



## Julie Andrews: Up Close at the Goodspeed By Laura Harkness

This winter, sophomore Laura Harkness had the exciting opportunity to sit down with actress, director, writer, and superwoman Julie Andrews.

Q: When you were writing your book, was it your intention to be a musical?

A: No, not at all. The reason being, at the time I couldn't conceive how it could've been a musical. I think in the best of all possible worlds, maybe

And they were realizing, of course, that Broadway in general is riddled with mice below the boards of any theater. But this one little mouse I just said, 'Oh please, dear, look after him! Take it away.' And then somebody said, jokingly, 'He probably came up to see the stars above the stage!' And a light bulb went off my head, and I go, 'That would be the best idea for a middle grade novel!' So, I began to write it with my daughter,



it could've been an animated film. But I never thought of it as being a live musical of performance theatre, even though it is a book about theatre. And we sent the book as a gift to Mr. Micheal Price (Executive Director) at Goodspeed Musicals and Mr. Alwine (Associate Producer) at Goodspeed Musicals and to our astonishment, from this gift, within 48 hours they came back and said, 'We'd love to acquire the rights and develop it for the theater as a musical.' And the difficulty in adapting it for the stage is the perspective issue. It is about a group of performing mice who have their own theater beneath the boards of a great Broadway theater. So how do you have actors playing mice and make it believable and get the audience to accept that? So, it's one of the reasons that we never thought of it as being possible, and all of a sudden here we are just about to start rehearsals tomorrow!

Q: Are you excited for that?

A: Yes, very, and quite thrilled with what we do have. Because we now have a new scene developed and a script for the musical by a lovely guy called Hunter Bell who has done such an honor by developing some of the characters, more so than we could've ever have hoped. And then the music and the lyrics, the music is by Zina Goldrich and the lyrics are by a lady called Marcy Heisler and they've done us proud.

Q: What was the inspiration for the book?

A: Something quite silly! I was performing on Broadway and somebody announced that there was a live mouse in the wardrobe department. I suggested that instead of a killer trap, that they could have a heart trap (a humane trap) it in the wardrobe department and maybe they would be kind to carry the mouse out and deposit it somewhere far, far away.

Emma Walton Hamilton. And in the end result, here we are! It was written about 7 years ago and acquired about certainly 6 years ago.

Q: You've written other books with her, your daughter...

A: Yes. I've written, to date, about 22 with her and other 5 just coming out soon.

Q: Oh really! That's exciting!

A: Yeah thank you!

Q: Yeah, that's so cool. So, what's it like to write with her?

A: A joy, an absolute joy. It would be as if I'm sitting across from you, and you were once this high (measures two feet off the ground), and now I'm talking with my daughter as an absolute full grown woman with her own talent and her own thoughts of humor. We are very compatible. We finish each other's sentences when we write like, 'I was just going to say that!' That kind of thing. We laugh a lot, we drink a lot of tea together, and we've never had an argument. We have different strengths and the best idea wins in our opinion. So if we might have a discussion about something, there's this sort of unspoken feeling that if each other one of us is most passionate about an issue is probably right.

Q: Out of all of the places, you chose Chester, CT. Why did you choose this town?

A: Well first of all, this is the second stage for the Goodspeed Musicals, this lovely Norma Terris Theater in Chester, since Mrs. Price and Mr. Alwine acquired the rights here. This is also one

## Kindness Counts By Elsbeth Kane

Your random acts of kindness don't go unnoticed...

With each new school year comes new initiatives to improve the school climate at Valley Regional High School; and thus we have the beginning of a new program for the 2012-2013 school

and all of the names are resubmitted for a final, end-of-the-year drawing.

Yes, it's as simple as that, because simplicity has proven, time and again, to be the key to a successful program. "Kindness Counts" has proven that a more directed focus on the positive is



Ms. Bergman and first quarter's Kindness Counts winner Kristen Kilby!

year, "Kindness Counts".

