

The Lowell Ledger

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Root-Lowell organizes sale to benefit tsunami relief efforts

"I will say Lowell is very generous."

- Dave Abel

By Dan Schneider

For the past week the people of Lowell have been shopping to benefit tsunami victims in southeast Asia.

One of the conference rooms at Root-Lowell Manufacturing has been filled since last Wednesday with products and gift certificates from numerous local manufacturers and businesses. For sale are boat seats, rounds of golf, dinner gift certificates, barbecue sauce and chemical sprayers, to give an idea of the variety. The products and gift certificates were all donated and are being sold at reduced prices. All the money goes to the Red Cross to aid relief efforts in the wake of tsunamis that devastated the region.

Root-Lowell employees

came up with the idea in a staff meeting shortly after the disaster struck. Dave Abel, national sales manager for the company, took up the task. He went to businesses and companies throughout Lowell seeking donations for the sale.

"I will say Lowell is very generous," Abel said. "I went around and solicited anybody and everybody I could get in town. And you don't realize how many companies there are in town until you go out and try to talk to everybody."

The response was impressive.

"There's probably donations of about \$7,500, roughly," Abel said. "And we'd like to try to get half that from people coming in here to buy those things."

He hopes the broad range of items for sale will

appeal to a wide range of people.

"People who normally shop at those places, that's who we're trying to get in," Abel said.

Root-Lowell Mfg., Litehouse Inc., Attwood, Wittenbach Sales and Service, Ionia County National Bank, Harold Zeigler Ford, Deer Run Golf Club, Curtis Cleaners, Larkin's Restaurant, Cher's Tanning Salon, Hunan Garden, Tractor Supply Company, Pizza Hut, LA Video, Lowell/Ronda Tire, Fry Daddy's, Cousin's, Sneaker's, Flat River Grill, Ball Floral, Blue Ribbon Feed, Stock Lumber, Showboat Automotive, NAPA, Keiser's, Bernard's Ace Hardware, Thomet Chevrolet, Faro's Pizza and Ada-Lowell 5 Theater are local businesses which donated products and services for the sale.

Response has been strong. The sale opened at noon last Wednesday; by 3



Dave Abel and Bev Hall with just a few of the items on sale for the tsunami relief effort at Root-Lowell.

- Photo submitted by Jay Vezina

p.m., \$1,300 had been raised. On Monday afternoon, the sale had raised more than \$3,000.

"It's been very, very good," Beverly Hall said of the response. She got a break from her job in Root-Lowell's ITS department to act as clerk for the sale.

Root-Lowell Manufacturing Company

president Tony Asselta gave a presentation on the sale at last Wednesday's Rotary Club meeting.

"After Rotary we had a huge deluge of people come through," Hall said.

Root-Lowell sale, cont'd., pg. 3

Vergennes Township seeks to work with city on sewer project

By J. Lobdell
Contributing Writer

Acquiring sewer service is a big issue for some property going through the annexation process in Vergennes Township. Officials in the township say they recognize it as a concern for future growth within the township.

