

The Greylock Echo

January Edition

Mount Greylock - Williamstown, MA

January 6th, 2025

The Phone Policy Experiment

BY AMELIA MADRIGAL

Last year, you could have walked into a classroom and seen 20 cell phones, some sleeping out on desks and some not-so-expertly concealed underneath, scrolling TikTok. In the hallway, you might have been passed by someone oblivious to your existence, completely immersed in music blasting from noise-canceling AirPods.

It was common to get bumped into by someone looking down at their phone, checking Instagram well into the next class period. On your way through the school, you could have walked by adjacent classrooms and seen completely different ways of managing student cell phone use.

Now, not so much. During the 2023-2024 academic year, former Superintendent Jason McCandless announced a new phone policy for the 2024-2025 academic year.

The policy, as dictated in the procedural document available on the school's website, states that the district "limits the presence and/or use of student-owned technology devices within its schools," defining student-owned technology as "any device capable of communicating via text or voice with another device and that is not provided to the student by the school district."

Specifically prohibited devices include laptops, headphones (airpods, etc.), kindles, tablets and cell phones. Such a drastic change was originally met with pushback, especially from frustrated students.

Almost half a year has passed under the new technology policy. Due to the 'blanket' nature of the district-wide policy, new concerns have arisen after a semester following the new procedures.

The lack of personal computers and personal emails specifically impacts seniors applying to college. Many seniors are advised to use

their personal email for their college applications and college board accounts (school emails disappear after graduation), but the school Chromebooks restrict any emails outside the mgrsd domain. This chromebook-specific limitation made it impossible for some seniors to access these college-related accounts during school hours. Even when changes were made to remedy these issues, lack of communication left many students in the dark regarding fixes.

Applying to college can be extremely stressful, and seniors have expressed how the current phone policy, lacking nuance in accommodating this problem specific to seniors, has led to even more stress.

"It's hard when a blanket rule is put into effect without considering all of the repercussions," senior Micah Zasada said.

On Wednesday, the Student Council put out a mid-year student approval

poll collecting data about the student perspective on the phone policy. There were three questions for students to answer: a one to five scale on how positively the policy has affected their experience at Greylock, checkboxes about their top two specific grievances with aspects of the policy and an open-ended optional question asking if there was anything else respondents would like to share.

Over 200 students responded to the poll, and 130 students responded to the last question asking for anything else students would like to add, and responses ranged from one sentence to 500 words long.

The poll's data revealed a clear student antagonism towards the phone policy, with 37.9% of students answering with a one (least positive) for the first question on how positive the impact has been, 20.5% answering with a two, and 21.0% answering with a three.

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1 in 650: Interview with Sepp Zammuto

BY PAIGE TUDOR



Photo Courtesy of Sepp Zammuto

The Greylock Echo sat down with senior Sepp Zammuto, who transferred to Greylock this year from Lincoln Academy in Newcastle, Maine after spending a year abroad in Italy. Parts of the interview have been edited for clarity and comprehension.

Echo: What sparked your decision to go abroad?

Sepp Zammuto: I was just looking for a big change. I wasn't necessarily discontent with where I was living or what I was studying, but I felt like I was living in a little bit of a bubble. I wanted to explore an entirely different education system, learn how other kids in the world were living, learn their language, completely immerse myself in the culture and just absorb as much as I could in one year. And I wanted to sort of test myself to see if I could be able to enter a culture where I didn't know anything and see how much I could pick up in a single year—whether that be from a linguistic standpoint, or culturally, or religiously, like I went to church and I had never done that before. I think that's really important to me, just getting out of my current comfort zone, accepting conflicting perspectives and using those to form my own ideology.

E: Would you say that growth happened in your experience?

SZ: Yeah, I came out being a completely different person. Before I left, I was very introverted. I didn't really have much social experience. Before high school, I was raised on a little

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Has the phone policy improved your experience at Greylock?

Scale is from 1 (Definitely not) to 5 (Absolutely). 224 total responses.

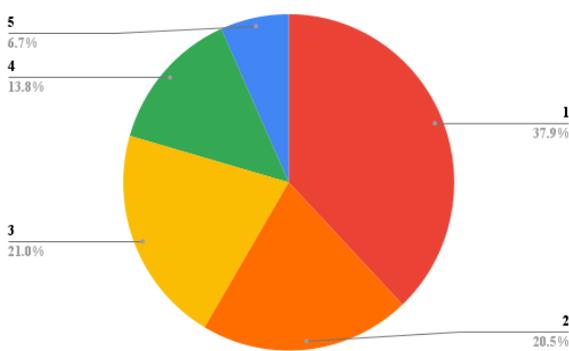


Chart Courtesy of Amelia Madrigal

Global Business Decision Impacts Nordic Ski Teams

Nora López covers purchase of nearby farm property. See Page 4

Greylock BSU Founded

Sabine Guerra reports on the new BSU and its impact. See Page 2

Greylock's Best Sports Moment

Read Will Igoe's thrilling retelling of the day. See Page 10

Australian Parliament Passes Social Media Bans

Robyn Gregg examines the ban and its implications. See Page 7

NEWS

Sand Springs Sauna Season Gains Popularity

BY ARTHUR MILLET

The Sand Springs pool may be known to most Northern Berkshire residents as a place to cool off during the summer, but the recreation center offers multiple activities during the winter months too. Among these attractions, the sauna and food pop-ups have drawn Greylock students for both employment and fun.

The recreation center sees a variety of people, but mostly caters to younger generations, including both Williams and Greylock students, many of whom work there. Many take advantage of the sauna in the evening, whether that be students coming after classes or parents coming right before the sauna closes after having put their children to bed.

For Greylock students, the combination of hot sauna and cold pool is the main attraction: “You go out, jump into the pool, go back into the sauna, and back into the pool,” said junior Mateo Whalen-Loux. “The pool isn’t heated, so it’s shockingly cold.”

“It’s incredibly beneficial for cardiovascular health,” said senior Gavin Hetherington. “The pool never fully freezes since it’s spring fed, so



Photo Courtesy of Henry Smith

you can shvitz, too,” said Hetherington, using the Yiddish word associated with alternating sauna time and cold plunges.

Various food pop-ups have also made their way to Sand Springs, from barbecue grills outside to pierogi stands inside. “This Japanese food pop-up where they had kebabs outside...was really popular,” said junior Nina Wied, employee at Sand Springs.

So far three pop-ups have made their way to Sand Springs this year, and more will likely come as the season progresses.

In addition to the food and sauna, the pool has also served as a location for yoga classes, many of which already occur during the summer. The winter activities at Sand Springs draw a unique crowd from both the Greylock and larger community who wish to take advantage of the pool during the off-season. ♦

Greylock Black Student Union Founded

BY SABINE GUERRA

Editor’s Note: This story contains references to a racial slur. The AP Style Manual states to only include the “N-word” when it is crucial to the story or understanding of a news event. Staff felt it was important to include reference to it here in order to not censor the real lived experiences of students in our school.

The Greylock Black Student Union (BSU) has started meeting in room A109 on Mondays during lunch. So far, the group, which many say provides crucial support to Black students at the school, has met four times.

According to ninth grader Myra Annuva, meetings typically “start off with food and refreshments, and then [they] start getting deeper into life at Greylock and what it means to be an ally or a BSU member.”

These meetings have proven to be both crucial and helpful. Sophomore Sara Ehle, another frequent attendee of BSU meetings, said, “I think that BSU is important for Black students... it helps create a safe space. It’s nice to come together with people that have similar experiences to you and to relate to other people.”

Annuva shared these sentiments, and explained that the meetings help her to “express [her] feelings about certain topics in school which are a bit more sensitive to most, but are acceptable in the meetings.”

The BSU is open to all students, and allows for the attendance of non-Black allies, so long as they remain respectful. When asked for their thoughts on the inclusion of allies in these meetings Annuva explained, “I think it matters why they are there.”

She continued to describe how at earlier meetings some students would attend seemingly solely for the food that was provided, and she stated “it made me very annoyed.”

She then presented the counterargument that having allies there is “important because then it shows what goes on in our community.” Ehle agreed with both points and added by saying,

“having allies there can be beneficial because it can help spread awareness about how Black people at Greylock feel.”

