

Board, teachers talking; no job actions early

By Rachel Payne

Both sides say some progress is being made in efforts to reach a new contract agreement between Mount Greylock's teachers and the school district. After a negotiating session on Monday, the school board asked for more time to develop a fresh proposal, and the union did not announce the start of planned, legal "work-to-rule" actions.

The last offer from the school board would put the

most senior teachers at Mount Greylock in the \$68,114-a-year bracket -- second only to the Lenox school district at \$69,055, according to an article last week in The Berkshire Eagle.

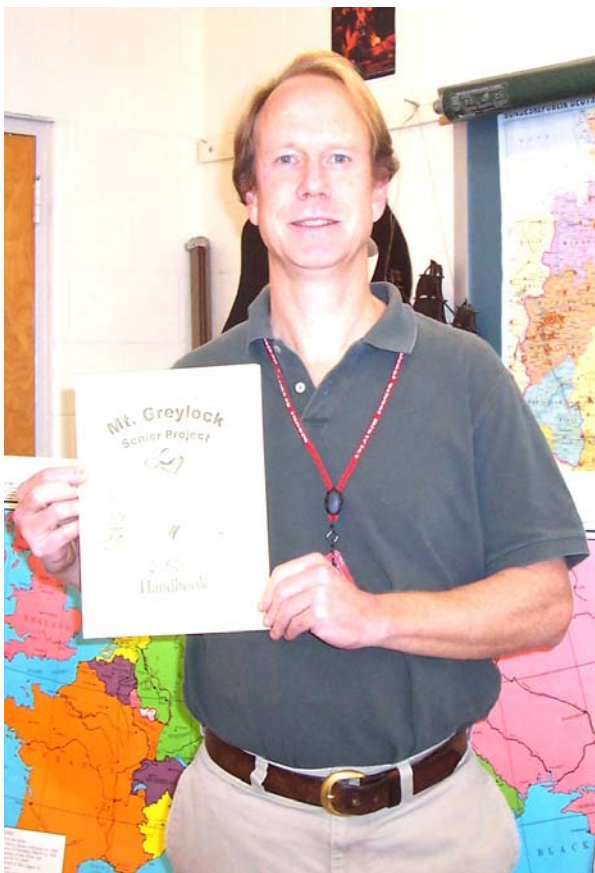
Now in its second consecutive year without a contract, the Mount Greylock Educators Association has rejected the contract offered by the School Committee. The refusal was almost unanimous: 52 union members voted against the proposal and only three sup-

ported it. In the words of Association President Rose-Marie Pelletier, "it was a very clear message."

The two-year contract proposed by the School Committee would grant all Greylock employees a 3.5 percent raise each year, and about half would receive an additional 2.5 percent; however, it would require that faculty pay 20 percent of their health insurance

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A GREAT START



Senior project advisors Tom Ostheimer, left, and Michael Powers

90% of seniors have submitted project proposals

By Flora Lim

Mount Greylock seniors are getting a great start for their Senior Projects this year, faculty say.

The Senior Project, an innovative program that offers seniors an opportunity to explore a field of interest outside the academic curriculum, has been approved by the Mount Greylock School Committee as a graduation requirement for the Classes of 2006 and beyond. Students will earn three credits for passing the Senior Project but will lose their "Student in

Good Standing" privileges if they fail to meet project expectations.

Over the course of the year, each student will select a topic, determine an "Essential Question" of interest, find a community mentor to supervise the project, conduct research and field work, write a paper on the project, and give an oral presentation explaining his or her accomplishments. After fac-

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Well water may return within year, board decides

By Katy Markland

Mount Greylock students and staff may be drinking well water again within a year -- or sooner -- following a vote by the school board to start construction as soon as possible to connect to a well 1,000 feet west of the school buildings.

A unanimous decision to proceed with the Well No. 2 option was reached at the School Committee meeting on Nov. 8. At the meeting, several options regarding the school's current water situation were discussed.

