narrative cohesion. The attempt to add in deeper themes such as redemption, trauma and personal growth feels forced at times, leaving some character arcs underdeveloped. The original film’s straightforward plot and thematic clarity are obscured here by attempts to introduce complexity that doesn’t always resonate as intended.

While the remake contains nods to the memorable lines of the original, it often veers into overly-familiar territory without delivering the memorable punch of its original. This aspect might disappoint fans looking for the iconic toughness of the 1989 script but could appeal to a new audience with no prior expectations because of its intriguing, action-packed plot.

Overall, the remake of “Road House” is an entertaining, decent reimagining of a cult classic. While it may not capture all the rough charm of the original, it provides enough modern twists to justify its existence. Jake Gyllenhaal delivers an applaudable performance, supported by a well-done cast and robust action scenes. This ensures that even if it doesn’t quite step out from the shadow of its original, it can still impress viewers. Fans of the original may find elements to critique, but new viewers and fans of action-packed dramas will find a good amount to enjoy in this modern rendition of an iconic story. ♦

# ETC.

## Reflections on the FAFSA Fiasco

BY ANABEL GONZALES

College acceptances are in, and as the daffodils bloom and the birds sing, all seniors are starting to hear a different tune: graduation. With the fourth quarter well under way, all anyone in the senior class can think of is the numbered days until they walk that stage. But the slog is not over yet, as many students have yet to commit to a college, and it isn't because their options are lacking – it is because of the ever-elusive financial aid packages.

First, some context. In 2023, the United States Department of Education announced they would be making some changes to the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) forms to make it generally easier and to give students more money in return, all part of the Federal government's goal to relieve and prevent student debt. However, this well-intentioned act has been far from smooth. Due to the difficulties of changing an entire FAFSA application, there have been massive delays, impacting students' ability to make decisions.

It's no secret that financial aid is one of the most important factors when deciding on a college. Even for those who get scholarships, financial aid is often a necessity in order to avoid crippling college debt and student loans. According to the *Associated Press*, over 17 million students fill out the FAFSA form each year, meaning the holdup has been incredibly detrimental to students.

"I knew the FAFSA was going to be bad this year, so I did the FAFSA early in January, but it still has not been processed, and I can't make any decisions until I get my package," senior Jackie Brannan said. "I'm literally in limbo, and I get emails from colleges giving me their estimated offer, but it's not the whole picture until my FAFSA comes through. I don't want to commit to a college before I know how much I am getting."

Brannan is not the only one who is concerned.

"Money is a big part of college, especially in the US," senior Phoebe Hughs said. "It's very disappointing how nightmarish the entire process has been even after decisions have rolled out."

Senior John Manuel Morales shared a similar perspective. "Money is obviously a very important factor, so not many people are able to make a decision yet without this information," he said.

Even in towns like Williamstown, where Williams College contributes approximately \$35,000 per year to the enrolled college students of faculty and staff members, this often covers only half of tuition and fees. In fact, some colleges are now costing close to 100,000 dollars a year. These fees make it difficult for people to escape student debt, and without these statements people have been hesitant to commit anywhere.

This issue goes beyond our school bubble and points to a greater problem in our country. The fact that money plays such an important part in the college decision-making process is proof we are living in a country that is an economic society first and a humanistic society second. In short, money dictates a large part of our happiness, and we need to consider money factors even for decisions like where we want to go to school.

Because education in the United States isn't provided for free by the government, as in many countries, the FAFSA delay points to how increasingly difficult it is becoming for anyone to afford college. We are going back in time to a place where only the elite are able to afford college without financial aid, and only the elite will escape debt. Though a handful of schools, including Williams College, are need-blind and give any admitted students the funds they need to attend, these schools are few and far between.

This FAFSA fiasco has revealed how important money really is when making decisions about our education. It is very clear that our futures are being dictated not by our free will, but by the amount of debt we will be in with every decision we make. ♦

*"It is very clear that our futures are being dictated not by our free will, but by the amount of debt we will be in with every decision we make."*

## 1 in 650 Cont.

of the military. It pretty much gave me a full ride to Norwich University in Vermont, which was my top choice. You can only apply for it for schools that have an ROTC [Reserve Officers' Training Corps] program. There are other schools locally, but I chose Norwich.

**E: Was this an online only application?**

GP: I applied online. If you go on the Navy website or the Marines website, they have the application for it. And so you have to fill it out. Then they have your information and somebody like a Marine officer or military officer will reach out to you by email and you have to set up a meeting where they interview you and you have to run a fitness test. This fitness test consists of a three mile run, pull ups, push ups, sit ups and a plank, and you have to get a certain score to pass. They also look at your academics and leadership skills. After, two marine officers came to my house, then went to the board and presented it to me.

**E: What's going to happen post-college with this scholarship?**

GP: So after my four years I am required to become an officer and go to Officer Candidate School and be on active duty for seven years. ♦

## Mini Crossword

CREATED BY CALEB LOW

1		2		3		4
				5		
6						
				7		
8						

### ACROSS

- 1. K-Pop sensation
- 5. a shelled bit of raw cacao
- 6. Hawkeye hooper or local beauty
- 7. first year MG math teacher last worked here
- 8. 'twas the night before Christmas

### DOWN

- 1. yard game with origins in the boot of Europe
- 2. infamous Slytherin professor
- 3. comprised of the fibula, tibia, and talus
- 4. Four famous Liverpoolian musicians walked across this road in 1969

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May 3rd, 2024

The Greylock Echo

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**ETC.**

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