

The Lowell Ledger

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Serving Lowell Area Readers Since 1893

Wednesday, October 26, 2005



History lesson in Lowell

Sixth grade students from East Rockford Middle School were on a tour of Lowell last Thursday to examine architectural elements in the city's buildings. The structures magnet learning group at the school, which learns about the various disciplines (math, science, etc.) through architecture, was taking notes on the Lowell showboat as showboat builder Ivan Blough talked about its detailing and construction as an example of a transportation-related structure.

Other years, the class had toured the Heritage Hill District in Grand Rapids, but chose Lowell this year for its greater variety of building types (residential, commercial, etc.) within a walkable area.

"We will refer to this trip all year because we'll say, 'Remember the keystone at the police station' or whatever," said math and science teacher Diane Sellhorn.



Gun drawn during argument outside Main Street establishment

By Dan Schneider

A man drew a firearm during what police believe was a drug-related altercation two weeks ago outside Larkin's Restaurant.

Jeffrey Scott Stevens, 50, of Lowell, was arrested and charged with four felony counts and two misdemeanors. He is accused of pulling out a small caliber pistol and waving it at a 25-year-old man's chest.

Stevens was in Larkin's Restaurant celebrating his birthday the night of Thursday, Oct. 13. Around 2 a.m. Friday morning, he was in an argument with the 25-year-old Lowell man. Lowell police detective

James Hinton said a drug issue was the probable topic of the dispute.

They took the argument outside onto North Broadway Street after the bar closed, which is when Stevens pulled the gun.

The younger man's friends called police. By the time the first officer arrived, Stevens had put the gun away. He attempted to walk away when a second officer

arrived on the scene, and reportedly resisted arrest once taken into custody.

Stevens' first three felony counts are firearms Arrest, cont'd., pg. 13

Commission votes down annexation

"We couldn't get anybody to play together here." - Rob Munger, developer

By Dan Schneider

Lowell will not grow by 177 acres.

Last Thursday, the state boundary commission denied a bid by Kentwood developer Rob Munger to annex a parcel of that size at the corner of Alden Nash Avenue and Vergennes Street to the city of Lowell. The parcel is part of Vergennes Township.

"I think there is such a thing as orderly growth and I think this is not it," boundary

commissioner Robert Clark said before voting to deny the annexation.

It was a unanimous vote by county boundary commissioners Clark and Susan Flakne, and state-level commissioners Vicki Barnett and chairperson Ken Verberg.

"Obviously, we're happy it went our way," Vergennes Township supervisor Tim Wittenbach said of the decision. "We're still in control of zoning on the property, and that was our goal from the beginning."

The denial came after a final appeal by Munger at the hearing.

"We couldn't get anybody to play together here," Munger said, referring to the municipalities' failure to come up with a 425 agreement.

He continued with an emotional appeal, saying without the annexation, it would be difficult to build a profitable development.

"As a developer, I get quite frequently asked to move out of the state," Munger said, meaning that there are promising business opportunities in other places such as Georgia.

Munger, whose com-

pany DuRay Development, LLC is based in Kentwood, said that he wants to stay in Michigan.

"We need jobs here. I don't want to move to Atlanta," he said.

After the commission made its decision, Munger had no comment about the decision or whether he still plans to develop the property. At a public hearing in March, he said he was committed to developing the property, regardless of the result of the annexation petition.

Wittenbach said he doesn't think the

Annexation, cont'd., pg. 9

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DON'T FORGET!
Set Your Clocks
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At 2 AM!

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Murray Lake staff member of the month

Fellow staff members nominated Linda DeCator-Highway as Murray Lake staff member of the month for September.

Staff agree DeCator is not only excellent in the classroom, but has been instrumental in organizing a service learning project involving a brick walkway at the school which Murray Lake staff and students have been working on.

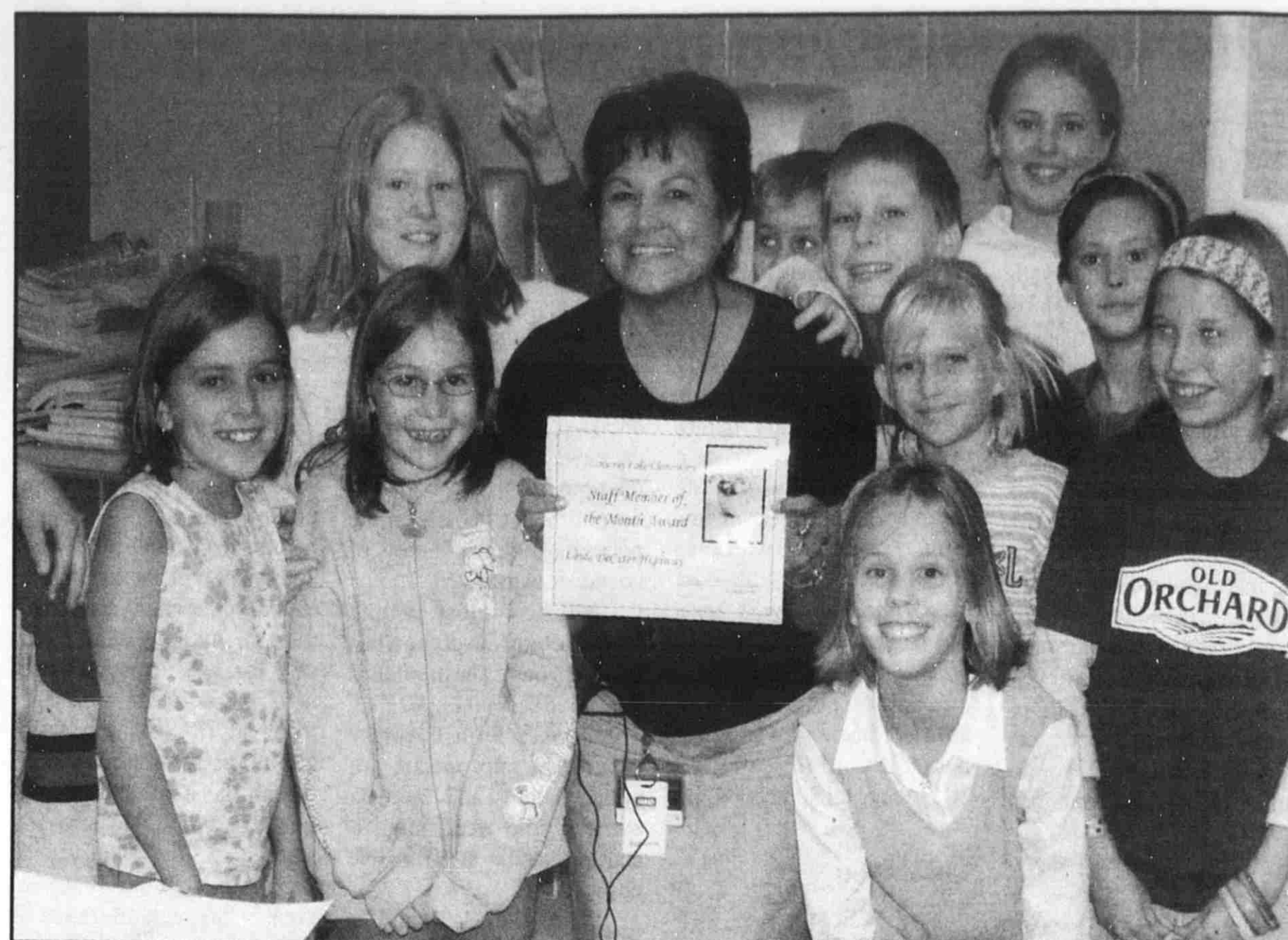
"Our outdoor gardens/classroom is an ongoing project that will give all of us something to be proud of as we plan, plant and maintain this area," said DeCator.

DeCator, the mother of

two grown children, has been teaching in Lowell for 28 years. She is also a licensed taxidermist with many of her animals on display at the Wittenbach/Wege Center and in the media center at Cherry Creek.

