

The Lowell Ledger

Volume 31 Issue 18

Serving Lowell Area Readers Since 1893

Wednesday, March 9, 2005



Counting on fun!

Playing a memory game at the Lowell Senior Center last Wednesday were Cherry Creek students Brice Warner (from left), Eva Cain, Coty Curtis, Jace Thomas and Ricky Perezfrom. The second grade classes of Jackie Tousley and Kim Lum have been playing games with seniors at the center once a month on Wednesdays, part of a service learning project. The most recent game was "clock concentration," in which the students tried to flip over analog clocks and their digital counterparts. The point was to learn "telling time with analog clocks," said Tousley, "which aren't around much anymore, but they still have to know how to do that." Past games have involved mathematics with sums of money. In May, the seniors will go to Cherry Creek to have lunch with the students.

Commissioners concerned over hefty price tag on updating master plan

By J. Lobdell
Contributing Writer

Lowell Planning Commissioners felt some sticker shock last week after receiving the cost for updating their master plan. At the request of the commission, Steve Langworthy of Langworthy, LeBlanc, Strader and Associates, put together the proposal which came in at an estimated cost of \$31,000.

"That's pretty steep," said city manager David Pasquale, who told the commission that with a tight city budget, he didn't see where the money would come from. The city has put through a request for \$5,000 from the Community Development Block Grant fund, a federal program that is overseen by Kent County, for work on the master plan. Pasquale said the city might be able to secure more funding from that fund next year.

With some monies from

the general fund or other community funds, the city might be able to cover \$20,000 for work on the master plan over a two-year period.

In reviewing the proposal, it provides for a comprehensive review of the master plan, which has not been done since 1995. The state requires municipalities to review a master plan every five years.

With that in mind,

planning commission chair Clark Jahnke felt the commission members need to spend some time reviewing the proposal and deciding what can be scaled back and what is necessary.

"We need to determine what we really want to keep in our master plan and what we want changed," Jahnke said, adding that commission members should take a look at the city's current master plan along with the proposal.

Pasquale said commission members should also keep in mind that working on a master plan update is a big commitment on their time as well.

"One of the major responsibilities of the planning commission is to provide a master plan," he said.

Because of the price tag, members suggested seeking proposals from other firms. Pasquale said that could be

done, but that along with cost, members are going to want to look at which firm will be able to most closely provide the type of services needed.

The commission will review the proposal and discuss it again at the next meeting. Jahnke said the group may want to meet with the city council to discuss what direction the city should take with its master plan.

Opinions from all sides at packed boundary commission hearing

By Dan Schneider

The state boundary commission heard arguments from the community on the issue of annexing 177 acres in Vergennes Township.

People filled every seat in the city council chambers at City Hall and then some for the public hearing last Thursday.

The first to state his case was developer Rob Munger, owner of DuRay Development, LLC, in Kentwood. The company filed a petition for the annexation on Oct. 13, 2004. The land in question is made up of two connected parcels located to the north of Foreman Road and with boundaries on Vergennes Street and Alden Nash Avenue.

Munger pointed out

that the nature of the area surrounding the property has changed.

"This isn't a rural area anymore," he said.

As evidence, he talked about the lights from Lowell High School, Meijer and Harold Zeigler Ford which are visible from the property. He also mentioned Vergennes and Alden Nash as major traffic arteries and the sewer infrastructure owned by Lowell Township that exists on the property.

The development of the land has often been described as urban sprawl by its critics. Munger attempted to turn this argument around, saying, "Higher density of the location will help prevent urban sprawl."

He also made an argument in favor of annexation on environmental grounds,

citing newspaper articles about hazards associated with septic systems. Annexation, he said, was the most logical way for the property to get access to city sewer service.

"I am going to develop this property," Munger said, saying he would build the houses with septic tanks if the annexation failed to go through.

An official position paper from the Lowell City Council relative to the annexation was read by city manager Dave Pasquale in which he states that the city did not initiate or pursue the annexation, but that DuRay Development did; that the city has met with the township several times to discuss a 425 agreement,

by which sewer or other city services could be offered to the development without annexation; and that "the city has not started this action, but is very supportive." Conway from the Grand Rapids law firm Warner, Norcross and Judd, represented Vergennes Township for the majority of its allotted time. She argued that this annexation runs contrary to the boundary commission's stated purpose of maintaining regular city boundaries.

"It makes the city of Lowell more irregular," Conway said.

She compared the annexation to one that failed in the city of Owosso in the 1970s. She read from the court's ruling, which said that annexation would have made the Owosso an "armed

monster with only minimally connected appendages."

She pointed out that the land has no road access to the city. A car leaving the development would

have to make at least a three-quarter-mile trip

Boundary commission hearing, cont'd., pg. 20



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New Digs... Page 3**

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With Our Counsel



Donna Warber M.A. LLP
Rev. Bob Baird M.S.W.
Kathryn DenHouter Ph.D.

WHAT IS DYSPLEXIA?

The school year is winding down, and once again our elementary schools have helped develop some wonderful readers. This is always so satisfying to the child, to the teacher and to the child's parents. But there are some children who have fallen behind, and simply are unable to master the skills necessary to become good readers. The adults that are caring for him/her need to ask the question, "Does my child have dyslexia?" This article will present what the symptoms of dyslexia are, based on the definition from the International Dyslexia Association.

Dyslexia is a neurologically-based, often familial, disorder which interferes with the acquisition and processing of language. Varying in degree of severity, it is manifested by difficulties in receptive and expressive language, including phonological processing, in reading, writing, spelling, handwriting and sometimes in arithmetic.

Dyslexia is not the result of motivation, sensory impairment, inadequate instructional or environmental opportunities, or other limiting conditions, but may occur together with these conditions.