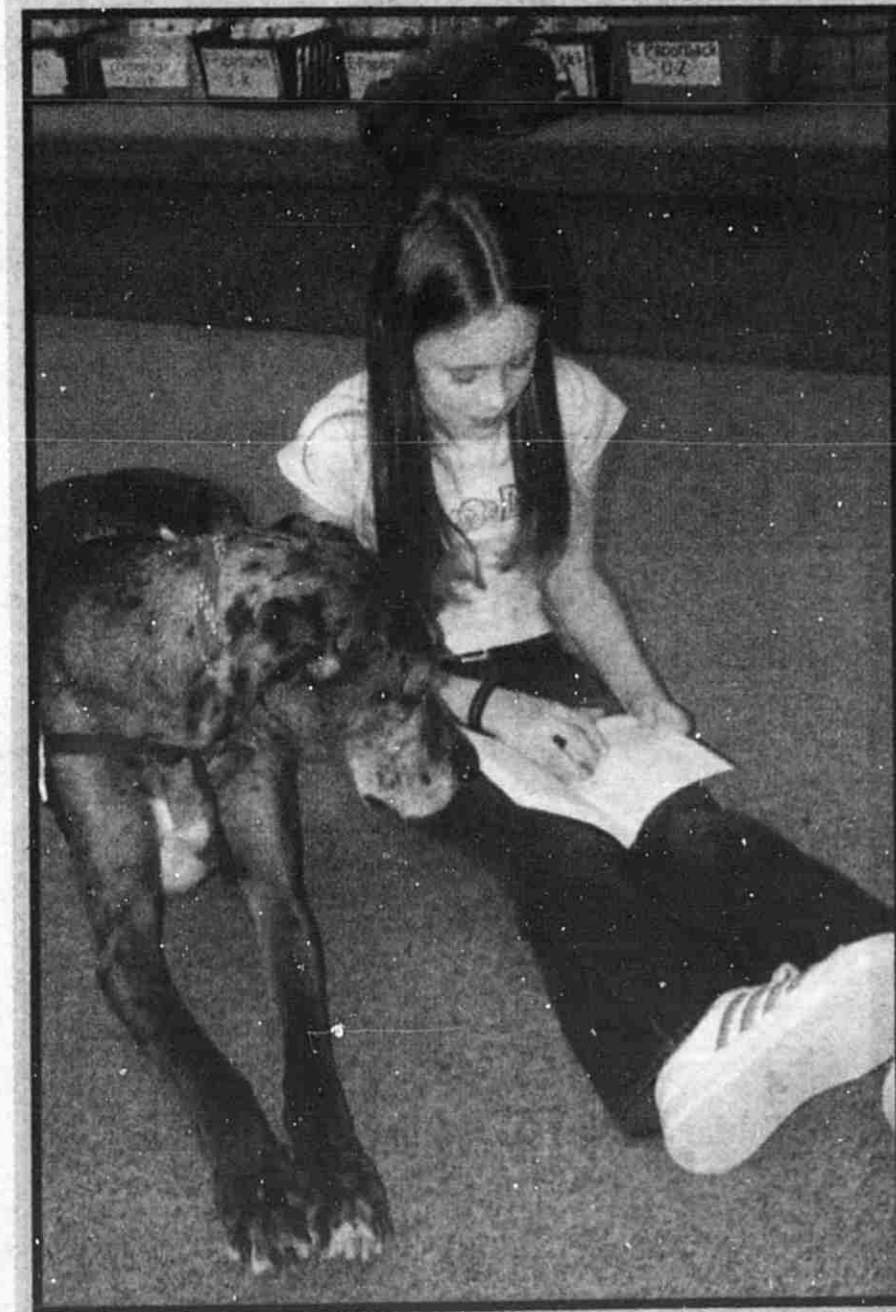
Duray Development is seeking annexation of 177 acres located near the corner of Vergennes Street and Alden Nash Road partly to get sewer service to the parcel. As the township continues to grow, Vergennes Township supervisor Tim Wittenbach said township officials hope to be able to work with the city on this issue as it has with fire protection, the Lowell Area Historical Society, Lowell Area Arts Council and, most recently, the Lowell Area Trails Agreement.

Wittenbach said when the township was approached in 1980 about sewer service, there were about 1,800 people in the area. "At that time, the board couldn't justify such an expense," he said.

Vergennes sewer project, cont'd., pg. 8

Patient canines help elementary students improve reading skills

By Dan Schneider



Indigo, a five-year-old Great Dane, listens attentively to the book *Because of Winn-Dixie* being read by Pauline Harrington in the Cherry Creek Elementary media center.

Students at Cherry Creek Elementary are finding out that dogs are fun to read to. And educators and dog experts say canine audiences speed a child's development as a reader.

Since Nov. 29, dogs have been lazing around in the Cherry Creek media center every other Monday evening, listening to kids read stories.

"She loves kids and for her, lying down next to a kid, that's gravy," said Jeanne Lewis. Her Great Dane, Indigo, made her debut as a listener Jan. 10 at Cherry Creek.

