

The Lowell Ledger

Volume 34 Issue 8

Serving Lowell Area Readers Since 1893

Wednesday, December 28, 2005

Snowman no more

Ben Fleet (with snowball) and Todd Drenth place a large snowball on top of a giant snowman while Tony Robinson, left, and Yujiro Uchida steady the ladders. Breanna Kurzhals is observing the process. The snowman, completed last Thursday evening in front of Fleet's house on Spring Street, stood more than 12 feet tall and had yard rakes for arms. "Yuji (Uchida) is our foreign exchange student so we wanted him to have a chance to make a snowman," Fleet said. The snowman, unfortunately, was the worse for wear with above-freezing temperatures and rain prevalent over the holiday weekend.

Area ice skating subject to weather ups and downs

By Dan Schneider

Early snow and cold temperatures allowed the ice rink at Richards Park to open earlier than usual this year.

That was good news for the Houston family, who came down from Belding to skate on the ice, Thursday.

"We've been eyeing it all week," Darla Houston said.

The Houstons live near Belding, but make frequent

trips to Lowell. They go to church at St. Mary's Catholic Church, a block away.

Two of her five children were on skates Friday. "I can tell we're going to have to get more skates," she said. "We have two pairs of skates and I think this is going to be the favorite pastime this year."

Thursday was the first day the ice was open for skating.

"Cracky," is how Sam Houston, 8, described the ice. "It will crunch when

you go over certain spots."

When Paul Houston joined his sons on the ice, he gave the same words of caution: "There's soft spots out here, boys."

Most years, the ice is never open for skating at all until well into January. Though Lowell Department of Public Works' employees spend time nearly every day watering down the rink to build up the ice, conditions are still contingent on weather.

Ice Skating, cont'd., pg. 12



Annexation talks will continue

By Dan Schneider

The saga of the 177 acres in Vergennes Township petitioned for annexation to the city of Lowell continues.

In October, the state of Michigan boundary commission voted three to one to recommend denial of an annexation petition by DuRay Development, LLC owner Rob Munger. But the final say in the matter belongs to the director of the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth (DLEG), David C. Hollister.

The property in question is an L-shaped piece located at the corner of Vergennes Street and Alden Nash Avenue. Munger, who has an option to buy the property, said the goal of the annexation petition was to attain city services for a development on the property. This would include water, sewer and police protection.

Annexation would also make the property part of the city of Lowell, taking zoning authority and

future tax revenue away from Vergennes Township. Further complicating the matter is the fact that the water and sewer lines that would serve the property, though they connect to city facilities, are owned by Lowell Charter Township.

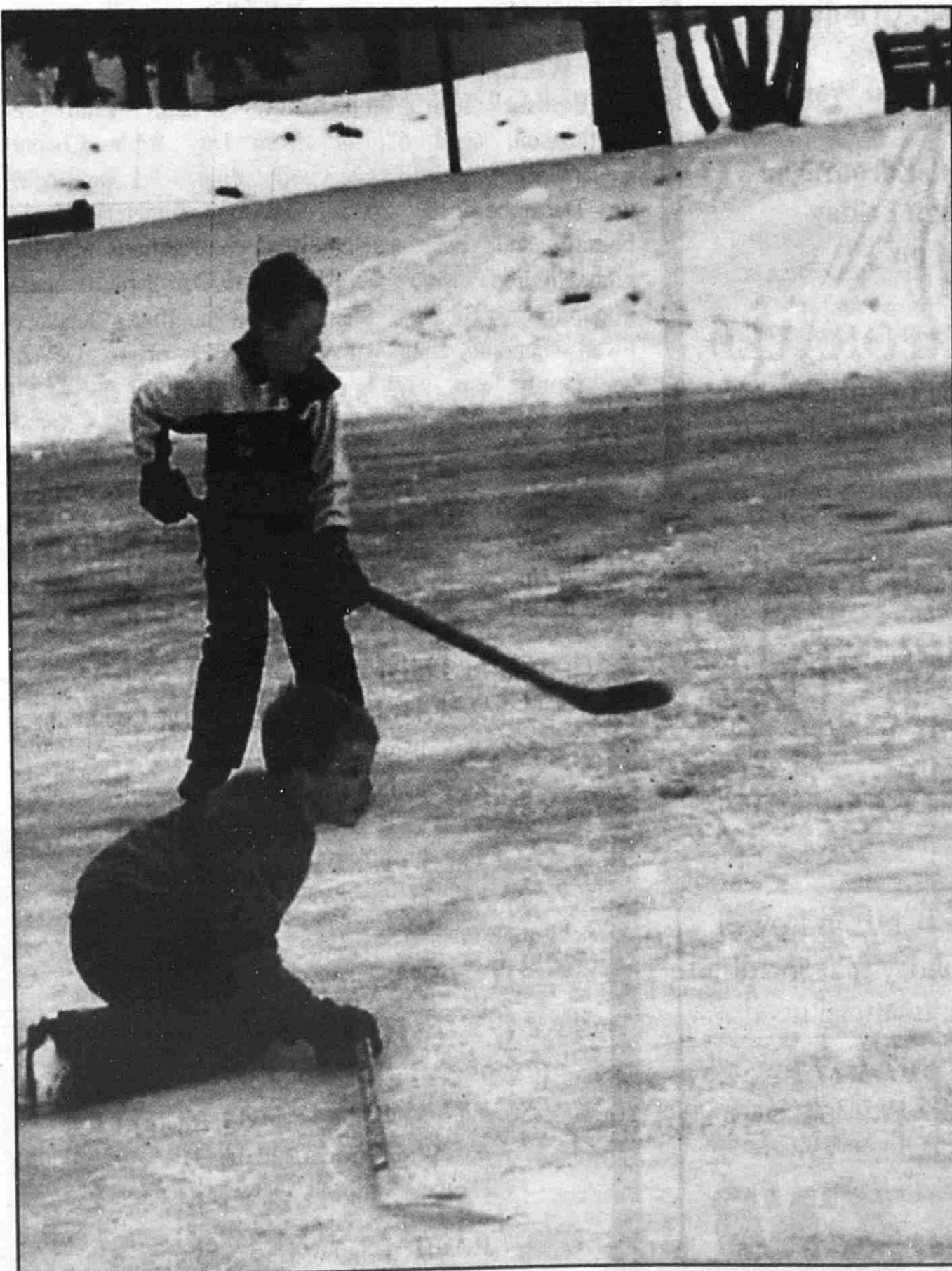
After discussing the issues with Vergennes Township and Lowell city officials for more than an hour and a half at a Dec. 15 meeting, the boundary commission recommended more delay before a final decision is made.

"We're supposed to

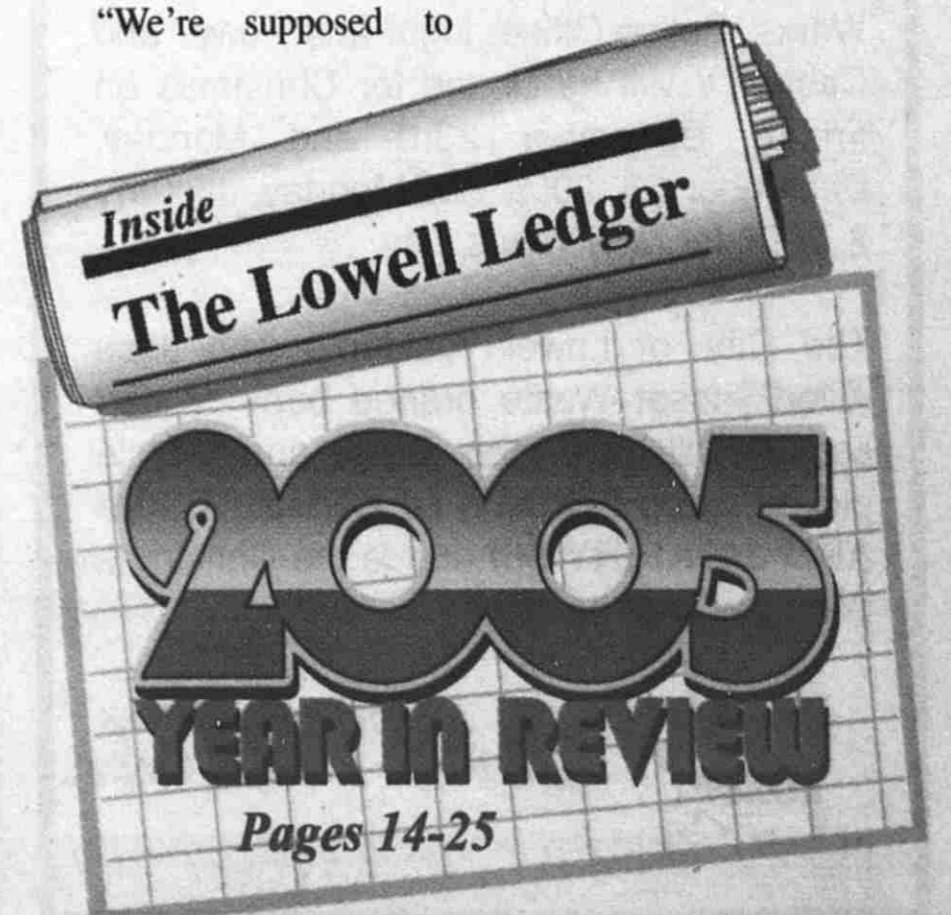
report back to the boundary commission in 60 days," Lowell city manager Dave Pasquale said.

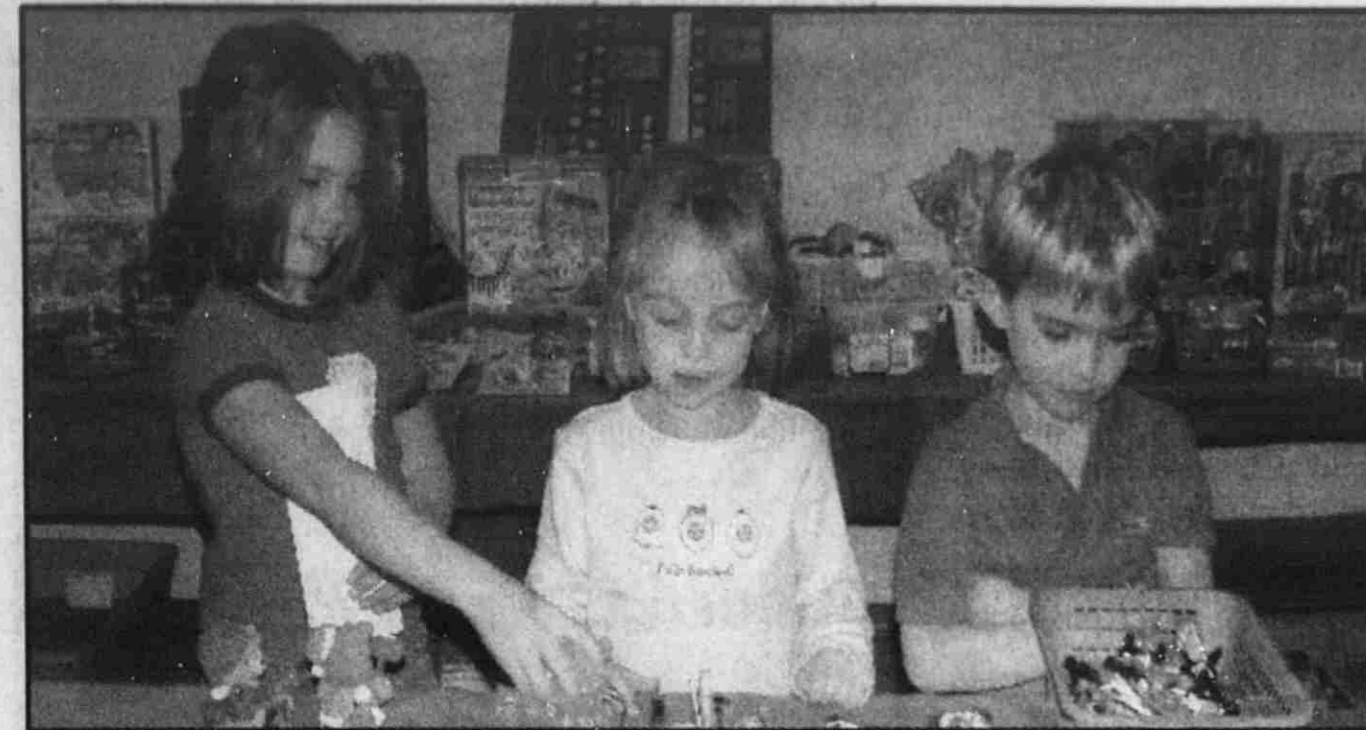
During that time, representatives from Vergennes, Lowell city and Lowell Charter Township are expected to discuss other options for dealing with the situation. State law supplies a few methods by which municipalities provide, share, or transfer things like municipal services, zoning

Annexation, cont'd., pg. 9



Sam (in foreground) and Hank Houston tried out the early skating ice at Richards Park.