Although dyslexia is lifelong, individuals frequently respond successfully to timely and appropriate intervention. Emotional disturbances and behavioral difficulties are often secondary results. Characteristics that may accompany dyslexia:

- Lack of awareness in sounds in words—sound order, rhymes, or sequence of syllables.
- Difficulty decoding words—single word identification.
- Poor sequencing of numbers, of letters in words, when read or written (e.g., b-d; sing-sign; left-felt; soiled-solid; 12-21.)
- Problems with reading comprehension.
- Difficulty expressing thoughts in written form.

- Delayed spoken language.
- Imprecise or incomplete interpretation of language that is heard.
- Difficulty in expressing thoughts orally.
- Confusion about directions in space or time, right and left, up and down, early and late, yesterday and tomorrow, months and days.
- Confusion about right or left handedness.
- Similar problems among relatives.
- Difficulty with handwriting.
- Difficulty in mathematics - often related to sequencing of steps or directionality or to the language of mathematics.

Persons with dyslexia can learn, but they must be taught in a manner appropriate to their particular strengths and weaknesses. Next month "With our Counsel" will discuss famous people in history who have struggled with dyslexia.

To The Editor, continued... From Page 5

Some of us started as substitutes for food service, then hired in at 1.5 or 2 hours a day. Our school system doesn't even have a sub pool anymore. We now use a temp service to fill positions. No background checks are required. School employees, however, are required to have a criminal background check.

I'm afraid our administration has become nothing more

than an accounting firm, with the education and well being of our children a secondary interest.

So why am I writing this? I want you, the public, to start asking questions. I want the public to be informed of the things that are not published in our local papers.

Sincerely,
Robin Briggs

Lowell High School March Students of the Month

Lowell High School "students of the month" have been selected for March.

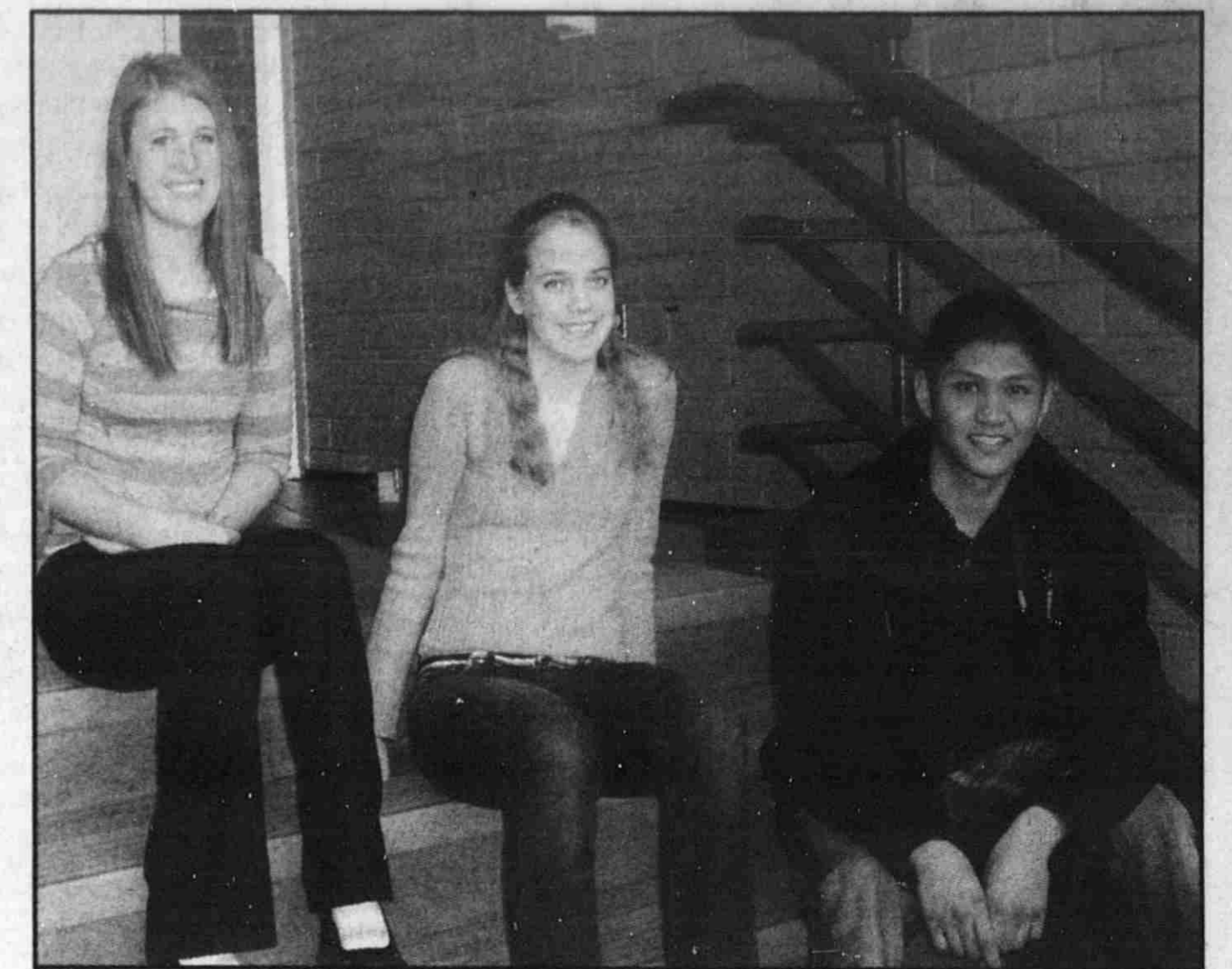
Julie Dunn was the choice of the Agriscience Department. She is the daughter of Rick Dunn of Lowell and Kathy Dunn of Ada. The senior is a member of FFA, National Honor Society, the equestrian team and the cheerleading squad. In addition, she is active in her church youth group and 4-H. Dunn plans to attend Michigan State University in the fall. Her

teacher nominator said she works very hard to maintain her academics and also finds time to participate in extracurricular activities.