DeCator and her husband Darryl Highway enjoy fishing, golfing and camping.

"Linda is a great teacher. She knows her stuff, and gets kids involved in their learning. She is very hands on with her teaching and is very deserving of this recognition," said Murray Lake principal Brent Noskey.



Tips for slashing those soaring heating bills yet to come

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita will hit homeowners everywhere in the wallet this winter. The storms have caused real damage and disruption to the natural gas industry, adding to stains already caused by rising demand. Natural gas prices are now at a record high and the Department of Energy states they will keep going up as the cold weather descends upon us.

Natural gas prices are expected to rise a whopping 71 percent more this winter compared to last year. In other words, a \$500 to \$800 jump in annual home and water heating bills for most homeowners and over \$1,000 for many.

To reduce how much you

use, here are seven tips from the Comfort Institute to make your home an energy sipper instead of a gas guzzler.

1. Have your duct system tested for air leaks. According to a recent research by the Dept. of Energy (DOE), gaps, joints and disconnections in the typical home's duct system are much more significant. Authorities recommend having a heating contractor test for leaks and then seal them with a brushed-on-fiber-reinforced sealant.

2. Ask your contractor to perform an Infiltrometer "blower door" test. The blower door is a computerized instrument which pinpoints where your home's worst air leaks are and measures how leaky

the overall house is. Most homes have the equivalent of an open window in combined air leaks.

3. Close your fireplace damper. Shut it now or waste precious warm air all winter long.

4. Replace your furnace or heat pump air filter. Most systems need this done every month to ensure safe and efficient operation.

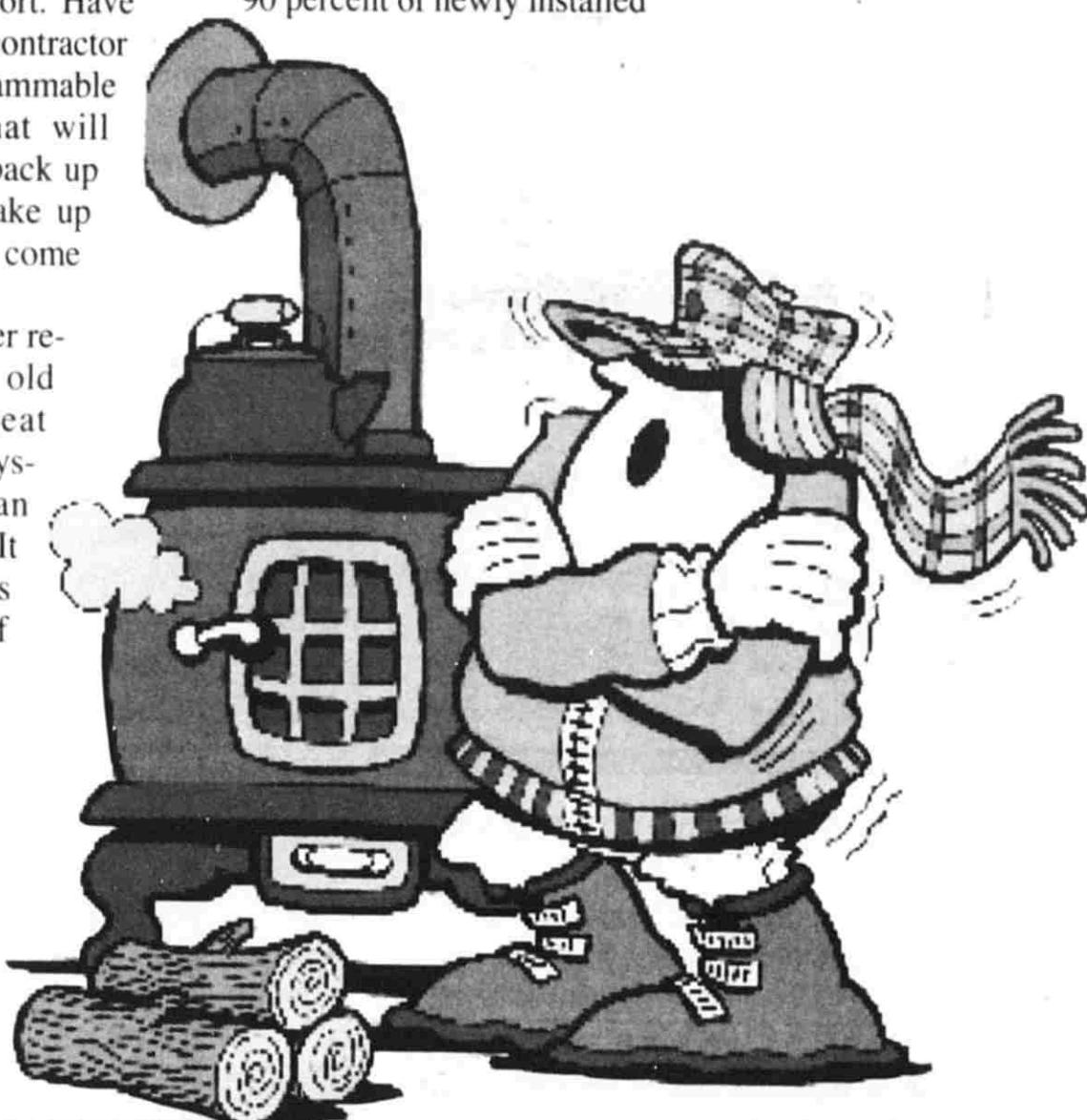
5. Have your heating system cleaned and tuned. A pre-season tune up reduces the chances of breakdowns on cold winter nights, improves safety and more than pays for itself through more energy efficient operation. Also have a complete carbon monoxide safety check completed.

6. Install a programmable set-back thermostat. Turn down your thermostat eight degrees for eight hours a day and you'll save eight percent on home heating costs. But you don't have to sacrifice comfort. Have your heating contractor install a programmable thermostat that will turn the heat back up before you wake up or before you come home.

7. Consider replacing your old furnace or heat pump. Is your system more than 12 years old? It probably wastes 35 cents out of

every dollar you pay for fuel. A new system is safe, improved comfort is more dependable and creates less air pollution. But do some homework before talking to contractors. Research has found that over 90 percent of newly installed

high efficiency systems have energy wasting installation mistakes. Visit www.energystar.gov and www.comfortinstitute.org for more information.



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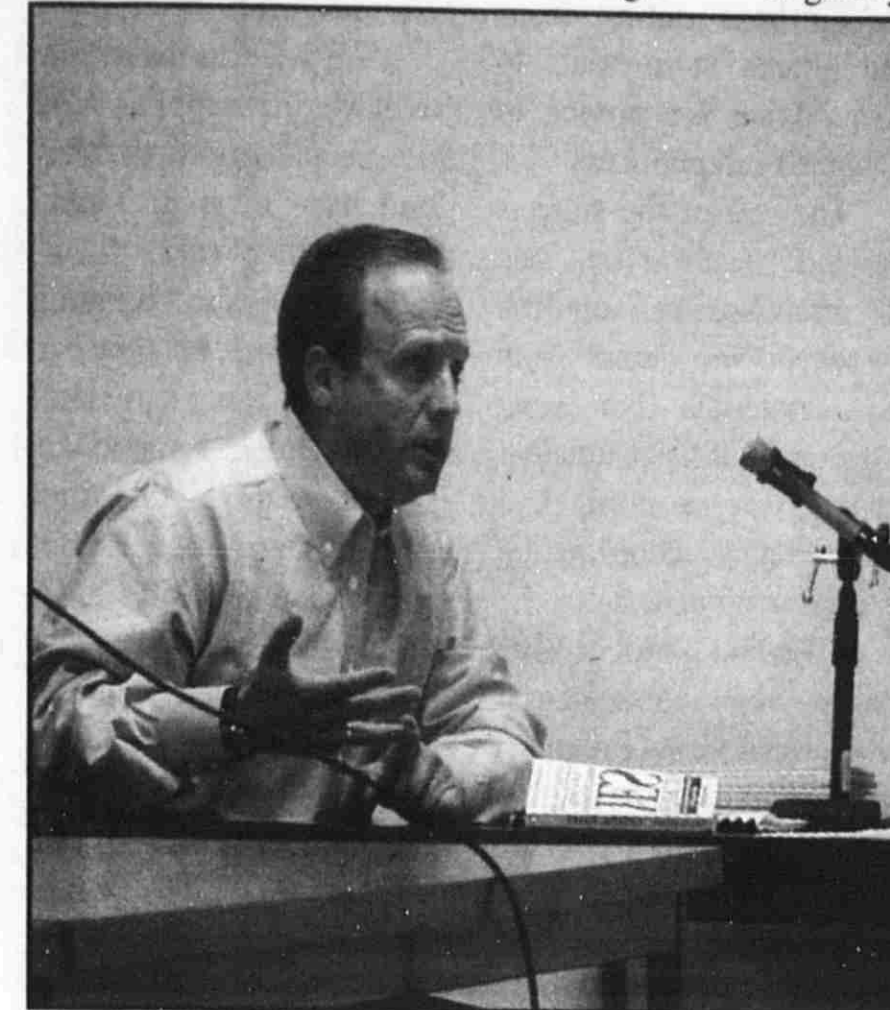
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Annexation, continued ...From Page 1