"It was cool," said Cherry Creek fifth grade student Pauline Harrington, who read *Because of Winn-Dixie* by Kate DiCamillo to Indigo. The book was about a stray dog found by

a young girl at a southern supermarket.

Indigo was joined in the library by two golden retrievers. All three dogs are therapy dogs. The dogs usually visit hospitals and nursing homes, where their presence has a therapeutic effect ... lowers blood pressure, eases anxiety. But dogs have also been known to provide a positive learning environment for young readers.

"It's been shown that, using the dogs, in one semester, will improve their reading a grade level, sometimes up to three grade levels," said Terrilynne Lymburner.

Lymburner is president of West Michigan Therapy Dogs. She and Lewis started the organization in 2001. It's a group of

Patient canines, cont'd., pg. 8

Generosity Abounds, Pg. 6

A Soldier Returns, Pg. 9

425 Agreement, continued ... From Page 8

Pasquale suggested the possibility of having a Vergennes Township Planning Commission contingency available to review the development plans with the city retaining full control over the zoning issues; Wittenbach felt this might be feasible.

Wittenbach said the township would like the property to revert back to the township once the agreement was completed. According

to the information provided by Pasquale, 50 percent of the 425 Agreement parcels have gone to the cities involved with 39 percent being returned to the original governmental body.

As for tax revenue sharing, Pasquale said the township probably would receive all of its levied millage, about a mill. In theory, the city levies about 16 mills, with the township's portion coming from that,

Pasquale explained. He added that other millages, such as the Lowell Historical Museum mill, might also be levied on the property if it falls under the city's jurisdiction.

The city council was concerned about the agreement's length of time. While such an agreement is in place, no other parcels around the property can seek a 425 Agreement. Pasquale said he would do more research on whether those parcels could be annexed or whether the 425 Agreement could be expanded while in place. If the property were allowed to be annexed, the surrounding parcels could be annexed or seek 425 Agreements. Because of that and the fact that Vergennes has grown and changed so much over the past 20 years,

councilman Jim Pfaller said he could not support a long-term agreement, but might consider one for 20 years. A 425 Agreement can last up to 50 years.

"I don't want to be tied into anything," said councilman Al Mathews.

The two groups agreed to put together the negotiation team to work on the details of formulating a plan. The team will include two members from each municipality and the attorneys representing Vergennes Township and the city of Lowell. The agreements would have to be presented to each board/council and each governing body must have a public hearing before approving it.

Pasquale said the agreement is subject to a referendum vote, if brought up in either

municipality. Munger said he would give the groups seven weeks to work this out and get an agreement signed and in place. This is the time period before the public hearing on the annexation takes place. Since Munger's company requested the annexation, it is the only group that can slow it down or stop it. Munger said because of obligations to the current property owners, the Cook family, he did not want to slow down that process at this time.

After the meeting, Munger said for the development it didn't matter if the property were annexed or if there was a 425 Agreement.

"Our objective was never to take anything away from Vergennes," Munger

said. "We want to work together."

Munger said part of his company's decision to develop the land was because the sewer ran through the property. It wasn't until he got a letter from Lowell Township, which owns that sewer line, stating it would not provide sewer capacity, that Duray started looking for other options. He said he did meet with Vergennes at three different meetings to discuss plans. When those meetings stalled, the company decided to move forward on the annexation process. A developer can not instigate a 425 Agreement process - only the governmental bodies involved can do this.

Lowell gymnasts place in middle of the pack at Holland

By Dan Schneider

The Lowell gymnastics team placed ninth in a field of 17 teams at last Saturday's Holland Invitational.

The Red Arrows' team score was 126.725. Lowell's Jenna Dickerman placed

seventh overall in the all-around as an individual gymnast.

Lowell's top four on vault were Amanda Rau (8.6, sixth overall), Dickerman (8.425, ninth overall), Becca Underwood (7.95) and Kelli Kowalski (7.55).

On bars, Dickerman scored a 7.95 followed by Rau (7.75), Kowalski (7.25) and Leannah Seese (7.25) who is making progress after recovering from ACL surgery last year.