The water issue began approximately 18 months ago, when the well from which the school obtained its water was found to contain perchlorate. The latest October 25 testing of the water source revealed that the well now contains 2.18 parts per billion of perchlorate—still above the Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) recommended level of 1 part per billion, but an improvement from any of the previous testings.

If consumed (especially by pregnant women, infants, children age 12 and under, and persons with untreated hypothyroidism), perchlorate may impair normal thyroid function, potentially harming metabolism, growth, and development.

Since the discovery of perchlorate in the well, bottled water has been the replacement cooking and drinking source. When the existing water issue first arose, it was hoped that bottled water would be a temporary fix. Several viable alternatives have been explored in the past year or so to achieve a more lasting resolution.

In the past number of weeks, the plausible solutions were narrowed down to two choices—the first, to connect to the water supply at Sweetwood, and the second, to use Well No. 2 as the main water supply. Both ideas were discussed in detail at the meeting.

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Building committee now hearing pitches from architects

Starts process to pick planner for renovation

A committee of local architects, faculty, staff and parents has begun listening to pitches from companies who want to play a role in designing a new or renovated home for Mount Greylock Regional High School.

The committee met two days last week and at one session was treated to a detailed description of projects completed elsewhere in Massachusetts by Dore & Whittier Architects, Inc. Dore is not the only architect which submitted bids to be named project planner for the updating.

The committee is the result of the school board's conclusion that heating, ventilation, windows and other aspects of the nearly 40-year-old Mount Greylock are reaching the point where retrofitting may be more costly than building new.

The committee, appointed by the school board, has made no decisions about whether to build a new school, or renovation some or all of the existing structures. The process it has undertaken first is to pick and pay for a consultant to make recommendations about what to do.

Dore, with offices also in Vermont, described its work on schools in both Wilbraham, near Springfield, and in a suburb of Worcester. One renovation it cited cost over \$20 million when complete and involved a building with approximately the same number of students in grades 7-12 as are housed at Mount Greylock.

Once an project planner is chosen, the planner will likely solicit the opinions of all school users about what a future Mount Greylock should look like.



A representative from Dore & Whittier Architects Inc., of Newburyport, standing, briefs Mount Greylock's school building committee on Nov. 8.

ARTS

NEGOTIATE

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costs, where they had previously paid only 10 percent.

At this month's School Committee meeting, Pelletier read a statement from the Association that urged the committee to set a date for further negotiation, and the two organizations intend to meet on Monday, Nov. 14. The statement also advised that the process would be accelerated if the School Committee would give authority to its negotiation team. Pelletier read that "it would be helpful and much more efficient at this critical juncture if the teams can negotiate back and forth until a resolution is reached without having to check back with the entire committee or Association between counteroffers."

In an earlier interview, Pelletier expressed confidence in the Association's negotiating team, which is very conscious of the union's bottom line. "Our negotiators are informed by the membership and so they have a good sense of what will pass and what won't."

On the other side of the issue, Sally White, the Vice Chair of the School Committee, stresses the importance of compromise in light of the school's financial woes. In a note submitted to www.greyllocknews.com, she wrote that "without a new contract, the staff at Mount Greylock continues to pay 10 percent of their health insurance coverage. That percentage is a relic of days gone by, when health insurance was not the juggernaut that it is now, for everyone – teachers and taxpayers alike." She described the rise in health care costs as "a sad reality of the modern economy" but reinforced the need for a balanced budget.

Pelletier said of contract negotiations, "It should be a back and forth process, and it should happen in a timely way. It's been a back and forth process, I think, but it has not been timely." The statement also threatened union action. Association members "have empowered the chief negotiator to control the timing of any lawful, concerted union activity. Unless he indicates significant progress on Monday, Nov 14, the Association will announce an escalation of lawful, concerted union activity beginning Tuesday, Nov. 15... this escalation may include the following: the cessation of voluntary activities and the resignation of staff from certain stipend positions. If a proposal that is endorsed by our negotiators is not agreed to before Thanksgiving, then, as of Nov. 28, we will escalate the lawful, concerted union activity to include a further resignation from stipend positions until such time as a contract is approved by a majority of the members."