commission's decision will sour relations between the township and the developer if development plans continue.

be that bad, it's business," Wittenbach said. "We'll work with him just like before on a go-forward basis."

"I don't think it will Munger originally



Developer Rob Munger makes some final points in favor of annexation.

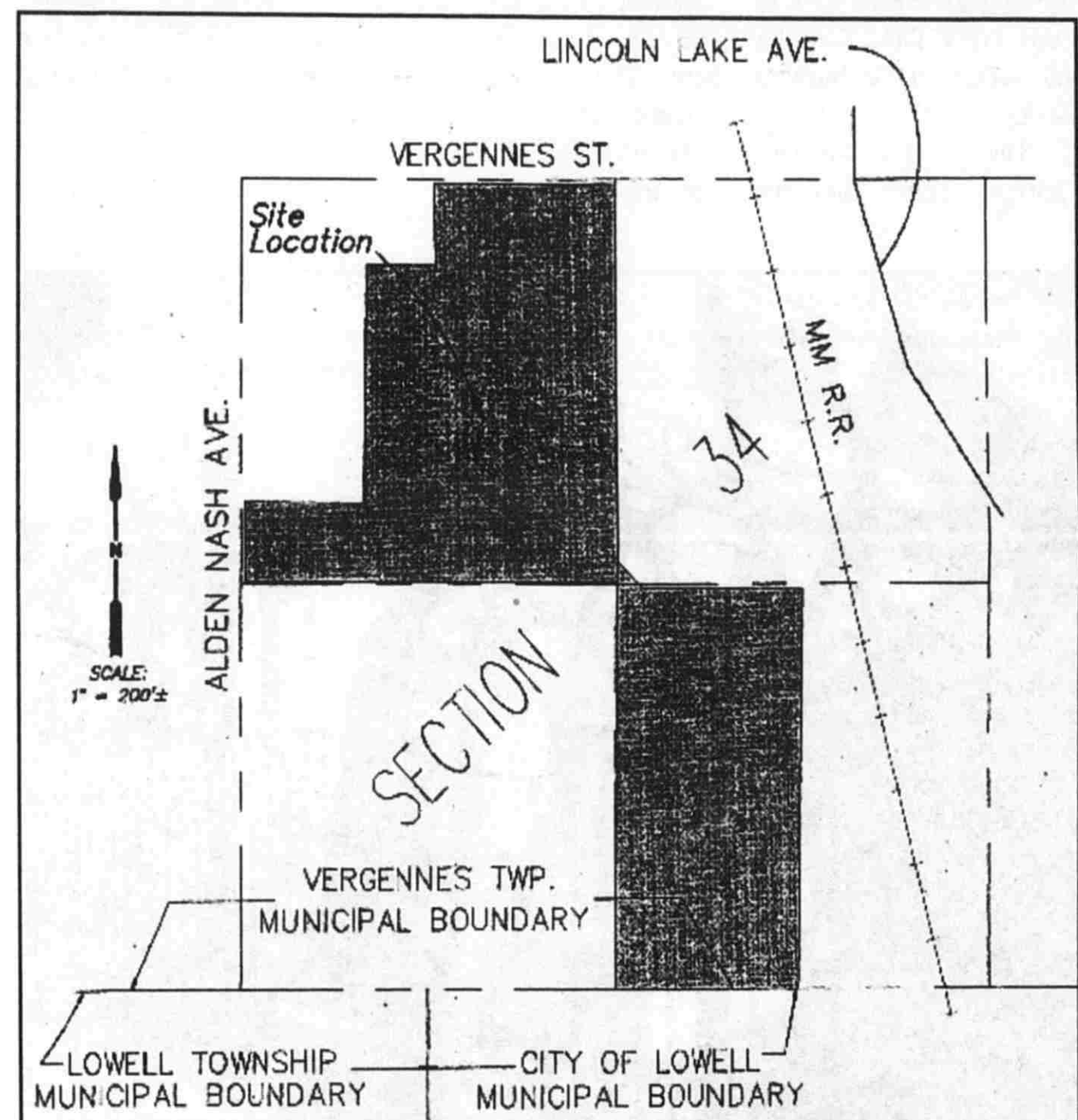
sought annexation as a means to procure city services, particularly sewer, for his eventual development on the property.

Sewer service was a particularly complex issue. The property lies in Vergennes Township, the sewer line running through it is owned by Lowell Charter Township, and the city of Lowell owns the wastewater treatment plant.

But the question of who would get zoning authority for the property is what pushed the decision into the hands of the state commission.

"At least from our standpoint, the major bone of contention is the zoning authority," Lowell city manager Dave Pasquale said at the hearing.

Munger petitioned the boundary commission for annexation in October 2004.



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- Albert Einstein (1879 - 1955)

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Lowell city manager Dave Pasquale (from left), Lowell mayor Jeanne Shores, and Vergennes Township supervisor Tim Wittenbach listen as the state boundary commission discusses the annexation proposal.

The commission held a public hearing in March at Lowell City Hall.

The township and the city were given the opportunity to negotiate a 425 agreement, which would have allowed the development to get city services without annexation. It would require the city and township to agree on a number of issues pertaining to the property, such as how to divide up the millage revenue from the eventual development.

The two municipalities were unable to broker such an agreement, however. The city felt it should have zoning authority since it was providing the services. One of the primary reasons behind the township's claim to the zoning authority was that the property is basically a peninsula into the township. And, though the property is technically contiguous with the city boundaries, it is isolated from the city of Lowell proper.

"The effect of this development on the

township will be so much greater than the effect on the city," Vergennes Township's lawyer, Sue Conway, said at the hearing.

The city's zoning would have allowed higher density than Vergennes' R-1, which allows one house per acre.

At a September hearing, the boundary commission gave the city and township another month to work out a 425 agreement before it would decide the annexation issue. During that period of time, representatives from both municipalities met twice. At the first meeting, they came to an agreement on the length of the 425 agreement (35 years) and a sharing plan for millage revenue.

"I was very hopeful after the first meeting, disappointed after the second meeting," Lowell mayor Jeanne Shores told the boundary commission.

In the second meeting, neither side could come up with a solution to the zoning authority question. Both sides did, however,

offer the other side input into the zoning process. So an impasse was declared, and the fate of the property was left in the hands of the boundary commission.

"I was disappointed," Pasquale said of the decision. "I don't really think the boundary commission understood the realities of the sewer and if the city is going to provide the sewer capacity. I think we should keep the zoning rights."

Pasquale went on to emphasize that it was not the city, but the developer, who sought the annexation in the first place.