Alto Elementary Shoppers

Alto Elementary's Santa Shop was held Nov. 28, 29, 30 and Dec. 1. It is a nonprofit service for all of its students and gives them the opportunity to buy Christmas gifts for his/her family in a safe environment. Trisha Propst and Kim Taylor, Santa Shop coordinators, said prices range from 25 cents - \$6, with the majority of the items priced \$3.50 or less. Pictured are Jordan Blough, Abby Green and Roman Rozell at this year's Santa Shop.

Annexation, continued ...From Page 1

authority, property and tax revenue. The city primarily wants a share of tax revenues while the township's concern is with maintaining zoning control. The first meeting will likely only set the stage for future meetings.

"What we're trying to do is really set up an outline of what we'd like to accomplish," Pasquale said.

Pasquale will be the city's representative for the talks. Vergennes Township will be represented by supervisor Tim Wittenbach. Lowell Charter Township has not yet chosen a representative, and did not discuss the matter at its most recent board meeting.

It isn't the first time a decision on the issue has

been delayed. In August, changes to the boundary commission's roster delayed action on the petition. In September, the commission decided to give the municipalities another month to work it out among themselves before making a decision.

During the current grace period, Wittenbach thinks the commission wants the municipalities to extend conversation beyond the property petitioned for annexation.

"I think they're trying to get us to work with more than just those 177 acres," Wittenbach said. That way "if this issue comes up again, then maybe we'll have more of a semi-agreed-on proposal rather than start

everything from scratch." The talks could also be a platform for a more holistic approach to inter-municipal growth planning.

"That's what they're trying to get municipalities to do is some joint planning on urban growth issues," Wittenbach said.

After the 60-day time period, the commission may recommend more time be given. Or it may put the issue in Hollister's hands.

Hollister has several options. He can sign the order denying the annexation, as recommended by the commission in October. He can recommend more time be given for local negotiations. Or he can ask for and sign a new order to approve the annexation.

However, the only time an annexation or similar question was decided in a manner opposite from the recommendation of the commission was in

1999. That year, Michigan Department of Consumer and Industry Services (now known as DLEG) director Kathy Wilbur ordered that the incorporation of a home

rule city be put to a vote of the people. The commission had recommended denial of the petitioned incorporation.

Plowing permits, continued... From Page 3

Leaving snow out in the street can create a dangerous situation if the blades get caught on the frozen snow and could cause potential injury to the city operator as well as damage to the city truck. Several years ago, DesJarden said the blade of a city truck hit some frozen snow on the side of the street causing the truck to spin around. Fortunately, there were no injuries to the

operator or damage to the truck. DesJarden said at this point, he has not had anything serious happen to any of the fleet—which consists of three big trucks and two small ones that are for the parking lots—or to the six drivers.

Valentine said snow is not to be deposited on public right-of-way. Operators are also supposed to clean up any messes they create and

make sure sidewalks are clear.

As for the licensing process, it probably wouldn't become a reality until next winter since Valentine is currently working on decriminalizing some of the city's current ordinances.

Currently, the city of Grand Rapids does require its snow plow operators to be licensed.

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Red Arrows fall to Creston Polar Bears

By Dan Schneider

Last Tuesday, the Lowell boys basketball team lost against one of the best teams they're likely to see this season.

The Creston Polar Bears came to town and handed the Arrows a 65-38 loss. A tough team, Creston had guys who could dunk; they had guys who could hit the three (Jerrell Sanders hit four triples in the game). The whole team was fast and physical.

Although the Arrows struggled in the game, it was the kind of team Lowell coach Jeff McDonald wants his team to see in the season's early going.

"I want to schedule these kinds of teams," McDonald said. "These are the kinds of teams that you have to beat to win a league title some day or a district title."

Lowell played a strong

first half. They were the first on the board after Mike McElroy rocketed a pass from outside right to Justin Hardin for a layup. The 2-0 lead would be their only one of the game, however, as Creston aced a three on their next possession.

The Polar Bears were up 19-10 after one quarter. But the Arrows went on a 7-0 run to start the second. It was a four-point game as the clock ran down on the first half, but Sanders hit one of his triples with 2.5 seconds left on the clock.

Then Creston took off in the second half, outscoring Lowell 22-10 in the third quarter and 15-10 in the fourth.

A team like Creston will "take you out of a lot of things because they are so athletic, so it means you have to make plays," McDonald said.

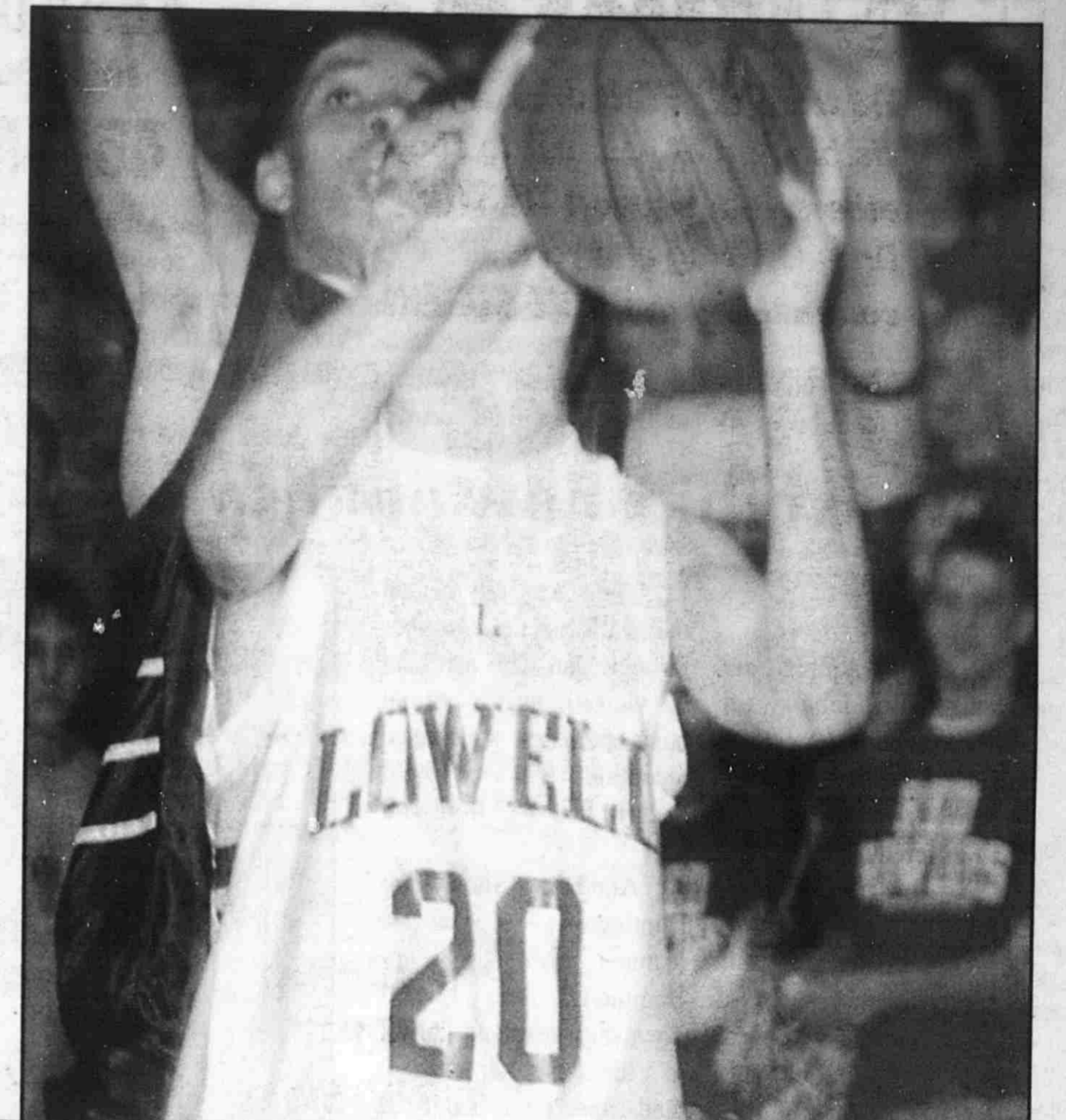
Lowell's leading scorers were Ryan Lane with 11 points and Josh Hettinga with eight.

To score his points, Lane had to make post plays against players who were bigger and stronger than he was.

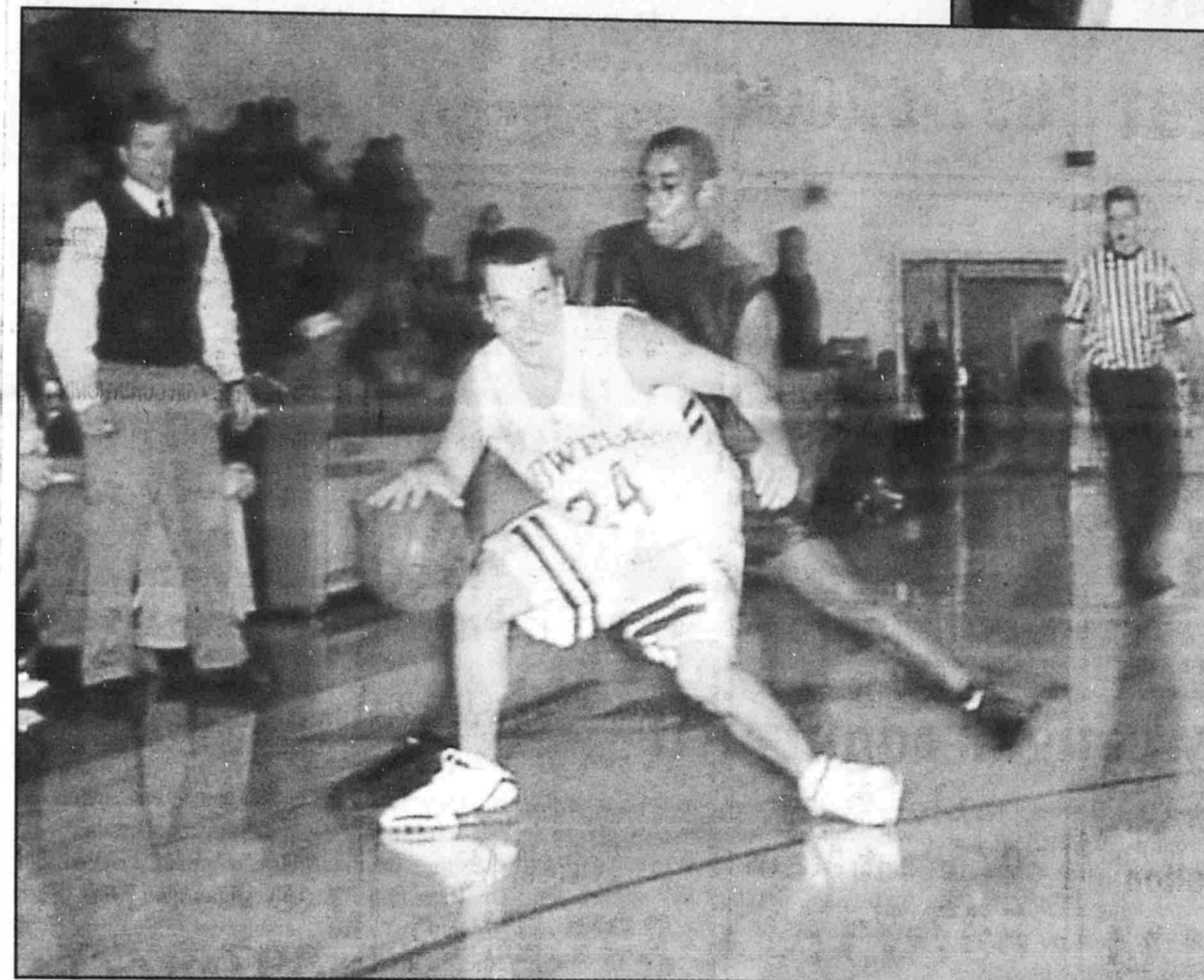
"Ryan is an under-sized post player in terms of size," McDonald said. "He takes a lot of pride in his post footwork."