At a Connecticut Association of National Honor Societies (CANHS) meeting, the NHS officers and Mrs. Bergman, their advisor, brainstormed a new program for Valley that would effectively promote kindness. They wanted to incorporate the goals of this year's CANHS statewide initiative for a more positive learning environment into a program unique to the community at VRHS.

Each class received a program run-down at the initial first-week-back meetings with Mrs. Martineau. Here is how the program works. You, the student, happen to take part in a random act of kindness. This can be anything from the mundane to the extravagant. Somebody notices said act, and your name is written down on a raffle card. Each quarter there is a drawing for a \$50 dollar visa gift card,

the best approach to bettering the school environment. Kristen Kilby, grade 10, was the first name to be drawn at the end of the 1st quarter. Congratulations to Kristen, and all other nominees. Second was Ashley Termini. You are the very bread and butter of the program. NHS officers were amazed at how many nominations flooded in for the first quarter, and they want to keep the kindness coming! Please be on the lookout for the people around you who contribute (in one small way or another) in making valley a great place to be.

Teachers can nominate students or students can nominate other students by reporting kind acts to a teacher or Mrs. Bergman directly.

...and remember... it may be trite but it pushes the point- Kindness Counts (really!)

Q: Oh yeah, I bet.

A: And that is, if you're passionate about what you do, then go for it wholeheartedly. Be prepared that if anytime, you may be surprised by a phenomenal opportunity that may come your way, and that's when I say, do your homework. Be ready. Because you never know when something's going to be offered to you and you say, 'Oh my gosh!' So in other words, be prepared to go.

Q: Thank you so much! Thank you.

A: Oh, you're welcome.

of the rare few theaters where you can get something up on its feet and it isn't judged. The audience knows that it's a work in progress. So this allows us here, that rare opportunity of developing something that we hope is going to be terrific, and we feel it is. But it allows us to find out what we have.

Q: Okay, I have one last question. Do you have any advice for aspiring singers and writers, such as myself?

A: Yes, I do. I've been asked that question a lot.

# An Excerpt from “Alleyways of Democracy”

By Sten Spinella

I had planned this excursion two months in advance. The election was to come down, as it often does, to a handful of swing states, or battleground states. In the spirit of full disclosure, I passionately believed Barack Obama deserved to be elected over Mitt Romney, and helping this cause in Connecticut would be fruitless as we nutmeggers vote almost exclusively democratic in presidential elections. I signed up to become a volunteer for Barack Obama’s Vote Corps online, and was stationed in West Chester, Pennsylvania.

West Chester is a microcosm of the United States, reflecting both the division between political parties and the modern American melting pot. There are wealthy suburbs and developments, as well as expensive, large, secluded homes, many near golf courses, which dot hill-sides away from the rest of West Chester. These areas were both strong Romney supporters, though the developments had some favoring Obama. Keith’s parents lived in an upscale area like this, and he divulged to me that their liberal leanings must remain clandestine for fear of “preferential” treatment by the police, or even home invasions. I think he was joking.

There were also middle class suburbs and apartments. The downtown apartments were expensive, but the middle class areas in the “Borough” were less pricey and housed mostly industrial workers. The factories in this area, full of men in overalls chatting and smoking cigarettes, contributed to a lean toward Obama. The University was full of Obama supporters, and an entire faction of the West Chester office was dispatched there to make sure thousands of students were able to vote. Parts of the Borough mostly made up of minorities and low income housing favored Obama, and the challenge for the office I worked in was to get most of them to go out on November 6th and vote. In fact, the West Chester office volunteers were enlisted for an all-out effort to assist people at a makeshift office in Coatesville, a poor area of projects 25 minutes away. Canvassers from West Chester, including me, stormed homes with flyers and information and questions of support. After the successful invasion, I heard a top fellow in the West Chester office say on her phone: “We had a problem in one of our heaviest African-American districts today but our entire staff went down there and got the vote out. I couldn’t have walked into a better situation. These guys have worked their (butts) off, man. I’m tired.”