"She finally put a back-

tuck back in her floor routine and a fly-away dismount off bars so it was good to see her back in our top four in those events," Lowell coach Michele DeHaan said.

Lowell's top four on floor were Dickerman (8.5),

Rau (8.4), Seese (8.4) and Underwood (8.25).

The top four Red Arrows on beam were Dickerman (8.55, third place overall), Kowalski (7.5), Amanda Vezino (7.4) and Rau (7.0).

Lowell's gymnastics meet against Forest Hills last Wednesday was cancelled. Lowell hosts East Grand Rapids-Caledonia-West Catholic on Wednesday.

Girls jump, boys slide into OK White bowling season

By Dan Schneider

The Lowell girls bowling team claimed its second win of the OK White season last Wednesday at Kenowa Hills.

It was a 29-1 win for Lowell. Lisa Brown rolled 307 in two games for Lowell. Ashley Nawrocki rolled 289 in two, and Carey

Crout rolled 259. Kim Ward rolled a 124 game.

The girls' team beat Northview 22-8 in their Monday, Jan. 10 OK White debut.

"The way they're bowling right now, they're doing good. I'm happy with the way they're bowling," Lowell coach Rocky

Eickhoff said. Eickhoff's daughter Amanda coaches the girls' team directly, while Eickhoff oversees the boys and the team as a whole.

Last Wednesday was the second loss for the boys' team, who fell to the Knights 27-3. In two games, Jim Denny rolled a total of 412, Jon Eickhoff rolled 344, and

Josh Vaught rolled 343.

The boys, Eickhoff said, were "struggling a little bit missing our spares and that's the name of the game, carrying the spare."

The Lowell boys lost to Northview Jan. 10, 22-8.

The boys team was 5-0 before entering conference competition. With their two

conference wins, the girls team is 5-2 on the season so far.

Both teams are young this year. The girls return two starters in Brown and Crout. Nawrocki is the team's anchor bowler as a freshman.

Lowell's next match is at home against Unity Christian Monday, Jan. 24. The Lowell Invitational is Sat., Jan. 29. There will be 10 teams, including the Red Arrows, bowling that day at Lowell Lanes.

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Lowell volleyball outlasts EGR, takes third at Zeeland

By Dan Schneider

It took five games, but host Lowell prevailed last Thursday against East Grand Rapids.

After winning the first two games—tight games—of the match 26-24 and 25-23, the Arrows lost their momentum in game three. The Pioneers won 25-17.

Lowell played stronger in the fourth game, rallying from a 12-4 deficit to within two points at 18-16. But East pulled it out, forcing game five by winning 25-19.

The Red Arrows hit the floor with a new intensity in game five. Taylor Verdon, whose service aces had frustrated the Pioneers all night, opened the game with three straight aces. Verdon had nine aces on the night. Lowell was up 4-0 before East scored. Lowell finished the night triumphant with a 15-12 score in the final game of the match. "It was long, but I think more gratifying," Lowell coach Gigi Peal said. "East wasn't coming in here to go away in three games, they had five."

"It was a good match," East Grand Rapids coach Mike Dykstra said. "We got off to a little slow start but after that it was back and forth. We're a pretty young team still and I think consistently putting the ball away was difficult for us, and Lowell just did it a little better."

