

# The Lowell Ledger

Volume 34 Issue 29

Serving Lowell Area Readers Since 1893

Wednesday, May 24, 2006

## Coldwater's mayor spends the day discovering Lowell

By Dan Schneider

For this year's Mayor Exchange Day, Lowell traded mayors with the city of Coldwater. Mayor Gene Wallace and representatives from that city in south-central Michigan were greeted at the Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce Tuesday morning. They proceeded to tour local businesses including Litehouse, Inc., and Superior Furniture. They also toured municipal buildings such as Lowell Light and Power and the water treatment plant. Most of the day was spent touring the town, during which time representatives from both cities talked about the similarities and differences between the two.

Coldwater is a town of about 10,800. Its major employers are a Walmart distribution center, three medium-security state prisons, a hospital and its public school system. Coldwater is the county seat of Branch County. Surrounded by the county's 101 lakes, the town draws a large number of tourists during the summer. It also has significant Spanish- and Arabic-speaking populations.

*Mayor Exchange Day, cont'd., pg. 4*



Front row, left to right: Coldwater mayor Gene Wallace; Coldwater city councilmember Mitch Rice, Candy Rice; Lowell city manager Dave Pasquale; and Lowell city councilmember Jeanne Shores; back row: Coldwater city councilmember Bob Huntley; Sharon Wallace; Coldwater city councilmember Don Shemel; and Coldwater city manager Bill Steven in front of the gallon-size packaging line at Litehouse, Inc., during a tour for Mayor Exchange Day.

## Fairgrounds come alive with bluegrass music over the weekend



Schlitz Creek performs Saturday afternoon during the Mayfest Bluegrass festival.

By Dan Schneider

With the sound of banjos, mandolins and stand-up basses, the West Michigan Bluegrass Music Association's 11th annual Mayfest hit the Lowell Fairgrounds over the weekend.

There was music on the stage and also everywhere else ... among the campers in the parking lot, in the horse barns and in the King Memorial Youth Center, string pickers were congregating and playing songs.

Even Lowell mayor Chuck Myers got in on the action. After welcoming the bluegrass fans gathered under the stage tent behind the Reeth Barn, he opened up a small suitcase of harmonicas. He proceeded to play some of what he

called "bluesgrass" with members of the West Michigan Bluegrass Music Association (WMBMA) board.

Then it was an afternoon of bluegrass, spilling into an evening of bluegrass. There were The Chapmans,

the headline group, who played bluegrass in a real polished style. And there was Schlitz Creek, who had the style of true-grit hillbillies with their bib overalls and between-song banter.

They got started in a barn near Kalamazoo, with a bunch of guys playing just for fun.

"We said, 'Hey, we can take this jammin' out to the bars and make some money with it,'" standup bassist Nick Griffith said, sitting around a campfire Saturday afternoon, outside

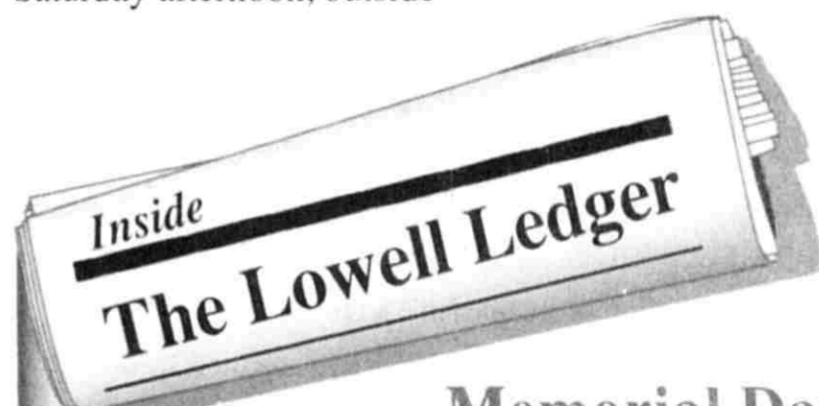
their motorhome near the football field.

Griffith has been familiar with bluegrass music since he was young.

"My dad played when I was growing up, so we were always going to these festivals," he said.

Schlitz Creek guitarist Dave Dekema had a sort of conversion to bluegrass after meeting Dekema and banjo-player Nick Deaton. What inspired him about bluegrass was the expansive repertoire.