The last part of my trip and the “Get Out The Vote” weekend, Monday and Tuesday, proved to be the most hectic, and the most memorable. The phone banking room was in disarray and filled to capacity from nine in the morning to nine at night each day during the GOTV campaign. The cast of characters were vast and amusing. Two eight-year-old girls came in at separate times with their mothers. They read the script verbatim, saying “Personally, today I’m here because the president ended the war in Iraq.” They were confident, not to mention adorable.

I heard two women talking about their husbands, and how they recently converted them from conservative to liberal. “He doesn’t even watch Fox anymore! I catch him watching MSNBC all the time.”

“Does he stay up for Rachel?”  
“Yes! Rachel’s his new favorite!”

A short stocky Philipino college girl, Victoria, was proper, pushy, and effective on the phone. She came in every night around five, didn’t say a word to anyone, made calls for three hours, and

left.

Karen is a black woman around the age of fifty of whom I soon grew fond. She told me she was not interested in politics until she witnessed Obama’s famous 2004 Democratic National Convention address. She didn’t even vote before that day. She kept tabs on Obama following the event, and cried with joy the day he was elected. Karen bonded with me over classic R&B. One late night in the phone bank room as I was sorting stickers and loading cell phones with minutes, I decided it was a fine time to play Marvin Gaye. Karen also happened to be in the room, organizing canvassing packets for the next day. She immediately whipped around at



the sound of “Ain’t No Mountain High Enough” and shook her head with nostalgia as I unintentionally attempted to ruin the song by singing along. When the tune finished, she recounted Tammi Terelle and Marvin Gaye’s complex relationship. She slipped into an emotional state as she told me: “She was younger than him, but he just felt comfortable around her. I don’t think it was a sexual thing, I think he was protective of her, like a father or a brother. I remember watching that video for the first time.” She trailed off.

At this point, the people on our call lists had been contacted at least twice, and for every twenty five people who demanded the volunteer stop calling, only one person warmly received our advances. When people told us they could not volunteer because they were poll watching, Keith became irate: “Poll watching doesn’t win elections. Knocking on doors wins elections.”

My diet for the week consisted of all the “hoagies” (Pennsylvanian grinders) money could buy, and whatever was on the table that people brought in. Sometimes pasta, or pulled pork, other times doughnuts, or cookies. There was little time to eat though, and starting Sunday, I was on the move and canvassing regularly.

I went door to door with a middle aged black woman, Phyllis, who was a nurse with a husband and a daughter. She had squeezed in a couple volunteer hours at the end of a busy work day. We canvassed in a development, and with the yards so far apart, she drove house to house while I jumped out and spoke

to residents about voting to make sure they would be able to get to the polls and they knew all the necessary information. Phyllis had her own opinions about the election: “Romney doesn’t know what it’s like to be poor. He lives in a fantasy land where those who don’t have jobs are lazy or dependent - that’s just not true!” She became quite animated at this point, and I solemnly nodded while she told me why she would vote for the sitting President. Her reasons mostly consisted of personality and background rather than policy.

I canvassed a couple times with Clara, a twenty one year old white woman from Texas and a fellow member of the Vote Corps. We worked low income

Ryan signs. Two times we saw a man driving around with a dog crate strapped to the top of his car with a sign across the back of the crate saying “Beware of dog.” We talked face to face with hundreds of people all the way up to the 7:00 voting deadline Tuesday night.

My proudest moment for the week was an encounter I had with a man behind the apartment door I knocked on in the afternoon during election day. We had a long conversation with topics ranging from the national debt and healthcare to liberalism, conservatism, and Keynesian economics. He told me he was not going to vote. Such an appalling sentiment is not completely his fault, for, admittedly, politics is not currently in a publicly popular place. I tried to appeal to his sense of civic duty. He did not budge. He agreed taxes should be raised to help appease the debt, but believed Obama would spend too much. He knew Romney would not raise taxes, but he believed he would cut spending. He saw the two candidates as synonymous. I tried to tell him Romney would double the defense budget and add to the debt while Obama would make the military smaller and save money. He didn’t buy it. Twenty six minutes in, with my foolish, idealistic hope that I could convince this man to vote fading, I made a final attempt at persuasion.