They both see the benefits of having allies, as Sara Ehle explained, “as long as the allies are there for good reasons.”

Myra emphasized that BSU’s role extends beyond supporting Black students, stating “it’s important for BSU to be introduced to Greylock students, even if they’re not of African descent, because it shows the real, authentic and kind of ugly experiences” faced by Black students.

She proceeded to say that sharing these experiences “can really affect people’s mindsets, while at school, and while out of school as well.”

For some, the BSU came out of a sort of necessity. Annuva and Ehle both shared that they have been no strangers to racist incidents at Mount Greylock, and they describe how it can be very difficult attending a predominantly white school as students of color. Annuva claimed that over the years she’s witnessed students using the N-word in the halls, and that sometimes a student or group of students will “yell it out or just say it casually, even if they’re not of any type of Black descent of any sort.”

She went on to describe how it impacted her and said, “you kind of feel attacked in a way, or you just feel uncomfortable.” She explained that it is hard to know what to do in that situation “and you don’t know if you should stand up for yourself, you know, your background, or if you should stay silent like everyone else.”

Ehle added that she’s had to deal with a lot of microaggressions and as she puts it, “dealing with people around you not understanding you, touching your hair and making fun of you.” Ehle explained the struggle of “not having anyone to go to, because of the lack of diversity in our school” and she said that “it makes [life at Greylock] very difficult.”

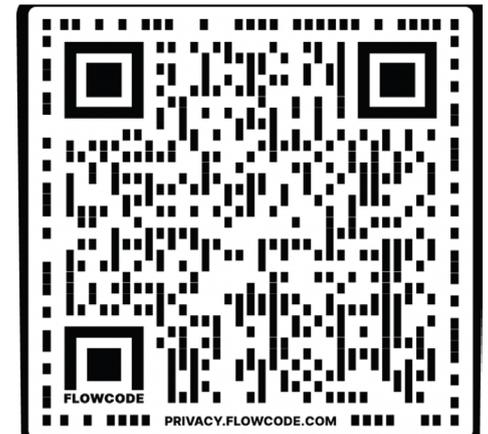
They both claim that for these reasons the BSU has been immensely helpful for them.

Annuva explained that the college student members who help to facilitate these meetings along with Coach Verdell “help a great deal,” and that they offer good insights on “how to stand up for yourself.”

She also said that in the meetings “you feel heard, because [the college students] might have gone through similar experiences.”

The Greylock Black Student Union has already been extremely impactful in only a short amount of time. Ehle explains that the BSU wishes to expand this impact and that “the representatives from BSU are really trying to work with us to plan events.”

Ehle added, “I think that BSU can help us move forward as a school and improve in ways that we couldn’t if we didn’t have a program like this.” The BSU has been a revolutionary addition to the school community and has created an empowering space for Black students at Greylock. ♦



Scan here to read more articles on the Echo website!

NEWS

Students Attend Mid-Year Field Trips

BY EMILIE JONES

The end of the year held much excitement for Mount Greylock students, as many were able to take part in engaging field trips. The Emily Dickinson field trip, led by English teachers Rebecca Tucker-Smith and Kathleen Igoe, took place just before Thanksgiving break, and the Science Blast, led by science teacher Shawn Burdick, as well as the AP Computer Science trip to Harvard, led by computer science and math teacher Brandon Price, both occurred the week after students' return.

The Emily Dickinson trip was attended by 23 students from 10th through 12th grade. The trip took place at Dickinson's home, now called the Emily Dickinson Museum, in Amherst, Massachusetts. Students were divided into groups for an interactive house tour and activities. Igoe described the visit as particularly memorable, noting, "the coolest part of the house tour [was that] it was a dark, rainy day. We walked into Emily's room and it was so light. The wallpaper was lighter and there were tons of windows." She also mentioned how "the rugs and walls were patterned."

As part of the activities, students opened "mystery boxes" that contained artifacts from Emily Dickinson's house. The visitors got to learn about Emily Dickinson's unique habits, and Igoe explained that "these mystery boxes had reprinted poems. There was an invitation to a taffy pulling party, and she wrote a poem on the back. We just looked at what she was saying in the poems, what her handwriting looked like. We observed their connections to the artifacts

in the box."

After admiring Emily Dickinson's poems, they got to enjoy writing some of their own. "They had us do a 'how to' poem about something we did frequently," said Igoe, who did "walking my dog."

All juniors were able to attend the annual Science Blast at Williams College. Burdick led students to the science center of Williams where students were met by eager Williams' scientists. There were a variety of workshops offered, and students were each placed in two. "I personally did the spectroscopy and chocolate workshops. Both were fun and interesting," said Burdick. "The spectroscopy was a new offering this year, but as usual chocolate was the most popular."

Junior Ava Charbonneau confirmed this: "I really liked making the chocolate because you had to focus and keep it in the precise temperature range." She explained that in the chocolate workshop, students "learned about the physics of tempering chocolate and how if it gets too hot, it will be bad."

Charbonneau also attended the "Taste of Flavor" workshop where she "learned about how taste and flavor are different, and most people use them interchangeably. [I] really liked tasting the different foods because I got to distinguish all of the flavors from one another."

To sophomores who will be taking part in these workshops next year, Charbonneau said they "should get excited because it is a day to do hands-on activities while also learning new things. The workshops show real life scenarios

where science occurs every day."

Reflecting on the field trip, Burdick stated that "11th graders get to see science college science labs in action, and see students only a little older than themselves doing science. This can help with their college planning and expectations. As a science teacher, it is also great to see so many real-world applications of science-how science helps us understand everything, literally everything in the world, everything we experience, every moment of every day."

Lastly, the AP Computer Science students had a trip of their own all the way to Harvard where they looked at projects created by the college's students. "I really enjoyed touring Harvard and exploring Boston. The fair itself was super cool, and I saw a bunch of very dramatically different projects," said junior Will Svrluga. Svrluga said his favorite project was a "program for virtual reality where it let you move wherever you looked."

Although Will didn't personally look into the code of the projects, he believes "it will all help me get ideas for the end of year project and help me be creative."

Overall, these field trips offered students valuable opportunities to learn through hands-on experiences and expand their understanding of subjects outside the classroom. ♦

Remedy Hall Supply Dispenser Installed

BY REED MILES-HARRIS

Remedy Hall, a local mutual aid boutique that supplies people with necessary, non-food goods has given Mount Greylock a supply dispenser. This dispenser is located in the SSC room and can be accessed at any time by anyone.

Remedy Hall is located on Main Street in Williamstown and is free for anyone to use. They offer basic necessities for people who need them and their mission is to "provide those experiencing hardship with non-food basic life necessities, free of charge." Anyone can help people in need by donating whatever they feel is a basic necessity to Remedy Hall.

Remedy Hall normally only uses their main location on 906 Main Street for business but they have now put in a supply dispenser at Mount Greylock. Their goal with this new supply dispenser is to expand the reach of Remedy Hall and to give students of Mount Greylock easier access to the same services as the main location.

This supply dispenser is located in SSC and is open to everyone who goes to Mount Greylock. It contains a wide array of items including but not limited to: personal hygiene items such as deodorant or soap, socks, blankets, batteries, towels, shirts, pants, hats and gloves.

Few people in Mount Greylock High School know about the dispenser that Remedy Hall has

placed in their school. The supply dispenser can be a useful tool for anyone in need of basic non-food life necessities and it is important that peo-



Photo Courtesy of Krishiv Malhotra

ple know they can get help and where to find it. Remedy Hall wants to help everyone that they

can and by putting this supply dispenser in the school they are able to reach more people than they would be able to if they hadn't.

Anyone at Mount Greylock can put something into or take something out of the supply dispenser that is now located in the SSC room. Remedy Hall wants to help as many people as they are able to, and anyone can help them to achieve this goal simply by donating non-food basic life necessities either to the supply dispenser at Mount Greylock Regional High School or at their main location on 906 Main Street in Williamstown.