Alvin Aquino was selected by the Technology Department. A senior, he is the son of Enrique and Priscila Aquino of Ada. Employed at Alticor, he also enjoys boxing in his free time. Aquino plans to attend college and work next year. His teacher nominator said he worked hard in drawing and painting class, and chose subjects that weren't always

the easiest but in which he showed a strong interest.

Alice Blumm was chosen by the Science Department. The junior is the daughter of John and Paula Blumm of Lowell. Her extracurricular activities include a part in the all-school play and stage manager for the all-school musical. She is also president of the junior section of the Grand Rapids Astronomical Association. Her teacher nominator said Blumm does excellent work in science and overall academic excellence.



Students of the Month are pictured, left to right: Julie Dunn, Alice Blumm and Alvin Aquino.

Charm is a way of getting the answer yes without asking a clear question.

—Albert Camus

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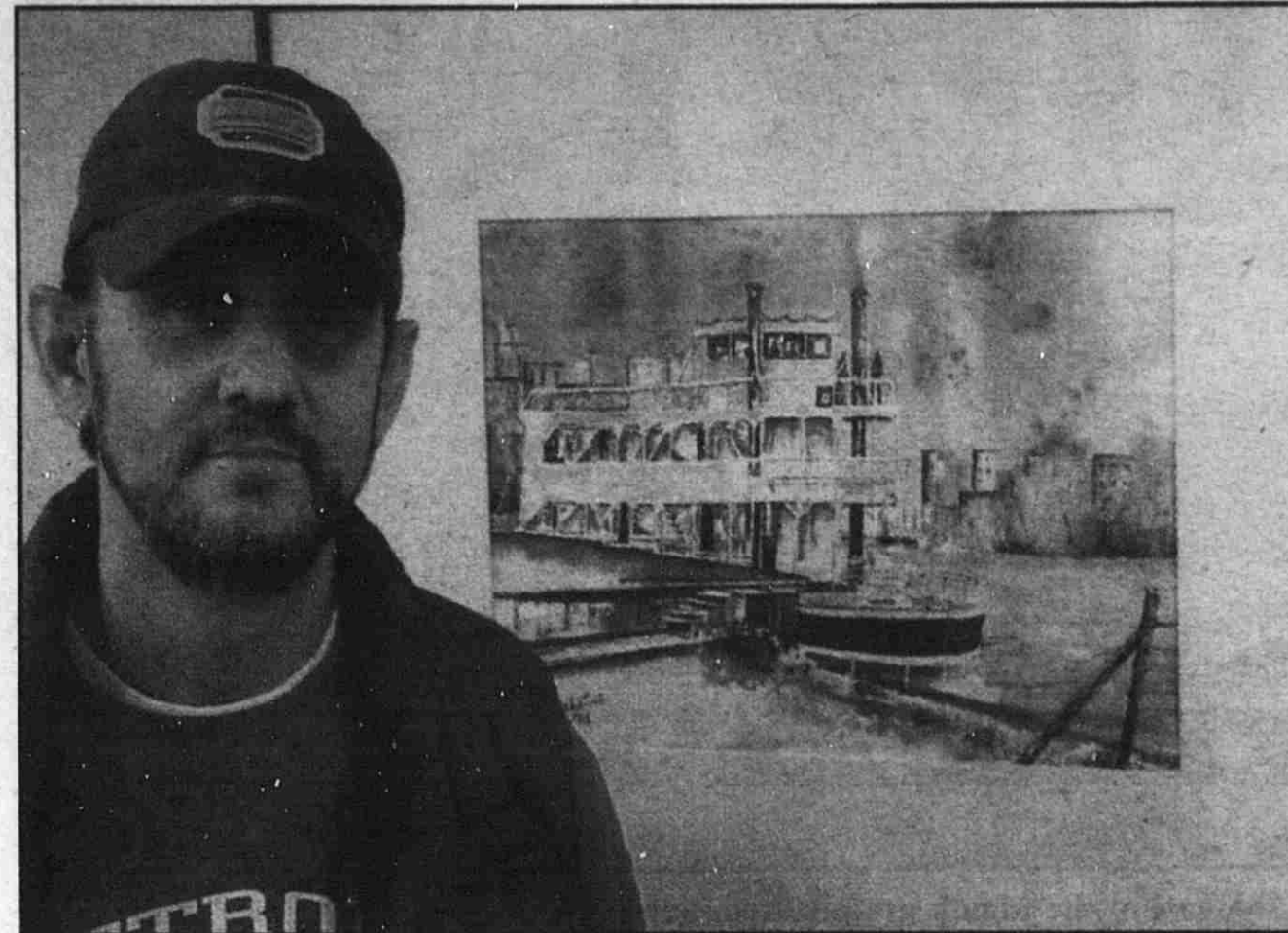
Featured Artists

Don Holstine

By Dan Schneider
Born and raised in Grand Haven, watercolor artist Don Holstine has painted a lot of lighthouses. He's painted familiar

ones like Big Red in Holland and Point Betsie in Frankfort, and also lesser known ones elsewhere along the shoreline. Some of them have fresh coats of paint, but, he said, "others have fallen into delapidation."
Holstine's artworks currently on display at the Huntington Galleria include some of those lighthouses. "I don't have as many lighthouses in this exhibit as I usually would have," he said, adding that there are several paintings from around Lowell... the showboat, the backs of buildings over the Flat River, King Milling and Blue Ribbon Feeds. "Every little com-

At left, Lowell artist Don Holstine with his painting of the Lowell Showboat, one of several currently on display at the Huntington Galleria on E. Main St.



Marine visits students who wrote to him overseas

By Dan Schneider

Home from Iraq following a seven-and-a-half-month deployment, Marine Sgt. Jerry Jordan spent last Friday afternoon tubing at Pando Ski Center with students from Unity High School. Jordan returned from Iraq on Feb. 14 for a 20-day leave.

The students in Tonya Sandborn's class wrote letters to Jordan, a 29-year-old Lake Odessa native, while he was stationed. Sandborn is a family friend of the Marine sergeant, who went to high school with her sister in Lake Odessa.