“If you won’t vote for either candidate, think about how Romney would leave thirty one million people without healthcare, as he vows to do by repealing Obamacare.”

“So if I don’t vote for Obama, I’m killing thirty one million people.”

“Basically.”

He got in his car and voted for Obama.

Rachel, Kaelyn, Austin and I went on a last mission Tuesday night. We scoured West Chester University to make sure all the students had voted. The deadline passed, and those who had voted for Obama were congratulated by us, while those who voted for Romney were berated. As Rachel became visibly angry at Romney supporters, I simply asked why. I wanted to know why a citizen would have voted for the former governor of Massachusetts. Inevitably, the people I questioned took it as heckling, and my question went unanswered.

We returned to the office anxious to see results. Kaelyn could not contain herself, declaring Obama or Romney winners in certain states with only one percent of the precincts reporting. A nervous cheer erupted from the office when Obama took Pennsylvania. The legal drinkers began to uncork wine and champagne and crack open beers, and the tension leading up to the result was short lived. About half an hour later, Obama was declared the winner of Ohio, and therefore, had attained the necessary amount of electoral votes to become a two-term president.

The entire office was swept into a type of emotional hilarity. Hugs and tears flowed liberally, with shouts and shrieks of triumphant expletives and hopeful statements echoing through the unassuming building. Susanna and Karen both came to me and while hugging me spoke through tears: “You have a future. You have a future.” Rachel jumped on me and I lost my balance and almost fell. Annie lay silently smiling on the floor. Clara was with Nate. Slick Rick and I chest bumped. The familiar call originated anonymously and was taken up by the entire staff:

“Fired up!”

“Ready to go!”

We went to Jazmine, a restaurant, to celebrate. I talked to Rachel for a while

neighborhoods. Most of the people we spoke with were strong Obama supporters, and I had a pleasant chat with a man who was trying to launch a rap career. He showed me a few of his videos. I did the talking while Clara took care of the paperwork, like giving the people stickers and keeping track of the statistics: How many people were not home? How many people were strong Obama supporters? How many were undecided?

I trekked across West Chester in every conceivable area with every possible partner and efficiently passed out flyers in Coatesville. I went to hundreds of apartments with Annie and Clara, doing the same. I spent the majority of the last two days with Kaelyn, Austin, and Rachel. Kaelyn is the daughter of Karen, a black junior at American University who drove us to our targets over the last day and a half. She loved holiday music and had a strong urge to tear down every Republican sign, whether local or federal, that she witnessed. Austin is a white, goofy senior in high school with a distinct running style. Rachel was with us on the last day. She is a fearless, ambitious senior in high school, who, in all honesty, wants to be president in 2040. She had spent her summer working as an intern in the office. She went to a high school in West Chester and was well acquainted with all the fellows, but she had to stop working at the office so she could focus on school. I hardly knew her, and five minutes in, she playfully criticized all I did.

Monday and Tuesday we four, in different combinations, argued about music and thumbed our noses at Romney/

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# Hyde Park Student Breaks Silence

Satire By Jonathan Luster

2030 Scottsdale, AZ (AP)—In what was described as a "deafening, ear piercing noise" students in Honors Communications class at Hyde Park High School were shaken when fellow classmate, Meg A. Hertz, exercised her vocal chords to produce vibrations known as vocal sounds.

In a decade marked by text message interactions between students and where verbal communication has become extinct, Hertz's outbreak not only sent shockwaves reverberating through Hyde Park halls, but also sound waves. Trauma was so extensive that several students were seen exiting the school bleeding profusely from their ears. Doctors believe the student's ears were extremely sensitive to noise after a prolonged absence from sound.