If you would like to contact Remedy Hall directly you can either go there physically, call or text them at 413-884-3051 or you can find them on Facebook. Remedy Hall wants to help as many people as they can, and by talking to them and donating non-food basic life necessities you can help too. ♦

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NEWS

Global Business Decision Impacts Nordic Ski Team

BY NORA LÓPEZ

Nearly 4,000 miles away, business decisions in Germany are impacting the Mount Greylock Nordic ski teams.

Earlier in 2024, the Berkshire Eagle wrote that “Jan-Gisbert Schultze and Paul-Bernhard Kallen...managing partners at Acton Capital, a venture capital firm in Munich” purchased 235 acres of land surrounding Mount Greylock Regional School. This land, formerly known as Green River Farms, is currently being leased to Green River Regenerative Farms, which is a shared investment between Green River Farms Inc. and Understanding Ag LLC.

The Noble Research Institute, the United States’ largest nonprofit dedicated to farm and ranch management education, states that regenerative agriculture “strives to work with nature rather than against it” by “restoring degraded soils... based on ecological principles.”

Sustainable farming is simultaneously financially and environmentally beneficial. The National Resources Defense Council (NRDC) writes that “there’s no strict rule book...the holistic principles behind...regenerative agriculture are meant to restore soil and ecosystem health, address inequity, and leave our land, waters, and climate in better shape for future generations.”

Although regenerative farming may be a valiant and noble movement to introduce to

Berkshire County, the Mount Greylock Nordic ski teams have been disadvantaged by the change in ownership of Green River Farms. In previous years, trails crossing into Green River Farms property were included in both races and practices. This year, however, access to this land—including the area adjacent to the varsity baseball field and the apple orchard across the street from Mount Greylock—has been prohibited.

Nordic coach Hilary Greene was alerted to the change in practice resources after seeing new signs forbidding access points while on a walk. “I was immediately alarmed because those fields are one of our favorite places to ski,” Greene explained. “They’re just beautiful. They offer this nice, gentle, rolling terrain, and some hills.”

Her next step was to attempt to contact the owners, which she has been unsuccessful in doing at the time of publication. Greene did reach the farm’s local manager, but “the manager was very adamant that the new owners do not want any activity in that field.” While she waits to be put into contact with the property owners, the nordic team will have to make adjustments.

When asked about available ski trails, nordic coach Ian Nesbitt said, “We’re able to ski on the trails that exist on Mount Greylock prop-

erty, but our access to surrounding areas has changed.” His goal in the face of this change is to secure access to additional trails around Williamstown, like the Phelps Trail.

While loss of access to the farm is a navigational and practical challenge for the team, it is also a nostalgic loss. Many traditions for both the ski teams and the Mount Greylock cross country teams were rooted in the farmland and its pond. Maya Filson, an eighth grade member of both the cross country and ski teams, said, “Some girls on the cross country team liked to go there before races and throw a rock into the pond for good luck.” She also added that the ski team had a lot of good memories on the farm, saying, “One time last year the pond froze and so we went on the pond and had a really good time.”

Senior runner Rafa Mellow-Bartels agreed, saying, “Last year we ran on it a lot and there were a lot of old traditions that some people on the team had.”

Luckily, the teams still have many miles of great trails to use on school property and are no strangers to adjusting to change. “One of the best things about the ski team is we’re super flexible,” said Greene. ♦

Breaking Down Barriers: The ASL Lunch Group

BY NORA STRICKER

So far during Mount Greylock Regional School’s 2024-2025 academic year, Williams College student Asa Quasney has been leading American Sign Language (ASL) meetings during lunch periods. These groups hope to spread awareness about ASL while deepening student understanding and interest.

The meetings are held on Tuesdays in the library during lunches B and C (11:50-12:20 and 12:24-12:58). So far, a group of approximately ten students have learned how to sign “Hello, my name is (blank),” finger spelling, the standard ASL alphabet and a brief history on ASL.

Additionally, Quasney has shown the importance of facial structure and how it can affect meaning, for example, the way one holds their eyebrows to convey a yes or no statement is different compared to a question.

Sophomore Lyric Jackson went to their first meeting and loved the experience. Jackson recalls that they “learned by watching” and the meeting was not structured as a class, but instead had a comfortable atmosphere that was “very welcoming.” Jackson’s first impressions of Quasney were positive, noting that they were “passionate about teaching others.”

Sophomore Aero Higdon-Topaz added that Quasney seemed “extremely kind” and loves “how safe the space feels.” Students are challenged to go the entire meeting without saying a word: only sign and written communication are allowed. This quiet environment allows for the maximum amount of learning and ensures

respect for Quasney, who is completely deaf.



Photo Courtesy of Liza Barrett

Jackson went on to explain that their favorite moment from the meeting was unexpected. After some minor technical difficulties regarding the whiteboard, Quasney resolved the problem and signed the word for success, a movement where both index fingers point to the

corners of the mouth and flip upwards. Jackson valued this moment because it happened naturally through experience: “It was something I wouldn’t have learned otherwise.”

Both Jackson and Higdon-Topaz plan on continuing to attend the ASL lunch groups while also extending their understanding of sign independently. In fact, Higdon-Topaz plans on starting online lessons or using an ASL dictionary.

The ASL lunch group has the potential to make great waves in the Greylock community. Learning ASL benefits everyone, both Deaf and hearing. It is important to spread awareness about a topic that affects so many lives because many hearing people do not know how to successfully or effectively communicate with a Deaf individual. Education regarding the Deaf community is hard to come by in many schools, which is wildly exclusive to the population of Deaf and hard of hearing students.

These easily accessible lessons provided by Quasney are the first steps to creating a community built on inclusivity. More attendees would propel the lunch meetings into even more success, but the effects of these meetings reach farther than just Mount Greylock. Students who attend are helping create a world where Deaf people are accepted, understood and welcomed into communities with open arms.

“It’s really fun. I recommend going!” Jackson remarked. ♦

NEWS

Meet Your Neighbor: Michael Hutchinson

BY NORA STRICKER & MACKENZIE ALCARO

Meet Your Neighbor is a column showcasing interviews with residents of Sweetwood. These interviews help to exhibit the stories of our neighbors and how they have impacted their communities. This interview is with Micheal Hutchinson, former engineer at Sprague Electric and music enthusiast.

Echo: Where were you born and where did you grow up?

Michael Hutchinson: Physical birth took place in Randolph, Vermont, and most of my childhood was in Rochester, Vermont, which is a little town of less than 1,000 people. It's very rural, more rural than Williamstown if you can imagine. Then, in high school, I went to St. Johnsbury, Vermont, where they have a trade school. My parents thought it would be wonderful if I were a tradesman, that I would be sure of having an income. Then, of course, I went onto college and all that good stuff.

E: What was your first job out of college?

MH: My first job was at Sprague Electric in North Adams. I worked for them for most of my work life at plants here and in Nashua, New Hampshire, and Barre, Vermont. They were international: I've been to the Taiwan plant and to the plant in France. Sprague Electric made electronic components. Let's just be simple without going through all the math.

E: Is that a career you pictured yourself going into?

MH: In high school, I was thinking, what do I do to make a living? I've always been pretty musi-

cal, but I'm not a showman. I studied piano, violin, French horn, and other stuff, so I had a pretty good background. Violin was my major instrument, so I thought I'm not good enough for the Boston Symphony, so what will I do?



Photo Courtesy of Janice Paquette

At the time, engineers were in high demand, so this is what has happened: my head has been in engineering, my heart has been in music.

E: So music has always been a big part of your life even though you didn't pursue it as a career?

MH: Oh, yeah. I've sung in church choirs, for example, I've formed little combos for dance and I've substituted or filled in when people need a musician.

E: Was the violin something that stayed with

you throughout your life?

MH: The violin stayed throughout high school and trade school. Then I went to college in Boston at Northeastern University where I had a very tough academic schedule, but I had to do something with the violin, so I went over to Boston Conservatory and I said "Can I join your orchestra?" So I did that for a couple of terms. Then, when I came here in 1961, I joined the Berkshire Symphony. So, that was a nice experience.

E: Do you do anything with music, while you're here at Sweetwood?

MH: Oh yes. I give an annual presentation called "50 Years in 60 Minutes," which looks at the top three hits of each decade. Right now I'm working on years ending in four, so 1914, 1924, 1934, 1944, 1954. I'm about halfway through the presentation, which should probably occur next year (2025).