Despite the disappointing loss, the Arrows showed signs of intensity that will help them greatly in future games.

"I credit my guys for competing like crazy even though the score was lopsided," McDonald said. Lowell plays its next two games on the road: a Jan. 6 game at Forest Hills Northern and a Jan. 10 game against a strong Godwin Heights team.



Lowell's Justin Hardin goes up for an inside shot against Creston in last Tuesday's game.



At left, Lowell's Josh Hettinga moves the ball against Creston.

Arrows volleyball at Byron Center

The Lowell varsity volleyball team competed in its second tournament of the season last Thursday at the Byron Center Invitational.

Lowell started the day in pool C with Hudsonville, Rogers and Grand Rapids West Catholic.

The Red Arrows split games with Hudsonville, dominating the first, 25-16, before losing a close second match, 27-26. It was the same story against West Catholic. Lowell won game one, 25-14, before falling 25-22. The Arrows swept

Rogers, winning 25-12 and 25-19.

Hudsonville ended pool play at the top of pool C with Lowell in second. Both teams advanced to the top bracket of the tournament, the gold bracket.

Lowell faced Hamilton in the gold bracket quarterfinals. With the Arrows losing both games (25-11, 25-13), the Hawkeyes advanced to the championship round by beating Kenowa Hills. They were shut out in the finals by Unity Christian.

Interlochen scholarship opportunity

Top high school musicians around the country have the opportunity to apply for an Emerson Scholarship Award to the world-famous Interlochen Arts Camp in northern Michigan. Fifty-two students from across the United States will receive a full scholarship for the 2006 Interlochen Arts Camp.

The merit-based scholarships are funded through a generous grant from St. Louis-based Emerson. The Emerson Scholars Award is a \$5,802 scholarship, which provides full tuition, private lessons, and room and board for the six-week summer program, June 24-August 7.

Applicants must be in grades nine through 12 and demonstrate exceptional proficiency on harp, string, wind or percussion instruments. An audition submitted on tape or CD is required with application.

Applications must be postmarked by Feb. 15 and winners will be announced by April 15. For more information, or to obtain an application, e-mail admissions@interlochen.org, call (231) 276-7472 or write the Emerson Scholars Program, Interlochen Center for the Arts, P.O. Box 199, Interlochen, MI, 49643.

Master Gardener class offered

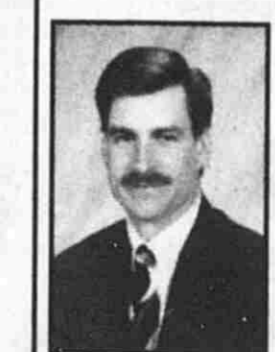
Gardening enthusiasts have a great opportunity coming their way this winter. Ionia County-MSU Extension will offer its popular Master Gardener weekly educational series beginning Jan. 12. There are 12 sessions each Thursday from 6-10 p.m. through

March 30 at Clarksville Agricultural Research Station, 9302 Portland Rd.

Professional speakers from Michigan State University as well as the horticultural industry begin with foundational topics of soil and plant science. The program then moves ahead

with in-depth information on flowers, fruits, vegetables, lawns, woody ornamentals, house plants, and home, yard and garden pests.

The program cost is \$250. Call 527-5357 for an information packet.



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At the request of a local business owner, the city of Lowell has decided to put up for sale a parcel of land on Riverside Drive. Jeff and Bif Altoft, owners of the Backwater Café, at 109 Riverside Dr., made the request in February.



Fifth grade students at Alto Elementary presented a selection of skits on the theme of "The Core Democratic Values" Friday, Jan. 28. Pictured, from left to right, are Kristin Reid, Blake Lyman as George Washington, Kayla Blough as Betsy Ross and Greg Blanton as Francis Scott Key. 2-9-05

The management of the city's Wastewater Treatment Plant is next up on the Lowell City Council's review of contracted services. EarthTech has managed the plant since 1989.

Lowell's Chrysler-Dodge-Jeep dealership has changed hands for the fifth time in its 85-year history.

Its name is now Grand-Vennen following the recent purchase by the Grand Auto family. It will be Grand's second dealership in Lowell.

The Alto Girl Scouts are selling cookies ... these cookies won't be eaten on the home front, but rather overseas by U.S. soldiers.

The Lowell Area Schools board of education approved an employee severance plan incentive, Monday.

The plan would offer employees of 10 years or more a year's salary to retire or resign from the district.

A historical program Wednesday, March 23 at Lowell High School will offer firsthand accounts of the Battle of Okinawa, given by three World War II veterans.

MARCH 23

A Grand Rapids Civil War organization is leading the charge to renovate and repair Oakwood Cemetery's civil war monument.

To help cover costs, the city of Lowell has introduced a new fee schedule for the large pavilion at Creekside Park.

Polystyrene lunch trays used at Lowell High School will soon be on their way to becoming park benches and picnic tables, instead of on their way to the landfill.

The high school environmental club worked for the better part of a year to convince school officials to implement a recycling program.

A floating dock planned for the Grand River Riverfront Park in Lowell Charter Township may not become a reality in time for this year's crew season.

The seven senior girls on this year's Lowell High School Future Farmers of America (FFA) Agricultural Issues team will go national on a local issue in October. Julie Dunn, Kelly Foote, Katie Serne, Marie Wade, Katie Ward, Shelley Wernet and Michelle Wolf took first in the state FFA competition, which was held March 9-11 at Michigan State University in East Lansing.

Just before the turn of the 20th century, Lowell was starting to take a new interest in its city image.

In May of 1999, the city council approved a flashy new logo for the town.

MARCH 30

On Monday, the sun shone on a dedication ceremony to celebrate the completion of the Kent County Habitat for Humanity house on Bowes Road in Lowell. Debbie and Scott Baldwin are ready to move into their new home.

The Lowell Church of the Nazarene held a prayer service Thursday morning for Terri Schiavo, the severely brain-damaged Florida woman whose feeding-tube status has made national news in recent weeks.

Pvt. Ryan Datema (Churches) has successfully completed the Army's 16 weeks of Advanced Individual Training in Ft. Eustis, Va. He graduated fourth in his class with honors. Datema is the son of Brent and Nancy Churches.

The ninth annual Lowell Community Expo took place Saturday at Lowell High School. Attendees were exposed to a wide variety of businesses and organizations that call this town and the surrounding area home.

April '05

Sky-rocketing gas prices in Lowell were well above the state average, climbing above \$2.44 late Monday morning at most local gas stations.



Law enforcement officials restricted access to Lowell Middle School for five hours last Thursday following an anonymous phone call claiming a gun was in the building. 3-23-05

Mike Benson has been a strongman evangelist for a little more than a year now. In that time, he's traveled all over the country with The Conquerors International Strength Team and now they are in Lowell.

The Lowell community weight-loss challenge came to a close at the end of last month and, according to organizers, was a success.

The speed on North Hudson continues to be a regular

The Zip Code Show is currently on the walls of the Lowell Area Arts Council's Hudson Street Gallery, demonstrating the variety of media being worked on by artists in and around the city.

Lowell's Thebes Players will take a British turn for this year's spring dinner theater production, Norman Robbin's "Wedding of the Year."

After some review, the Lowell city council decided to raise its bonding request to \$600,000 from the original \$400,000 for a proposed road project on Grindle Drive.

Lowell police officers caught a man fleeing on foot from Kent County Sheriff's deputies last Thursday afternoon on the railroad tracks behind Metric Manufacturing Co., Inc. The deputies were pursuing the man after clocking him speeding on Hudson Street.

The official kick-off for the fundraiser of the Civil War monument at Oakwood Cemetery is this Saturday at the Wittenbach Agri-science Center.

Army National Guard Pvt. Joshua R. Griffin has graduated from basic infantry training at Fort Benning, Columbus, Ga. Griffin, a 2001 graduate of Lowell High School, is the son of Theresa Griffin of Lowell.

Lowell will once again take time to recognize the people who have made this place what it is with the "Spirit of Community" celebration this Friday in the Lowell Performing Arts Center (LPAC).

Sterling Massey and James Turner are running for the school board seat currently held by Jim Reagan, who is not running for re-election.

With local car dealerships remaining silent, and after

complaint, said Lowell police chief Jim Valentine. One consideration is a three-lane roadway—one lane in each direction with a continuous center turn lane.

The Lowell Police Department recently added a third patrol bike to its stable. The department has been patrolling on bicycles since 1997, when LPD first bought a Trek mountain bike and built it up for police use.

Making the school year shorter and outsourcing transportation maintenance costs should be options on the table for Lowell Area Schools according to the recommendations of the cost containment committee.

The Flat River Grill once again has received the city's endorsement to serve alcoholic beverages on the Lowell Showboat during the Showboat Summer Concerts.

A developer is slowly clearing the hurdles to put a Big Boy restaurant and other retail on the southwest corner of Bowes Road and M-21.

Two parents of students at Lowell Middle School have seen their children's asthma problems worsen during the time they've been at the school.

Freshmen at Lowell High School split into two groups to do service work in different places. The East House visited the woods near Hopkins, where they did a variety of work at Camp Mel Trotter. The West House went to Grand Rapids, where they undertook a large-scale neighborhood cleanup project on the southeast side.

Lowell Light and Power board members, employees and friends and family of the late Norman Borgerson met at the utility's substation on Bowes Road to dedicate a stone monument to the utility's longtime board member.

A documentary made by Lowell resident Robert Prince "Making Choices: The Dutch Resistance During World War II" will air this Thursday evening.

researching other cities, the Lowell Planning Commission has decided to leave its ordinance alone regarding banners and flags.



Students from the West House of the Freshman Year at Lowell High School teamed up with freshmen from Ottawa Hills High School to clean up a neighborhood on Grand Rapids' southeast side. 4-27-05

Two reports have emerged so far this year describing the increasingly brash antics of the coyotes around Lowell.

May '05

Kraig and Jody Haybarker were named this year's Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce Person of the Year.

Lowell Light and Power board members, employees and friends and family of the late Norman Borgerson met at the utility's substation on Bowes Road to dedicate a stone monument to the utility's longtime board member.

A documentary made by Lowell resident Robert Prince "Making Choices: The Dutch Resistance During World War II" will air this Thursday evening.

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The cast of Lowell High School's spring musical production of Footloose cuts loose in the opening number. 3-9-05

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Securing air easements is the next step for the Lowell City Airport as it continues to upgrade its status to a general utility airport.