The commission's denial of the annexation petition does not prevent Munger from developing the property. The townships and city will have to come up with an agreement, however, if the development is going to have sewer.

"This does not preclude the further discussion of the 425 agreement," Verberg said. "It just takes the hammer off."



Charlene Yeiter and Tara Eversman are the owners of CT's Scrapbook Central, a new store in Lowell.

New business caters to local scrappers

By Dan Schneider

Scrapbooking is growing in popularity as a hobby, almost to the point of being subculture, and for those who like nothing better than a good "crop," there's a new store in Lowell.

"Crop" is scrapbooking lingo for a group get-together for the purpose of putting pictures onto scrapbook pages. CT's Scrapbook Central has been open in Lowell since Aug. 20. The place has ample room for scrapbooking to take place, and a wide variety of pages and accessories for pasting pictures.

Part of the store has tables where patrons can gather during open hours to scrap. Scrapbook Central also hosts weekly crops Friday nights from 6 p.m. to midnight. The cost is \$10 and includes a light dinner. The shop also hosts daytime crops every third Saturday and scrapbooking birthday parties.

The shop's owners, Charlene Yeiter and her

daughter Tara Eversman, are both 15-year scrapbooking veterans. They and their employees, also scrapbooking hobbyists, are on hand during crops and regular store hours to give advice for novice to advanced scrapbookers.

The rest of the store is devoted to the retail sale of scrapbooking supplies. These run the gamut from basic materials like paper and glue to fully put-together layouts. Several companies offer lines of coordinating scrapbooking materials.

"They've done the creativity for you so all you have to do is put your pictures in," Eversman said. "It helps people visualize, having everything coordinated, and we try to keep up with the new products."

Eversman and Yeiter chose Lowell as their location, for one thing because Eversman lives here, and for another, so scrapbookers in this area wouldn't have to travel to get supplies.

"We thought we needed something closer and we thought this would be a good location for Ionia, Belding and Lakewood area," Eversman said.

"We want to make sure we have the supplies here that people want so they don't have to go to Grand Rapids," Yeiter said.

The shop is still building up its inventory, but they can order just about anything related to scrapbooks. They're adapting the store as they learn more about people's scrapbooking tastes in the Lowell area.

"Of course, football and cheerleading are very popular here," Eversman said.

She said a lot of people have already been coming in to make scrapbooks for seniors who will graduate in the spring.

Scrapbook Central, located at 1335 W. Main St., is open Tuesday - Saturday from 9 a.m. - 7 p.m.

A bridge to the past

Lowell - Hastings rail was once part of the thriving Pere Marquette line

By Dan Schneider

With paint flaking off it in big chunks, and rust blending it back into its natural forest surrounding, the steel bridge across the

steel bridge replaced a wooden bridge. Built in the fall and winter of 1890, the bridge connected the Lowell and Hastings Railroad to downtown Lowell for the first time. The Lowell Journal

south side of the Grand River. It was platted in the 1850s. A street name is now all that remains of Segwun.

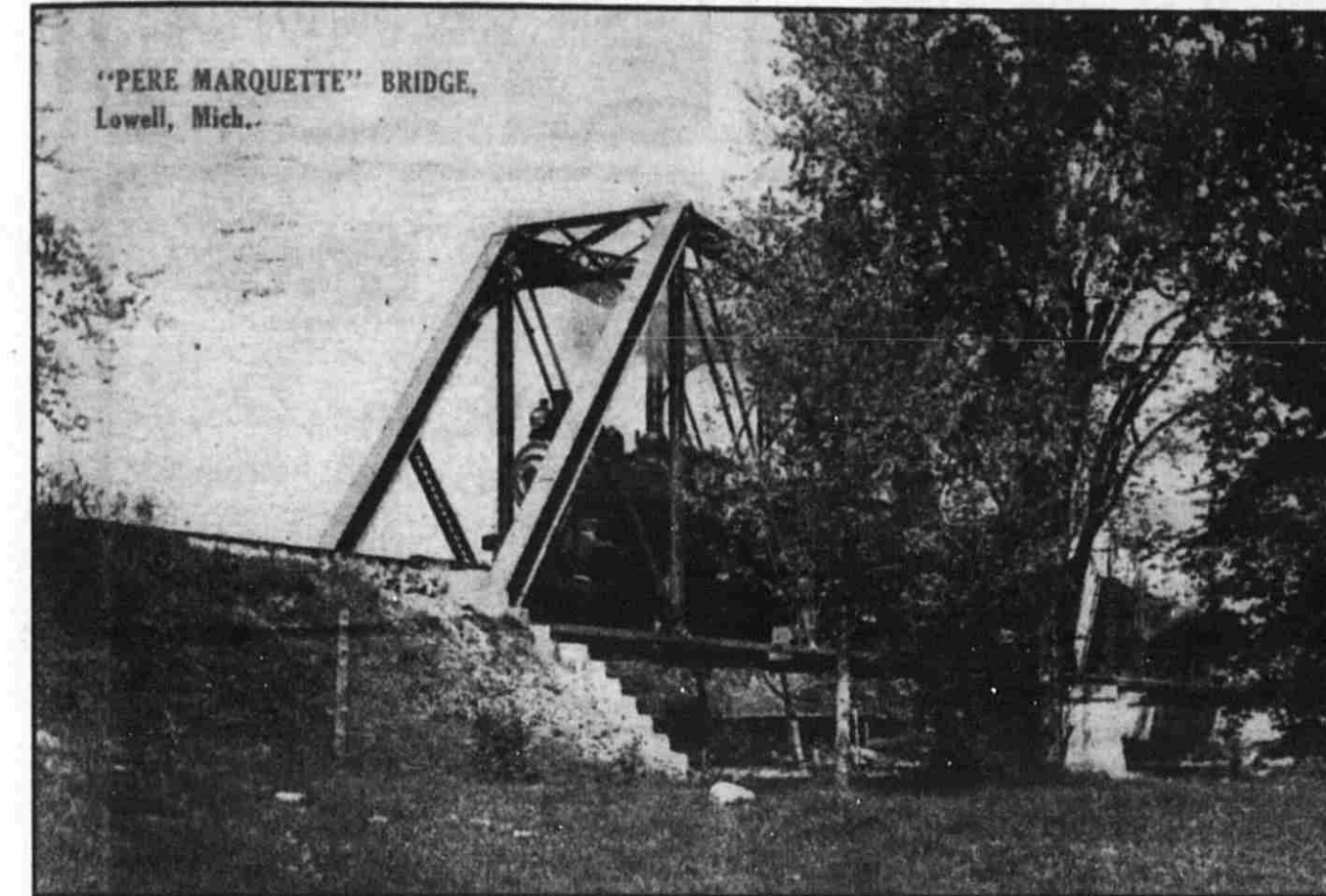
The railroad received a mild reception when it opened. A barbecue

Milling Company bought Wisner Brothers in 1896.

Much of the information in this article was taken from a book by railroad historian Merritt B. Scharnweber titled "The Lowell and

Hastings Railroad Company 1887-1898." The book tells a more complete story of the railroad from its beginnings to its purchase by the Grand Rapids, Belding and Saginaw Railroad Company and name

change to Pere Marquette. The story is told mostly through excerpts from the Lowell Journal and Freeport Herald newspapers. A copy of the book is available at the Englehardt Library.



This postcard showing a train crossing the bridge was postmarked Feb. 28, 1914.

Grand River is still the most visible sign of what was once known as the Lowell and Hastings Railroad.

By the time the bridge was built in 1904, the rail line was known as the Pere Marquette Railroad. Its builder, the American Bridge Company of New York, is the same company that built the Mackinac Bridge in 1957. It was also involved in such grand constructions as the Chrysler Building in New York City and, later, Chicago's Sears Tower.