E: What is your process when you compose a piece?

MH: Well, first of all, I have a tune I can't get out of my head. Then I've got to figure out the harmonization that I want to use. Get it in my head and then put it on paper and adjust the keys to make sure in the violin case, I don't go above the third position.

E: Do you have a favorite genre of music or a favorite song?

MH: I go from Handel Oratorios to Broadway to Symphonies. Anything that has a melody draws me. ♦

Greylock Community Featured at Holiday Walk

BY MILA MARCISZ

The first weekend of December was Williamstown's 41st Annual Holiday Walk. The weekend was full of events, from the Tree Lighting to the Penny Social, but, as always, the highlight was Saturday's Reindog Parade.

The parade featured local businesses, Mount Greylock clubs and, of course, festive dogs and their almost equally festive owners. It was a perfect, if not slightly cold, day for the parade: the first in recent memory to feature actively falling snow.

The parade was split into three categories based on the size of the dog: small, medium and large. The voting on best costume was done before the parade, and the winning dogs for each group got to proudly walk down the street with the sign marking them as the winner.

After the dogs came the Williamstown Fire Department firefighters and Santa in a firetruck. There was no shortage of candy, which was tossed from parade participants and Santa down to the people lining Spring Street.

Mount Greylock club Mindset Matters brought its mission to the Holiday Walk. The club walked with their banner in the parade. The club also ran a hot chocolate stand set up at the bottom of Spring Street that provided parade-goers with warm beverages. In addition, every

cup sold supported the Polinsky's Hope Foundation, an organization founded by parents who



Photo Courtesy of Jack Uhas

tragically lost their son, a football player, to mental health struggles.

The club's future ambitions extend far beyond just this event. Founder Ward Bianchi mentioned that the club is going to "try to bring in some speakers to talk to the whole school. [There will] probably [be] two or three this

year, and then for the next three years, [we'll] just keep building."

Though only recently started, Mindset Matters has become a big part of the community of athletes at Greylock, as well as in the larger fabric of our school. The club challenges traditional narratives about mental health and gives athletes the opportunities to have valuable conversations. The club's ongoing commitment to creating a supportive environment where mental health can be discussed openly and where athletes can support one another is evident in the work Mindset Matters has been, and continues to do, in the school building, on the fields and on the courts.

The Greylock community was also featured on TV, as librarian Liza Barrett appeared on Willinet with seniors Vera DeJong and Gavin Hetherington to discuss the phone policy, puzzling in the library and recent school spirit initiatives.

As always, the Holiday Walk and Reindog Parade were successful community events this holiday season! Greylock clubs and teams turned out to fundraise and spread the word about their activities, and the parade was a successful showing of the dogs of Williamstown. ♦

NEWS & FEATURES

Behind the Scenes Mounties Insta

BY JACLYNN KASTRINAKIS

Librarian Liza Barrett has been in charge of the MGMounties Instagram for six years, posting updates of the student life for the community. This year, she has had a great deal of help from her TA, senior Malia Koffi.

Last school year, students and faculty were able to check Mountie updates throughout the day. However, the new electronic policy does not allow for this. But that doesn't stop Barrett and Koffi: "With the new phone policy, Mr. Schutz and I spent some time thinking about whether it was time to let MGMounties go...but ultimately we decided that while there is a no phone policy in school, which I just completely support and love, outside of school, kids are enjoying it," said Barrett.

Koffi and Barrett collaborate to create posts during block five. "I love running the Instagram, it's fun. We find a fun caption and just post them," said Koffi.

The photos are gathered from a number of sources. Some student photographers send in photos. Recently, the Mount Greylock club Mindset Matters had an opportunity to par-

ticipate in the Holiday Walk in Williamstown. Junior Jack Uhas photographed the event and messaged the Instagram page to post his photos.

"The number of parents who thank me when they see their children on the account is really awesome."

- Librarian Liza Barrett

They also take photos in school, keeping in mind the safety and confidentiality of the students. "When I go around I always ask, 'Is it okay if I post you?'" said Barrett. Students are also asked if they like the photo, and if not it is deleted.

These photos act as a window into a school where much of daily activity now goes unre-

corded. "For the parents, you're in your child's school so much in elementary school, and then suddenly you're not really in the building in middle school and high school. The number of parents who thank me when they see their children on the account is really awesome," said Barrett.

The page also serves to promote community events. Barrett wants students to see opportunities and be in the know for activities they can be a part of. Every month the Milne Library and Sweetwood send Barrett monthly updates to report on the Mounties story.

"We're just trying to capture the heartbeat of the school...the whole purpose of the Instagram is to shed a positive light on all of the wonderful things happening inside the building, right around the building and in the actual school community daily. That is the entire reason that it was started," said Barrett. "But I couldn't stay on top of it and have it be active daily if it weren't for Malia doing it. And it's fun. We have fun doing it together." ♦

1 in 650 Cont.

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mountain in the middle of nowhere. In Italy, I was going to some very small schools, leaving, and then going to all these intercultural conventions and talking, learning how to speak a different language from scratch, and then speaking with people of all these different cultures. I really learned how to carry myself in a more confident way. I learned how to be independent, and I really learned to stand up for what I believed in, even when I felt like I was the only person that believed in a certain thing. And I encountered some true political diversity over there that I don't think would have been possible. So I think I came out of it just being a lot more aware of my place in the world and how much control I had over my environment, and I realized that I'm very small. Things I do are going to be pretty miniscule on a certain level, but there are some big changes I can make if I have the mindset to go out and get it.

E: Is that mindset what inspired you to take on the Greylock experience?

SZ: I was pretty disassociated after coming back from Italy...I thought a lot about American education, and I came to the conclusion at a certain point that there just wasn't much value in it. I saw a lot taught from a very theoretical perspective in Italy, and I thought American schools did it very practically, but there just wasn't as much discipline in the system. And I sort of imagined like a perfect school system where it could be both theoretical and practical, and all those ideologies would match, would come together to form something completely unique and functional, but coming back from a very theoretical, very traditional school to a practical, modern institution, I just felt really disassociated, and I started to question what education was actu-

ally giving me. So I decided at a certain point I just didn't really want to go to college or high school or do any of that. So I was thinking about dropping out for a bit, and that did not really go over well with my parents, so I decided just to take a breather, do another year of high school, get my mind in order and complete all the credits that I missed when I was abroad, and I realized I missed my dad and my roots in the Green Mountains, and I just decided to come here for a fresh start. At that point, attending Mount Greylock was the obvious choice!

E: Very cool. Education seems to be a thing that you're thinking about a lot—are there particular classes this year at Greylock or at Williams that have been particularly thought-provoking?

SZ: Absolutely, I would say the faculty at Greylock are overall pretty great. And it's rare to see a public institution that's at this level, and there are just a lot of great minds in this school. But especially having the chance to take courses at Williams has been really eye opening. This fall I took a course on Leadership Studies. It really kind of introduced me to the world of political philosophy, and taught me to analyze, like a lot of great minds, like Machiavelli, Rousseau, Marx, Madison, and not just those great minds, but also the great minds of my class. I feel like I was exposed to some people who were really, really sharp and really knew what they were talking about. And that's not something I'd ever really experienced before going to school in Maine or even Italy. And that was just really, really cool to see people with that kind of intellectual motivation.

E: Moving away from the intellectual side of learning, do you have any artistic interests?

SZ: So I've never actually taken a visual arts class in school, but I've done a lot of Performing Arts. I've done a lot of theater, and I do acrobatics and circus arts and stuff like that. Visual Arts is something that I'm curious to get into. I've done a lot of nylon craft work.

E: What do you do for athletics?

SZ: I practice circus arts, diving and gymnastics privately. At school, I've done three years of cross-country and outdoor track.

E: Have you felt welcomed in this school so far?

SZ: Absolutely! I'm always getting roped into cool stuff like clubs and athletics. People are so enthusiastic about their endeavors...and persistent to get others involved. When students come together for something, it's a group more than the sum of its parts. I love seeing what everyone's up to. ♦

Have an opinion you want to share?
Is there an issue you think needs more recognition?
Do you think our opinion writers are just plain wrong?
If so, get in contact with the Echo at greylockecho@student.mgrsd.org to submit a letter to the editor!

