

The Journal Register

SERVING PALMER, MONSON, BRIMFIELD, HOLLAND & WALES

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HOLLAND

Community Center recognizes many volunteers

By Marcelo Gusmão
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HOLLAND – This week, the Community Center held an event to recognize and appreciate its many volunteers, who have been working on many projects throughout the community.

Volunteer Appreciation
The event was held at 1 p.m. on Tuesday, June 16, and invited the Community Center's 70 volunteers to attend and be recognized. The Center's director, Barbara Palmer, said that the event recognizes the many col-

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Submitted Photo

Gardeners volunteer at the Community Center by maintaining the trees by the patio.

MONSON

Board makes plans

SummerFest this weekend

By Marcelo Gusmão
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MONSON – At last week's Select Board meeting, the town finalized plans for this weekend's SummerFest, as well as recognizing a retiring Planning Board member.

SummerFest 2026

Steve Slozak approached the board to go over the details relating to SummerFest, which will be held on the street on June 20, with a rain date on June 21.

"I don't think we'll ever go back to Veterans Field," chuckled Slozak. "It was a lesson learned."

"If you do decide to go back to Veterans Field, you know it's going to rain," joked Chair Peter Warren.

Slozak described straightening out the fireworks with the School Department, along with other items including the banner, insurance, the liquor license, and a document for free gifts of the town in the amount of \$4,000. Town Administrator Jennifer Wolowicz said that through a project to

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MONSON



Submitted Photo

Steven B., age 21, Hailey B., age 19, teacher Lauren Messer, and instructional aide Laura M. Brown.

Vocational Independence Program holds successful bake sale

By Marcelo Gusmão
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MONSON – Last Tuesday, a program from the high school traveled to the corporate office of Monson Savings Bank to hold its annual bake sale and promote foundational skills in high school graduates.

The Vocational Independence Program is a specialized transitional program offered by the high school to outgoing students aged 18 to 22, to help them de-

velop skills necessary for a successful adult life after high school, including daily life skills, employment, meaningful community participation, the program emphasizes independence, self-advocacy, workplace readiness, and real world learning experiences.

Transition and Special Education Teacher Lauren Messer said that the program evenly combines community-based events with classroom instruction.

"We do a lot of practicing skills in the classroom

that we can then translate into those real world experiences when we go out into the community," Messer said.

As an example, Messer described a trip to the grocery store. "In the classroom we make a shopping list and budget for the shopping we need to do, and then we go to the store, find and purchase the items, and go through the whole checkout process."

On another trip, the class went to the Holyoke

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PALMER

School Committee member criticizes town budget in public hearing

By Marcelo Gusmão
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PALMER – At last week's Town Council meeting, School Committee Member Sandy Noonan approached the council to ask about cuts to the school department budget.

"We just had a budget

hearing, and for the first time since I've been on, we did not pass the budget," Noonan said. "Due diligence was done by the school department and the administration team; there were no good cuts, but the part that, I think, bothered many of us, was that they had to cut, because of our deficit, half of the world language department."

Council Vice President Jessica Ferry read further details from Superintendent Matt

Francis, including two Unit A teachers, two Unit B paraprofessionals, a cut to Professional Development, a cut to Appendix C stipend positions, among other cuts.

Noonan noted that the school department received a .87% increase to its budget, and asked, "Did any other department get such a low increase in their budget this year? Can you give us the percentages of the different departments?"

Town Manager Brad Brothers said that these numbers are all available online, and presented the percentage increases for similar departments, including a 6.9% increase to the police department, 1.3% increase to the Town Manager, a 1% decrease to the Department of Public Works, amounting approximately \$20,000, a 1.2% decrease to Planning and Economic Development, a 1.5% decrease to Facilities General,

an 8.3% decrease for the Veterans Agent, and 0% for the Assessor.

Noonan compared the decrease in the school district's budget to that of Pathfinder Vocational Technical High School, which received a 5% increase, amounting to \$111,314.

"Plus, they just received a \$3.5 million grant that we were not eligible to apply for," Noonan said. "It was a Vocational Technical grant, for a

school that has a strong CTE component."

Councilor Matt Lemieux noted that the Pathfinder budget is voted on by all of the school's member communities, which includes eight other towns. "We're just obligated to pay our portion," Lemieux said.