*Bluegrass, cont'd., pg. 10*



Memorial Day  
May 29, 2006



Lowell's Main Street  
Parade At 10 AM

*Walking For Wellness ... Page 3*  
*City Survey Planned ... Page 4*  
*Garden Club At 57 ... Page 11*  
*RV Park Possibilities ... Page 13*

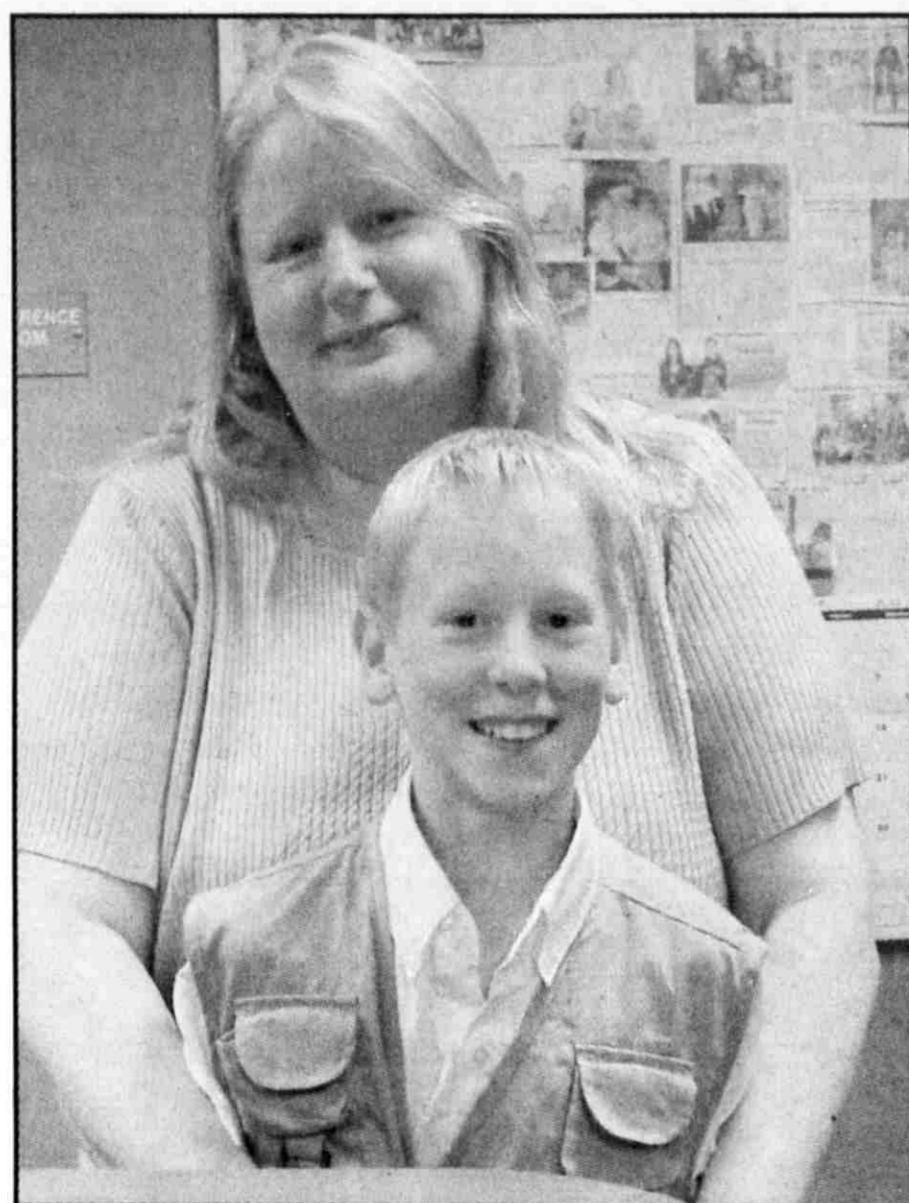








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Marie Peterson with her son Grant.

## Volunteer of the month at Murray Lake

Marie Peterson was named Murray Lake Elementary's volunteer of the month for April. She and her husband Jim have three children in the Lowell School District: Alyshia and Jayme at the middle school and Grant, a fourth grader at Murray Lake.

Peterson was nominated by staff members for the time and energy she puts into the many activities going on at Murray Lake.

"I love to volunteer, because our teachers work so hard to give our children a good education, and I just want to help them out in any way I can. I also hope by showing my children how important their education is to me, they will make it important to themselves. Through this process, I am able to stay actively involved in my children's lives," said Peterson.