What started out as a normal day for seventh year Communications teacher Joanne Johnson quickly escalated into a nightmare. At approximately 9:35a.m. Johnson was teaching her Honors Communications class when she directed her students to respond to a blog post with their tablets. At 9:37a.m. Hertz erupted. Johnson claimed Hertz's words were "inaudible to the human ear" and further described the oral outbreak as a "huge disturbance" to a tranquil classroom of engaged students.

Hyde Park Principal d.B Caraway quickly reacted, sending out a text message to all students and faculty calling for "Code Red" the code for an immediate lockdown. Only minutes later at 9:50a.m. the first responders arrived at the scene and by 9:55a.m. police and ambulances swarmed and surrounded the school.

The outbreak left delusional students in a daze of confusion filled with a slew of unanswered questions: What caused Hertz to act in such a brash way? Is she mentally insane? Who are her parents? Does she have a cat?

Laryngologist Dr. Paul Stein, a voice expert, was working at his office when he initially caught news of the outbreak. "In a maneuver very rare in today's society, Hertz exercised the muscles in her larynx to tighten her vocal chords, further narrowing this small opening," tweeted a concerned Dr. Stein, "when air from her lungs passed through the tightened chords a vibration was produced." This vibration produced the phenomena, vocal sound.

Several students took the incident straight to Twitter as one student, Christian Moore, tweeted: "Ridiculous!!! I think my ears are still ringing!"

"In no way does this behavior reflect the students in this school. We pride ourselves on teaching proper etiquette and are deeply troubled by what transpired in room 202 today. Hertz's behavior is inexcusable and swift and appropriate punishment will follow," blogged Principal Caraway.

Meg A Hertz is currently being evaluated at Phoenix General Hospital for signs of mental illness and will be transferred to an anonymous but local rehab clinic. On her way to the hospital, in a recent interview the loquacious Hertz proclaimed, "there is nothing wrong with me, I'm fine."

"Doom struck Scottsdale today and an eerie, dark cloud will hang over this city for a longtime," Mayor of Scottsdale Eugene Reynolds texted Arizona News, "we might need to start verbally communicating with each other once again, but at this moment I think we are all speechless."

# Teacher Feature: Ms. Sullivan

By Sarah Burzin

Ms. Sullivan began teaching art students at Valley during the fall, and she fits seamlessly into the community's academic culture. The new art teacher said she enjoys her job because Valley has a "wonderful environment" that is both warm and respectful. Ms. Sullivan attended Northern Colorado University as an undergraduate, and later received her Masters in Art at the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD). She considers herself fortunate, because from a young age she knew she wanted to pursue art professionally. Valley students are grateful her father encouraged her to earn her teaching certification so she can share her talents with young, aspiring artists.

Previously, Ms. Sullivan taught at Old Lyme High School for 35 years. As department head, she was able to create

new art programs for the school, such as an animation program and a Raku day where students could fire pottery outside, following an ancient Japanese tradition.



When asked about her favorite medium, Ms. Sullivan calls herself "a screen printer at heart", and even has her own screen-printing business. Despite her preference, Ms. Sullivan emphasizes the importance of drawing and painting—what she calls the core of art. She adamantly believes, "You have to know the skill of drawing in order to speak the language of art."

Students and faculty may not know Ms. Sullivan is an avid hiker. In fact, she has hiked mountain ranges from the Alps to

the Rocky Mountains. Ms. Sullivan is

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# 2013's Color of the Year

By Nile Otte

Every holiday season, Pantone Inc., the world's leading authority on color, chooses one color that they proclaim to be the "Color of the Year" in fashion for the upcoming year (it's my favorite time of year). Pantone recently released its pick for the 2013 Color of the Year and, much to my delight, it's (drumroll please) Emerald Green!