Council President Barbara Barry clarified how the rising cost of health insurance

HEARING | page 8



Saturday, June 20th

please join us for a

★ 11:00AM ★

ON THE LAWN OF THE PALMER HISTORICAL & CULTURAL CENTER
2072 MAIN STREET
THREE RIVERS

Hear Ye, Hear Ye

please join us for a

READING OF THE PALMER DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

Signed on:
June 17, 1776

PALMER

THE TOWN OF SEVEN RAILROADS

250

CELEBRATION!

This program is funded in part by a grant from the Palmer Cultural Council, a local agency, which is supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency.

1:00 - 3:00PM

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1455 North Main Street
Palmer

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SOFTBALL

MHS softball reaches state quarterfinals

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

MONSON — Monson varsity softball coach Matt Hull wasn't 100 percent sure that he would have enough players to field a team about two weeks before the start of the regular season.

It turned out to be a very successful campaign for the Lady Mustangs.

After playing in the Western Mass. Class D championship game for the first time, Monson advanced to the Elite 8 game in the Division 5 state tournament.

The seventh-seeded Lady Mustangs pulled out a 14-13 walk off victory over the 10th-seeded Tahanto Regional in a round of 16 contest played at the Quarry Hill softball field, last Tuesday afternoon.

"Every game that we get to play is house money, especially not having any seniors and only one junior," Hull said. "Before the start of the season, we didn't think that we would have enough players, and we would have to co-op with another team. We were able to find several players, who are young and inexperienced."

The Lady Rams (16-8) graduated three players and two other starters from last year's squad decided not to return this spring.

"We figured that this would be a rebuilding year," Hull added. "I never thought we would be going to the Elite 8 in the state tournament. I'm so happy for these players."

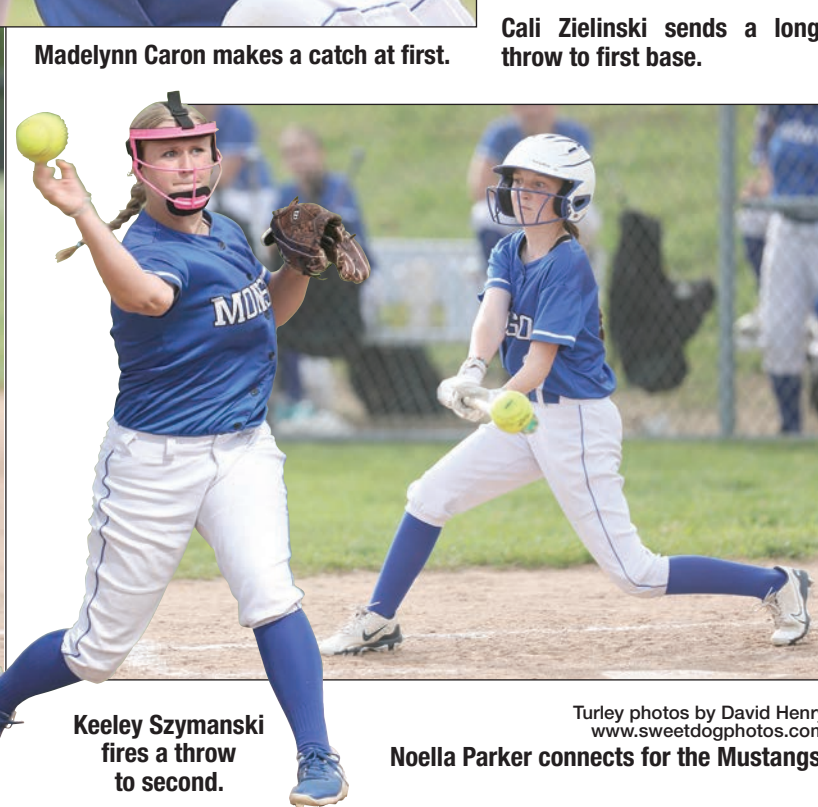
The Lady Mustangs only junior is Chelsea Hull, who's the starting pitcher.

With the score tied 13-13 entering the bottom of the seventh inning, Hull, who's the daughter of the Lady Mustangs head coach, was intentionally walked leading off the frame. Sophomore shortstop Cali Zielinski also drew a walk. After the next hit, a pop-up caught by the second baseman, the game came to an end. Sophomore first baseman Maddy Caron hit a ground ball to the second baseman, and she was safe at first base following a throwing error. Hull crossed the plate with the game winning run.

