

The Journal Register

SERVING PALMER, MONSON, BRIMFIELD, HOLLAND & WALES

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MONSON

Local organizer awarded Citizen of the Year

By Marcelo Gusmão
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MONSON – Last Friday, June 19, the town’s Citizen of the Year was celebrated with a banquet at the Legion Pavilion.

The Citizen of the Year Award is presented annually to an individual or couple that has lived in town for a minimum of five years. It’s decided on by the Citizen of

the Year Committee, made up of past recipients, to recognize service and dedication that has made a significant contribution to the community.

The Chair of the Citizen of the Year Committee is Peter Matrow, who received the award back in 2017, when it was given out by a different organization that has since dissolved.

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Submitted Photo

Citizen of the Year Committee Chair, Peter Matrow, congratulates Steve Slozak (right), as 2026’s award recipient, in recognition for his “distinguished accomplishments and dedicated service to our community.”

PALMER

Town Council receives committee recommendations

By Marcelo Gusmão
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PALMER – At the Town Council meeting on Thursday, June 18, the council received a report from the Ordinance Review Committee, and voted on appointments to town boards and committees, and the transfer of town funds.

This week, the Town Council voted on eight appointments to town positions. Michael Burns was appointed to the Board of Assessors, and Judith Be-

chard was appointed to the Cultural Council, with terms ending June 30, 2028, and Brenda Binczewicz was appointed to the Board of Assessors, Peter Izyk and Nicholas Zeo were appointed to the Conservation Commission, Christine Reim was appointed to the Cultural Council, George Richardson was appointed to the Historical Commission, and Amber Kumpulian was appointed to the Recreation Committee, with terms ending on June 30, 2029.

The meeting began by rescinding a vote from a

meeting on Dec. 18, 2025, and declaring the former Converse Middle School building a surplus property available for disposition.

The council then received recommendations from the Ordinance Review Committee, presented by Chair Dave Pasquini, as a summary of the work done by the committee from August of 2025 to May 14 of this year. These recommendations will be referred to the Town Council Ordinance Review Subcommittee.

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PALMER

Council approves budget items

By Marcelo Gusmão
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PALMER – At last week’s Town Council meeting, several decisions were made regarding the town’s budget for the next fiscal year.

At the Thursday, June 18 meeting, Council President Barbara Barry read several line items into the record as the council voted to adopt the budget for the 2026-27 fiscal year, following a public hearing that was held on June 8, in keeping with the town’s bylaws.

One item was for the Wastewater Treatment Plant, the operating budget for which will cost \$4,500,524, with the indirect costs coming in at \$163,538. The transfer to sewer surplus will be \$200,872, with a total budget of \$4,864,934, which the town voted to raise through the collection of sewer fees.

Town Manager Brad Brothers said that this represents a 4.5% increase from the previous fiscal year’s rate.

“I visited them last week, and what a nice building and facility they have,” added

MONSON



Photo by Marcelo Gusmão

Rachel Mengel and her husband, “Mr. Cookie” Gaston, had a truck selling cookies from Cookies by Ray.

Residents enjoy annual SummerFest

By Marcelo Gusmão
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MONSON – This week, the town enjoyed one of the most anticipated events of the summer, the annual SummerFest held at Quarry Hill Community School.

On Saturday, June 20, at 5 p.m., residents gathered at Quarry Hill to partake in the festivities and to watch the annual fireworks show ahead of this year’s celebration of the nation’s 250th anniversary.

“It’s a good time, a family-friendly environment,” said Kim Adamson-Bashaw, who has been attending SummerFest for five years. “We come back every year.”

“It’s our first year bringing the kids,” said Ash Converse, who added that it was convenient to bring the kids as she lived across the street.

In addition to the fireworks show, there were a number of local businesses and organizations with tables and food trucks set up to support the event. The First Church of Monson had a table giving out popcorn, Hillios sold novelty toys, Painting Party Place provided face-painting and temporary tattoos, and the Lions Club made snow cones.

CZP’s Frozen Treats had sweets and treats for those who wanted to cool off, Cookies by Ray was there with a variety of homemade cookies, and Batch Ice Cream had 12 different flavors of scooped ice cream to serve in cones and bowls. Sweet Memories had donuts with a variety of different flavors, including s’mores, maple, bacon, caramel apple cream, blueberry lemon, strawberry cream, peanut butter cup, and apple cider.