This van, with its driver, nearly landed in the Flat River last Tuesday afternoon after an accident on Main Street. 5-11-05

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Realizing that in the current economic climate the city needs to be more supportive to its businesses, the Lowell City Council has decided to review the city's ordinance on outdoor merchandise displays.

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A brief cloudburst Sunday was the first rain ever to fall on a CROP Walk in Lowell but didn't dampen the enthusiasm of the 147 walkers who hit the streets of Lowell for the event.

MAY 11

Lowell High School got milk last Tuesday and a visit from Greg Kelsner of the 1979 national championship Michigan State basketball team after a Lowell student's essay about the school's health initiatives was selected as a winner in a milk promotion.

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Voters in the Lowell School District gave the nod to James Turner in a close school board election last Tuesday.

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The Country Roots Band will perform Saturday at the Lowell Performing Arts Center. Proceeds from the event will benefit the Amateur Radio Group of Youth in Lowell (A.R.G.Y.L.).

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The city of Lowell received some good financial news last week as two local organizations approved more than \$140,000 to help with the City Hall/police station bond payment. The Downtown Development Authority authorized \$128,147 and Look Memorial Fund approved

\$15,000. Both amounts will be put in the city's general fund, from where bond payments are paid.

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It appears four candidates will be vying for three spots on the Lowell City Council this fall: incumbents mayor Jeanne Shores, and councilmen Jim Pfaller and Jim Hodges, along with challenger Jim Hall.

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Deadline for teachers to sign up for Lowell Area Schools' severance plan is Friday. The early retirement incentive topped the list of suggestions for cuts to the 2005-2006 school budget.

MAY 18

Lowell resident and avid tri-athlete Roger Bonga will be taking a trip across the country soon on a bike to raise money for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society.

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Home caregiving for elderly parents requires a lot of time, dedication and sacrifice. Now a charity called Christian Caregiver Relief, whose volunteers give breaks to home caregivers, is looking to establish a presence in Lowell.

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Lowell Senior Neighbors and Schneider Manor will host several events for National Senior Health Week, which are free and open to the entire Lowell senior community.

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Several new additions will put a fresh face on this year's Mayfest Bluegrass Festival.



The Lowell Area Schools board room was packed Monday night with people who came to express their opinions and ideas about suggested budget cuts. 5-18-05

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Representatives from the Lowell Area Arts Council and the Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce came before the council to review a new proposed floor layout of the building that houses the chamber. The new layout would include space for the arts council.

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Lowell elementary and middle school students did better than the state average across all subjects of this winter's Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) tests.

MAY 25

A group of municipal government representatives from the city of Davison was in Lowell last Thursday for Mayor Exchange day.

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Residents wishing to voice their opinions on how the city of Lowell should spend its money have one meeting left before the council is set to approve its 2005-2006 budget.

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After receiving an amount palatable to its liking, the Lowell Planning Commission has decided to move forward on revamping its master plan.

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An unusually mild summer brought a drop in revenues for the Lowell Light and Power Company (LL&P) last year with higher fuel costs keeping expenses up.

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Lowell resident Peggy Covert is on a mission. She wants to banish garlic mustard from the woods around the area. It was three years ago when she first noticed the plants with their heart-shaped, serrated leaves in the woods on her property at the north end of Washington Street.

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A retirement open house will be held for Lowell wrestling coach Dave Strejc. After 11 years of coaching wrestling at Lowell, Strejc is retiring to spend more time with his family.

June '05

JUNE 1

Hundreds of people lined the streets of Lowell and then gathered at Oakwood Cemetery Monday in observance of Memorial Day.

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A total of 24 teachers chose to leave Lowell Area Schools with the incentive package from the district's employee severance plan. Three more teachers retired under the terms of their contracts.

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In a joint meeting between Lowell City and Lowell Township planning commissions, both discovered the two municipalities have a similar ordinance on banners, pennants and flags that many of the city car dealerships have used to promote their locations.

JUNE 8

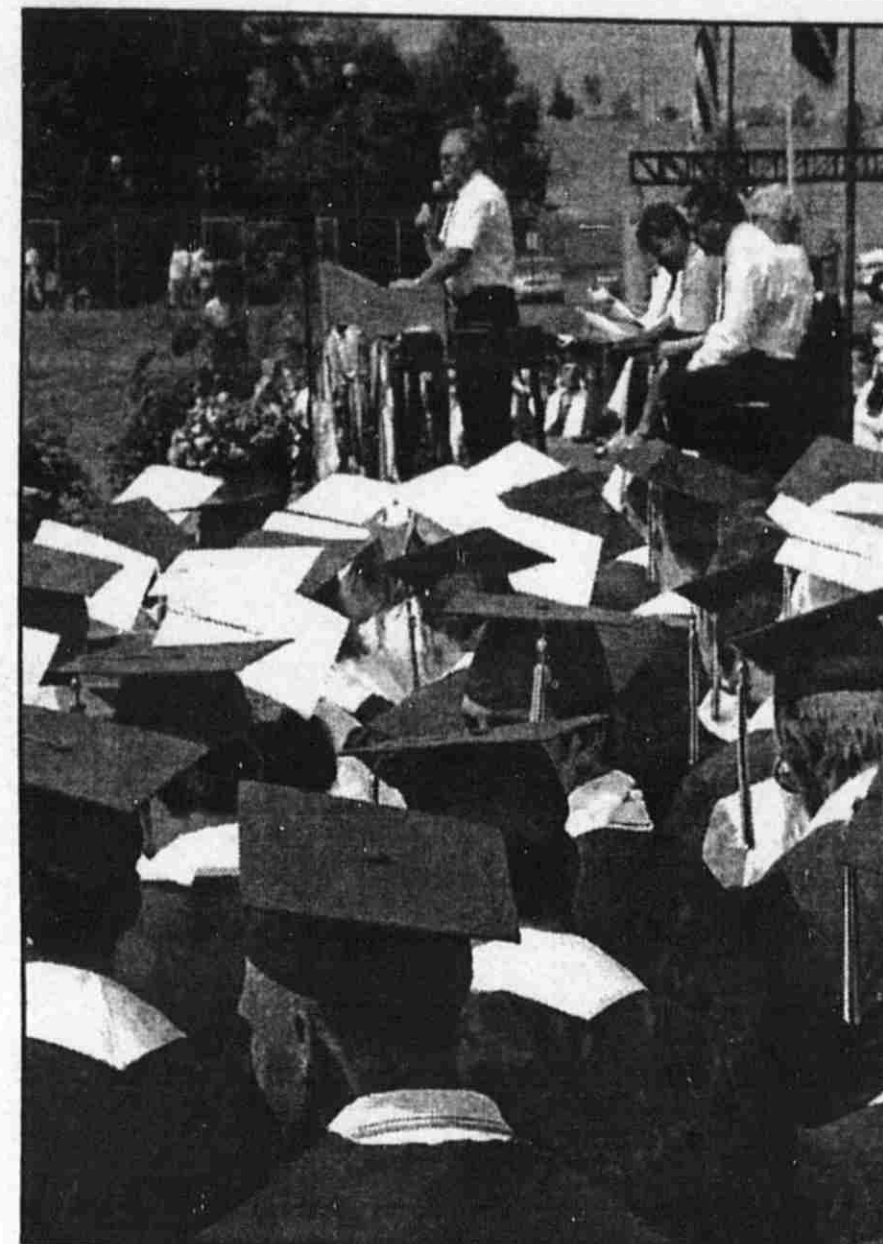
As weather threatened to disrupt the 127th annual commencement exercises at Red Arrow Stadium on Sunday, diplomas were handed out in a faster than normal manner to the Lowell seniors.

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The Howard farm at the corner of Parnell Avenue and Two Mile Road in Vergennes Township was dedicated Friday morning as the first farm to be permanently preserved in agriculture through the Kent County Purchase of Development Rights program.

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The Lowell City Council approved its 2005-2006 budget Monday night, giving its employees a 2.5 percent pay increase, the first such increase in two years.



A graduate's-eye view of the 2005 Lowell High School commencement proceedings. Principal Scott Vashaw is at the podium. 6-8-05

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Four train cars filled with Native American art arrived in Lowell Friday. The train is called "Artrain USA" and it tours the country bringing art exhibits to small towns.

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The new wall that replaced the old swing set along Riverwalk Plaza next to Unity High School was dedicated Monday. The wall is covered in mosaic tile. It's a project Unity students worked on this winter and into the spring.

JUNE 15

The Lowell Showboat Sizzlin' Summer Concerts starts Thursday. A lot of changes are coming this summer: there's a new stage, new acts, new nights and new business sponsors.

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The city of Lowell's wastewater and water service rates are going to increase. The question is whether it will be the readiness-to-serve charge or the consumption charge that will go up.

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The Lowell Area Schools Board of Education approved a slate of budget cuts totaling more than \$1.4 million at its Monday meeting.

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Deciding it has been a mutually benefiting agreement and seeing few others who could manage the city of Lowell wastewater treatment facility, the city council unanimously decided to award a new 10-year contract to Earth Tech.

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Grattan Township broke ground for a new firehouse Saturday.

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Members of the Lowell Leadership Institute for Volunteer Excellence class (LIVE 5) still hope to build a bridge in the Cooper Woodland Preserve, but the project has experienced several delays.

JUNE 22

The Grand Valley American Indian Lodge brings its Restoring the Circle Pow Wow to the Lowell Fairgrounds this weekend.

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The city of Lowell lost one of its most dedicated citizens over the weekend, as former postmaster Charlie Doyle died of a heart attack Sunday morning at the age of 77.

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It appears the Foreman building will be getting a new coat of paint, and the city of Lowell and the Kent County Youth Fair have EarthTech to thank.



A native dancer in full regalia moves around the dance circle Sunday during the "Restoring the Circle" Pow Wow at the Lowell Fairgrounds. 6-29-05

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There is a lot of history at the crossroads of 84th Street and S. Alden Nash. Among the few buildings that comprise Bowne Center, there are four structures more than a century old.

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At the Lowell Charter Township meeting Monday night, the board voted to delay paving 1.75 miles of 36th Street east of Segwun until next construction season, pending a February review of the township budget.

Season's Greetings. Christi Kargl, Mrs. Schneider, Alto Elementary. Includes drawings of boots and a snowman.

Brendan McCoy, Mrs. Vezino, St. Patrick School. Includes drawings of candles and a snowman.

Thao Tran, Mr. Bredin, Cherry Creek. Includes drawing of a snowman. REGAL INSURANCE AGENCY.