MHS | page 11



Chelsea Hull winds for a pitch.



Keeley Szymanski fires a throw to second.

Madelynn Caron makes a catch at first.

Cali Zielinski sends a long throw to first base.

Noella Parker connects for the Mustangs.

Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com

BASEBALL

Post 241 edged in extras

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

PALMER — Before the start of the high school baseball season, the Palmer Parks Department installed a portable outfield fence at historic Legion Field.

While the new fence is a nice addition to the field, it didn't help the Monson Post 241 Legion team very much in their season opening 4-3 extra inning loss to Westfield Post 124, last Wednesday night.

After Westfield Post 124 took the lead with an unearned run in the top of the eighth inning, Monson loaded the bases with two outs in the bottom half of the frame.

Their rally began with catcher Kyle Kaczuwka drawing a walk against righthanded relief pitcher Jakob Elmer. Then first baseman Liam McGrath blasted a shot to deep left field. In previous years, it most likely would've been an inside the park home run and Monson would've celebrated a walk off victory. However, the ball bounced over the new fence for a ground rule double.

"If the fence wasn't there, Liam's hit would've tied the score and we probably win the game," said Monson manager Steve Tripp. "This is the first year that they put up the outfield fence during the

POST | page 10

BASEBALL

Teddy Bears Pools scores rare win over defending champs

SOUTH HADLEY — Teddy Bear Pools and Spas wasted no time last Monday evening at South Hadley High School, sending eight men to the plate in the bottom of the first and not looking back en route to a 15-0 blanking of PeoplesBank. The margin was never in question.

The first inning established the tone with swift and relentless efficiency. Bailey Griggs drew a walk that scored a run, Xavion Maldonado doubled to bring home two more, a PeoplesBank error allowed another pair to score, Sean Rosemond drew a walk to push across yet another, and Alex Gochinski grounded out with enough to score one more. Six runs — before PeoplesBank could exhale.

The scoring resumed in the second when Travis Kagan singled to plate one, and

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Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com
Danny Gaines pitches for the Bankers.



Tyler Evans makes a catch at first.

Left, Dave Clark picks up a grounder for PeoplesBank.

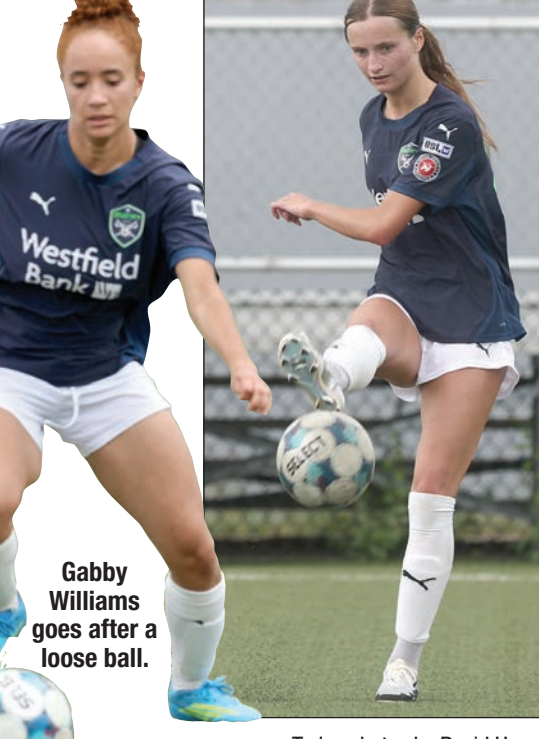
SOCCER

Mutiny defeats Maine Footy

LUDLOW — Last Sunday afternoon, June 7, Maine Footy made their annual visit to Luistano Stadium. The New England Mutiny continued their success against the Footy, defeating Maine 4-0. The UWS win was followed by a win at the Worcester Wanderers 3-0. The Mutiny did suffer a USL-W loss against Hudson Valley 2-1 last Tuesday. The Mutiny will face Hudson Valley against on Saturday, June 20 at Luistano Stadium.



Milla Lee starts up the field.



Gabby Williams goes after a loose ball.

Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com

Eva Blatz sends a free kick away.



Valentina Molinari looks to get around an opposing player.



Sophia Scyocurka tries to overcome an opponent.