NEWS & FEATURES

Australian Parliament Passes Social Media Ban

BY ROBYN GREGG

The Australian parliament has officially passed a law banning all people under the age of 16 from social media. Australia is the first country to pass this law which aims to address worldwide growing concerns about the effect of social media platforms on the privacy and emotional development of teenagers.

The new law requires online platforms to verify the age of the users and prevent underage adolescents from using the site. These social networks have been given one year to find ways to implement the restriction. The social media apps that will be covered by the ban are not specified. However, as stated by The New York Times, “the government has named TikTok, Facebook, Snapchat, Reddit, Instagram and X as sites it is likely to include.” Platforms that fail to prevent underage users from accessing their services could face penalties, including fines.

The primary motivation for the ban stems from substantial research documenting the adverse mental health effects of social media on adolescents. For example, studies suggest that

adolescents under the age of 16 who use social media for more than three hours a day are twice as likely to experience symptoms of anxiety, depression, and other mental health difficulties. In executing this law, the Australian government looks to develop a safer online environment by reducing the number of children vulnerable to cyberbullying, online predators and harmful content.

Another significant factor in the development of this new standard is data privacy. Many social media platforms collect vast amounts of personal data from users, including children, which can be exploited for targeted advertising and other purposes. By enforcing an age limit, the Australian government aims to protect children from the risks of having their data harvested without proper consent.

This new law has sparked both positive and negative discussion from Australians, debating whether the rule is too harsh or a perfect solution. The majority of the population is in support of the legislation; as stated by YouGov, a “survey

found that 77% of Australians back the under-16 social media ban, a significant increase from the 61% support found in an August poll prior to the government’s official announcement.” Surveys and polls show that support for the regulations is led by parental groups, and some even argue for more restrictive and widespread bans.

While the implementation of the law in Australia has been met with mixed reviews, it is a novel and innovative solution to a well recognized societal challenge. Although there has been no reported action by other governmental bodies to follow Australia’s lead, there is a global pushback on the persistent usage of the internet. This includes Mount Greylock, where the new policy on personal devices has recently been instated. The question remains as to what the future of regulations on technology might look like. ♦

“Grease” Set to Be Winter Musical

BY MACKENZIE ALACRO

As winter has arrived, so has the announcement of Mount Greylock’s Winter Musical, “Grease.”

The musical was first performed in Chicago in 1971, and was written and composed by Jim Jacobs and Warren Casey. In 1978, a film rendition directed by Randal Klesier was released, which includes some variations from the original musical.

This year, Mount Greylock will perform its rendition of the musical in early March, with Jeffrey Welch as the director. The storyline follows the teenage romance of Danny Zuko, who

will be played by Morris Israel, and Sandy Olson, who will be played by Adele Low, as they navigate their teenage love story at Rydell High School.

As for how the choice was made, Welch said, “since (last year) we did an older show based on Shakespeare, I thought something different was good. It has a lot of parts. It’s a good ensemble show. The musical is different. So for all those reasons, I thought it would be a good fit for the cast.”

The specific makeup of the Greylock rendition is inspired by the musical but includes some

elements from the film: “some of the songs from the film are not in the show, but we’re going to incorporate them because people like them. So there will be some different stuff, but it is going to be more similar to the film than it is to the original production,” said Welch.

After hearing about the choice of musical, there has been a large influx of student participation. The choice of “Grease” seems to be a crowd-pleaser and promises to be a big hit for the Mount Greylock Theater Department. ♦

Analysis of the Greylock Mock Election

BY CHARLOTTE HOLUBAR

The 2024 Mount Greylock Regional School mock election, co-organized by the Student Council and the former Register Educate Vote club (REV), aimed similarly, as in 2020, to engage students in the democratic process and mirror actual statewide and national elections. However, shifts in voter turnout, results and ballot question responses highlight the evolving dynamics within the school community.

In 2020, the REV club independently organized the mock election, emphasizing civic education and voter registration. By 2024, the Student Council absorbed the club by integrating REV as a subcommittee, and now results and statistics can be found on the Student Council Canvas page. This year, the ballot received 343 votes compared to the 295 in 2020, a 16.3% increase.

Interestingly, both years saw the highest participation from the 7th grade, though their share grew from 22.8% in 2020 to 26.5% in 2024. Conversely, senior participation remained consistently low, with only 11.2% of the 2020

vote and 10.3% in 2024. And in overall electorate surveying, this year included six post-12th-grade votes, a new voting category, which may suggest an effort to continue being more inclusive in the school community.

The most striking change between the two elections was the shift in presidential preferences. In 2020, President Joe Biden received overwhelming support with 73% of the vote, while Former President Donald Trump secured 18%. In 2024, Vice President Kamala Harris received 68%—a five point drop—while Trump, running again, saw an increase to 25%.

The absence of a write-in option for the presidential race in 2024 may have slightly inflated support for the two main candidates, but the trend suggests a modest shift toward more conservative preferences. But comparatively, this shift was not at all present in both of the Senate races. In 2020, Senator Markey garnered 78% of the vote, and the identical figure for Senator Warren in 2024. The divergence between presidential and Senate races might reflect the

greater polarization or shifting attitudes about national versus state leadership.

Ballot questions offered a different lens for analyzing student political attitudes and how they compare to our statewide results.

In 2020, only two ballot questions were included, and only in one, Right to Repair, did Mount Greylock voting align with the Massachusetts state results. Oppositely, Rank Choice Voting did not pass in the state like this year’s opposition to raising the minimum wage. 69% of Greylock students actually supported the ballot question while 64% of the state voted “No.” Younger voters, especially students, may view a higher minimum wage as more essential for addressing inequality, whereas the broader state electorate might have economic concerns tied to inflation or business interests.

This year, the number of ballot questions increased to five, with four mirroring state outcomes, suggesting a high level of political correlation between the student body and state voters. ♦

FEATURES

Phone Policy cont.

Continued from Page 1

Only 15 individuals, or 6.7% answered with a five (most positive).

As for the second question, the two front-runners for the most difficult aspects of the policy were “No AirPods or Student-Owned Headphones” and “It Being Difficult to Communicate with Home/Parents (Car Rides, Plans, General, etc).”

Students passionately answered the third question, mostly negatively. Among the concerns were trouble submitting work in certain classes, communicating with parents, personal computers and that kids who would use their phones still do. Although some of the issues brought up by students were inevitable, there are valid arguments for a reevaluation for activities.

“Some teachers make you submit pictures of classwork, which wasn’t a problem last year,” said senior Katherine Goss.

Senior Mia Patrick explained how she tried

to take photos of her work with her Chromebook, but the camera isn’t good enough to accurately capture it.

Compared to students, teachers’ outlooks are much more positive on the new policy.

Health and wellness teacher Emily McCarthy said, “[As a teacher], it’s much easier to navigate with a consistent policy throughout the school.”

Contrasting to each teacher left to defend their own classroom policies against possibly uncooperative students, there is less space for a teacher’s leniency to be taken advantage of.

Parents, understandably, are mixed on the issue. There are some parents frustrated with the lack of easy communication as opposed to when students could text or call home during the day.

That being said, there are also many parents who are grateful for the school’s harsher rules around technology, especially because of all of

the research showing teenage cell phone addiction and how teens today struggle with attention-span.

“[Greylock before strict phone restrictions] didn’t sound like the best environment, [specifically] at lunchtime, when everyone had their phones instead of hanging out with other kids,” said parent Elena Traister. “I think overall we’re going in the right direction, but it seems like there needs to be some way to navigate it, so [the policy] works for everyone, especially seniors applying to college.”

Teachers and administrators are overwhelmingly pleased by the benefits of the new phone policy. That said, this past semester, students have experienced some unexpected negative consequences of the phone policy. Many students would like to work with administrators to revise the policy. ♦

Recipe Corner: Baklava

Sugary treats are often a great way to sweeten up the winter season. Baklava is a Mediterranean and Middle Eastern pastry made of layered filo and chopped nuts, and sweetened with a honey syrup. Instructions are as follows.