You may remember that last year's color of the year, Tangerine Tango, ended up everywhere from runways to beauty collections to homes. Yes, my mother was so inspired by 2012's Color of the Year she decided to paint our entire house a variation of the electric orangey red. This being said, if you don't have any Emerald Green in your closet, you may want to get on that, stat. But of course, feel free to just stick to mixing up your wardrobe and leaving your house the way it is. Adding this beautiful shade of green to your collection of clothes will be exceedingly easy, as it popped up all over the spring runways. Many of fashions leading brands and designers incorporated this color into their spring collections such as Sportmax, Gucci, Zac Posen,

Burberry, and Kenzo.

After extensive research of the trends from runways and red carpets, as well as interior textile developments, Pantone was able to reach their decision. Leatrice Elsemann, the executive director of the Pantone Color Institute let the public know that green is "the most abundant hue in nature" and that "the human eye sees more green than any other color." (Drop that fact to impress the family at dinner this year!) It would be cognizant to prepare yourself to see much more of the color, as I predict the runways, streets, and hopefully our hallways here at Valley will be swarming with Emerald Green this year.

When I first heard of Pantone and their Color of the Year I wondered what exactly gave this corporation the power to determine the "it color". After some research of my own I came across an article explaining the secret agent-y process involved in determining the colors. Pantone hosts two classified meetings each year at locations unknown to the public where representatives of various color standard groups come together to present and debate their opinions of what exactly should be the color of the year. This goes on for two days until officials are able to agree upon a decision. So as I see it, a mysterious council is responsible for determining the fate of our closets and apparently our houses too. What do you think of Pantone's choice this year? Is there a trip to Emerald City in your near future?

## Alleyways continued

over ginger ales. We had been monitoring the election for a while and were more than content to talk policy, or gloat on the victory, or talk about some article we read in The New Yorker that reaffirmed our beliefs. There was no time for that at the moment though. This was about the thing we no longer had to compete for: a personal, but impersonal victory, a victory for all the people I had met on the trip and would never again. There was no consensus on what the next move would be, how the fiscal cliff negotiations would be handled, how the polarization would be fixed. There was only the understanding that those who had toiled in the unglamorous alleyways of democracy, some for six months, some for a week, had been vindicated. All that needed recognition was the understanding that we were in a moment, one of those points in your personal history where you would eternally remember where you were when it happened.

President Obama emerged from backstage to address his constituency, invigorated and inspired as his oratory tends to be. He harkened back to the days of not being "a collection of red states and blue states." The foolish idealism had returned, and it didn't matter that it would soon slip away. The President spoke directly to his

volunteers: "To the best campaign team and volunteers in the history of politics. The best. The best ever." The restaurant erupted.

Despite the civil rights lawyers at the polls, the videos of voting machines changing votes, and the long lines, Democracy was once again justified. In the words of the president, "That's why we do this. That's what politics can be. That's why elections matter. It's not small, it's big. It's important. Democracy in a nation of 300 million can be noisy and messy and complicated. We have our own opinions. Each of us has deeply held beliefs. And when we go through tough times, when we make big decisions as a country, it necessarily stirs passions, stirs up controversy."

"I believe we can seize this future together because we are not as divided as our politics suggests. We're not as cynical as the pundits believe. We are greater than the sum of our individual ambitions, and we remain more than a collection of red states and blue states. We are and forever will be the United States of America."

If you want to read on visit <http://sspinella.blogspot.com>

Do you have a great idea for an article? What would you like to see in the school newspaper? Do you wish to join the school newspaper? Email us at:

[voveditors@yahoo.com](mailto:voveditors@yahoo.com)

New members and ideas are always welcome!