Stationed in hostile territory, Jordan said soldiers appreciate hearing from home.

"When you're having a really stressful, intense day, and you get mail from people that you know or don't know, any kind of mail is good mail," he said. "It feels good because you think about it and all the people back here are supporting you."

Stressful days were the norm for Jordan who was in Iraq for his second deployment. With the Marines' Second Force Recon, he was stationed south of Baghdad in what's referred to as the "Triangle of Death." Their mission was to train an elite Iraqi security force called Hillaswat.

"Sometimes you'd be training out there and you'd

have mortars flying in on you, but you just kept going because you expected things like that to happen," Jordan said.

Letters in two packages came from about 20 Unity High School students. He tried to answer as many questions as possible in his responses.

"I remember sitting there one day on my day off, just sitting there and writing letters," Jordan said.

Some of the classmates who wrote letters knew people who went or nearly went to Iraq, and therefore welcomed the opportunity to write to a serviceman stationed there.

"I had a brother who almost had to go and so I thought I could write Jerry," Unity senior Amanda Reed said.

"Half of us decided to do it just because Sandborn asked us to and we thought it would be fun," said Unity junior Meghan Ryan. "And one of my friends, he went over there, too, so I thought I'd write to Jerry."

Ryan plans to join the military herself when she graduates from high school.

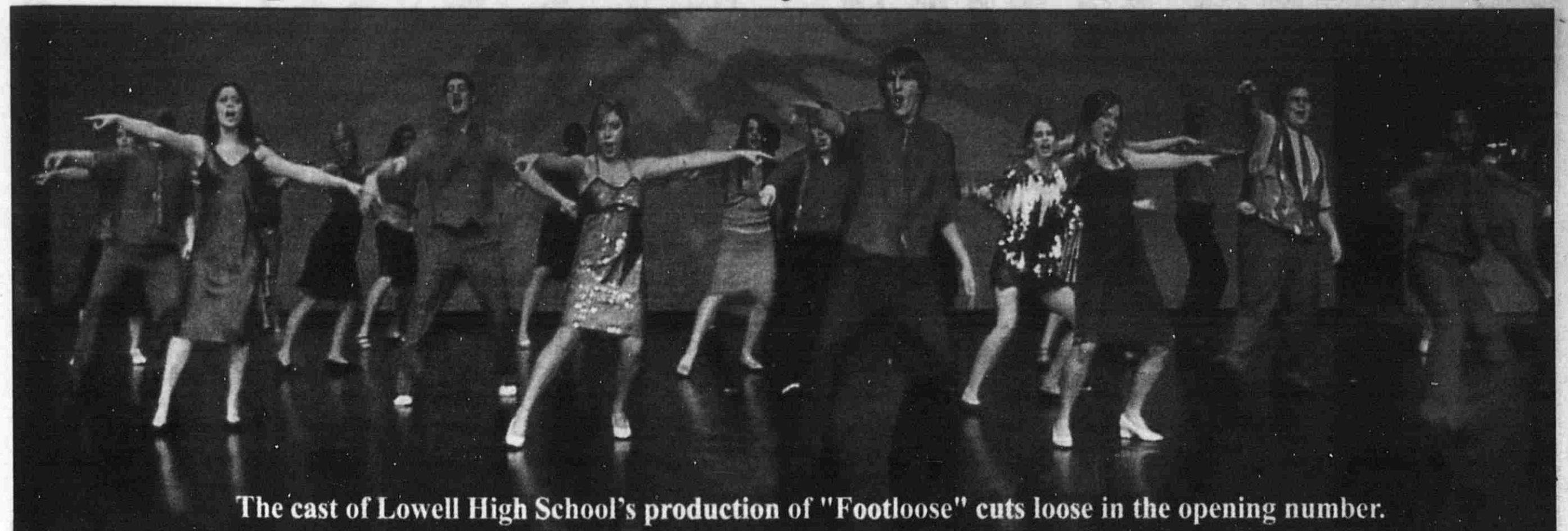
"Just because then I could get my training done and become a firefighter faster," she said.

Jordan will be stationed at Camp LeJeune, North Carolina, after his leave time is up.



Above, from left, Marine Sgt. Jerry Jordan, Unity High School teacher Tonya Sandborn, and students Meghan Ryan, Alan Boeve and Amanda Reed in the Unity High School gym. Jordan went snow-tubing with the class a week ago.

Spring musical is fancy free and "Footloose"



The cast of Lowell High School's production of "Footloose" cuts loose in the opening number.

By Dan Schneider

Lowell High School is rockin' this spring with the musical "Footloose" which opens Thursday.

The production is an allegorical tale about what can happen when rock and roll invades a small, rural town. The result is well-choreographed musical numbers.

Junior Chad Dreth shakes his hips like Elvis to the dismay of the town moralists. He plays Ren McCormack, a teenager from Chicago whose life circumstances force him to move to rural Anytown, U.S.A. with his mother. It turns out that Anytown is in Iowa, and in the play it is called Bomont.

At first, Bomont doesn't appreciate his big-city airs. Dancing and rock and roll are verboten in the small town. Reverend Shaw Moore—played by senior Kyler Krieg, whose singing voice is one of several discovered during rehearsals for the musical—is a religious zealot bent on keeping feet firmly planted on the ground in the town of Bomont. When some high schoolers from Bomont High die in a car accident after a homecoming dance in a nearby town, Moore talks the city council into outlawing dancing in the town.

McCormack can't seem to catch a break.

Early on, he is sternly reprimanded for showing off "a few moves" at the school by principal Harry Clark (Regan Doyle). He also loses a job and is pretty bored in the cow-town. Moore's fast-living teenage daughter, Ariel (Amanda Durkee) takes a liking to McCormack immediately, which promises further plot complications. Needless to say, McCormack shakes things up a bit in Bomont, but can he loosen its Puritanical shackles? It will take several musical numbers, but he just might pull it off.