Baklava:

1 lb walnuts
1/2 lb almonds
1/3 cup sugar
1/8 tsp Ground Cloves
1/4 tsp Ground Nutmeg
1 1/4 tsp Cinnamon
1/4 lb unsalted butter, melted

42 sheets / 1 package filo

Syrup:

1 cup water
1/4 cup sugar
1 cup honey

Step 1 - Chop and combine all baklava ingredients except the filo and butter. Divide the mixture into four equal parts.

Step 2 - In a 9x13 pan, layer the filo and nut mix as follows: 9 filo, 1/4 nut mix, 6 filo, 1/4 mix, 6 filo, 1/4 mix, 6 filo, 1/4 mix, 15 filo. For each piece of filo, place the filo flat on the previous piece and

paint fully with butter using a pastry brush.

Step 3 - Cut the baklava before placing it in the oven to bake at 350° for 45-60 mins until lightly browned.

Step 4 - While baklava is baking, bring 1 cup of water and 1/2 cup sugar to a boil, then add 1 cup of honey and bring to a boil again. Cool the syrup down in the freezer or fridge.

Step 5 - Immediately after removing baklava from the oven, pour the chilled syrup over the hot baklava. ♦

Recipe Courtesy of Helen Condouris

School Spirit Anyone?

BY RAFA MASON

Everybody loves school spirit: the pep rally, the pajama days and the “Do you have a Duck?” game. Two groups at Greylock, Peer Team and the Student Council, are working to give everyone more fun, especially during these long winter months.

Many may not know Peer Team and the Student Council are involved in planning school spirit activities, but now that the Peer Team no longer works with the middle school in the same way they did in the past, they are finding a new purpose in school spirit.

Inside the Student Council, the Spirit Subcommittee works on creating spirit, with their next initiative mainly being “setting the winter pep rally up,” according to the subcommittee’s head, junior Nora López.

The Winter Pep Rally will be “very similar to the Fall Pep Rally,” López added. “The winter sports, Fit Club and the musical will all do performances.” It will take place on the half day of January 31, before the high school’s Snow Ball. Even though the dance is high school only, the pep rally will be for everyone.

This will be coupled with a spirit week hosted by Peer Team, who also hopes to do “another pep rally near when the seniors leave,”

according to senior and peer team president Emily Alvarez.

The two groups have also been collaborating on other spirit initiatives. The week before winter break, the student council held their annual Ugly Sweater Contest on Thursday before giving out hot chocolate during high school lunches on Friday in conjunction with



Photo Courtesy of Krishiv Malhotra

a pajama day hosted by Peer Team. Librarian Liza Barret also added that the peer team also

hosted the super secret teacher spirit week that happened earlier.

The purpose of school spirit is something that is generally agreed on. The counseling office’s administrative assistant Bridget Balawender, said that “it’s fun.” Balawender works with Peer Team along with Barret. Alvarez added that it “makes people want to go to school.”

Barrett agreed with her, adding, “there’s a lot of research...that [says] people will succeed more and...people’s ability to learn is directly tied to the way they feel.”

López thinks that the main goal of school spirit is to “create an environment at Mount Greylock that students and faculty enjoy coming to every day, and creates a place where... everyone feels comfortable and like they have something to look forward to each day.”

All in all, Mount Greylock students who enjoy the fun, pajamas, ducks, sweaters and hot chocolate will have plenty to look forward to these next months. Hopes are high that this veritable tidal wave of school spirit will continue, and we will have fun activities for years to come. ♦

SPORTS

Winter Sports Preview

BY COLE CREIGHTON

After a strong fall sports season, many Mounties are gearing up for intense and exciting winter seasons. Our athletes will be competing in many sports at the school, including basketball, nordic skiing, wrestling and hockey.

Many winter teams found success last season, including the girls' nordic ski team, who won a state title. For this year, captain Nina Wied feels that although the team did lose senior Annie Miller, they still have "a really good base of a lot of really talented skiers."

"We have people who are going to take those spots and do really good things," said Wied, who hopes the team can remember that "the age of the team does not define how good [they] are" and above all hopes they have another fun season that culminates in another state championship.

The boys Nordic team also experienced great amounts of success last season, placing second at states. According to captain Zeke Singer, the ramp up and excitement for the season has been high with many people working out and starting to practice right after their fall seasons ended. "I'm very excited," said Singer. "There was a motivation on the team, basically from even a few weeks before, thinking about ski season and talking about it." Additionally, Singer wants the team to have a fun environment and "not take [themselves] too seriously on easy days, but, when we have to for workouts and different races to just be able to really dial in". Hopefully the boys can one up their performance from last season and continue their reign

of success by bringing home the state championship.

Another team coming off a strong 2024 season is the Mount Greylock, Hoosac, McCann and Drury Co-Op wrestling team. They return



Photo Courtesy of Knowl Stroud

many strong wrestlers and have added some good young talent. The team had multiple wins by Jayquan Vazquez and Brett Dupis who are both returning. This year they hope to piggyback off of last season's success and take it statewide.

The last season for both Mountie's basketball teams was up and down but culminated in a strong finish. The boys ended their season in the state tournament after upsetting 24th seeded Blue Hills but were knocked out the

next round by ninth seeded Georgetown. The girls also finished their season by stringing a few wins of their own together. Senior captain Kate Shelsy feels that the team will be able to take their momentum from the end of last year into this season. "I think we built something good towards the end of the year, we got a lot better," said Shelsy.

After a surprising 2024, the boys basketball team lost many key players to both graduation and transfer. Coach Tommy Verdell feels that this season will be completely different from the last due to the youth of the team and has tried to build time into practice to accommodate that youth. He has started practice in the classroom this year to allow for "teaching and learning in different ways" and has shared many "quotes and thoughts about building [the teams] culture." Verdell hopes to see "how people grow and mature...both physically and from the neck up". As for results, Verdell hopes the team can add another game to their schedule and build upon the past year.

Last but not least, seven Greylock students are playing McCann Tech Co-Op hockey. Led by senior Liam Noyes, the team has already played a couple of games and is looking forward to a great season.

After a long successful fall season it will be exciting to see how our winter teams do. Will they continue their reign of success, or will they have to bow down to a rebuilding year? As of now nobody can know for sure, but it will certainly be exciting. ♦

Athlete Spotlight: Patrick Holland

BY ADELE LOW

Sophomore Patrick Holland is a member of the Varsity cross country running, nordic skiing and baseball teams. He recently placed 4th and 2nd at two Eastern Cup skiing races against u16 athletes from New England, New York and Canada and has one state title and one state runner up with the school nordic team.

Echo: At the Eastern Cup, what was it like to race against a larger geographic pool of skiers than usual?

Patrick Holland: This race was a lot different from Massachusetts races. The nordic skiers from schools around us are a lot less competitive and everyone at this cup wants to do well and wants to support each other.

E: Was anyone from Greylock in attendance?

PH: Yes, Knowl Stroud and Simon Shin.

E: What was it like getting to experience this with them?

PH: It was super fun, and we got to see all of the graduated seniors from last year, like Jude, Ollie, Declan and Quinn which was one of the best parts. I felt like I had so much support throughout the race.

E: Moving on from the Eastern Cup, what are your goals for the end of the season?

PH: I would love to make Junior Nationals and

do well in the races there.

E: What about during the rest of the season?

PH: As a team, I would like to win every race, which should happen, and for me, I would just



Photo Courtesy of Charles Swabey

like to do as best as I can and prepare well for the postseason races.

E: Building onto preparation, what are your training routines to get ready for ski season?

PH: During the summer, I did a lot of distance roller skiing, lifting and strength exercises, and

during cross country I tried to rollerski sometimes but I was pretty busy.

E: Is it ever difficult to be a three sport athlete?

PH: No not really. I find that playing sports makes the year less difficult, it's not a burden at all. You have a good time doing them, and it honestly makes the year go by way faster.

E: Would you say that you enjoy all of the sports that you play—skiing, cross-country and baseball?

PH: Yes I really love them, skiing is definitely at the top of my list though.

E: How do you feel about the community on the MG sports teams?

PH: Everyone is so supportive and it really feels like a big family.