Pelletier repeatedly expressed the unwillingness of teachers to "lose net pay year after year after year." She said that "what [Association members] are looking for is a package as a whole that will allow us to keep our head above water, so that we're maintaining our own standard of living and not losing ground as we progress" and that will "allow us to entice the best teachers in the area." The school's ability to attract teachers at the top of their field is a growing concern. Pelletier asserted that, in terms of entry-level salary for a college graduate, Mount Greylock ranks eleventh in the county.

The Greylock Echo

The Mount Greylock Echo is the student newspaper of Mt. Greylock Regional High School in Williamstown, Mass. Published monthly during the academic year, each issue is developed and edited by a team of editors and writers. Any Mt. Greylock student may join the staff, attend meetings and submit articles.

Next open meeting: Tues., Nov. 29
Next issue: Fri., December 16
Deadline: Friday, Dec. 9

Editors-in-Chief: Carl Kubler, Kejia Tang
This month's Staff: Rachel Payne, Isa St. Clair, Flora Lim, Kathy Markland, Grace Laidlaw, Shan Wang, Rosanna Zarza, Spencer Kowitz, Mitch Galli.

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Mali performs Oct. 20 before an almost-full auditorium at Mount Greylock

Could Taylor Mali's performance be first of more cultural events?

By Grace Laidlaw

On Oct. 20, Mount Greylock hosted poet Taylor Mali, who performed a number of pieces by both himself and his own favorite poets. Some of his works were satirical, some pensive, and many were a mixture of humor and serious reflection.

Between poems, Mali told stories about his experiences as a poet and a teacher, illustrating that the experiences on which his poetry is based are as varied as the poetry itself. To judge by the deafening applause that followed each verse and anecdote, both Mali's stories and his poems were very well received.

Many students and parents have begun to wonder if the visit is the beginning of a growing trend towards bringing outside cultural influences into the high school.

The day after his poetry reading, Mr. Mali met with a group of high school students in the MGRHS library. Students wrote about and shared experiences from their own pasts and then listened to Mali's presentation on helpful hints about writing and performing poetry.

"Poetry owes a greater debt to truth than it does to fact," he told students, emphasizing that, while good poetry is often based on personal experience, the truth revealed by a work of poetry, whether humorous or tragic, is more important than giving a true-to-life account of the experience on which the poem is based; when writing poetry, one can alter

the facts to get at the truth.

Many students and parents have begun to wonder if the visit is the beginning of a growing trend towards bringing outside cultural influences into the high school. When asked to comment on the possibility of such a trend, English teacher Liza Barrett, who helped organize Taylor Mali's visit, noted that the Friends of the Arts organization has always made an effort to bring in outside performers for the benefit of Greylock students. She also noted that the MGRHS English Department has been attempting to bring an outside author to speak at the high school at least once a year for the past several years. She did add, however, that "in the past two years, a few friends in the community and I have made a conscious effort to organize performances at Mount Greylock that will interest the students as well as the community."

Ms. Barrett also stressed the need to bring in performers that would attract a variety of audiences. "My goal is to fill the Mount Greylock auditorium at least once a year with a diverse audience. Taylor Mali's performance accomplished that goal, as did last year's a cappella, drumming, and dance concert, which featured dance and musical groups from both Greylock and Williams College." It seems, then, that Taylor Mali's Greylock performance is indeed a byproduct of a larger effort, an effort that has been going on longer than students may realize. This is obviously good news, particularly given recent budget concerns: while the school is facing financial hard times, outside performances for the enjoyment and benefit of MGRHS students and of the community as a whole do not have to cease.



Jack Snow (MGRHS '05), preceded Mali



NEWS

PTO focus on website upgrading; 'Forum' monthly goes online

Shan Wang

The November issue of the MGRHS newsletter, The Forum, appeared online at the school website, www.mgrhs.org, earlier this month. Online publication is just one of the several initiatives recently taken to improve communication between the school and the community.