# Ask Harry

GREAT ADVICE AND KNOW-HOW: HARRY TAYLOR'S WISDOM FOR YOUR WORRIES

Dear General Zod,

**I cheated on a test, and the guilt is starting to drive me nuts! I can't focus in class, have difficulty sleeping at night, and see a spectral Banquo occupying my seat at the dinner table. He eats all my turkey and is giving me the silent treatment. I got a C+ on my History midterm exam.**

**What should I do?**

**- Abraham Lincoln**

Dear Mr. Lincoln,

I'm so glad you came to me for advice. As for the guilt thing, I suggest not cheating. It's like Bernie Madoff: he was rich for a minute, but now he's in jail. If you believe in Karma, maybe stop another boy from cheating so your behavior will balance out. And if your bad midterm grades keep you from graduating, you can still work as a Disneyland automaton. They're so realistic, nobody can tell the difference, and if you mess up the Gettysburg address, old people can just blame those "new-fangled talking machines."

I'm not kidding,

Harry Taylor, Master of the Mystic Arts.

Dear Mr. Fantastic,

**My boyfriend-to-be is too busy playing Dungeons and Dragons to notice me because he is too busy slaying zombie spiders, and his cursed double-sided battle axe is the center of his attention. When I asked him if he wanted to hang out, he said something rude about "rolling for charisma"... another gaming reference? You seem nerdy, so you should be able to help.**

**- Level 3 human Girl**

Dear misinformed:

I am a geek. Not a nerd. There's a huge pocket protector sized difference. Getting in the game might help. After using a spell to lower his intelligence, a wizard with the right spell

focus should be able to persuade him into liking you. And, by the way, D&D is not as geeky as... Star Trek Monopoly (Next Generation Edition). Not that geekiness is something to be ashamed of. Look at me! Okay, that's enough. Really—I mean it. Stop staring at me!

I'm quite excellent,

Harry Taylor, Lord of the Rings

Dear Harry,

**These letters sound like you are just making them up in order to enable you to type something that you think is funny. Wouldn't it be better for you to respond to the concerns of real people instead of subjecting us to your so-called humor? After all, responding to actual reader questions would cut your work in half, thus freeing up the computer for other, almost certainly better purposes.**

**- An anonymous parent**

Dear anonymous parent:

I understand your concern, but have difficulty figuring out how a parent could submit this to a high school newspaper before it was printed for the first time in order to trash my exquisite literary brilliance. Also, my mom says that World of Warcraft does not take priority over my schoolwork. This computer is an instrument of the next Shakespeare, and the bard of Avon didn't give up his quill so somebody else could play hangman with it.

I still don't know who you are, but...I'm Harry Taylor and I approve this message.

(Anyone with questions for his Excellency can submit them to the Voices of Valley, which will then forward them to me or throw them out depending on if it's a Thursday.)

## "Brigadoon" Update

By Tina Mitchel

Thanks to the efforts of the Brigadoon cast and crew, this year's Valley musical is beginning to take shape. Theater is about being transported to a far-away place and embarking on a journey. This year's production leads audiences to a small, mystical Scottish village, following the footsteps of two New Yorkers, played by seniors Parker Wallis and Sam Kneeland. Cast members are bringing the show to life by working to incorporate some authentic Scottish culture into the musical. Students spent a Saturday working with a dialect coach to perfect their Scottish accents and are beginning to apply the unique pronunciation to the songs and scenes in the show.

To create an authentic image of rural Scotland on stage, costumes are being matched to the real colors and patterns that the Scottish have historically worn. Each cast member belongs to a clan, and the colors of the tartans (or traditional plaid cloth) that might have been worn by that clan are being incorporated into costuming. It's quite intriguing, watching cast

members attempt to embody their Scottish identities. This element of culture works to embody Scottish tradition and will ensure that the performance is a genuine one.

In another effort to bring the musical to life, this year's crew is working with Mr. Kropiwnicki's set design class on several special projects. Not only have the students worked on creating aged swords, but they are currently developing a slightly more complicated project. This year's show will include a scene possibly more technologically advanced than any other. The crew hopes to tell a story through pictures. This will be a new and interesting aspect to Valley performances, and will be a definite reason to attend a Brigadoon showing.