Besides rock and roll, the orchestra pit features five electrified instruments. Ryder Jones plays both guitar and Cowboy Bob. Famous songs featured include the title song and "Let's Hear it for the Boy." Footloose is a complicated production, one with 10-second costume changes and on-the-fly set changes. It incorporates a huge cast and elementary students even make one-night-only appearances.

It's a big production, and the musical is flying solo this year, financially, due to a tight budget. There will be six performances: March 10, 11, 12, 18 at 7:30 p.m.; March 19 at 2 and 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$5 students/seniors; \$7 general admission; and \$8 at the door. Call 987-2956.

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BOWNE TOWNSHIP NOTICE

The Bowne Township Board will hold a public hearing on the proposed budget for fiscal years 2005-2006 at the Bowne Township Historic Hall - 8240 Alden Nash SE., Alto, MI 49302 on Monday, March 21, 2005 at 7:30 p.m. "The property tax Millage rate proposed to be levied to support the proposed Budget will be a subject of this hearing." A copy of the budget is available for public inspection at the Township Office at the above address Wednesday, Thursday 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon and 1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m., Friday 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon.

Sandra L. Kowalczyk
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Tickets on sale in the Lowell High School Main Office

Gymnasts wrap up the season in Traverse City

By Dan Schneider

The Lowell gymnastics team finished out its season Saturday at the team regionals at Traverse City Central High School.

The Red Arrows scored 128.55 as a team to place eighth in the tournament, despite a day hampered by injuries and circumstance. A knee injury flared up, keeping Leannah Seese out of competition. An ankle injury prevented Kelli Kowalski from competing in her events except for uneven bars. Amanda Rau injured her ankle on floor exercise with vault and bars remaining. Jenna Dickerman's hand grip tore during her uneven bars routine, forcing a fall in what was otherwise one of her best routines of the season.

"It was basically the routine of her life up to that point, so that was too bad,"

said Lowell coach Michele DeHaan.

Due to these circumstances, some of the Red Arrow gymnasts scored who usually don't crack the top four. Olivia Breuker competed on vault, and Rochelle Bieri, filling in at the last minute because of Seese's injury, performed a beam routine without any falls.

Lowell only had four gymnasts who competed

on vault and bars. But considering these incidents, it was a pretty good day for the Arrows.

"Just for us to have to count all four scores on vault and bars, and to have the other girls injured, it was nice to still score 128.55 because it really wasn't that far from what we usually score," DeHaan said. "Even though it wasn't good enough to make it to state, I still think we had a great day."

Dickerman and Rau fell just short of making state individually, DeHaan said.

Lowell's scorers on vault were Rau (8.7) ... "She had one of her best vaults of the year," DeHaan said; Dickerman (8.55), Rebecca Underwood (8.2) and Breuker (7.45).

Bar scores for Lowell were Dickerman (7.95), Rau (7.65), Underwood (6.95) and Kowalski (6.35).

On beam, Dickerman and Underwood scored 8.6; Rau, 8.15; and Bieri, 7.1.

Top scores on floor were made by Dickerman (8.925), Underwood (8.875), Rau (8.85) and Alicia Weeber (7.65).

The combined Forest Hills team won the regional championship with a team score of 141.8.

Local students compete in karate championships

Sensei Aaron Bailey and his students Mariah Moore, Sam Whaley, Austin Rife and Jesse Davis, all of Lowell, competed in the Great Lakes All Star Open Karate Championships at Riverside Middle School in Grand Rapids on Feb. 12.

With hundreds of entrants, ages six to 60, the competition was intense, and demonstrated martial arts styles such as Tae Kwon Do, Karate, Arnis Sikaran, Wushu and Jujitsu.

Sensei Bailey competed in forms and sparring, placing third in the light



Pictured, left to right, are Mariah Moore, Austin Rife and Jesse Davis at Great Lakes All Star Karate Championships.

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The March board of review of Lowell Township will meet at the Lowell Township Hall on:

TUESDAY, MARCH 15, 2005

Between the hours of 9 a.m. and 12 noon and 1 p.m. and 4 p.m.

THURSDAY, MARCH 17, 2005

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OR

- 2.) By letter addressed to:
Lowell Township/Assessor
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***MUST BE RECEIVED PRIOR TO MARCH 11, 2005**

Linda Regan
Lowell Township Clerk

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Thanks to the one that knows the speed limit on Gee Dr. I wish more would pay attention to the 25mph limit. Keep our kids safe.

To the person who doesn't like sports stories on the front page. Be grateful that our town has so many wonderful young athletes. Great job to all of you! We want more front page sports news!

CONGRATULATIONS to the Lowell members of the West Michigan Home School Concert Band for their scoring a "1" at the MSBOA District Festival! Good Luck at State!!

Intertwined, you and I. Our souls speak from across the miles. Intertwined, you and I. Our blood flows from the same inside, Sister I Miss You!

Thanks to all who graciously offered to look for "O. J." last Thursday! We found him finally and he is back home. -The Jesbergs

Lowell wrestles its way into the semifinals at Battle Creek

By Dan Schneider

Ask coach Dave Strejcek how the Lowell Red Arrows made it to the state finals this year, and he'll tell you two things: hard work and heart.

"I've coached a lot of teams, and teams with talent, and this team has far and away the biggest hearts of any I've ever seen," Strejcek said.

In the state quarterfinals in Battle Creek Friday, wrestling against Oxford, Lowell showed some of the same intensity that beat Sparta in the regional final. The Red Arrows defeated the Wildcats 41-21.

"It was just incredible what these kids were able to do today," Strejcek said.

The match started at 135, where Lowell's Joe Mendez won by pin in 3:04. Dominic Doyle pinned Oxford's Adam Duncan in :59, Ray Seese pinned Mike Upshur in 3:58, Cory Fitzpatrick was pinned at 112 and Chris Roeloffs was pinned at 140. Justin Boss won the 130 match for Lowell after Mike May forfeited with a wrist injury. Boss had just tied the score at 3 each.