## Simple solutions to avoid boating accidents

According to the most recent statistics released by the U.S. Coast Guard, drinking and driving is a safety concern that is not limited to Michigan roads. In fact, says the Coast Guard, alcohol was involved in more than half (51 percent) of all boating fatalities in Michigan during 2004, well above the national average of 33 percent.

By comparison, alcohol was a factor in 37 percent of Michigan highway fatalities during the same year, according to the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA).

Part of the problem, say law enforcement officials, is that boating is often strictly viewed as a recreational activity and some of its more serious obligations can be overlooked.

Sgt. Dan Toth of the Oakland County Sheriff's Department Marine Division, said more than 80 percent of the drownings and fatal boating accidents that occur each year are due to reckless operation, alcohol use and/or not wearing a Personal Flotation Device (PFD). He recommends that all new boat owners - including those using jet skis for the first time - take a boater's safety class. If you were born after Dec. 1, 1978, it's mandatory.

Michigan law prohibits anyone from boating while under the influence of alcohol or drugs. It is also illegal

for the owner of a vessel to allow anyone else to operate that vessel under the influence of alcohol or drugs. A first offense is a 90-day misdemeanor with a \$500 fine. A second offense can yield up to one year in jail and a \$1,000 fine. Boating privileges are also sanctioned.

Michigan law also requires that all vessels be equipped with a PFD for each person on board. More than half (63 percent) of the 676 persons who died in U.S. boating accidents last summer were not wearing a life jacket. PFD's not only keep you afloat after a mishap, but can help protect you against deadly hypothermia, or lowering of the body's core temperature, and also provoke some protection against internal injury in boating collisions and falls.

### Safe Boating Tips

- **Take a safe-boating class.** Many schools, local sheriff's department marine division and diverse groups such as the Coast Guard Auxiliary and Red Cross offer them.

- **Give your boat a safety check.** This should be done at the start of each season and each time you leave the dock.

- **Be watchful for old pilings, sandbars and other hazards.** Plot your routes using a GPS (Global Positioning System) if possible to keep known obstructions pinpointed.

- **Equip your vessel with a marine radio or cell phone.** Emergencies can arise and it's good to keep track of the weather. Always have a compass onboard.

## College News

Erin Doyle, of Alto, received her diploma May 13 from Franciscan University in Steubenville, Ohio. Doyle earned degrees in both political science and Spanish, and graduated summa cum laude, achieving a cumulative grade point average above 3.8. Among her academic accomplishments,

she received the Orestes Augustus Brownson Award given to one student each year by the Political Science Department. She is the daughter of Brian and Cheryl Doyle of Alto.

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## Bluegrass, continued ... From Page 1

"I played rock and roll for years, and you can't get rock and rollers together to play for four hours," Dekema said. "But these guys would play all night long without playing the same song."

Schlitz Creek has played in Lowell before, at previous WMBMA festivals and at the Riverview Tavern.

"They like bluegrass around here, that's for sure," Griffith said. "It's nice to play for a crowd that pays attention. We'll play in a bar in Kalamazoo and all you can hear is clinking bottles."

For Les Emard, who plays guitar with the outfit "Ellen Beam and Bluegrass Twist," music means bluegrass.