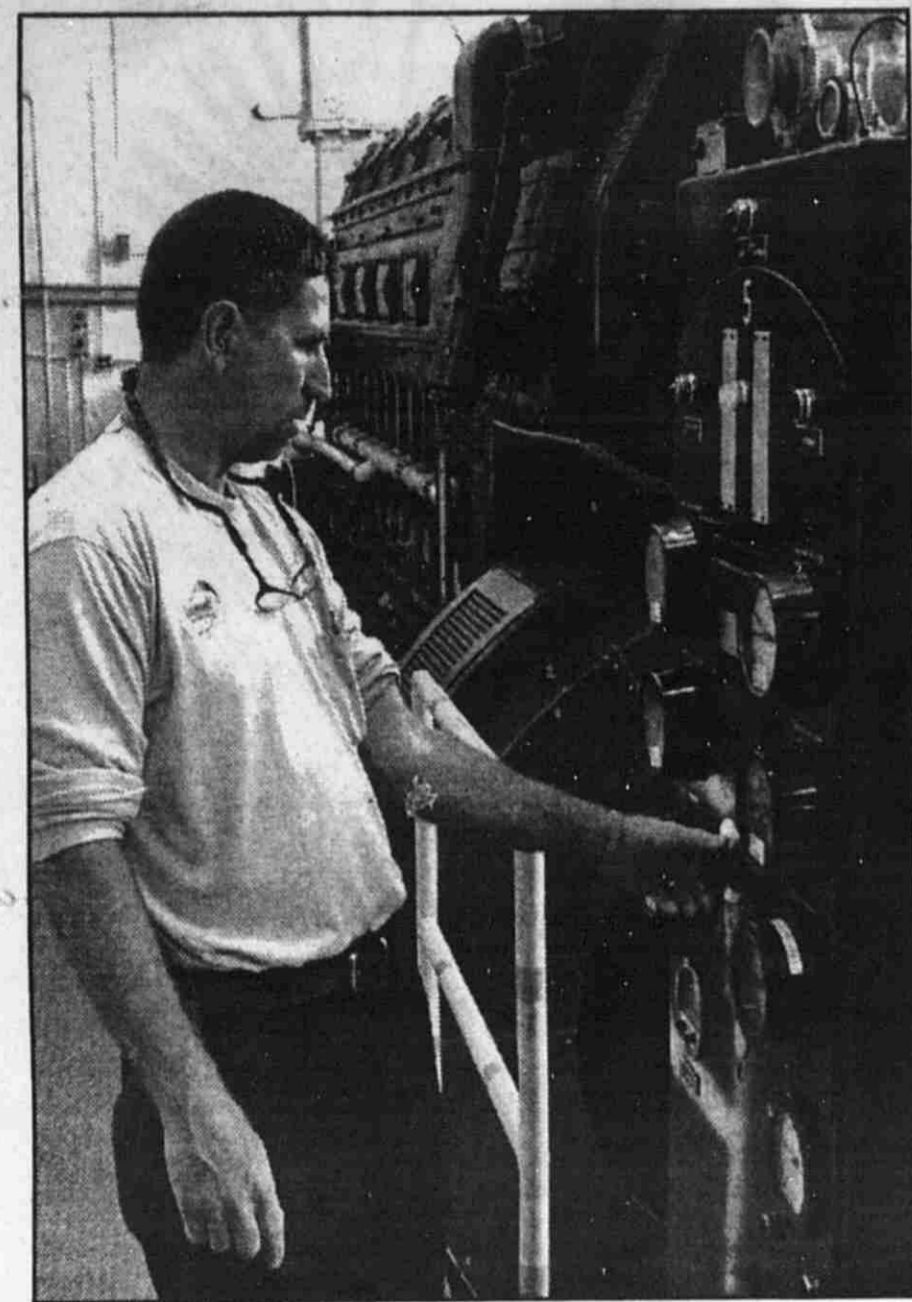
Merry Christmas! Includes drawing of a snowman and stars. LOWELL TOWNSHIP HALL.

Gingerbread Cookies. Includes drawing of gingerbread men. Keiser's.

Monica Cook, Mrs. Young, Cherry Creek. Includes drawing of a snowman. Snowboat AUTOMOTIVE SUPPLY, INC.

JUNE 29

More than 40 from Lowell were among the 11,000 people from districts across the state who rallied in front of the Capitol in Lansing last Tuesday seeking improved funding for education.



Lowell Light and Power safety director and power plant supervisor Tom Russo gets ready to put a generator online. The utility ran its generators for a total of six hours last Tuesday because of high electricity demand caused by high temperatures. 7-6-05

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Cadet Aaron S. Ritzema, son of Dion and Catherine Ritzema of Alto, graduated from the United States Military Academy on May 28.

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Michele DeHaan is retiring as varsity gymnastics coach after 12 years in that position at Lowell High School.

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Members of the newest Lowell High School sports team, The Kent County Conservation League/Lowell High School trap shooting team, have been honing their skills at shooting orange clay discs for the past four weeks.

July '05

JULY 6

On July 12, a bone marrow drive will be held at Lowell High School to help eight-year old cancer patient Anna Organek.

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A local car dealership has decided to alter its plan for a proposed body shop, but a lack of detail to the plans forced the Lowell Planning Commission to table the matter.

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Cadet Benjamin J. Meyer, a 2001 graduate of East Kentwood High School, graduated from the U.S. Military Academy on May 28. He is the son of Craig and Cindy Meyer of Lowell.

00000

Voyages Coffee Shop closed a few weeks ago but reopened Friday under new ownership. Not much has changed, yet, but the new owners plan to add a deli.

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The Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce's annual Riverwalk Festival has grown once again this year with new attractions and new things to do in Lowell.

JULY 13

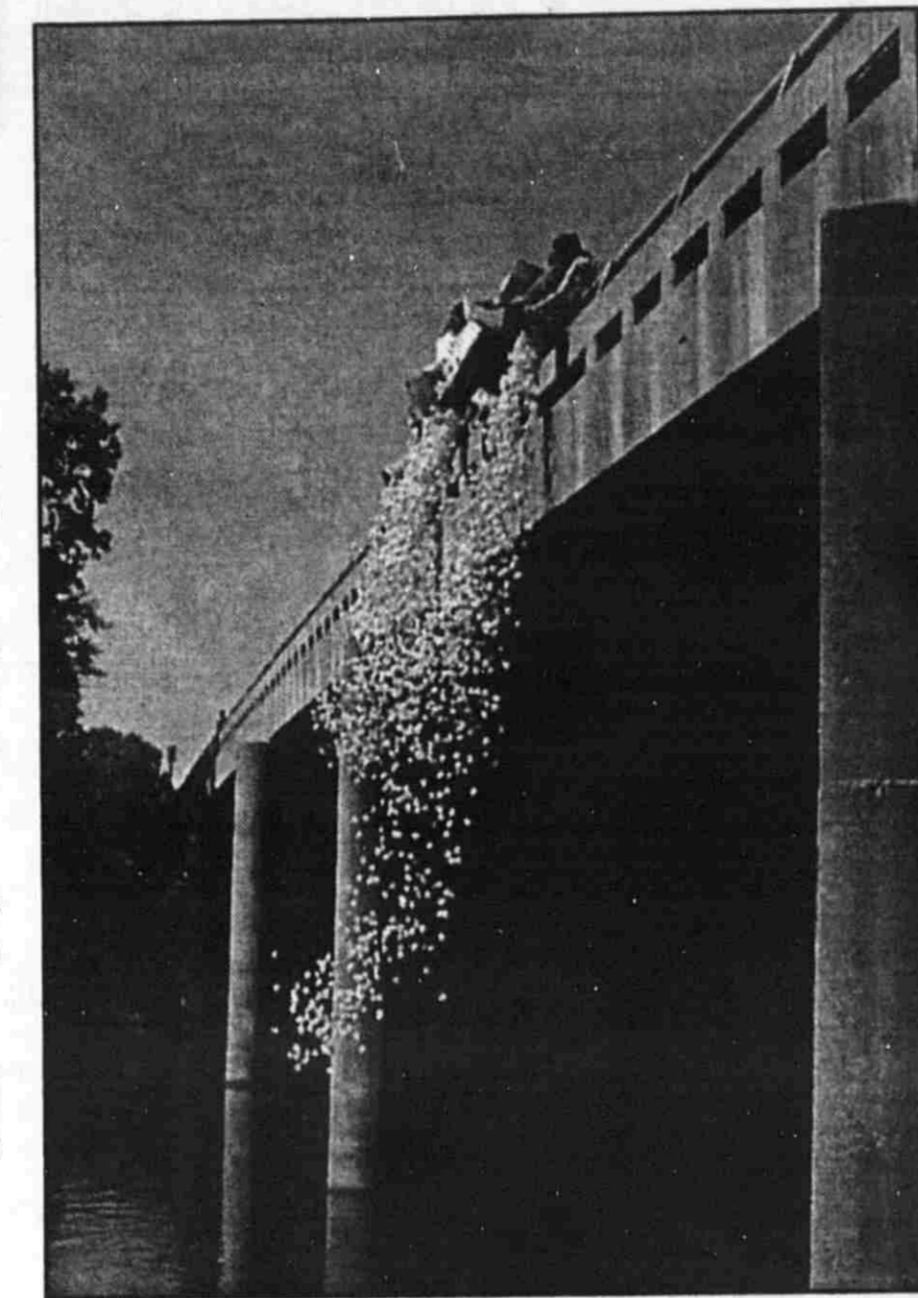
Lowell may be getting into the business of trafficking emergency response vehicles to Santiago in the Dominican Republic. Last Thursday, representatives from Santiago visited Lowell to have a look at the Lowell Area Fire Department's old Engine Number 3. The Lowell Rotary Club hopes to help ship the fire truck to the Caribbean nation.

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Businesses in Lowell must now keep any outdoor merchandise and displays a distance of 10 feet from front lot lines.

00000

There are approximately 160 varieties of daylilies in Angelo's flower pots at her home on Springside Drive in Lowell Township. Her gardens are a tour stop on a county-wide garden tour this weekend.



Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce volunteers dump ducks off the Division Street bridge at the start of the annual duck race. 7-13-05

JULY 20

People in downtown Lowell are hoping some visible additions on Main Street will make pedestrians more visible to motorists.

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Last Tuesday's marrow drive for Anna Organek at Lowell High School drew more than 1,000 people, even one from Alaska.

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Coinciding with the heat wave of the last few weeks has been a not-much-crime wave.

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The city is looking at creating a contract and fee structure for the Lowell Showboat.



Austin Fischer, of Alto and the Cherry Valley Livestock Club, keeps his pig under control during the livestock auction at the Kent County Youth Fair. 8-17-05

00000
A skate park in Lowell is a possibility if young skateboarding enthusiasts can find funding.

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If the fourth phase of the city's sewer improvement plan is approved next month, the city's east side of the Flat River will see city crews and sewer workers in the area.

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At its meeting Monday, the Vergennes Township Board approved four applications for the Kent County Purchase of Development Rights program.

00000

Over the objections of the Lowell Light and Power Board, the Lowell City Council selected Biggs, Hausserman, Thompson & Dickinson to serve as the city auditors for the next three years.

JULY 27

The Grand Rapids Area Astronomical Association, whose members built the James C. Veen Observatory in Lowell Township and spend late nights looking at stars from there, recently celebrated its 50th anniversary.

00000

Lowell lost a longtime teacher and lifetime fervent sports supporter Saturday with the passing of Bob Perry, 79, known to many as "Mr. Red Arrow."

August '05

AUGUST 3

Changes to the Michigan boundary commission's roster may delay its decision on the petitioned annexation of 177 acres of Vergennes Township to the city of Lowell.

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There are a number of interesting features the city of Lowell has to offer when looking down from 500 to 800 feet.

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Receiving approval for its newest plan, a local auto dealer intends to get construction underway quickly for the city's newest business: a body shop.