Publishing The Forum online ensures its punctuality. The school will continue to mail The Forum at the beginning of every month, but a printed newsletter requires time to collate, fold, stamp, and label, and delivery to families will likely be slowed down because the issues are sent at bulk-mail rate. The Beacon, a middle-school newsletter run with the help of parents, is not mailed but given to students during school to take home. The general concern with the distribution of written notices to students is that important notices might not make it to a parent or guardian, but this worry is eliminated in creating an online version available for perusal anytime.

Because the developments on the www.mgrhs.org website are relatively new, updating regularly is difficult. Currently the website is run solely by Jason Bennett, the technical coordinator. Time constraints also hinder more frequent updates. If students were allowed to assist with managing the school's website (indeed, a few students are already assistants to Ray Dushaney, the audio/visual specialist), extra measures will need to be taken to ensure the security of website content.

The Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) recently sought to improve Mount Greylock's existing website, as complete redesign at this point seemed impractical. According to Supt. Travis, the organization was also looking at the possibility of fundraising to purchase an update for the school's web software, rather than entirely replacing the current software. In addition

to being less costly than brand-new software, an update would also not require retraining staff.

The PTO is also responsible for a parents' mailing list. Forms to add emails and home addresses to the list were sent home in August with the schedules and handbooks. A few hundred parents who signed the forms are currently receiving information from the PTO. The mailing list does not encompass school-wide information such as warnings about the water situation or whole department field trips, which are still sent home in the form of traditional paper notices.

Further concerns exist, however, over improving school communication with the Lanesboro community. Since Lanesboro lacks television, cable, the Building Committee and School Committee meetings normally televised for Williamstown residents on Willinet cannot be broadcasted in Lanesboro. To address this issue, tapes of these meetings have been made available in the school library for Lanesboro and Hancock. The PTO has also considered moving one or two meetings per year to Lanesboro itself, and Supt. Travis has attended several Hancock School Committee meetings to hear out their concerns. "It's nice for you to go there, rather than have them come all the way here," he said.

Community Day, a continuation of last year's outreach program through which community members may visit Mount Greylock to shadow a student for a few periods and eat lunch in the school cafeteria, is another initiative to bring the community closer to Mount Greylock. This year's dates were set for November 14, 15, and 16. Visitors could request to see a particular teacher or shadow a particular student. A meeting was to have been held after lunch to hear visitors' input about the running of the school.

Progress Reports" and a final evaluation.

Each of Mount Greylock's 11 faculty advisors is responsible for supervising 10-12 student advisees. This year's advisors are Joe Bazzano, Catherine Canales, Jessica Casalinova, Peter Niemeyer, Ouisa Forhaltz, Drew Gibson, Ginger Sumner, Marjorie Keeley, David Livernois, Ray Miro, and Susan Strizzi.

Jessica Casalinova, a guidance counselor and one of the advisors, says, "I really support the Senior Project . . . I have sat with all of my advisees on more than one occasion. It really has been fun for me to help individual students mold their ideas and develop a plan of action."

Mr. Ostheimer agrees: "For me, the enjoyable part is sitting down with the student and talking about the project -- the conversation. What I don't enjoy as much is the nagging that I have to do to make students meet their deadlines. Preliminary work has to be done before the fun work. The challenge is trying to make the Senior Project a culture of the school that is supported and valued by student, teacher, and the community."

Students are investigating a wide array of topics: art, business, cooking, education, fashion, film, psychology, teaching, writing.



Four who joined faculty

By Gina Iannitelli and Mitch Galli

Ms. Close

Ms. Close, an Economics and Witch Hunt teacher, was previously a principal at BART. She decided to come to Mount Greylock because she wanted to get back in the classroom while staying in the local area, and she was very excited about the subjects that she is now teaching. She points out that the forty-four minute classes are a disadvantage, but the students are "good-natured in general". She attended both UMass and Tufts colleges, and says that she always wanted to become a teacher because she was inspired by her eighth-grade teacher. She grew up in Brooklyn, MA.