Performances are scheduled for March 22, 23, and 24th. This journey to the highlands of Scotland will no doubt be a fascinating one, and, as always, expect a show like no other.

## Silver Linings Playbook

### Movie Review

By Sena Spinella

Rather than going through with my original plan and suffering through the agony of reviewing another Twilight film (I did see it and concluded it is not worth my time and effort), I ventured to the Madison Art Cinemas and took a chance on The Silver Linings Playbook, whose obscure title does the movie no justice. This movie has intricate layers of meaning and enables you to get something more out of it each time you watch it. The acting was a refreshing treat, including a memorable protagonist, Pat Solatano (Bradley Cooper), and his newfound friend, Tiffani (Jennifer Lawrence).

Pat was just discharged from a mental hospital where he had been incarcerated for nearly killing his estranged wife's boyfriend. His impulsiveness throughout the movie is rooted in his suffering from bipolar disorder. As a result, Pat moves in with his elderly parents and makes numerous attempts to prove that his life has changed and he is under control (to no avail). Pat's parents, Dolores (Jacki Weaver) and Pat Sr. (Robert De Niro) are convincing with their timid, treading-on-thin-ice reactions to Pat's emotions. Pat Sr's Obsessive Compulsive tendencies are undeniable, clearly a direct link to his son's mental problems. These three play their parts perfectly in creating the tense, awkward dynamic that manifests itself in such an unconventional situation. Pat is suffering in denial, holding on to the belief that his marriage can be saved while Nikki (his estranged wife) holds a restraining order against him. Up until the very end of the movie, Pat believes he will be able to save

his marriage.

Pat soon meets Tiffani, a complicated young woman who just lost her husband and is suffering from some psychological issues. Tiffani proves to be the ideal addition to Pat's life, and though they get in intense arguments and clash at times, their complex characters compliment each other perfectly. Tiffani knows how to handle Pat's severe mood swings and denial about his wife, helping him through it, while Pat is sensitive to Tiffani's loss and has a soothing affect on her edgy character. This is especially evident when Tiffani involves Pat in her dancing project as a meditative device. Tiffani and Pat go on to compete in a dance competition, and while they obviously are not at the caliber of the other dancers, reaching their personal goal of a 5 out of 10 completely satisfies them.

While most would expect the movie to have a serious mood based on its topic, the director, David O'Russell, is able to incorporate a comedic effect throughout the film. From Pat's awkward family situation to his reaction to literary classics to the dance scene at the end, the movie is simply hilarious. Its quirkiness is emphasized by bizarre, dynamic camera angles that illuminate the complexity of the characters, Pat's mood swings, and the many layers in the film. Despite the uneasy, apprehensive feeling the movie loads on viewers, I still came away feeling satisfied, almost cleansed, by the clever manner in which David O'Russell presented the heavy topics. The film was an ideal ratio of comedy and romance.



You may see this truck rolling around town and you should know that Matt O'Brien is the artist behind the image. Shoreline Sanitation hired Matt to recreate this anti-underage drinking campaign ad for their truck. He worked with ..... Another interesting note: the hands featured in the ad belong to Mr. Purdy, Mr. Taber and Miss B. We'll let you figure out the order.

### Sullivan, continued

also a former downhill skiing racer.

At her former job in the service bureau, she organized a two-week long backpacking excursion for students to experience the wilderness first-hand. Ms. Sullivan's passion for the outdoors influences her teaching style. She likes to say, "I teach with Mother Nature."

If students are on the fence and deciding whether to take an art course, Ms. Sullivan advises students to, "try it

(and), you'll like it." She solidified her point with an emphasis on the fact that high school is a student's final free shot to enroll in an art course.

Ms. Sullivan appreciates the arts and her job, saying "I enjoy having fun with students who learn little things everyday." Students and faculty are eager to continue working with Ms. Sullivan, and she has been a welcome addition to the Valley Regional community.