E: Is there a professional who is your idol?

PH: I don't really watch professional ski races or follow any of those people, but I really look up to Quinn McDermott and Ollie Swabey, they are huge inspirations because of their skill and spirit. Skiing means so much to me, and I'm so thankful that I had great leaders to set an example. ♦

SPORTS & OPINION

Greylock's Best Sports Moment

BY WILL IGOE

November 2, 2024 will forever be remembered as a victorious day for the Mounties. On this day, both the Greylock boys' and girls' soccer programs left the pitch as 2024 Western Mass Class C Champions. In thrilling fashion, big-time moments from clutch players defended the boys' team's status as reigning champs while the girls' team dethroned rivals Monson.

Early Saturday morning, the Greylock soccer teams piled into a luxurious coach bus with hopes of bringing home two Western Mass trophies by the day's end. As the bus left Mount Greylock, the players and coaches settled into their comfortable seating arrangements, ready for the 100-minute trek to Springfield Central High School, where they would later take on their competitors in back-to-back matches.

Arriving at the field 80 minutes before game time gave the Greylock boys' squad plenty of time to warm up and prepare for their final at 1:00 PM against Pathfinder Technical High School. Coach Mike Russo guided the team through warmups with advice and motivation.

The whistle blew for the kickoff of the first game, and the Greylock boys' team was ready to bring their pace and relentlessness to their opponent. After a few near misses in the opening minutes, senior Simon Shin found the back of the net after junior Kofi Roberts tied up a defender, leaving the ball primed for a shot by Greylock's attacking midfielder. The team entered halftime with a 1-0 lead, dominating both chances and possession.

The Mounties continued their dogged pursuit of goals when senior captain Will Igoe fired

a shot into the bottom-right corner off another appetizing layoff from Roberts. Leading 2-0, the Mounties lost focus, conceding two quick goals to Pathfinder Tech, tying the game at 2-2.

Regulation time expired, and the squad was fired up for overtime. The Mounties intensified their focus, especially in the second overtime, when junior Everett Crowe unleashed a screamer off the far post and into the net—off yet another Roberts assist—delivering the Mt. Greylock boys' soccer team the Western Mass title for the second year in a row. Crowe cel-



Photo Courtesy of Lindsey Von Holtz

brated by waving his jersey, entertaining fans who had traveled long distances to support their Mounties.

With a quick turnaround, the Greylock girls' team's final against Monson, the reigning back-to-back champions, got underway at 3:00 PM. The Mounties played a strong defensive game, denying Monson's star forward any offensive opportunities. Ninth grader Rowan Apotsos proved that her speed was unmatched, chasing

down opposing attackers time and time again.

Junior Nora López came close to putting the Mounties in the lead with some wonderful through balls from senior captain Mila Marcisz. Senior captain Mai O'Connor, with her years of playoff experience, shined as the keeper for Greylock. After 80 minutes, the Mounties were square with Monson High, locked in a defensively sound battle at 0-0.

After 10 minutes of overtime, the Mounties discovered a renewed sense of urgency and creativity. Marcisz slid a ball through a crowded penalty box and into the back of the net, earning Mt. Greylock girls' soccer their first Western Mass Championship in the 21st century.

O'Connor reflected, "It was a long time coming...after three years of falling short in the finals, it was relieving to win." O'Connor also complimented Coach Natalie Harris, saying, "From beginning to end, Coach Harris made her statement of confidence and belief in our team clear and direct."

Greylock boys' senior defender and captain, Gavin Hetherington, recalled, "I felt relief. We had taken 29 shots on goal and only scored two. I was confident in the squad that we were going to win in overtime, but the clock kept ticking and the game remained tied...I miss the kids from last year, but it was great to prove that we have a strong and deep program."

With golden goals in double overtime from Crowe and Marcisz, the Mounties loaded up their bus and began their celebrations, blasting music and singing and dancing the whole way home. ♦

25 Years of Winning with Hilary Greene

BY REED OLNEY

Head Coach Hilary Greene is the key to the Mount Greylock nordic ski teams' continued success. During the past 25 years at Greylock, Greene's coaching has helped the two nordic teams win 40 Berkshire County League Championships and 20 State titles.

Greene has created a welcoming and inclusive environment for cross-country skiing at the school. "[Coach Greene] is really positive and encouraging," said ninth grader Josephine Bay.

Many of her teammates agree. "Coach Hilary is an inspirational and dedicated coach. She shows true commitment to our team and progress as athletes and people," said junior and captain Nina Wied.

Wied's sister, eighth grader Avery Wied, who also skis for the team, added, "She cares for each person individually and it shows."

When Greene started as the Head Coach, turnout was very low each year. The team now has a huge number of students participating with over 47 total skiers on both boys' and girls' teams, with 15 skiers on the girls' team this year.

Greene is a Mount Greylock graduate herself. When she moved here in the ninth grade there were only three other people on the team. They needed one more person to be able to compete.

She initially started to get in shape for running, but she grew to love the sport of nordic skiing. "They begged me to join," said Greene. "And then I started doing it and I loved it."

Her discovery of cross country skiing also motivated her father to start coaching. "I think I influenced him to coach because he started coaching the year after I graduated," said Greene.

Hiram Greene, her father, coached for 36 years and amassed a collection of championships. After skiing for Colby College, Hilary Greene returned to Greylock and coached alongside her father for 24 years. He retired last year after winning 21 state championships in total.

Greene attributes most of her success to her athletes. When asked what motivates her to continue coaching, Greene said it is "the group of kids that I get to work with everyday and definitely [seeing] them buy into it and then work and improve every day."

It is evident why the team has won so much: the chemistry and feeling of closeness. "She is a really supportive coach and she is so generous and puts so much of her time and energy into us," said eighth grader Maya Filson, who was part of the winning Varsity team last year. "I grew a lot with her coaching."

The team has seen a lot of accomplishments in recent years and will hopefully see much more success in years to come. None of this could have ever been possible without Hilary Greene. ♦



Photo Courtesy of Hilary Greene

OPINION & REVIEW

“Emilia Pérez” Transcends Genres

BY RAFA MELLOW-BARTELS

Avid moviegoers cannot be disappointed with the selection of great movies that were released in 2024. From the movie frenzy surrounding “Challengers” to the most recent craze around “Wicked” and “Gladiator,” most fans of the movies can only say that they were fulfilled.

“Emilia Pérez” is one movie that may not have stuck out in terms of popularity. Still, there is no doubt that it deserves the same attention and love from the viewers.

“Emilia Pérez” is a film directed by Jacques Audiard, a French film writer and director. This film tells the story of a Mexican lawyer, played by Zoe Saldana, who is hired to help a notorious cartel boss, Manitas, transition into a woman.

Early in the film, the viewers are introduced to Manitas in a way that was both violent and vulnerable. It has long been a desire of Manitas to live honestly and freely as a woman. However, this has been impossible due to being the head of a drug cartel. But, Manitas decides to choose happiness and live as Emilia Pérez, the woman who Manitas has always felt was her real self.

Then the movie explores the journey of Emilia Pérez as she becomes her true self, including moving back to Mexico where she realigns with her culture.

The film is thought provoking, genre bending and all together stands out among new movie releases. It has a rollercoaster of a plot that requires you to think at every moment. The film has also struck audiences due to the fact

that it is a mixture of so many different genres. There is no single category that “Emilia Pérez” fits in as it could be considered a comedy, a musical, a drama and a crime fiction.

Since the film transcends so many different genres, it is nothing short of electrifying. The film clocks in at around two hours and six minutes. Within that time there are countless

“The film is thought provoking, genre bending and all together stands out among new movie releases. It has a rollercoaster of a plot that requires you to think at every moment.”

entertaining scenes such as car chases, crime fights and scenes filled with tension between characters. Contrasting the action scenes are emotional scenes with loss and deep sadness.

These scenes would not be exhilarating or heartbreaking without the people who play the characters. The main characters in this film are three women, Emilia Pérez, played by Karla Sofia Gascón, Rita Mora Castro, Saldana’s character, and Jessi Del Monte, the wife of Manitas

who is played by Selena Gomez. All of their performances were outstanding and have been highly praised by critics at the Cannes Film Festival.