Mr. Faulkner

Mr. Faulkner previously taught at Nashua High school in New Hampshire. He now teaches Algebra I and II here at Mount Greylock because he has family in the area. The difference between Nashua High and here, he says, is that there is more school spirit at Mount Greylock, as Nashua was a city school. He primarily wanted to work in computer science, but that didn't work out, so after becoming a tutor he decided he wanted to teach and switched his major. He attended the University of New Hampshire and grew up in Seabrook, NH.

Mr. Floyd

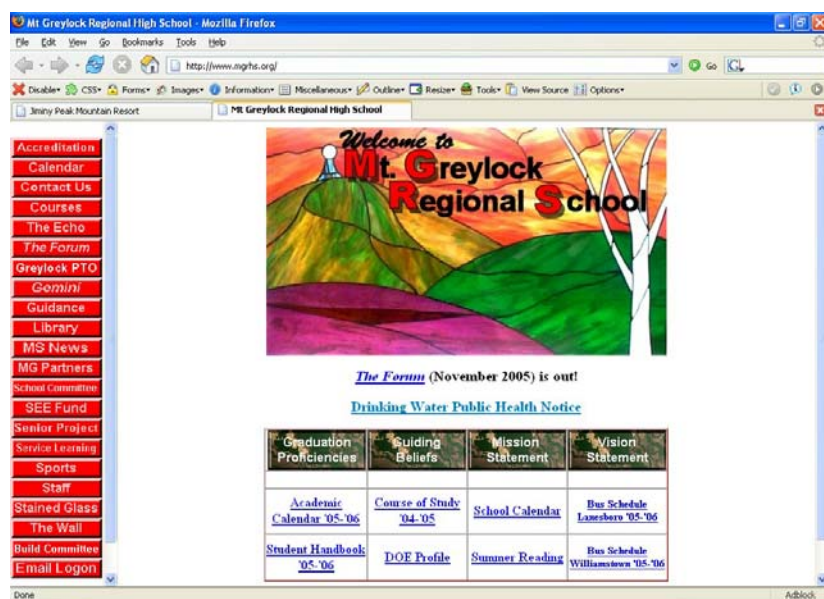


Mr. Floyd, a first time teacher, teaches History in the middle school. He prepared for his first full-time teaching job by substitute-teaching last year. He decided to come teach at Mount Greylock because he knew a history teacher was needed, and he always thought of it as a good school with a good reputation. Growing up, he knew he wanted to do something with

history, whether it was working at a museum or in any other history-related occupation. He grew up in Pittsfield and attended PHS, and then went to Pomona College in Claremont, CA.

Ms. Wesley

Ms. Wesley, in her first full teaching job, teaches Math and Science in the eighth grade. She was previously a permanent sub. She says she decided to come to Mount Greylock because she got a job here, and also because it is a good school. She received her first year of college education at AIC, and then finished at MCLA. She has always wanted to become a teacher because she thinks that educating kids is good, and she also wanted to make a difference. She grew up in Pittsfield, and now races stock cars and assistant-coaches wrestling in her spare time.



PROJECTS

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ulty members evaluate the project papers, teams of students, community members, and teachers will evaluate the oral presentations.

This year's senior-project coordinators are Mount Greylock teachers Tom Ostheimer and Michael Powers. According to Mr. Ostheimer, over 100 students have submitted their topic-approval forms and most students, over 90 percent of the class, have approved topics with an "Essential Question," sub-questions, and names of possible mentors.

Students are investigating topics like art, business, cooking, education, fashion, film, psychology, teaching and writing. Mr. Ostheimer says that his job as one of the coordinators "has been smoother this year with the help of advisors who are providing in-house help for students. Tracking down students and holding them accountable has been really helpful."

Each student should have a mentor in the community who will help the student determine his or her "Essential Question," develop a research/fieldwork plan, locate and utilize resources, write a Senior Project paper, and develop an oral presentation. Mentors are required to sign "Mentor Contracts" and CORI forms and later in the year will submit completed "Mentor

Guys, girls head east after WMass. X-country wins

The Mount Greylock Cross Country teams completed an astounding feat last Saturday, as both teams brought home Western Mass. Championships.