The Nutmeg Concessions First trailer provided hot dogs and hamburgers, Dev’s Mac and Cheese had macaroni dishes with an assortment of toppings, ranging from pulled pork, beef, and chicken, and Madd Eatz had homemade meatballs with marinara sauce, as well as their own burgers and dogs. More hot dogs were available at Hot Rod Dogs, and Rustic Fusion sold novelty egg rolls. Citrus and Soirée provided drinks, and the Beer Garden served beer, cider, seltzers, and water to people with cash and a valid ID.

Amos Nissebaum said that SummerFest was “hit or miss” for his family, depending on vacations.

“We love it,” Nissebaum said. “It’s always a good time to connect with

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BRIMFIELD

Cemetery tour unites family of Revolutionary soldier



By Marcelo Gusmão
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BRIMFIELD – Last week, the town enjoyed its first ever Cemetery Tour, where residents were invited to learn about history through an engaging performance by historians and actors.

The Saturday, June 13 cemetery tour came together thanks to the volunteers at Spirit of Brimfield, who came up with the tour as a way to celebrate the 250th anniversary of our nation’s founding. Sue De Bruin, Chair of the Historical Commission said that the event went very well,

with a huge turn-out and great weather.

“I’ve always had an interest in history, and storytelling is living history,” De Bruin said. “Storytelling is a great way for people to learn about a time and place in history, by hearing someone’s experiences at the time.”

Between her own familiarity with cemetery tours from when she was in New York, and the help of Mat

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Over 100 people from various parts of the country attended the Cemetery Tour over two hours.



SPORTS

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BASEBALL

Post 241 suffers loss to Greenfield

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

PALMER – Entering the second week of the American Legion baseball season, Monson Post 241 had the opportunity to move into a first-place tie with Greenfield Post 81 in the Zone 3A standings.

The Monson supporters didn't have very much to cheer for in the first meeting between the two teams. Greenfield remained in sole possession of first place and improved to a perfect 3-0 following an 11-0 shut-out victory on a gorgeous evening at Legion Field in Palmer, last Monday (June 15). The contest ended after five innings due to the 10-run mercy rule.

"We made more errors than we had base hits in tonight's game," said Palmer manager Steve Tripp. "You always have to make the plays to beat a very good hitting team like Greenfield."

While Greenfield outscored their first three opponents, 39-2, Monson (1-2) only scored seven runs in their first three games, which were all played at home. Four of the runs came in, a 4-2 win over Sheffield Post 340 on June 12.

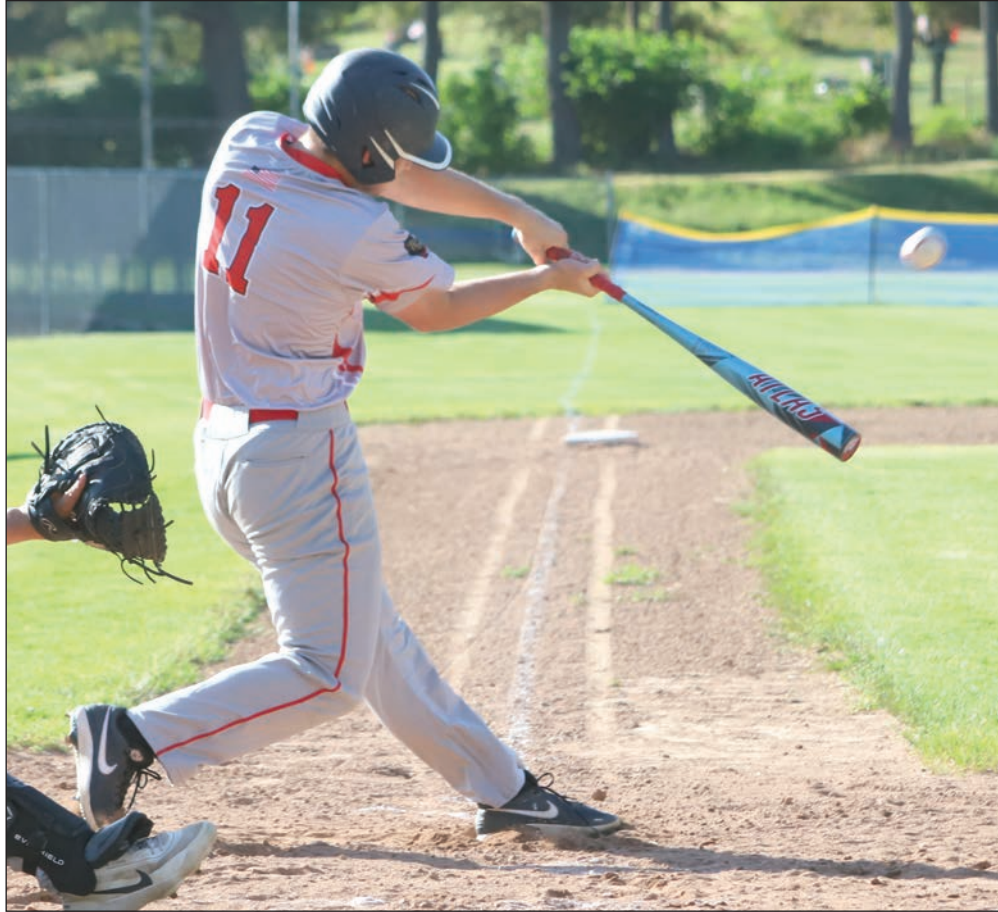
Tripp received some good news about Theo Haley, who suffered an injury at a preseason practice.