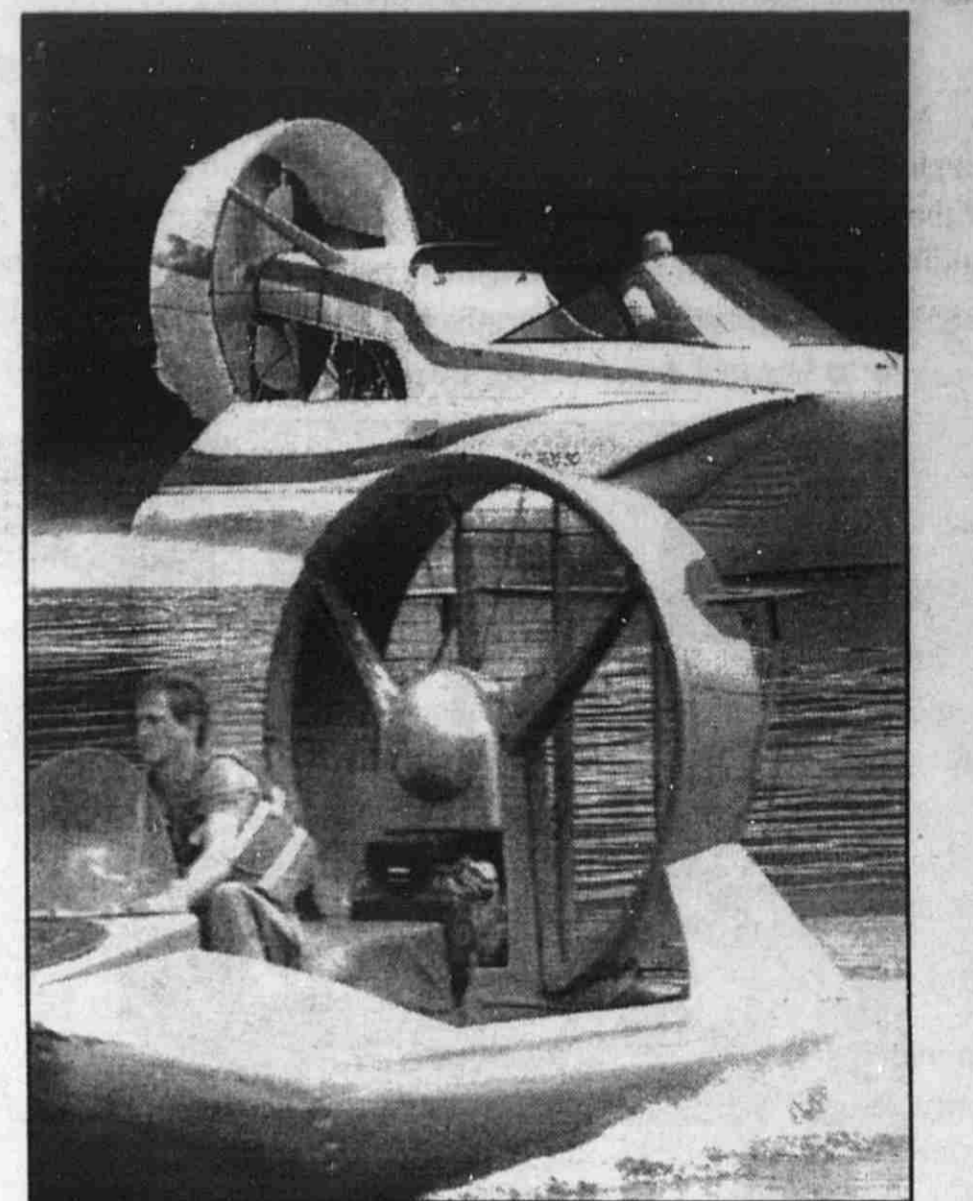
00000
Lowell High School students did well on the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) test this year.

Michelle Foote
Mrs. Schneider
Alto Elementary

Lowell Family Medical Center
Paul R. Gauthier, D.O. James C. Lang, D.O.
John G. Meier, D.O. Wayne A. Christenson, D.O.
Tracy L. Lixie, D.O.
Larissa Hollander, P.A.-C Julie Drake, P.A.-C
2550 West Main, Lowell • 616-252-5600

Breana McKendrick
Mr. Bredin
Cherry Creek Elementary

LOWELL MEDICAL SPECIALISTS
Mark Evenhouse MD • John Mogor MD
Joan Miedema MD
1150 N. Hudson, Lowell • 897-8436



Stan Sykes (foreground) and Dean Pollee cruise their hovercrafts down the Grand River by the Lowell Fairgrounds. 8-31-05

00000

If skateboarders in Lowell can put together a viable plan for a skate park at Stoney Lakeside Park, there are businesses in town willing to help make it happen.

AUGUST 10

Temperatures hovering around 90 degrees greeted animals and exhibitors at the 71st annual Kent County Youth Fair, which got started Sunday night at the Lowell Fairgrounds.

00000

A 1994 Dodge Ram pickup took a prime parking spot at Showboat Automotive Supply Friday afternoon, next to a rack of automotive chemicals after crashing through the front door.

Frosty the Snowman!
Gabrielle Gibbs
Mrs. Latva
Cherry Creek Elementary

Molly Denison
Mr. Fillman
Murray Lake Elementary

Salon, Inc. 204 W. Main • 897-1700

Quinton Dunn
Mr. Fillman
Murray Lake Elementary

Connor Acker
Mr. Fillman
Murray Lake Elementary

DURKEE LUMBER
Alto, Michigan • 868-6026
Hours: Mon. - Fri., 7:30 a.m. - 5 p.m. • Sat. 8 a.m. - noon

Elias Rempalski
Mr. Hawkins
Alto Elementary

Jayne McGill
Mr. Fillman
Murray Lake Elementary

211 E. Main, Lowell
897-6746

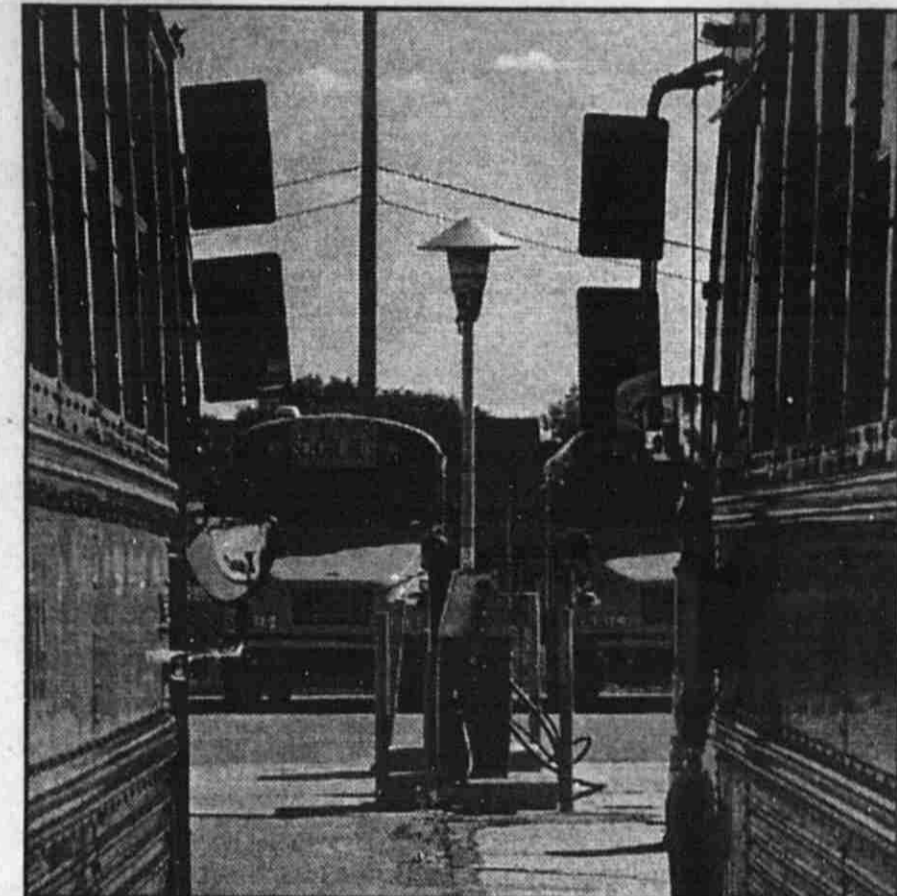
SNEAKERS

Emilyn Dec
Mrs. Pupil
Cherry Creek Elementary

Canfield Plumbing & Heating
403 N. Washington • Lowell • 897-0887

A financial analysis of the early retirement incentive put in place this spring by the Lowell Area Schools (LAS) board of education indicates that the plan is living up to its expectations in budgetary savings.

A Texas Hold'em tournament held Saturday night at the Lowell Moose Lodge capped a big fundraising push for the Anna Organek bone marrow drive.



High gas prices are having an impact on Lowell Area Schools, which buys one thousand gallons of diesel fuel per month to fill its thirsty bus fleet. 9-7-05

Art Attack III takes place Saturday, Aug. 20 from 6 to 11 p.m. at the Lowell Area Arts Council's Gallery at 149 S. Hudson.

Lowell Community Wellness's "100 Miles in 100 Days" walking challenge reached the two-thirds point last week with 140 participants, each trying to walk 100 miles by Sept. 6.

Earth Tech Inc. has quit as the maintenance contractor for a sewage lift system in Grattan Township after the

township's environmental engineering firm discovered problems with the system.

AUGUST 17

Two houses on Riverside Drive were torn down Monday.

Hot weather at the beginning of the week didn't stop people from coming out to the fair. Returns from parking and from the carnival were both up from last year.

At its meeting Monday, the Lowell Charter Township Board gave preliminary approval to a site plan for phase four of the Whispering Hills housing development, located west of Meijer.

When it comes to the issue of vicious dogs, the Lowell City Council has decided that its current ordinance on the matter is sufficient.

Herb Elzinga, a man known to probably every Lowellian of his generation and to many in the generations after, died early Monday after suffering a stroke the previous week. He was 92.

Parents dropping off and picking up students at Runciman Elementary and residents in that area should take note: High Street is going to be one way this fall.

The Lowell YMCA branch has hired a new associate director.

Jason Seeley Jr. of Lowell recently rode his way to second place in the world rankings of the National Little Britches Rodeo Association (NLBRA).

AUGUST 24

The shelves at the Fiat River Outreach Ministries' (F.R.O.M.) food pantry are becoming bare, and it's starting to have an impact on the families the charity helps.

Fundraisers working to help eight-year old Lowell cancer patient Anna Organek have reached their goal.

Army National Guard Pfc. Susan A. Hoag has graduated from basic combat training at Fort Jackson, Columbia, S.C. She is the daughter of Pat Hoag of Lowell and Dorothy Hoag of Grand Rapids.

Yellow tags are now hanging from Lowell's red fire hydrants, reminding people it is unlawful to tamper with or take water from them.

After some discussion on how to go about getting its master plan updated, the Lowell Planning Commission has made some headway in the process.

For about five years, Kaleidoscope has kept the citizens of Lowell abreast on the activities put on by local nonprofit organizations and now it is going online.

AUGUST 31

The Lowell Fairgrounds was the place to be over the weekend if you are a hovercraft hobbyist. Members of the Hovercraft Club of America brought their machines there, finding it to be a pretty ideal location.

At right: A collection of scarecrows leans on the poultry barn at the Lowell Fairgrounds before being distributed throughout town for the festival of scarecrows. 10-12-05



Haley Kyburz
Mr. Fillman
Murray Lake Elementary

THOMET
CHEVROLET BUICK

1250 W. Main, Lowell
897-9294

AN AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Brice Wingerter
Mrs. Vezino
St. Patrick School

WITTENBACH GMC
Grand

REAL PEOPLE...
REAL DIFFERENCE

749 W. Main St., Lowell
Ph. 897-9227 • 800-936-0040

Mistletoe

Sierra Drake
Mr. Stevens
Cherry Creek Elementary

Rudolph

Emily Peterson
Mr. Hawkins
Alto Elementary

BILL WHEELER
Certified Public Accountant
103 Riverside Dr., Lowell
897-7711

The North Country Trail Association will have a change of scenery when the route through Lowell is moved to create a safer passageway, as approved at Monday night's city council meeting.

Lowell Little League is preparing to make its financial books more open for scrutiny after the arrest of league president Edward Parks on embezzlement charges.

Tighter finances have caused the city to reduce the scope of a sidewalk project.

SEPTEMBER 28

North Hudson Street has gone from four lanes to three, and the transition has caused some confusion in town... at least while the appropriate line markings remain unpainted.

This is the third year the Lowell Area Historical Museum has held a tour of the city's historic homes.

The Lowell Area Schools board of education unanimously voted to hire Pat Murphy, 63, as interim superintendent. Murphy will fill in for Shari Miller, who is undergoing a round of cancer treatment.

Navy Seaman Recruit Justin D. Force, son of Julie Fones of Alto, recently completed U.S. Navy basic training at Recruit Training Command, Great Lakes, Ill.