It was the first time

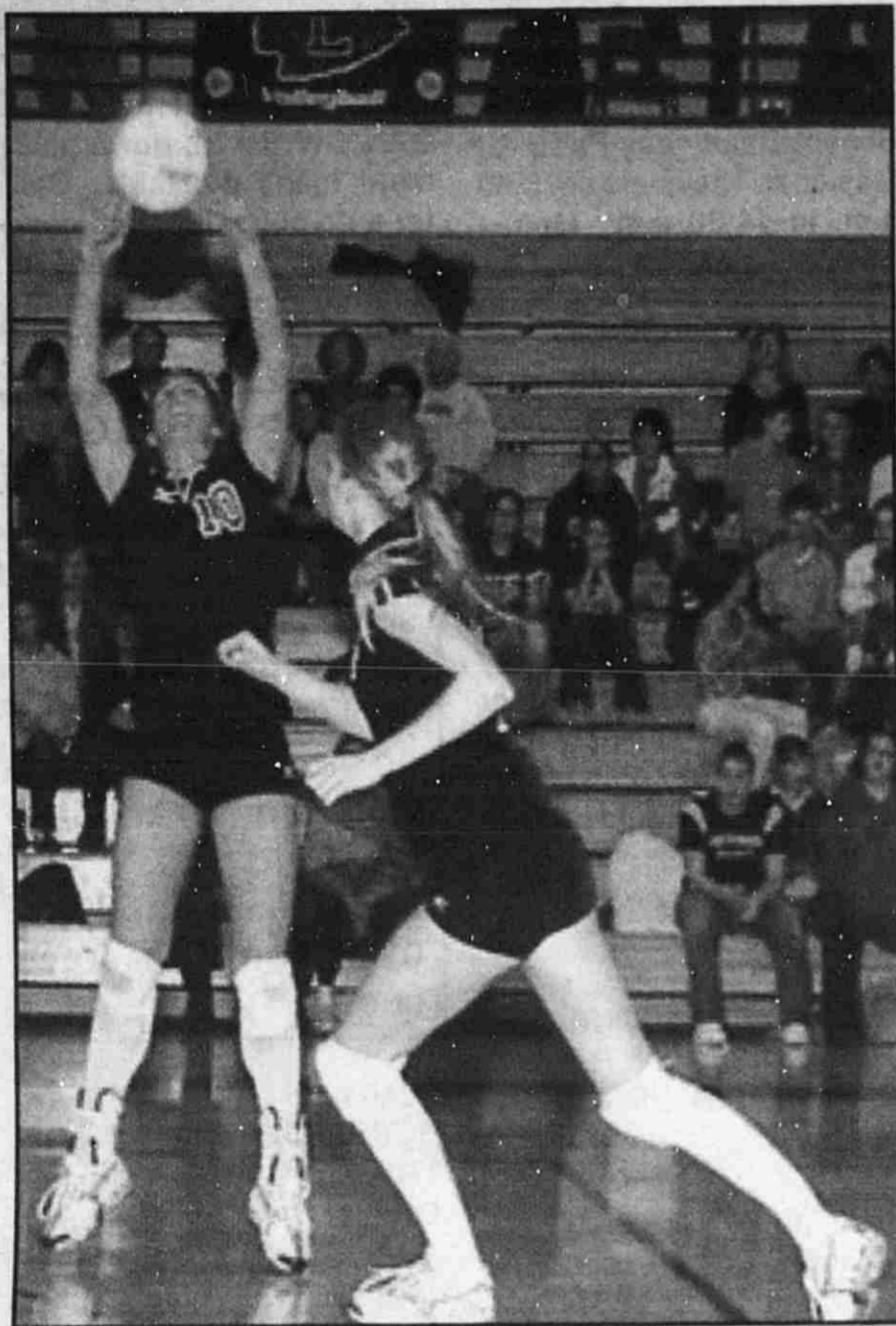
Lowell had beaten East in volleyball in the five years Peal has been coaching.

"It feels good, one step closer to a date on that banner," she said. "We knew this week and next week with Kenowa Hills were going to be our biggest games of the season." Verdon had 53 assists in the East game. Kristin Johnson and Samantha Mol had 18 kills. Four players with more than 20 digs in the match were evidence of Lowell's strong defensive play. Mol, Johnson, Lisa Johnson and Katie McElroy all had more than 20 digs.