Greylock also accomplished the same feat in 1993. After both teams finished second at WMASS last year, they knew what it would take to overcome not only their competition, but also the tough Northfield course to finish on top. Sunny skies and a surprisingly warm temperatures for mid-November provided the runners with quality racing conditions.

What may be even more stunning, though, than having both teams bringing back titles is that 7th grader Cate Costley continued her dominance of the sport thus far by winning the individual WMASS title. Her winning time of 19:49.63 averaged out to under a 6:23 mile over the 5k course. Two other middle schoolers finished in the scoring

Costley collects individual title

(top 5) for the Mounties, as they placed their entire top five in the top twenty of the race. Greylock won with a team score of 59, beating out second place Holyoke Catholic by 15 points and third place Mohawk by 20 points. About a minute behind Costley, freshmen Jackie Lemme crossed the line finishing in 6th. Sophomore Lindley Bell finished next with a time of 21:51.20 that was good enough for 14th place.

Greylock wrapped up the title over the next twenty seconds as 7th grader Marissa Ericson and 8th grader Erin Manners crossed the line in 18th and 20th places, respectively, following closely in Bell's footsteps. Freshmen Hannah Chenail and Abby Bishop rounded out the top seven for the Mounties with impressive times of their

own that would have placed them as the top two runners on four of the teams competing.

While the girls relied on younger runners, the boys team was led by a strong group of upperclassmen. Mount Greylock walloped the rest of the field finishing over forty points ahead of second place Monson as well as perennial contender Mohawk. Senior co-captain Seth Kelly, normally the second or third runner for Greylock, came up with a big performance in his penultimate high school race.

He finished first on the team and third overall stopping the clock at 17:49.55. Kelly didn't have to wait long to see more red and white as junior Evan Dethier and sophomore Nick Fogel both finished less than five seconds behind

him, claiming 4th and 6th places, respectively. After placing three runners in the top six, Greylock had a commanding control over the race. Seniors Kyle Flynn-Kasuba and Simon Reinhardt put any final hopes of other teams to rest, as they came across the line less than a minute after Kelly in 19th and 22nd places, respectively. Rounding out the top seven for the Mounties were sophomore Zach Yarter and senior Carl Kubler.

Both teams are now headed to the Massachusetts State Championship meet this Saturday at Franklin Park in Boston. The course is known as a fast one, and one that has a single major hill with which the runners must contend. Each team will look to better their sixth place finishes that they attained last season at States and with their promising results at WMASS, it seems as if such improvement is within their reach.

Football ends outside playoffs with tough loss after strong spurt

By Spencer Kowitz

Although the season ended without a playoff berth and with a loss in their final game, the football team can take solace in the fact that they provided a great Homecoming win for their fans over PHS and also ruined Drury's Homecoming, downing the Blue Devils on their own field.

Sandwiched between the pep rally and the Homecoming Dance, the football team provided the enormous, spirit laden, tailgating crowd with tons to cheer about as they romped the PHS Generals 41-14. The game, though, didn't start out great for the Mounties; in fact, PHS returned the opening kickoff for an 87 yard touchdown and a quick 7-0 lead.

Greylock bounced right back, however, capping off a 64 yard drive with an Aaron Castonguay touchdown less than four minutes later. This drive would be the first of many on the night in which the Mounties put on a clinic in running the football. Greylock amassed 443 yards on 50 carries on the evening, averaging nearly nine yards (a first down) a carry.

Castonguay finished off the next two drives with touchdowns as well putting Greylock up 21-7 early in the second quarter. He finished with 259 yards on 18 carries (averaging over 14 yards per carry) and four touchdowns. Fellow junior tailback Jeff Brodeur also surpassed the 100-yard plateau for the night.

In defense, the potent passing attack



[Photo by Rosanna Zarza]

of the Generals was held in check by the Greylock defense as PHS quarterback David Glass only completed 5 of 21 passes for 68 yards and was intercepted three times (by Preston Trites, Phil Sullivan, and Andrew Agostini).