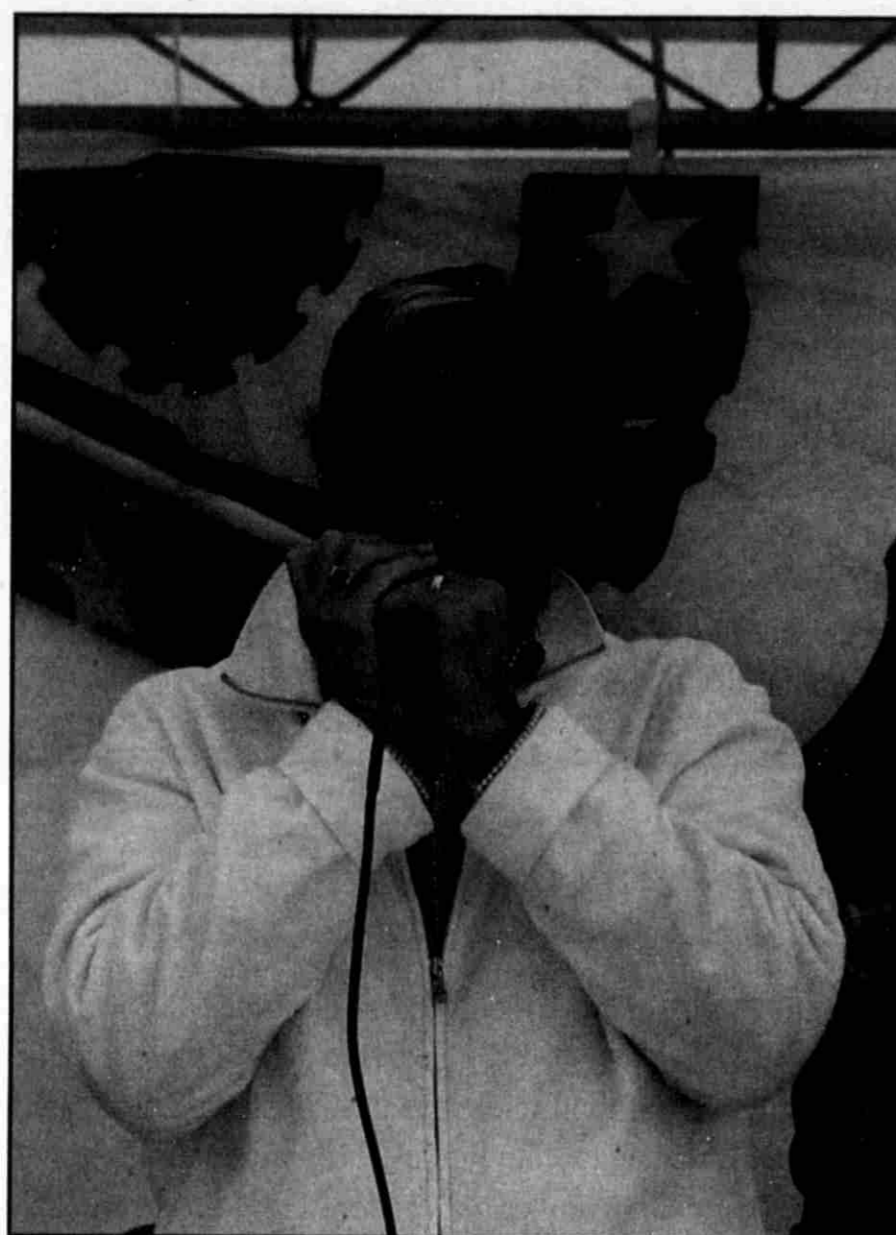
"The other types

of music--there's only two types of music now, bluegrass and rock and roll, because country is all rock and roll now," he said.

He was talking about his bluegrass philosophy Saturday afternoon. But mostly he wanted to stop answering questions and get back to playing his guitar.

Buford Ridell, who was playing music with Emard between a pair of RVs in the parking lot, sums up what he likes about bluegrass music this way: "You don't find anything that you couldn't sing to your grandmother, or your preacher."

That kind of family spirit pretty well pervaded the festival. Most people's time was spent "pickin' and grinnin'," as the saying goes, and enjoying America's old-time music.



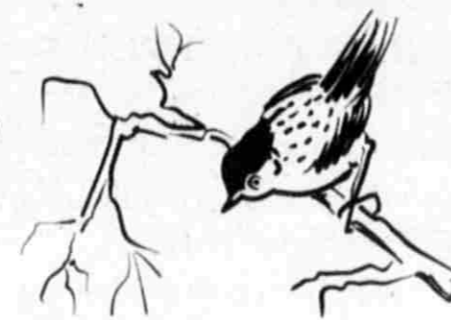
Lowell mayor Chuck Myers pulled out a harmonica to play some "bluegrass" during this weekend's festival.

\*\*\*  
Take a music bath once or twice a week for a few seasons, and you will find that it is to the soul what the water bath is to the body.

- Oliver Wendell Holmes (1809 - 1894)

## Outdoors

By Dave Stegehuis



### TOURNAMENT FISHING

At a time when professional sporting events from auto racing to ice hockey are riding a wave of popularity, professional fishing tournaments have not been left behind. There are large and small fishing tournaments across the country for a variety of species.