In 1904, even a bridge of such humble stature as Lowell's Pratt truss on the Pere Marquette Railroad line could scarcely have helped being built by the American Bridge Company. Four years earlier, J.P. Morgan and Company had consolidated 27 bridge building companies into a near monopoly under the American Bridge Company name. The merged companies commanded 90 percent of the U.S. bridge building market.

of Oct. 29, 1890, reported "the extension of the Lowell and Hastings Railroad is being pushed rapidly and a large number of teams are putting up the earth north of the Grand River fast. Three cars of timber for the bridge are on the ground."

The Lowell Journal of Wednesday, Jan. 7, 1891, reported that the first train had departed the Lowell Depot Monday at 11:15 a.m. The depot was located at the intersection of Washington and Front streets.

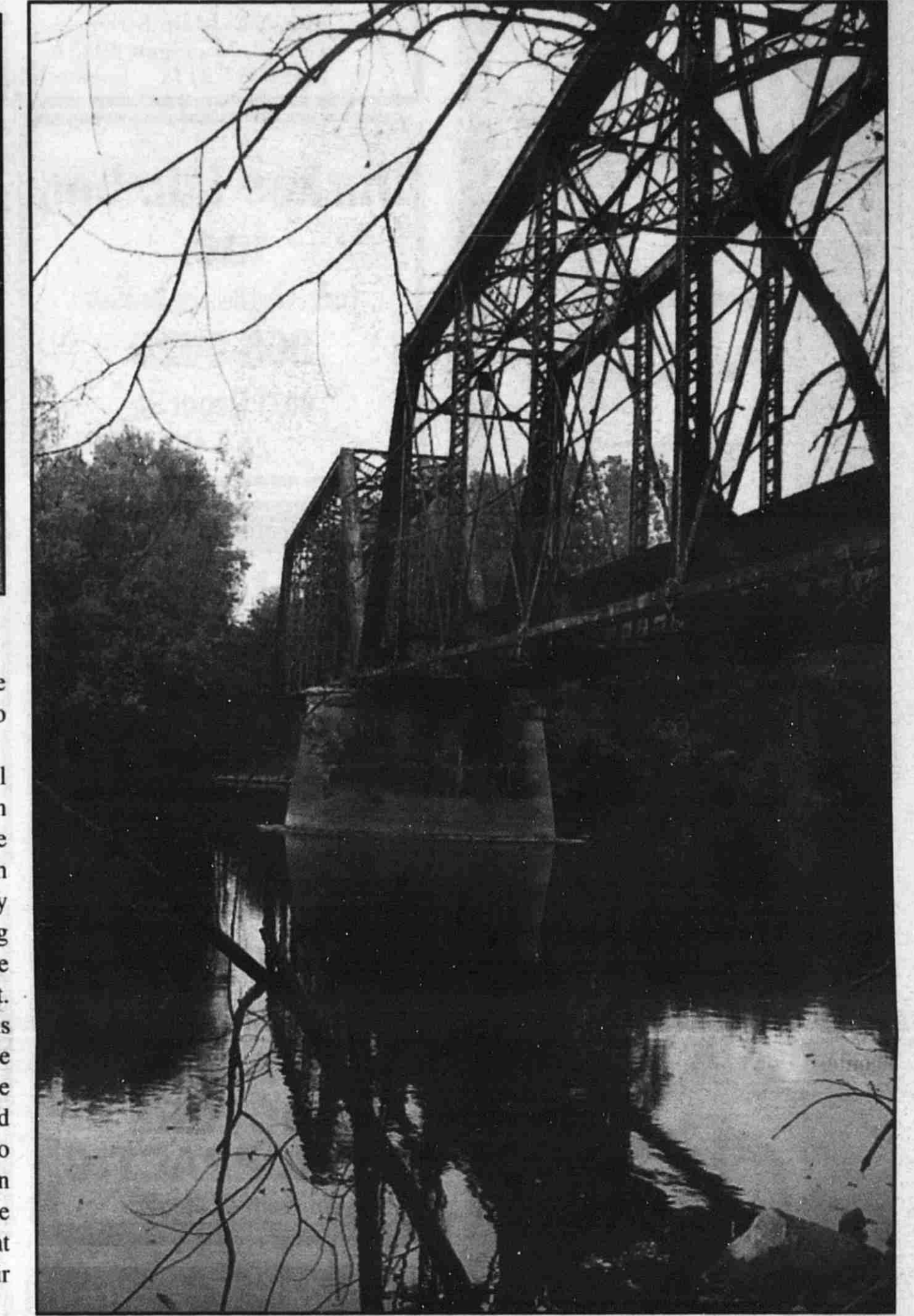
In its four previous years of existence, the Lowell and Hastings Railroad had not carried trains into either of its namesake towns. The railroad never did make it to Hastings, as the businessman who spearheaded the line, J.M. Boynton, had little luck in negotiations with that town.

When it opened in December of 1887, the Lowell and Hastings Railroad line ran from Freeport to Segwun. Segwun was a small village on the

celebration that was to be held in Freeport turned out to be a bust.

As reported in the Lowell Journal: "An excursion train was on hand and ran over the road, making four trips each way, but the crowd necessary to make a really interesting celebration was at some other place than Freeport. A few hungry individuals from Lowell and along the line walked up and down the street looking for that roasted ox, but the nearest thing to it that came to their vision was a lame horse in a pasture nearby, and at last they went to the hotel and bought their dinners."

The railroad line became more useful to the people of Lowell, of which there were about 2,500 at the time, with the construction of the Grand River Bridge. The bridge also had benefits for Lowell industry, which primarily consisted of flour milling at the time. A rail siding from the bridge to the Wisner Brothers Mill was built in the summer of 1891. King



A side view of the railroad bridge taken from the south bank of the Grand River.

IMPORTANT PUBLIC NOTICE CITY OF LOWELL UPDATE

TRASH, RECYCLING AND YARD WASTE SERVICES

As of December 5, 2005 the trash, recycling and yard waste services for the City of Lowell residents is being contracted to Allied Waste Inc., (Sunset Waste). Temporarily the trash bags will be blue and will be available for purchase by November 1, 2005 and must be purchased at City Hall, 301 E. Main St., Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

If you have yellow trash bags or yard waste bags with City of Lowell printed in red, they must be used by December 2, 2005. If you have trash or leaf bags you will not use by December 2, 2005, you must return to City Hall by November 14, 2005 for a refund.

All trash and recycling will continue to follow the same scheduled pick up days. Please have your trash and recycling out by 6:00 a.m. on the morning of your pickup.

The City and Allied Waste Services apologizes to the City residents for these inconveniences and appreciate your patience during this transition period.

If there are any questions, please call City Hall (897-8457).



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- Carl Sandburg
(1878 - 1967)



Last chance for play this weekend



There is still time to see "The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe" at the Lowell Performing Arts Center at the high school. Performances are scheduled for Saturday, Oct. 29 at 7 p.m. and Sunday, Oct. 30 at 2:30 p.m. Pictured is vocal music director Becky Reagan with some of the followers of Aslan.

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Crash, continued ...From Page 3

who uses the intersection on a daily basis, said she'd had "one close call" prior to Tuesday's accident.

falls short of the county road commission's requirements. "There's definite warrants for four-way stops and that's not even close," said Jeff Best, Kent County Road Commission director of traffic safety.

There have only been three accidents with injuries there over the last five years.

Arrest, continued ...From Page 1

possession by a felon, carrying a dangerous weapon with unlawful intent, and carrying a concealed weapon without a permit.

obstructing a police officer in 1996. In 1995, he was convicted of first degree home invasion and felonious assault. He was convicted separately of felonious assault the same year.

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Lowell basketball completes season sweep of Pioneers

By Dan Schneider

The 56-42 score at the end of last Thursday's Lowell victory over East Grand Rapids says little about the way the game went on the floor.

It was a much closer contest than that.

Lowell led 12-6 after one quarter of play. But the Pioneers surged back to within one point, 21-20, by halftime. East Grand Rapids took the lead on their first possession of the second half. Lowell outscored them to make the score 36-30 as the fourth quarter began. It took until the fourth quarter for Lowell to assert control of the game.