One of the most interesting parts of this film is that music is used as a method of storytelling. Most of the film is in Spanish, with few parts explained with English. Many of the characters use a mixture of dialogue and song to tell their story. When they break into song, their stories are told with more emotion which makes them seem more powerful and real to the viewer.

“Emilia Pérez” is a film that is exciting, transcends genres and is emotional, making it a must-see. The powerful scenes depicted by its actors leave the viewers with the important message of finding yourself. ♦

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The Untapped Potential of Directed Study

BY JACK UHAS

Is the current Directed Study framework at Mount Greylock the best it can be? For some, the thirty minute period offers time to complete work, freeing up time for themselves later. However, many, like me, believe the Directed Study system at Greylock could use some improvement. I believe that, as a school, we can reform the Directed Study system to offer an improved academic experience for students.

Picture your directed study. Depending on your luck, you could be with five or twenty-five other students. Your class could be a hub for socialization or under stringent control. Your teacher may not care too much about a pair of AirPods, or you may have them confiscated. Some classrooms have desks to complete work while other rooms only have small stands. The point is that directed studies vary widely in condition and only sometimes reflect students’ individual academic needs.

Consider a student who often seeks help from their teacher for a particular class. Under the current system, they must get a pass from said teacher and deliver it to their directed study teacher, all before their directed study block starts. While certainly a first-world problem, it seems inefficient for both students and teachers. I believe we’d all benefit from improving this system, perhaps through reoccurring passes or an easier alternative to paper passes (just not E-Hallpass).

Another idea I believe could give students more opportunities to explore areas of academic interest would be a “mini course” selection instead of one’s Directed Study block. These classes could range in topic but would focus on engaging students without providing extra

“Imagine if students could use their Directed Study block to attend a daily current events class or take a walk outdoors.”

stress of harsh grading or homework. Imagine if students could use their Directed Study block to attend a daily current events class or take a walk outdoors. Greylock certainly has a wide array of interests, and it would be amazing to see programs that represent these flourish further.

The (allowed) use of personal devices during Directed Study has been a semi-controversial topic. However, I hold that there are ways the school could allow personal devices while still maintaining equity. After all, there are

undoubtedly legitimate academic reasons students may want to use a personal device during their directed study block. Suppose the school was able to provide a space comparable to a computer lab where students could access non-Chromebook computers, alongside allowing student-owned computer use. In that case, they could provide equity and better address the student body’s needs.

This segues with another aspect of Directed Study; many (myself included) enjoy listening to music while working. Especially considering how loud some classrooms can get, it’s nice to relax while completing an essay. It is a minimal-risk activity to allow, and it would help many who have difficulty focusing in louder spaces. While students are provided earbuds by the school, they aren’t great for music streaming or tuning out noise. If students could bring in their own headphones, even if it were just wired ones, the spirit of the device policy would still remain while recognizing the value of such tools to students.

Overall, while the Directed Study block is undoubtedly useful, we can always stand to make improvements to it. I’ve heard so many great and thought-provoking ideas, and I hope that, as students, we continue to voice our needs to best direct our studies (pun very much intended). ♦

ETC.

Year in Review

BY FRANCES EVANS

“And with that, the 2024 season comes to an end. Goodnight.” -Sam Levitt

This year has been an eventful one, with major worldwide events, an election and the Paris 2024 Olympics. It seems even more has happened at Mount Greylock, so as we move into a new year, let’s take a moment to review how far we’ve come.

This past January, during the 2023-2024 school year, we sent 18 people to the Western Massachusetts Senior District Music Festival! We also sent 16 students to the Western Massachusetts Junior District Music Festival. After a couple years recovering after Covid, this year was a culmination of the efforts of music teachers Jaqueline Vinette and Patrick O’Connell’s hard work and dedication to growing the music program as well as the passion of our Mount Greylock students. The Mount Greylock wrestling team also earned yet another championship!

In sports news, the amazing girls’ nordic ski team won the state championship in February, and the boys’ team placed second. Also in February, the Spanish Club hosted a successful movie night fundraiser. This is just one example of how clubs like the Spanish Club and Register Educate Vote (REV) have made a comeback thanks to the renewed interest and efforts of Greylock students and advisors. Students enjoyed themselves at the Snow Ball and, at the end of the month, watched “Kiss Me Kate,” marking history teacher Jeffery Welch’s 20th musical as director.

In both February and March, Mount Greylock was visited by speakers in an exciting trend of Greylock Talks and other speaking tours that students and faculty helped organize. Max Stosel gave a talk on the impact of social media in February while Kaleb Joseph talked with the basketball teams about mental health. In other Mountie news, students and staff competed in the “Do You Have A Duck?” game with sev-

eral people earning the coveted gift cards and school swag.

March saw Mai Dekel represent the school in the Massachusetts All State Choir, which was a huge accomplishment for the entire program. The music department hosted a Prism Concert to inspire other talented future musicians in the Greylock gymnasium, with all music ensembles showcasing what they’ve worked on this past year. Looking toward the future, juniors attended the first ever MG Reality Fair!

Speaking of history being made, Mounties had their eyes to the skies to witness a total eclipse in April. Three days prior, Rafa Mellow-Bartels represented us at the Massachusetts State House for Student Government Day. Many Mounties also showed up and showed out at the Friends of the Arts’ “Celebration of the Arts Talent Show.” We saw many impressive acts including a band and several musical numbers. One of note was done by Jackson DuCharme, whose charming Elvis impersonation has earned him the right to play in the foyer and several other Mount Greylock events. To celebrate the end of the month, high schoolers attended the Spring Fling.

In May, the Youth Environmental Squad (YES Club) planted new fruit trees, helping to further improve our gorgeous campus. Mounties also had an impressive showing in the Western Mass Championship in girls tennis, softball and baseball. Near the end of the month, students watched “Lights Off,” a play written and directed by students Quin Repetto and Frances Evans.

To wrap up the 2023-2024 school year, Mount Greylock won the local Trivia Game Show called “As Schools Match Wits.” Furthermore, following historically large Western Mass. victories from both teams, the girls’ track and field team won a historic state title thanks to many standout performances, including a 100m, 200m, 4x100m sprinting triple from senior captain Maggie Nichols, great perfor-

mances from school record holders Chase Hoey and Nora López in the high jump and javelin, and a great showing from Katherine Goss who ended the year top-3 all-time performances in four separate events.

Getting back into the school year this August, a new phone policy was instituted to make students more present in the classroom. With varying reactions, Mounties continue to persevere and are working together to improve Greylock’s social and learning community. New faces also joined the Mount Greylock team in the IT, custodial and substitute teaching departments.

Jumping to October, we had a spirit week in preparation for Mountie athletic competitions as well as Homecoming. Once again, Mounties showed their pride in an impressive and creative display of costumes and backpacks. The Volleyball team won Greylock another Western Mass Class C title. In another victory, both cross country Teams won the Western Mass Class B Championship.

In November, the girls’ cross country Team came second and the boys’ came third at states. The Mount Greylock boys’ soccer team defended their Western Mass Class C title and the girls’ soccer team won it on the same day! Teachers showed their Mountie pride with a secret spirit week. In the auditorium, people piled in to see “Hamlet” and the school musical, “Grease,” was announced. Circling back to where we started, 26 people will be attending Senior District with several people trying out for All States. The music departments also had an impressive showing for Junior Districts.

Before I let you all go, I would be remiss not to remember a loss we had this year: Thomas Sherman, beloved teacher and friend.

As you can see, we’ve come a long way, but we’ve still got a whole half of a school year to go. Let’s have another great year, and I’ll see you all in 2025! ♦

Mini Crossword

CREATED BY MALCOLM MCKEOUGH

1	2	3	4	5
		6		7
8		9		
10			11	
12			13	
	14			

ACROSS

- Python and Scratch are used in this class
- Haircut for our fields
- “Friend” in French
- An acronym given to the very best
- Bold retort
- A double helix
- “__ Who Must Not Be Named”
- 365 days

DOWN

- Cafeteria soup utensil
- “2+√3” for example
- Meditation sound
- Started on December 21
- Predictor of snow days
- Opposite of a home game
- “I have a great idea!”

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