Tripp was originally told that it was a season ending injury, but after seeing a doctor, Haley was cleared to return to action. He's hoping to play his first game during the next couple of weeks.

This past spring, Haley was one of the leading hitters on the Palmer varsity baseball team.

Making his second start of the Legion season, Brayden Mega, who graduated from Pathfinder Tech a year ago, set down the first three Greenfield hitters that he faced on a groundball out and two strikeouts. The righthander didn't receive very much support after that.

The Monson batters had a chance to take the



Liam McGrath, a Quaboag student, makes solid contact.

lead against Greenfield righthander Matthew Burke in the bottom half of the opening frame.

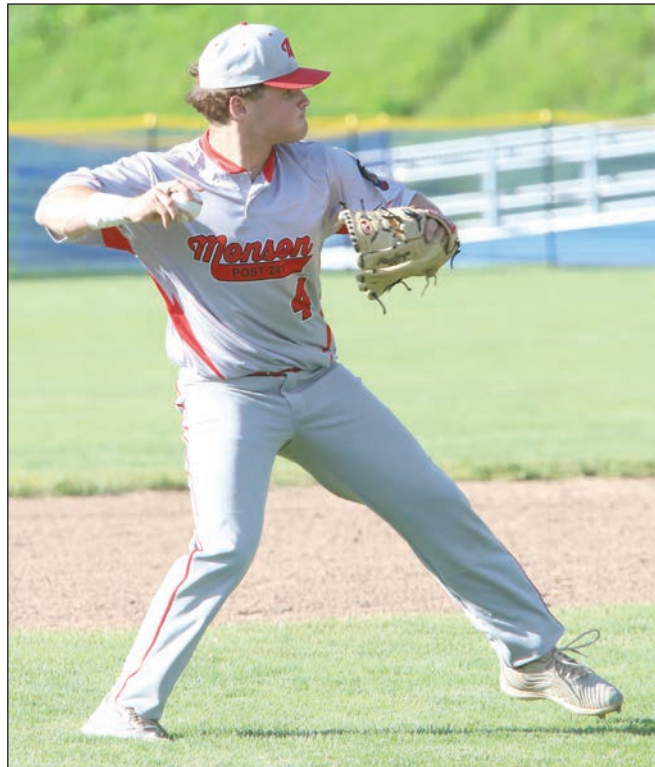
Third baseman Sebastian Mayberry beat out a groundball to the shortstop for an infield single leading off the inning. After the next batter struck out, first baseman Kyle Kaczuwka was also safe at first base following another infield hit. The threat ended quickly, as Burke retired the next two batters on a flyball and a strikeout.

"We haven't scored a first inning run during our first three games of the season," Tripp said. "We've been struggling offensively."

Monson had at least one base runner during the next four innings, but none of them advanced past second base.

With one-out in the second inning, shortstop Matt Santos reached first base following a fielding error by the Greenfield shortstop. It was only error made by the Post 81 defense.

Santos stole second base



Sebastian Mayberry sends a throw to second.

before Burke struck out the next two hitters.

Kaczuwka drew a walk with two outs in the next inning.

Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli

Monson's only other base hit in the game was a single into rightfield by Josi-

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SOCCER

Mutiny suffers loss to Crusaders

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

LUDLOW – Following three straight 2-1 road losses, the New England Mutiny were looking to celebrate a home victory versus the Hudson Valley Crusaders.

The Mutiny managed to take a 1-0 lead before the Crusaders responded with four unanswered goals leading to a 4-2 victory in a USL W League match held at Lusitano Stadium, last Saturday night.

"This is a very challenging league," said Avery Klingensmith, who was an outstanding soccer player at Belchertown High School. "We've had several games this season where we had taken an early lead and wound up losing, which is a little bit frustrating. Protecting a lead is something that we need to work on. We really wanted to win tonight's game."

The Mutiny (1-5-2) are first-year members of the USL W League. Their only victory came at home against AC Connecticut, 5-0, on May 30. They lost two close road matches against Hudson Valley, 2-0, and 2-1.

The Crusaders (5-2-2), along with Hartford Athletic and Vermont Green FC, are trying to finish the regular season in first place in the Northeast Division. Only the first place team earns a berth in the league playoffs.

Klingensmith, who wrapped up her collegiate soccer career at American University in Washington D.C. last fall, is planning to join a professional soccer team in Greece at the end of the summer.

"I'm really looking forward to starting my professional soccer career in a different country," Klingensmith said. "It's going to be a different type of experience for me."

Hope Santiniello, who's from Agawam, has been a member of the Mutiny since



Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com

Kayleigh Lukasik heads up the field for the Mutiny.



Chloe Laizer corrals the ball.

2019. She played in her first home match of the 2026 season against the Crusaders.

"The atmosphere at this stadium is always amazing," said Santiniello, who was a starting defender for the first time in last Saturday's match. "It's always been a pleasure playing for this team."

Just like Klingensmith, Santiniello is seeking an opportunity to play soccer at the

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SOCCER

Western Mass. Pioneers battle to draw with Boston Bolts

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

LUDLOW – After 21 days away from historic Lusitano Stadium, the Western Mass. Pioneers returned home last Friday night for an intrastate showdown with the Boston Bolts.

The Pioneers faithful supporters had plenty to celebrate early in the match, as the home side stormed out to a 2-0 advantage in the 24th minute.

The Bolts responded with a goal late in the first half. They struck again 15 minutes into the second half and the USL League Two matchup ended in a 2-2 draw in front of a large crowd.

"We held a 2-1 halftime lead," said Pioneers head coach Federico Molinari. "We didn't play very well in the second half. This is a very disappointing result for us."

Both teams entered the match with a total of 14 goals.

The Pioneers (5-1-2), who have allowed 10 goals, are currently sitting in third place in the Northeast Divi-

sion table behind NEC and Vermont Green FC.

The top two finishers in the division will automatically qualify for the league playoffs.

The Pioneers, who went 2-0-1 in their previous three matches on the road, have qualified for the league playoffs each year since joining USL League Two in 2019.

The Western Mass. squad will most likely need to win their remaining five regular season matches and get a little bit of help along the way to keep the playoff streak alive.

"It's very disappointing letting a two goal lead slip away, especially in front of our fans," said Felipe De Andrade, who scored the Pioneers second goal. "We're going to continue to improve and keep fighting the rest of the season."

De Andrade, who's from Westborough, played for the Bolts, which only won three matches a year ago.

"Western Mass has always been a very strong team," he said. "I just wanted a new challenge this year.

The atmosphere here is amazing and it's a privilege to be a member of this squad. I wouldn't change anything."

De Andrade, who was a member of the New England Revolution Academy soccer team in high school, began his collegiate career at UMass Boston. He'll be joining the men's soccer team at Bryant University, which competes at the Division I level, this fall.

The Pioneers had a couple of scoring chances during the first ten minutes of the contest.

Bolts goalie William Synnstedt made his first save on a header from Martin Echarren six minutes into the first half. A minute later, Echarren, who plays soccer at the University of Charleston, lined a shot towards the goal, but Synnstedt (2 saves) made the diving save knocking the ball over the end line resulting in a corner kick.

The Pioneers broke the ice during the 21st minute.

The scoring play began with Alfred Baafi delivering a crossing pass in the box to



Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com
Santiago Blasco fights to keep the ball.

Echarren, who put a header into the right corner of the net.

Three minutes later, De

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Jaiden Williams makes a quick pass to his left.