October '05

OCTOBER 5

At last Thursday's Downtown Development Authority Meeting, representatives of the Michigan Department of Transportation confirmed that the intersection of Main Street and Monroe Avenue does not meet the criteria for a traffic light.

The city of Lowell will be changing its waste hauler from Waste Management to Allied Waste Industries.

The Lowell Planning Commission has pushed back its starting date on reviewing and updating the city's master plan.

The fire that damaged an abandoned one-room school house in Grattan Township Friday was intentionally set, local fire officials said.

Lowell's Main Street will be brighter at night after the installation of new bulbs in all 163 old-time looking downtown streetlights.

Another year of school started last Wednesday in Lowell.

A hog roast Sunday, Sept. 11, at the Lowell Moose Lodge recreational hall will benefit a West Michigan spina bifida support group.

A "Chuck Wagon Roundup" is planned to raise money to preserve farmland in Grattan Township.

Liz Baker, executive director of the Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce, was surprised to see a sizeable crowd of people standing next to the showboat Monday evening, waiting to give her a thank-you party for her work promoting Lowell.

Art Attack, which took place Saturday, Aug. 20 at the Lowell Area Arts Council, was an even bigger hit than usual this year.

September '05

SEPTEMBER 7

As consumers in Lowell watched unleaded gas prices go as high as \$3.49 per gallon at local stations last week, Lowell Area Schools and local businesses also struggled with higher fuel costs.

Last week, people in Lowell were looking for ways to help the millions left homeless after Hurricane Katrina pounded the gulf-coast states. A group of youngsters set up a lemonade stand on Elm Street, and a Lowell truck driver is headed south with a semi trailer of supplies.

Gordon Marshall, who died Aug. 29 of lung cancer at the age of 63, left his mark on Lowell and especially on this town's veterans.

More than 93,000 people visited the Englehardt Library in 2004, checking out more than 130,000 items; and the staff answered almost 30,000 information requests.

A young Alto martial artist, Mariah Moore, organized benefit karate exhibition at the Alto Fall Festival to help eight-year old cancer patient Anna Organek.

The reigning pie and watermelon eating champion of Alto is looking for some challengers at this year's Alto Fall Festival.

SEPTEMBER 14

Since Aug. 15, Steve Mueller—he goes by "Ranger Steve"—has been settling into the biggest classroom in the Lowell school district as director of the Wittenbach-Wege Agriscience and Environmental Center.

At its Tuesday night meeting, the Lowell City Council unanimously voted to support a recommendation that the money collected from the Kent County Youth Fair be used toward Rec Park, where the annual event takes place.

Lowell Area Schools will hire an interim superintendent while superintendent Shari Miller undergoes seven weeks of cancer treatment.

At its Tuesday night meeting, the Lowell City Council gave approval for a permit for working under its roadways by setting a \$50 fee for a person or developer to obtain a street opening permit.

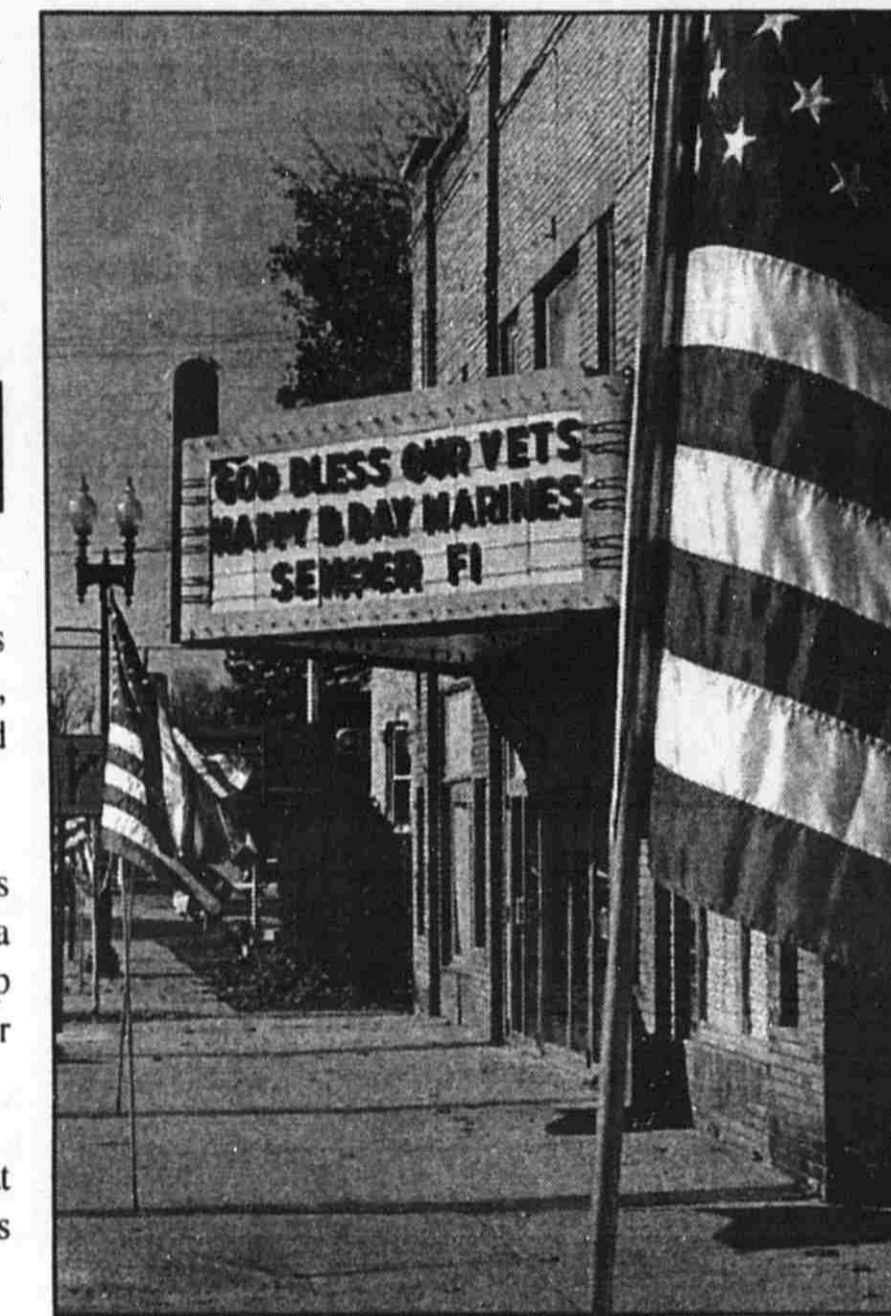
Vergennes Township residents interested in tapping into existing city water and sewer lines will be allowed to do so.

A spaghetti dinner being held Saturday at Larkin's Other Place will benefit accident victim Frances Thomas.

Energy was a big topic at Monday night's school board meeting, with the board hearing news of electricity savings in the school buildings and high gas prices impacting the district's bus fleet.

It started with pancakes, ended with bluegrass music, and in between there was a man breathing fire. The 25th annual Alto Fall Festival took place Saturday in that small village at the northern border of Bowne Township.

The Lowell Area Arts Council's current art exhibit has to do with water and its conservation.



This message adorned the marquee on Larkin's Other Place last Thursday and Friday in honor of Veterans Day and the 230th birthday of the U.S. Marine Corps. 11-16-05

Lowell Community Wellness's "100 Miles in 100 Days" was successful in getting people in the community to cover a lot of ground on foot, but participants fell short of the goal.

The fate of 177 acres in Vergennes Township that was petitioned for annexation to the city of Lowell will remain in the air for at least another month.

Happy
New
Year

Nicole Cummings
Mrs. Latva
Cherry Creek Elementary

LOWELL VISION CENTER
David Durkee, O.D. F.A.A.O.
Heidi Gordon, O.D.
2186 W. Main, Lowell • 897-2020

Happy
Holiday

Shelby Gaskin
Mr. Hawkins
Alto Elementary

Lowell Granite Co.
306 E. Main, Lowell
Ph. 897-7191

OCTOBER 12

Lowell was in full autumn mode this weekend for the annual Harvest Celebration put on by the Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce.

Lowell Area Schools bus drivers will get a 1.1 percent wage increase this year.

Vergennes Township Hall and three residences in the township were broken into last Thursday night.

A 1984 Lowell fire truck, no longer useable, will be shipped off to the Dominican Republic.

The Lowell Chamber of Commerce presented its first draft of proposed fees for renting the Lowell Showboat at the city council's meeting last week.

Some of the season's first cool temperatures greeted 68 runners and walkers Saturday morning for the inaugural Harvest Hustle 5-K race.

Mold at Lowell Middle School was once again a topic at the Lowell Area Schools board of education meeting as three parents informed the board that their children had to be removed from the school on doctor's orders.

OCTOBER 19

Long-distance swimmer Jim Dreyer, who made history this August by becoming the first person to swim across Lake Superior, spoke to the Lowell Rotary Club last Wednesday.

An outstanding bill of almost \$9,000 has put a stop on the city discussing the rental space of its tower with a wireless internet provider.

Army National Guard Pvt. Zachary Sherman has graduated from basic combat military training at Fort Sill, Lawton, Okla. Sherman is the son of Marilyn Benjamin of Lowell.

There is not a lot going on in Elmdale these days. It's one of several "ghost towns" that are the topic of an upcoming Lowell Area Historical Museum presentation.

OCTOBER 26

A man drew a firearm during what police believe was a drug-related altercation two weeks ago outside a local restaurant.

The Michigan Boundary Commission voted last Thursday to deny a petition by a developer to annex 177 acres of Vergennes Township to the city of Lowell.

The "Dinner With Friends" fundraiser for the Lowell Area Schools Education Foundation is coming up.

A condominium project and a proposed ordinance on canopies and awnings capped a light agenda for the Lowell Planning Commission at its regular meeting Monday night.

Army Pvt. Michael D. Plummer has graduated from One Station Unit Training at Fort Knox, Ky. Plummer, a 2003 Lowell High School graduate, is the son of Timothy Plummer of Brownstown and Shirley Van Haren of Clarksville.

November '05

NOVEMBER 2

The Lowell Area Historical Museum hosted a reception last Thursday to open its "Childhood Dreams: Toys of the Past" exhibit, which is now on display in the changing exhibits area of the museum.

Four vehicles were involved in an accident Friday on East Fulton St. near its intersection with Bowes Road and Alden Nash Ave.

Lowell's sidewalks and shops were filled with women last Thursday for the "Ladies' Night Out" shopping event.

Marine Corps Pvt. Steven M. Childs has completed 12 weeks of basic training at Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego, Calif., designed to challenge new Marine recruits both physically and mentally. Childs is the son of Maria and Brian Childs of Lowell.

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The right kinds of exercise have been making a big difference for a growing group of seniors in Lowell, who exercise several times a week in Lowell Senior Center program that is growing in popularity.

NOVEMBER 9

A host of houses throughout the Lowell area along with some businesses will be filled with crafts for sale for the ever-popular "Christmas Through Lowell" event.

The bleachers at the former Showboat Amphitheater were vandalized.

Lowell Area Schools lost its committed leader over the weekend as superintendent Shari Miller lost her battle with breast cancer at about 1 p.m. Sunday. She was 55 years old.

Lowell City Council will give a local wireless company 30 days to settle its debt with the city and establish a new lease agreement... otherwise the city will have its equipment removed for its tower.

00000

Hunters in Lowell are gearing up for another gun deer season. The season opens Tuesday in Michigan.

NOVEMBER 16

There is no change in the ranks of the Lowell city council after last Tuesday's election.

A complicated case with a lot of ins and outs led to a small-scale manhunt on the west end of town last Thursday.

A chimney fire at a house on Maple Run off Cascade Road in Lowell Township Sunday evening caused damage but no injuries.

A fatal accident occurred Tuesday morning at the intersection of Lincoln Lake Avenue and Bailey Drive.