"We executed our game plan the whole way; in the fourth quarter we missed some shots and those would have made it better for us," East coach Steve Wojciechowski said. "You want to have a chance to win the game in the fourth

quarter and that's what we did."

Lowell controlled the game for the fourth quarter, though for a while they let the Pioneers constrain them to the free throw line.

"I don't want to get fouled," Lowell coach Dee Crowley yelled at the team at one point in the final minutes.

The Red Arrows listened, quickening their movement off the ball. And on the next play, they broke through the East Grand Rapids press to get a three-on-one break. Amanda Geelhoed finished the break with a layup.

Crowley said the Arrows expected a tough game coming in. She said more defensive intensity would have kept Lowell further ahead earlier in the game.

Brook VanEck led the Lowell offense with 17 points. Nicole Shepard

scored 10; Brittany Bueche and Geelhoed each scored eight. Lowell had 31 rebounds. Geelhoed led with eight off the bench. Kelsey Crowley had four of Lowell's 13 assists.

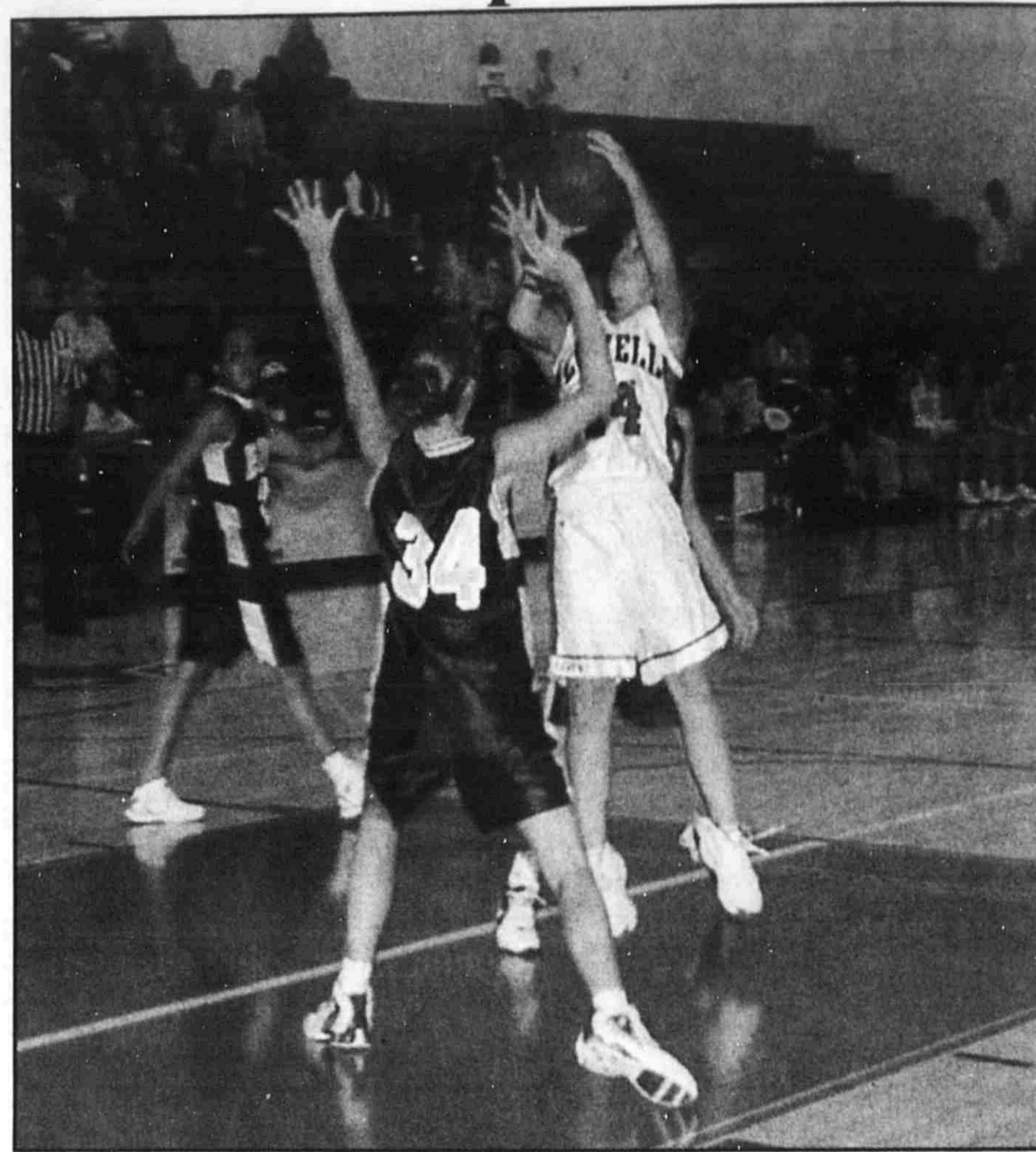
East Grand Rapids had a great game from Kendra Holman, who led all scorers and matched the number on her jersey with 22 points.

A week ago Tuesday, Lowell beat Northview 51-41.

"They played us very physically, tough inside, so we had to handle that," Crowley said. "We didn't handle the ball well, but when we did, we were able to score."

Brittany Lyman was Lowell's leading scorer with 14 points. Shepard scored 11 and VanEck scored 10.

The Arrows played at Greenville Tuesday and will play at Caledonia this Thursday.



Lowell's Chelsea Harrison takes a shot against East Grand Rapids.

Lowell soccer beats Northview, falls short against Rangers

By Dan Schneider

Lowell fell just one goal short last week in its bid to take the OK White

conference tournament championship.

The Arrows struggled early to win control of the

ball from the Rangers, who went up 1-0 in the first half's early going. The goal was by Tom Sahajadack.

Kory Anderson scored Lowell's first and only goal of the game in the second half, unassisted. But Joe Hoerner scored a second goal for Central and it proved to be enough for the victory.

In their two contests this season, Lowell and Forest Hills Central showed themselves to be well-matched opponents. During the regular conference season, Lowell came back to force two overtimes against the Rangers, but fell short 3-2.

After that performance, it looked like a new OK

White tradition had the potential to start. In years past, Lowell had lost its regular-season games against Unity Christian, then beaten the Crusaders in conference tournament finals to share the top spot in the OK White. This year, Lowell's loss to Northview in the last regular conference season game would have prevented the Arrows from getting a share of the conference title.

In any case, the reconfiguration of the OK White renewed the Lowell and Forest Hills Central rivalry which, for the

last three years, had been confined to post-season and non-conference play.

Last Tuesday, it was Lowell on the winning end of a 2-1 score in the OK White tournament semifinal. The Red Arrows regrouped, this time with a home-field advantage to beat the same Wildcats that had won the last OK White game at Northview.

Lowell beat East Grand Rapids 2-1 Monday in the district opener. The district semifinal is Wednesday at 7 p.m. at Forest Hills Northern.