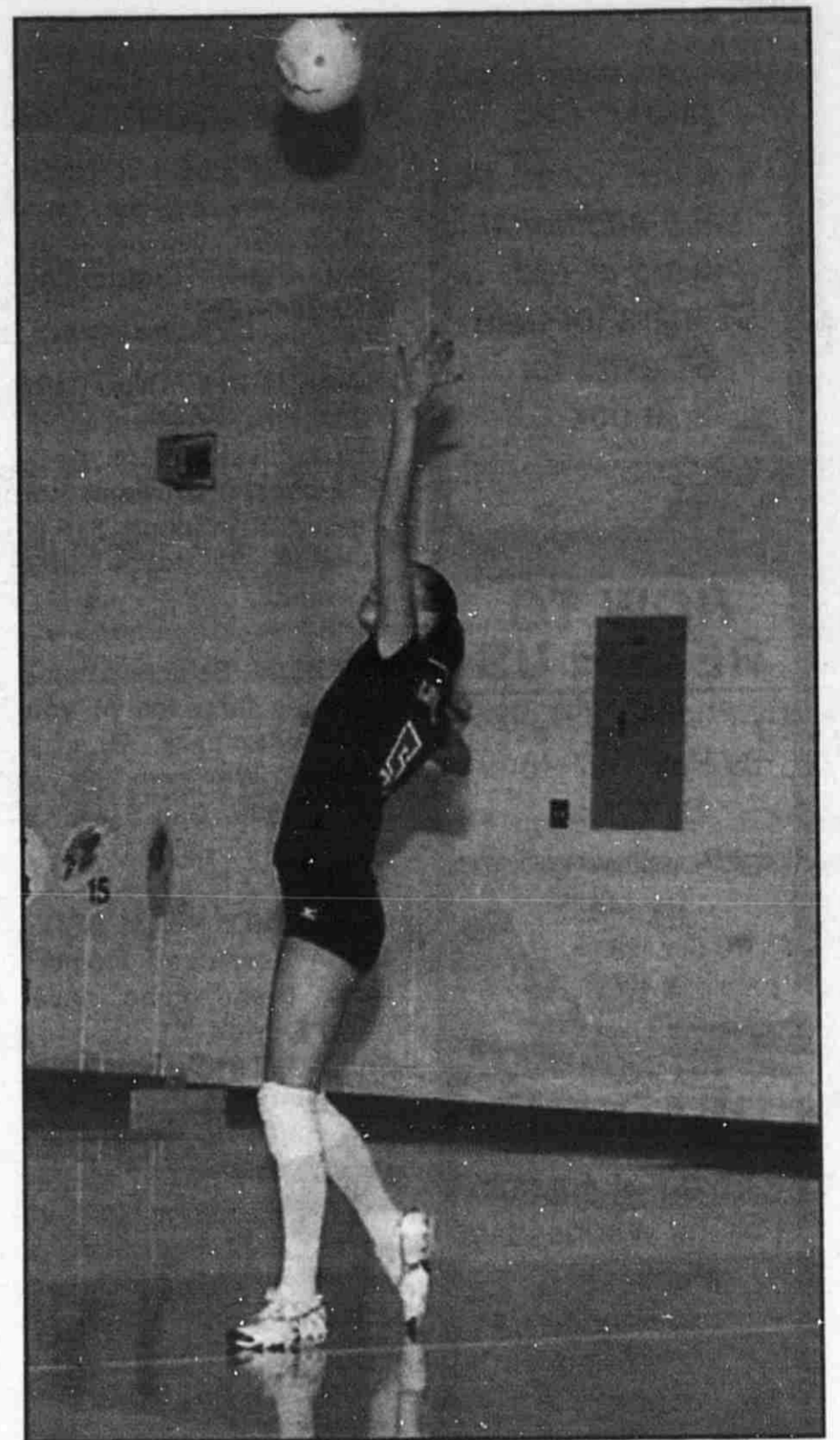
Lowell took third overall at the Zeeland Invitational on Saturday. The Arrows took second in their pool, defeating Wyoming Park 25-13, 25-15 and Hudsonville 25-19, 25-12; they lost to Holland 25-15, 14-25, 10-15.

Lowell beat Grandville in the quarterfinals 25-20, 25-11 before losing to Mattawan 22-25, 15-25 in the semifinals.

Lowell's next match is Thursday at Kenowa Hills.



Lowell's Taylor Verdon sets the ball in last Thursday's victory over EGR. She had 53 assists in the game.



Lowell's Samantha Mol serves the ball against East Grand Rapids.

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