Other than that, every match went the full six minutes. Lowell won nine of the 14 matches. Oxford briefly held the lead, 16-15, after Kyle Oliver won a 20-13 decision over Ryan Esbaugh in a back-and-forth match at 215.

Oxford coach Paul McDevitt chalked up some of the reason for the loss to the Wildcats' nerves in their first trip to the state finals since 1999. That year, they lost to Lowell in the semifinals.

"I think our kids had butterflies in their stomachs all day long and that tires you out," McDevitt said.

After the match, Strejcek gave the team what he called the strangest talk he'd ever given.

"I just talked about how we had no chance whatsoever and we did it regardless," Strejcek said. "It's incredible for a team that's not even rated in the top 20 in the state to make it to the final four in the state tournament."

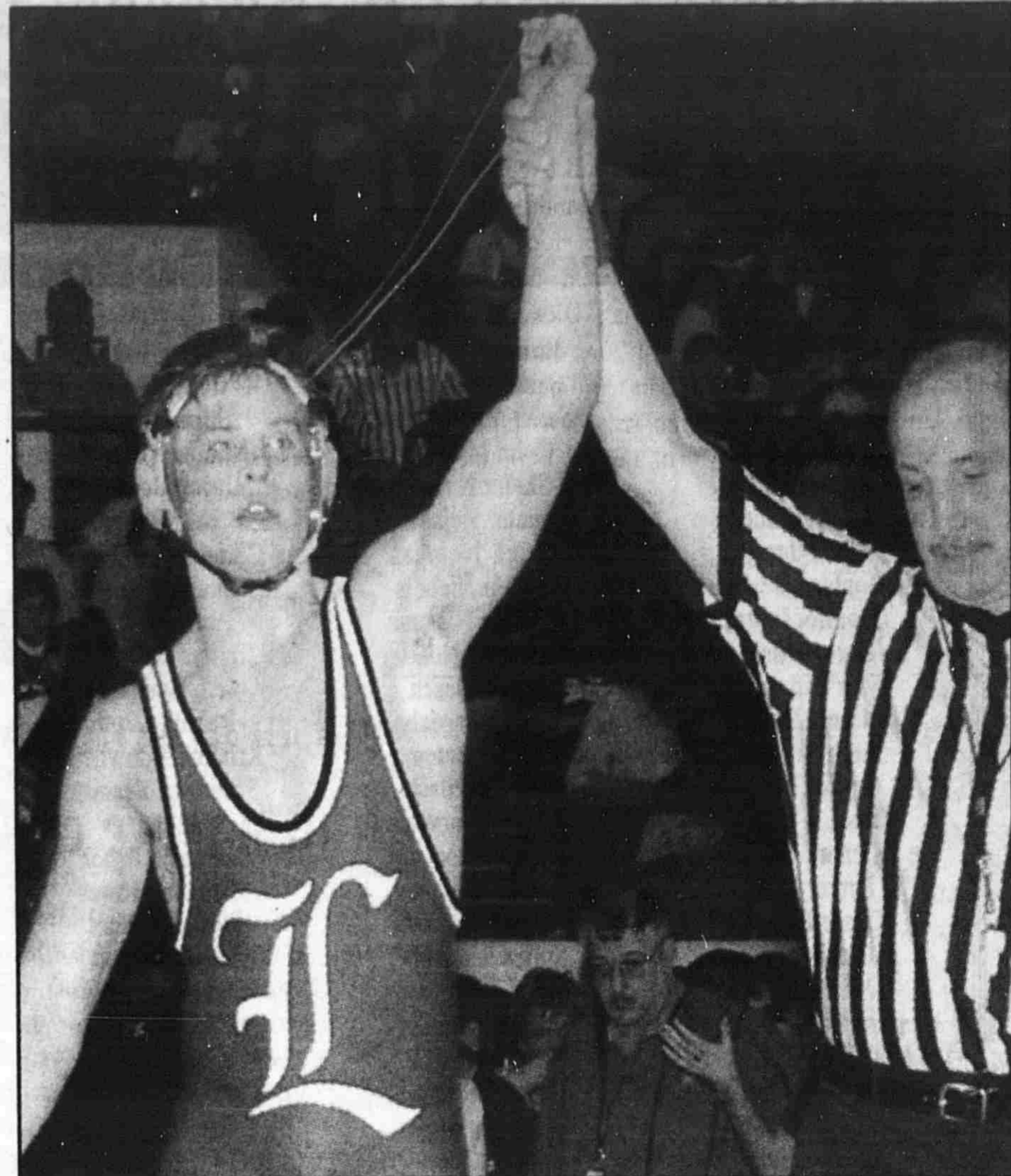
Lowell had a rough time of it the next day against Middleville Thornapple-Kellogg. The Trojans had

crushed Riverview 63-6 Friday to advance to the semifinals.

Middleville racked up a pin against Rob Karasiewicz at 119, a technical fall against Mike Thomas at 125, and a close decision, won in the final seconds, against Boss at 130 before Mendez put Lowell's first points on the board with a technical fall at 135. Lowell would win three other matches. Matt Francisco won a 6-3 decision over Travis Young at 171. Brock Graham was victorious in the 189, match on a last-second escape and takedown against Eric Reeder. That match had been scoreless through the first round. Seese won the 103 match by forfeit.

"We know Lowell peaks this time of year every year, their record speaks for itself, they're well-coached, they're good kids, things just went our way," Middleville coach Tom Lehman said. "There were a lot of big matches last time (when Middleville won 43-33 in a crossover match with Lowell) and we won some big matches today."