Cross country teams place fifth at conference meet

Lowell hosts OK White meet

By Dan Schneider

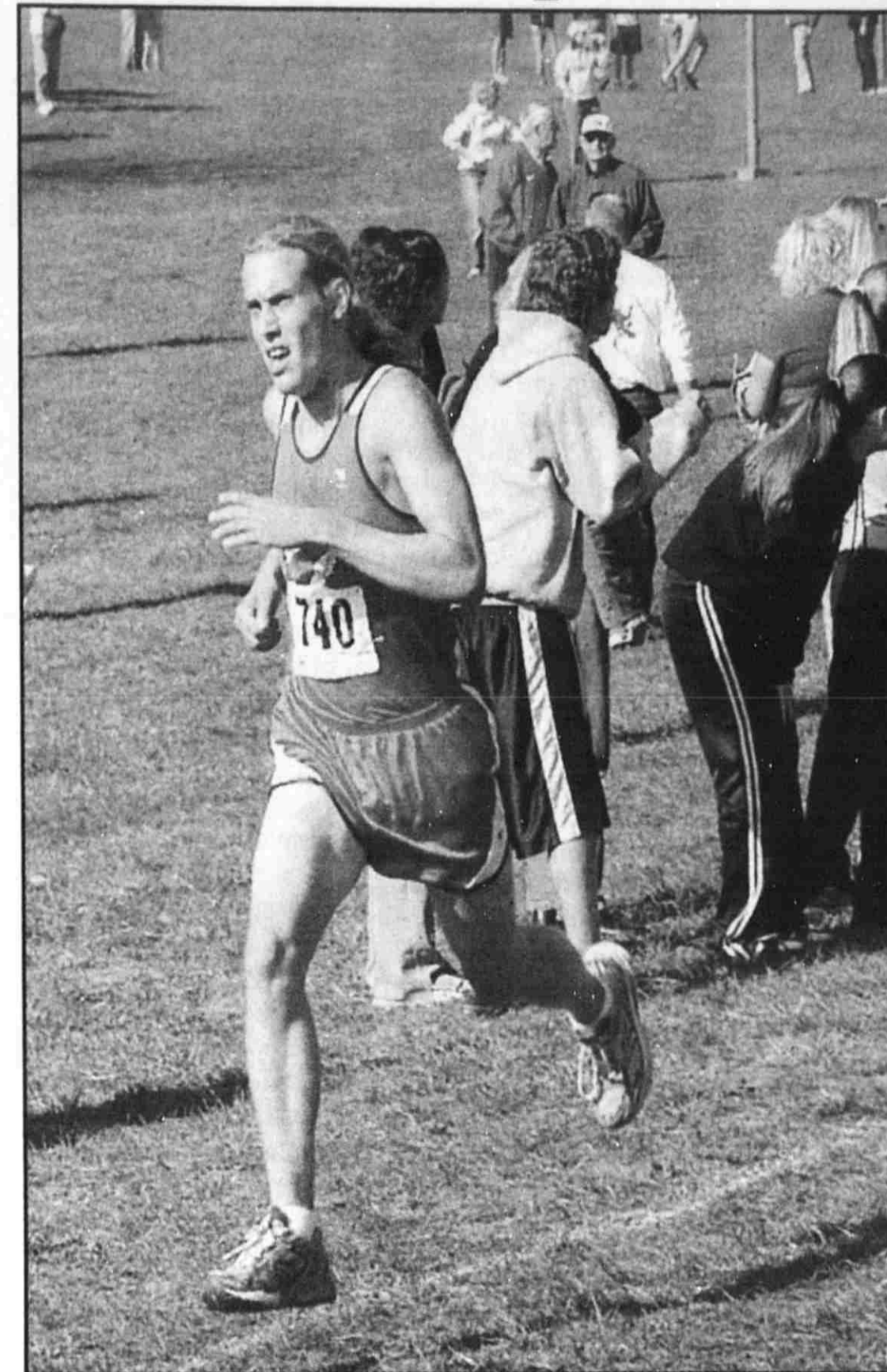
Both Lowell cross country teams finished fifth in last Friday's OK White conference meet.

The Red Arrows hosted the meet at the Lowell High School course.

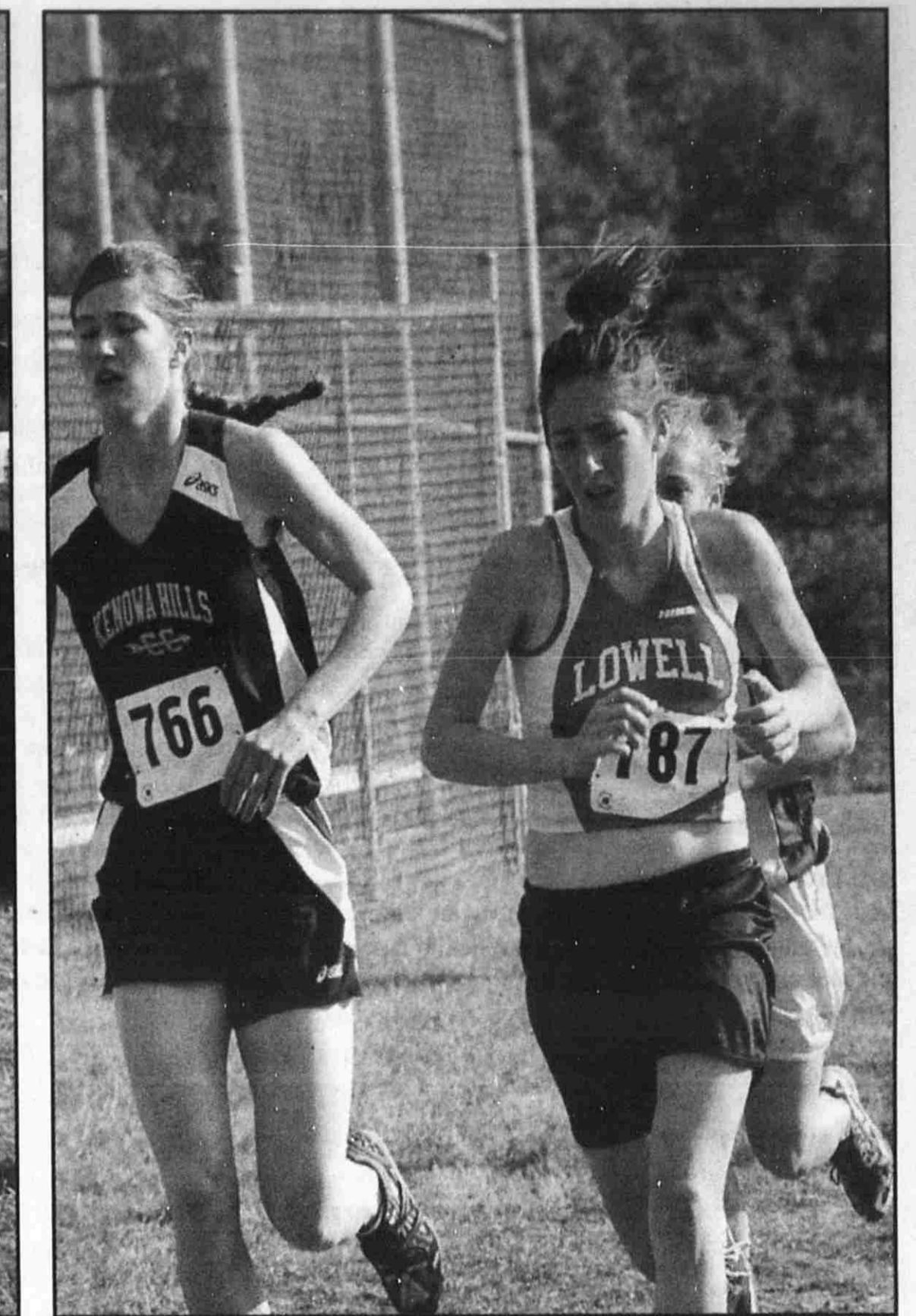
Justin Boss led the way for the Lowell boys team, finishing 17th in a time of 17:54. Mike Schumm came in 23rd in 18:12.1 followed by Keaton Dilly in 26th place in a time of 18:12.4. Andy Mark finished 26th with a time of 18:17. Kyle Ingebreton was Lowell's fifth runner, coming in 31st place with a tie of 18:25.

Simon Nyang of Forest Hills Northern finished first in the race. The Huskies were the top team at the meet with a score of 31. Lowell (121) finished behind Greenville (105) and ahead of Forest Hills Central (127).

Lowell girls scored 119 points and also finished behind Greenville (106) and ahead of Forest Hills Central (132). Forest Hills Northern



Lowell's Kyle Ingebreton sprints toward the finish line.



Monica Fitzpatrick was the top finisher for Lowell in the OK White conference meet at Lowell High School.

(34) was also the winning team in the girls race.