With Lowell's new waste hauler, trash, yard waste and recycling will now be picked up on the same day. That day is Thursday.

00000

Cement mixers and excavators are presently a frequent sight in Lowell Township as commercial development occurs there.

The Lowell Area Schools Board of Education agreed to seek bids for a firm to assess whether Lowell Middle School's heating, ventilation and air conditioning system may be creating a mold problem at the school.

A special celebration in honor of the life of the late Lowell Area Schools' superintendent Shari Miller was held last Wednesday in the Lowell Performing Arts Center.

NOVEMBER 23

New software at Lowell Area Schools has unified the library collections and created a big electronic catalog.

Arrest warrants were being sought Monday for two suspects after a drug bust last week found small amounts of marijuana, cocaine and drug paraphernalia at a house in Lowell.



Lowell Area Schools lost its committed leader over the weekend as superintendent Shari Miller lost her battle with breast cancer. 11-9-05

Advertisement for METRIC MANUFACTURING CO. featuring a snowman illustration and contact information: 1001 Foreman Lowell 897-5959.

Advertisement for L.A. TRIM featuring an illustration of a hot dog and contact information: 897-6546.

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There is an exhibit at City Hall about the history of the milling industry in Lowell.

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Christmas and country music were wafting through the air last weekend during Christmas Through Lowell. Candles were sniffed, ornaments were examined, recipes were handed out.

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At its regular meeting Monday, the Vergennes Township Board approved a resolution pledging growth-planning cooperation with the city of Lowell and Lowell Charter Township.

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A local builder will have to put sidewalk along the properties he owns on North Jefferson street. That was the decision by the Lowell City Council at its Monday night meeting.

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The Lowell High School crew team received the blessing of Lowell City Council to move its operation to Rec Park, but was told it still needed to follow procedure.

NOVEMBER 30

A fundraiser with music to benefit the Lowell Schools Orchestra Program will be held Friday night, Dec. 9, in the Lowell Performing Arts Center.

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Lowell police are looking for a man who killed a deer within city limits on the land between Stoney Lakeside Park and the Grand River.

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The first three days of December, which start Thursday, all have something in common. All feature a performance of "The Man Who Came to Supper" by the Lowell High School drama department in the Lowell Performing Arts Center.

December '05

DECEMBER 7

It was another good start to the Christmas season in Lowell with the annual Santa parade and associated activities.

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The time on both faces of the City Hall clock tower has been wrong for the last few weeks.

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Schneider Manor is a popular living option for seniors in Lowell.

*** Now there are more overweight people in America than average-weight people. So overweight people are now average. Which means you've met your New Year's resolution. - Jay Leno

Advertisement for PARKIN'S RESTAURANT featuring a Christmas tree illustration and contact information: 301 W. MAIN 897-5977.

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The closest a city bus comes to Lowell right now is at the corner of 36th Street and Kraft Ave., which is at the western end of Cascade Township. But some people would like to change that.

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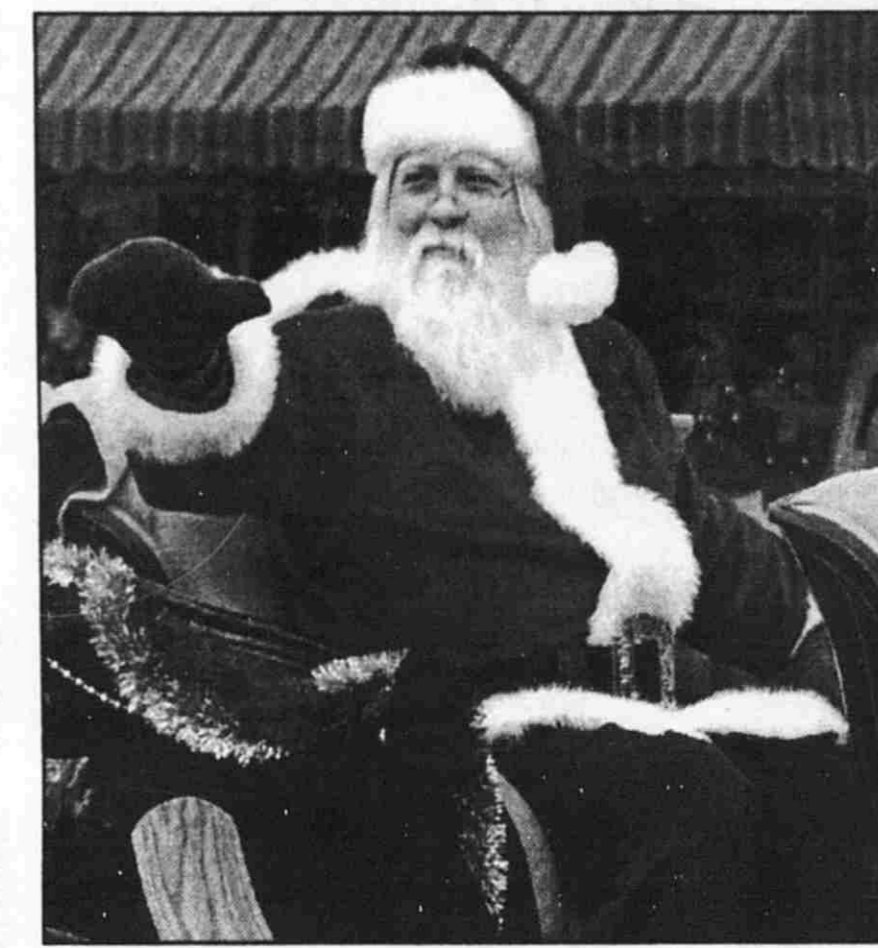
Army Reserve Sgt. Jason A. Stoutjesdyk was honored at a special Welcome Home Warrior-Citizen Award ceremony in recognition of the soldier's personal sacrifice, exceptional duty performance, and honorable service in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in Iraq and Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. Stoutjesdyk is the son of Jim Stoutjesdyk and Susan L. Lewis, both of Lowell.

DECEMBER 14

Trees are being removed along Bowes Road this week to make way for new power lines.

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Lance Cpl. David Stephens of Lowell was among the Marines injured in Iraq last week.



Santa Claus was the featured attraction at this year's annual Lowell Santa Parade. 12-7-05

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A car was driven into the Flat River just north of the Showboat in the early hours of Tuesday morning.

Advertisement for James Reagan, D.D.S. featuring a fireplace illustration and contact information: 207 W. Main, Lowell Ph. 897-7179.

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Businesses were given a 30-day reprieve to find other internet providers after the city forced a local provider to shut down for unpaid back rent for use of a city-owned tower.

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Lowell Area Schools received a good report from its auditing firm, Monday.

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Lowell resident Jean Carlson has made a dozen quilts which she plans to donate to the Ronald McDonald House in Grand Rapids.

DECEMBER 21

Lowell Area Schools has begun a candidate search to find a new superintendent.

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A request by a for-profit business to use the city council chambers has the Lowell City Council looking at drawing up a policy on renting city facilities.

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The Lowell Charter Township board made appointments to planning commission and zoning board of appeals seats at its Monday meeting. The board also discussed a proposal to expand the Look Memorial Fire Station to make more room for ambulances.

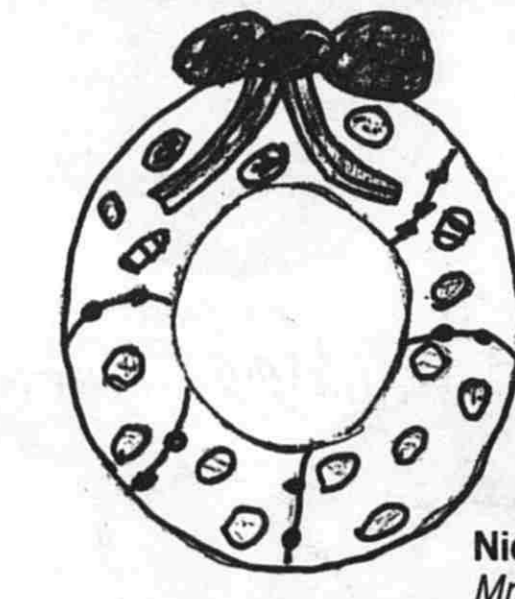
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Lowell will celebrate its 175th anniversary next year. The Lowell Area Historical Museum is marking the occasion with a pictorial history book.

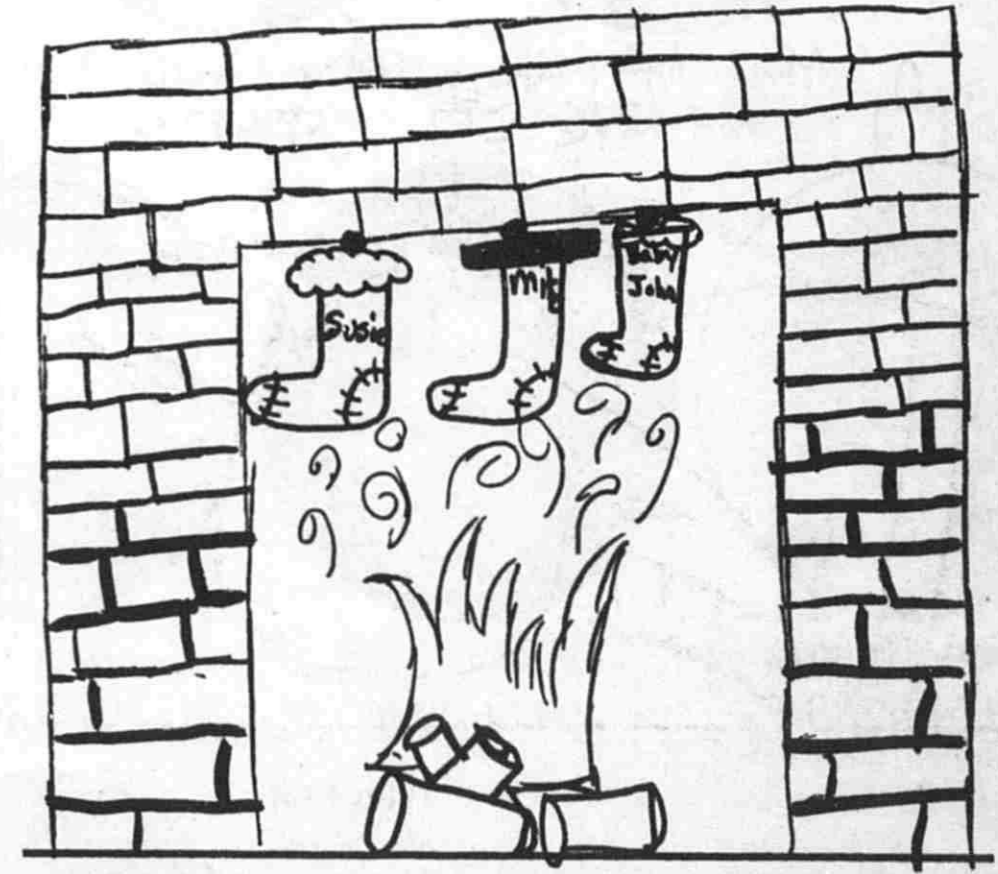
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Students at Lowell Area Schools kept busy before winter break with a number of community service projects.

Happy New Year! From all of us at The Lowell Ledger



Nick Robinson Mr. Bredin Cherry Creek Elementary



Lauren Weaver Mr. Fillman Murray Lake Elementary

James Reagan, D.D.S. 207 W. Main, Lowell Ph. 897-7179

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Lowell - 11635 E. Fulton Street, located next to Curves
616-897-6849



*Our surcharges (incl. 2.29% Federal Universal Service (varies quarterly), 5¢ Regulatory & 40¢ Administrative/line/mo., & others by area) are not taxes (details 1-888-684-1888); gov't taxes and our surcharges could add 6% to 35% to your bill. Activation fee: \$35 (25\$ for secondary Family SharePlan lines with 2-yr Agreements).
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