"I was just pleased that

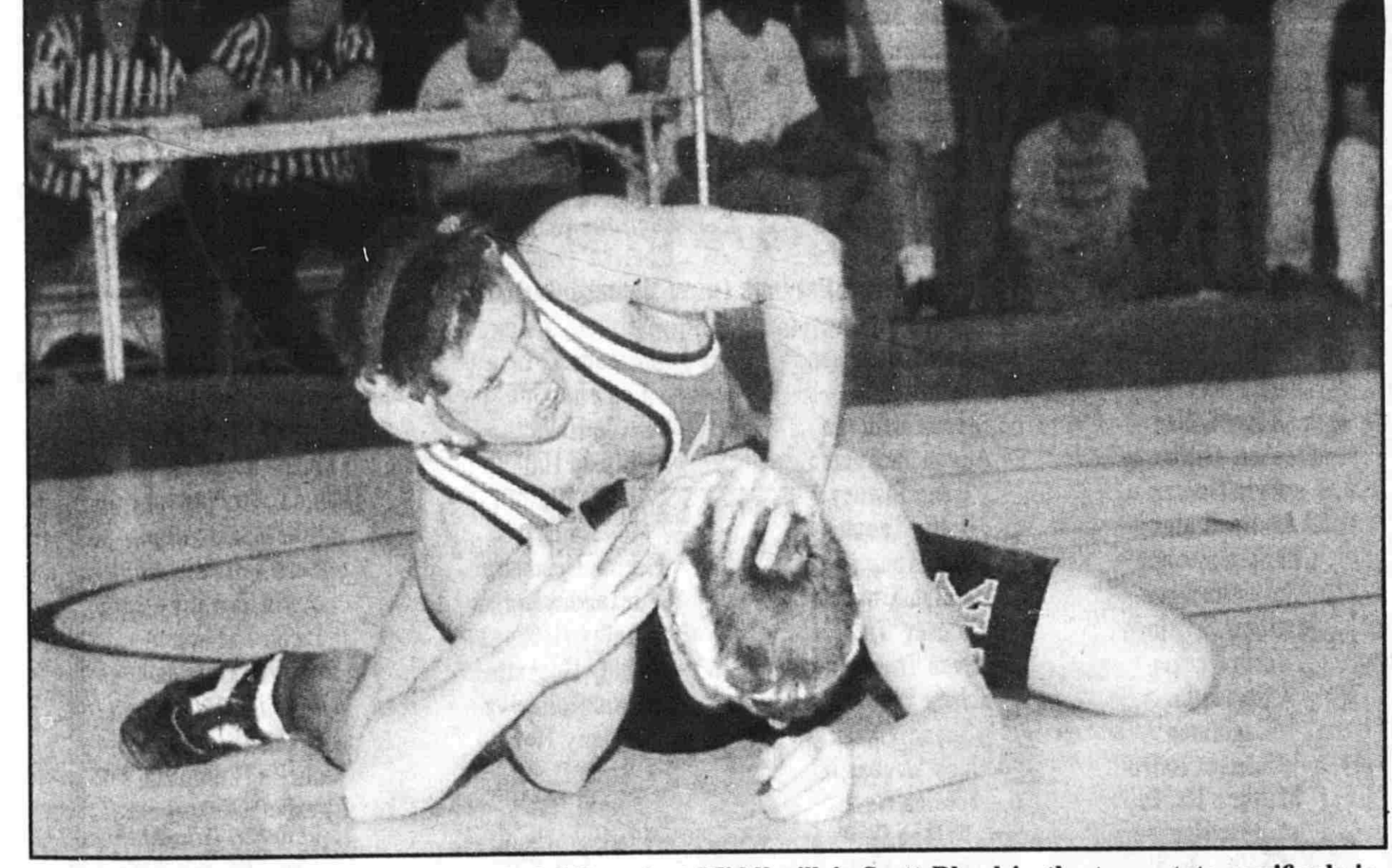


Lowell's Brock Graham defeated state qualifier Eric Reeder of Middleville in the 189 match.

we were able to knock off two of their state qualifiers at 171 and 189," Strejcek said. "We knew what we were getting into, we had no illusions about this match."

"It's an amazing feeling just that we made it here, and then to get in the top four," Mendez said. "We did a lot more than we expected this year. I'm happy with that, I'm sad to see it end."

The senior co-captain will wrestle for his fourth individual state championship this weekend at the Palace of Auburn Hills. He starts Thursday against Derek Ambs of Jackson Northwest in the first round of the 135 championship. Seese is also going to the individual state finals for Lowell. He will wrestle at 103 against Steve Light of St. Clair Shores-Lakeview.



Lowell's Joe Mendez won by technical fall against Middleville's Scott Blood in the team state semifinals in Battle Creek Saturday.

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SYNOPSIS BOWNE TOWNSHIP

Regular Board Meeting
February 21, 2005 7:30 p.m.

Motions approved.

Minutes approved for January meeting. List of invoices approved.

Motion to approve application for Purchase of Development Rights from David Bessey.

Motion to rollover the Community Development Block Grant Program funds.

Motion by resolution to authorize Clerk to apply for grant to purchase optical scan voting system.

Motion to authorize Clerk to purchase software for GASB-34.

Motion to establish township purchasing policy \$1,000 without formal bidding, \$20,000 with formal bidding.

Motion to pay auditor additional \$1600 for implementation of GASB-34.

Motion to approve ordinance amendments regarding private roads.

Motion to appoint Kryger and Bancroft to ZBA board.

Motion to authorize Treasurer to apply for Notary license.

Sandra L. Kowalczyk
Clerk-Bowne Township

Boundary commission hearing, continued ... From Page 1

through Vergennes and Lowell townships before getting to the city. Though the land proposed for annexation is contiguous to the city boundary, Lowell Area Schools' Cherry Creek Elementary property lies between the land and the nearest city road, Foreman.

She also said sewer-access options, short of annexation have not been exhausted. The development could have sewer access if an agreement were reached to allow Lowell Charter Township a larger allocation of the city's water and sewer capacity.

During his rebuttal period, Munger talked about the rights of landowners, calling the land Jim and Birdie Cooks' retirement plan.