Monica Fitzpatrick led Lowell with a time of 20:33

and a 13th place finish. Karen Judd finished 20th in 21:04.

Erin Beddows ran a time of 21:17 to finish 23rd in the

race. Britney Dietz came in 10th with a time of 21:56. Katie Riddle rounded out Lowell's top five, finishing in 33rd place with a time of 22:18.

Both Lowell teams compete Saturday in the regional meet at Jackson.

Football, continued...From Page 15

serious team defense in the game. Seven players had six or more tackles. McElroy, Watikunas, Ryan Mechaney, and Travis Hippey each had six. Justin Harden and Mike Racine each had seven. Kameron Blake led the Lowell tacklers with 11. Boss and Harden each had an interception in the game.

Lowell's first playoff

contest will be this Friday at 7:30 p.m. at Red Arrow Stadium. The gates open at 6 p.m. and admission is \$5 for all; no passes are allowed. The Arrows, playing in Division 2 this year, will host Portage Northern in the Region 2, District 1 semifinals. The Huskies were 7-2 this year. A win will put Lowell in the district final against their first

state-ranked opponent of the playoffs, either Davison (ranked 8th in the Oct. 18 AP poll) or Hudsonville (ranked 9th in the same poll). Lowell was ranked 4th in that poll.

Friday's win over Northview made this season the sixth straight year Lowell has won eight or more games in a season.

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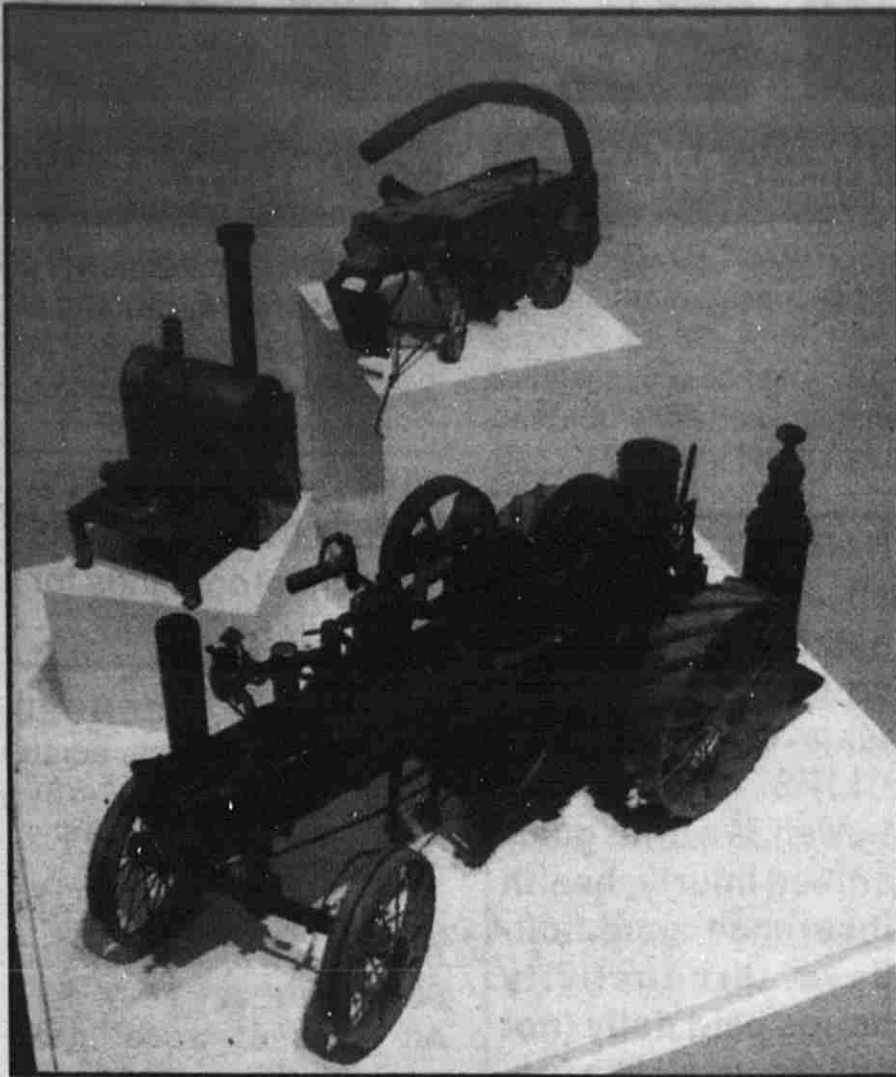
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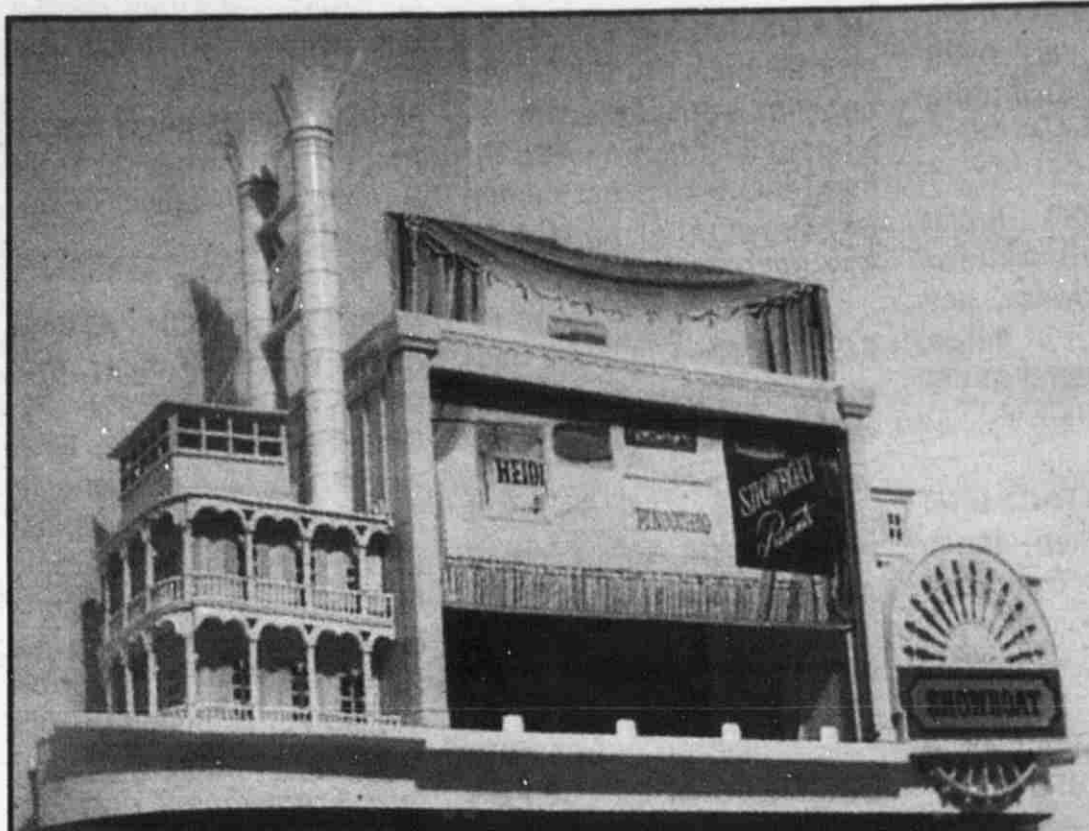
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Playthings from days gone by at museum exhibit

The steam engine toy, left, one of three built by Lester Graham, and the showboat toy are several on display at the Lowell Area Historical Museum's new exhibit "Childhood Dreams ... Toys From the Past." The exhibit features a collection of antique toys played with, made by, or collected by local individuals. A few of the toys, such as a pair of Hall air guns, were mass-produced in Lowell factories. According to museum director Judy Straub, the exhibit is designed to evoke the connections between past and present, and childhood and adulthood. A public reception to view the exhibit will take place from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday at 325 W. Main St. Light refreshments will be served.



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