



The High School View

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Students propose ideas for library renovations

BY OLIVIA JACOBS

Whether the ideas involve installing a super-sized jacuzzi for students, a Mocha Mott's--or Starbuck's--or having individual laptops available for research, student suggestions for improving the high school's library offer an eclectic list of possibilities.

A new and improved library is in the works for next year. Last week during the monthly advisory--short meetings that focus on an important school related topic--students and teachers discussed ways of making the library a more useful place.



PHOTOS BY KRISTINE HOPKINS

(Left) Mr. Burgoyne and Mr. Houghton lead an advisory discussion with students about plans for the new library.

These new library plans were sparked by the recommendations of the New England

Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) after their accreditation visits last year.

Ideas and funds from various school budgets and grants will be gathered this year, and next year improvements will begin.

Many students had creative ideas for the new library. Sophomore Olivia Lingren said, "My advisory came up with the idea that the library should be divided into a quiet space and a space where you are allowed to talk."

Ninth grader Danielle Hopkins also had big ideas. "Better computers would improve the library because the old ones are really slow," she said. "Also, a screening room would be nice if a class wants

to watch a movie, and comfortable bean bag chairs."

"I think the library would be improved if students were allowed to enter the library when chairs are still open rather than be turned away when the sign-in sheet says it's full," said sophomore Kaela Vecchia Zeitz.

The new librarian, Kevin McGrath, talked about the qualities of a new library. He said, "The library should reflect the values and needs of the entire school. The new design should be made so that multiple types of things can happen at once. It needs to be flexible in the kinds of activities it can provide."

Students had varying reactions about being asked for

their ideas about what they would like to see in a new library. Junior Gavin Fynbo said, "I do have doubts to how closely the administration will listen to our ideas or our opinions."

Danielle took a different approach. She said, "I think it was a great idea that the students were asked for ideas about the library by the administration."

Mr. McGrath summed up the library revamp plans. He said, "A good library should support creativity and innovation. This year we are planning, coming up with ideas, and accumulating money for the library. Next year those ideas will be put into action." **msv**

Homelessness stresses Island families (part 2)

BY G. GALEN MAYHEW

Connie is the only official conduit through which the homeless can find help. She became involved with the homeless when she met a man from Thailand in 2008 without housing. "I went to bed that night and heard a small quiet voice tell me, 'You can help him.' After another night had passed and I heard the voice again, I decided to try to find him some housing. After all, how hard could it be?" Two years and many forms later, Connie succeeded in finding the man housing.

Said Connie, "I kept seeing more people in need, and decided to continue helping." She began attending monthly classes with the Policy Board to End Homelessness in Hyannis, learning how to advocate, fill out state forms, interview, and fundraise. "I needed authority and approached the county, and they made me their Associate Commissioner for the Homeless."

Connie currently has two funds at her disposal, a voucher fund supplied by the state and a discretionary fund supplied through donations. These funds are for helping Islanders with their rent and fuel costs. Additionally, Connie has

been sending some people to Hyannis for Rapid Re-Housing, a program that supplies temporary housing until they can find permanent homes.

"We need dormitory-style housing for the singles here on the Island, as well as transitional-style housing for moving families. We don't have anything like that here on the Vineyard, and we can't simply send everyone off-Island," said Connie. "There is no affordable housing on the Vineyard. For \$800 to \$1,800/month you could pay a mortgage. Even working three jobs, it is hard for these people to keep a roof over their heads."

"The big word on the Vineyard is struggle. If it weren't for programs like the church suppers and Clothes To Go, I probably wouldn't have survived," said Mrs. Moreis.

Last year churches cooperated to combat the issue of homelessness by establishing the Island Clergy Homeless Initiative Task Force, aimed at working with local governments.

Pastor Richard Rego of the UMC of MV is one of the people on the Task Force. "The individual churches are using their own programs to try to help people, but there is

a need for a larger concerted effort. Each church has its finger on the pulse of its local community, but we need to work together with the towns and with Connie."

and alcohol are allowed," said Rich. "It is risky for people to bring their children or possessions there. We really need Island housing."

Said Pastor Rich, "This is



PHOTO BY CHRIS ARING-SHARKOVITZ

(From left) Phil Dieterich, Jane Dieterich, Jeffrey Enos, Alison Enos, and Elizabeth Villard prepare for a Community Supper at the Old Whaling Church in Edgartown Tuesday, January 13. Many others, not pictured, also help with suppers: De Borah Johnson (chef), Edson and Norman Rodgers, Jean Bishop, Ethel Chapman, and Sofia Anthony. Once a month, the Rotary of Martha's Vineyard, led by Mrs. Villard, prepares the weekly meal. The Whaling Church suppers, which have been held for over 20 years, will conclude for the season at the end of March.

The Task Force has mainly funneled donations to Connie's discretionary fund, but it also wants to tackle the housing issue. "The Hyannis homeless shelter is a wet shelter, which means that drugs

the Island's responsibility. This problem exists under our noses, and these people are in need of help from the Island communities. It affects everyone's quality of life and lifestyle."

community united against this issue," said Connie.

"Boosting awareness is crucial," said Pastor Rich. "This is a very gracious Island. People want to be able to help each other and give." **msv**

Said Connie, "Clothing drives through the churches and schools are always a help. We also need people to talk to our selectmen. These people need jobs, food, clothing, and shelter."

"There is no single program for youth to tap into," said Pastor Rich. "We need programs that touch upon people who may be in need. We need advocates and volunteers. Maybe high schoolers could be local representatives for these programs. Youth could work through the guidance offices to let us know anonymously what families need, that would be great."

As a new year starts and temperatures drop, it is important not to forget another group of Islanders who are battling depression, hunger, and the elements.

"The Island is not just a resort," said Mrs. Moreis. "It has people who live here year round and need help."

Community suppers are held seven days a week. The locations are: Monday-Edgartown Whaling Church; Tuesday-Chilmark Community Church; Wednesday-West Tisbury Congregational Church; Thursday-St. Augustine's Church; Friday-Grace Episcopal Church; Saturday-United Methodist Church of Martha's Vineyard; and Sunday at noon at the Federated Church. **msv**

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