"How would you feel if someone asked you to cut the value of your stock?" he said to the commission. He also addressed concerns about the development's possible impact on wetlands that exist on the property.

"There's no shortcuts with wetlands," Munger said.

During the city's rebuttal time, Pasquale expressed concern about allotting more sewer capacity to Lowell Charter Township.

He said, "If we provided the additional capacity, then we would forfeit that capacity for the possibility of development within the city."

In the township's rebuttal, Conway argued that if the city could spare the sewer capacity in the event the property were annexed, it could spare it through an agreement with the township, as well.

Among the 30 people signed up to speak during the public comment portion of the hearing were property owners Jim and Birdie Cook. Jim Cook said it has taken a long time to get a developer interested in the land and people who wanted to preserve the land have had the option to buy it.

"This property's been

for sale, it's been public knowledge for several years," Cook said. "It's our land and it's kind of difficult that every time you want to sell or develop a piece of land, someone will come and tell you how to do it."

Mark Nettleton of the Grand Rapids law firm Mika, Myers, Beckett and Jones spoke to the commission representing Lowell Charter Township.

"We urge you on behalf of Lowell Township not to recommend the annexation," he said.

Many spoke against the annexation during the public comment session. One of the issues was the township government's sovereignty in the enforcement of its master plan.

"The citizens of Vergennes Township did not establish the master plan with the intention of it being violated," Jaime Ladd said.

"The reason we are here tonight, if you cut right down to the bottom, is the developer doesn't want to comply with

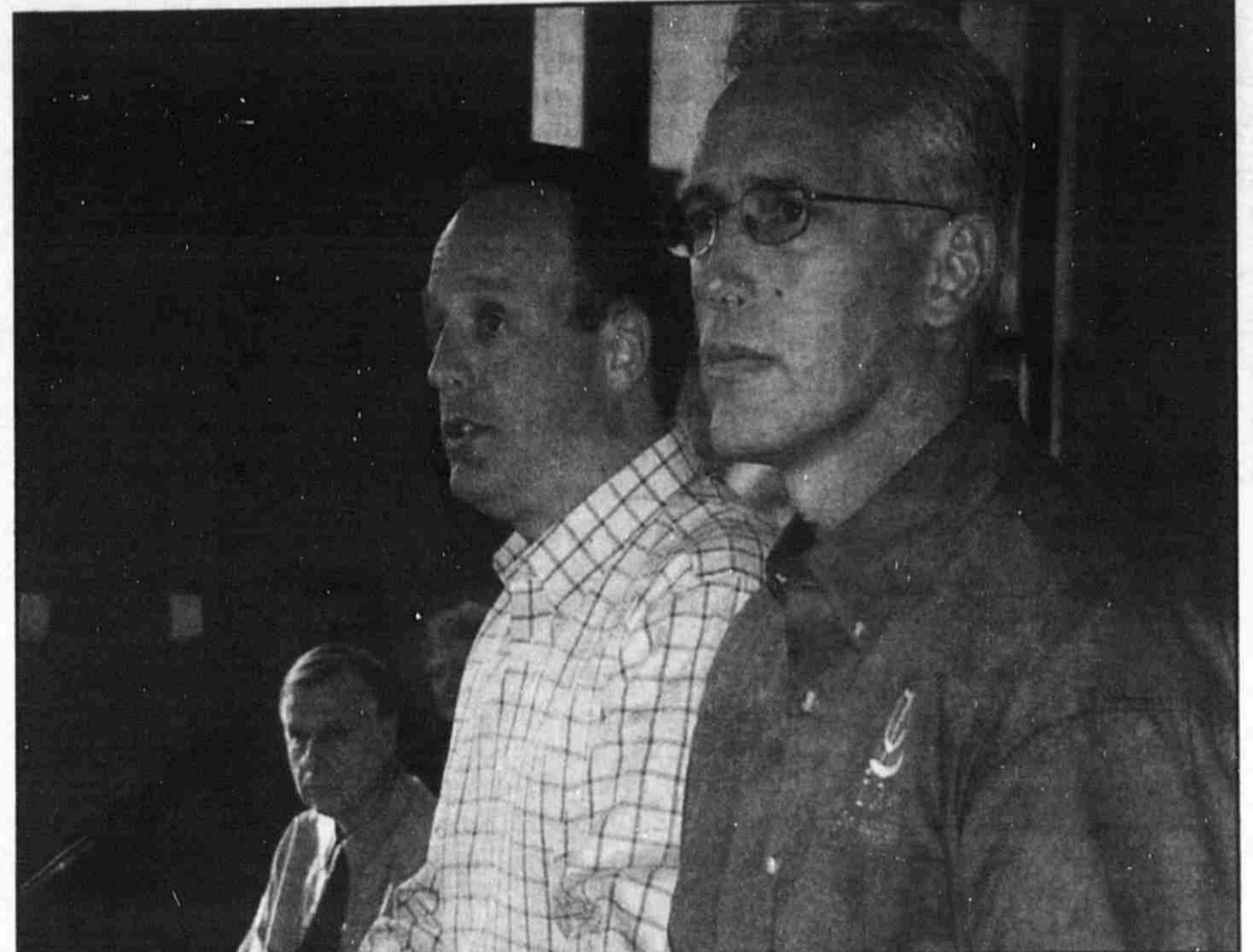
the township zoning," said Pete Gustafson.

Many expressed a desire for more community cooperation through the development process. Some feared that this annexation

issue could cause rift or a negative turning point in the relationship between the city and the townships.

The docket will remain open for 30 days to accept written testimony. DuRay

Development will then have seven days to make rebuttals on that material. It will be a few months thereafter before the commission makes its recommendation.



Rob Munger, owner of DuRay Development, LLC, and Brian Ellens, far right, a DuRay employee, present the case for annexation to the state boundary commission. In the background is Lowell city manager Dave Pasquale.

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