Greylock took the momentum from their Homecoming win into their next game against archrival Drury. Against a tougher defense than they had seen the week before, the Mounties still managed to maintain quite a ground attack and came away victorious by a 20-6 margin. Each team had 38 carries when the day was over, but MG's amounted to 299 yards (nearly 8 per carry), whereas Drury's netted only 152.

For the second week in a row, Castonguay led the offensive onslaught as he rushed 15 times for 208 yards and three TD's. His 70-yard burst late in the first quarter gave Greylock a 7-0

lead. He added two more second quarter touchdowns to give MG a firm hold on the game. Greylock took a 20-0 lead into halftime.

Drury failed to get their passing game going in the second half and a comeback was not to be, as quarterback Steve Bopp finished 2-10 and was twice intercepted by Phil Sullivan and the Greylock defense.

With their playoff hopes dashed the night before, a final non-league match-up may provide some teams with little incentive to go out and compete. Mount Greylock came ready to play, though, against a Putnam squad who had lost only one game all year. Even though the Mounties came out on the short end of a 20-16 game which came down to the final seconds, they played some of their best football of the season in this final game.

Greylock's Phil Sullivan nailed a 40-yard field goal through the uprights early in the second quarter after the Mounties had fallen behind 6-0. Because Putnam was stopping the run better than previous Greylock opponents, the Mounties took to the air more and quarterback Preston Trites found John Lucido for a 1 yard touchdown pass in the waning minutes of the first half to close Putnam's lead to 12-9.

Greylock took the lead in the third quarter when Trites found Dylan Schultz on a 2 yard touchdown pass, but Putnam responded and retook the lead for good late in the third quarter. Late in the fourth quarter, MG had one final chance to take the lead, but Putnam's defense proved too tough and held firm.

Although the team will lose a lot when the seniors leave, the cupboard is far from bare for Coach Shawn Flaherty next year. Castonguay, Brodeur, Trites, and co-captain Schultz all return for a Mountie squad that will look to build on the achievements of this year's team.

write now!

(actually, Nov. 29)

Attend the next Greylock Echo recruitment and assignment meeting Tues., Nov. 29, at 2:30 p.m. in the back of the Carleson Library. Cookies and conversation!

WATER

Continued from Page 1

Connecting to the water supply at Sweetwood (owned by Northern Berkshire Healthcare [NBH]) would solve several of Mt. Greylock's current issues. The connection would be relatively easy and the cost would most likely be lower than the cost to establish Well No. 2, with a grant from the Department of Education aiding in the expense.

Mount Greylock would not be responsible for the quality or quantity of the water coming from Sweetwood.

However, this option also poses some challenges. Mount Greylock may be in need of its own water

source, and because the Sweetwood connection would not provide the school with its own supply, it is potentially more of a challenge than a solution. Though there are other disadvantages involved in this prospect, the main difficulty is the fact that NBH offered only a temporary 4-year connection plan. For Mount Greylock, this means prolonging the already lengthy search for a permanent solution.

The second potential solution discussed at the meeting was the idea of making Well No. 2 the permanent water source. Although the initial cost (ballpark \$270,000) may be greater than connecting to Sweetwood, the annual cost of maintaining it may be lower.

Mount Greylock will also have control over its own sufficient water supply, with no charge per gallon, which are costs the school would have to cover in

using Sweetwood's water supply. Drawbacks also surround this option, such as the possibility of being put in the water business, something the school does not aim to do.

Though either arrangement would supply the school with water, the School Committee voted unanimously to proceed with the Well No. 2 plan. But before proceeding, the Committee would like to explore the challenges that may arise in the development of the new water source. With thoughts of a new school in the relatively near future, the location of the 10,000-gallon tank must be carefully planned. Fire protection is another issue that needs to be resolved prior to well development.

Now that the Committee has reached a decision, the school wishes for no further delay as costs are continuously rising. The project will hopefully begin within the next year.