The In-Fishermen Professional Walleye Trail (PWT), for example, will produce eight events from May through August during the 2006 season. The Keweenaw Waterway at Houghton/Hancock and Big and Little Bay De Noc at Escanaba, both in the Upper Peninsula, are the Michigan venues for the 2006 PWT Pro-Am schedule. Other three-day events will take place in South Dakota, Minnesota, North Dakota and Wisconsin.

Pro-fishermen are sponsored by boat, motor and tackle manufacturers as well as some non-fishing related products. The Pros spend most of their time representing sponsors' products at sport and fishing shows, guiding and presenting seminars on fishing techniques. Because of the time and travel required, these fishermen need the support of very understanding spouses and children.

Amateur fishermen can apply for an opportunity to fish with a pro in any PWT event. If successful, for a fee, the amateur will fish with a different pro each day. It is a great chance to learn about walleye fishing methods and explore new water. There are prizes for top finishers for both anglers.

The tournaments draw anglers and fans from across the country to communities which welcome the visitors to their area. Of course, local waters receive a temporary spike in fishing pressure. I have been inadvertently caught up in a few tournaments while fishing with family and was not significantly inconvenienced or hindered by the tournament boats. Usually, a larger body of water will be chosen for larger tournaments.

Fish are always released after the weigh-in. Dead or injured fish do not count toward the anglers' score, so great effort is made to keep fish healthy. Even when hundreds of fish are caught, very few, if any, die. Casualties are donated to a local food program or institution.

These tournaments create a showcase where equipment manufacturers can exhibit their wares to fishermen who are eager to see the latest and greatest stuff. Also, the average angler can find out how and where fish are caught on the particular body of water. Local businesses such as bait shops, motels/hotels, and restaurants enjoy the surge in business. And, hopefully, the excitement and interest generated will help to recruit new fishermen to the sport.

The next time you have an opportunity to watch a fishing tournament or participate in one, pay attention to what's happening and you will likely become a better fisherman. Besides, it's lots of fun, and it is comforting to know someone else is as passionate about fishing as you are.

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## Showboat Garden Club concentrates its efforts on keeping Lowell beautiful

By Dan Schneider

In its 57 years of existence, the Lowell Showboat Garden Club has left a mark on this town.

Currently, that mark is probably most visible hanging from the decks of the club's namesake, the Lowell Showboat. For the past several years, the club has hung baskets spilling over with flowers from the rafters of the showboat. They've also filled the planting beds on the Riverwalk Plaza adjacent to the Lowell's celebrated boat. This year's installation of hanging baskets is scheduled for Friday, in time for the Memorial Day parade.

Founded in 1949 by Hulda Fineis, the club is a federated club, a member of Michigan Garden Clubs, Inc., and National Garden Clubs, Inc. The Showboat Garden Club hosted the Michigan District IV Spring Meeting earlier this month at Deer Run Golf Club. There were 150 gardeners present for the event from such towns as Holland, Saugatuck, Belding and Cedar Springs. They ate lunch and listened to speakers in the banquet hall decorated with flowers and well-dressed scarecrows.

When the club started in '49, and during its early history, it had officers in

charge of interesting things like "bird life" and "Civic and Roadside Therapy." The club's major emphasis throughout its first 30 years was on staging flower shows. In 1979, the club decided to pursue a different direction, with the focus on beautifying Lowell.

That spirit continues today. Besides the flowers planted aboard and alongside the showboat, the club plants the flowers around the Lowell Municipal Airport sign and maintains the labyrinth at the Wittenbach-Wege Agriscience and Environmental Center. Plans are in place to plant gardens around the Lowell Fairgrounds for the Kent County Youth Fair this year.

"We try to do as much as we can," club president Carol McGregor said. "We're always looking for more little projects."

Not all of their projects involve plants, directly. The club offers scholarships annually, especially for students enrolling in agriculture school at Michigan State University. It gives financial support to the Wittenbach Wege Center, Frederik Meijer Gardens in Grand Rapids Township, and to the Michigan State University Cooperative Extension Service for Kent County.

The club is a familiar presence at the Lowell Area Arts Council's Fall Festival. From a large booth usually tucked in the trees at the northeast end of the grounds, members sell arrangements of dried flowers.

The club meets once a month, often making field trips like last month's trip to a hosta and daylily farm near Cedar Springs. Olive Cook, 77, has been to every single Showboat Garden Club meeting for the last 35 years, an impressive streak of perfect attendance.

"I just made up my mind that I was going to go each time and if there was something else going on I just didn't do it," Cook said.

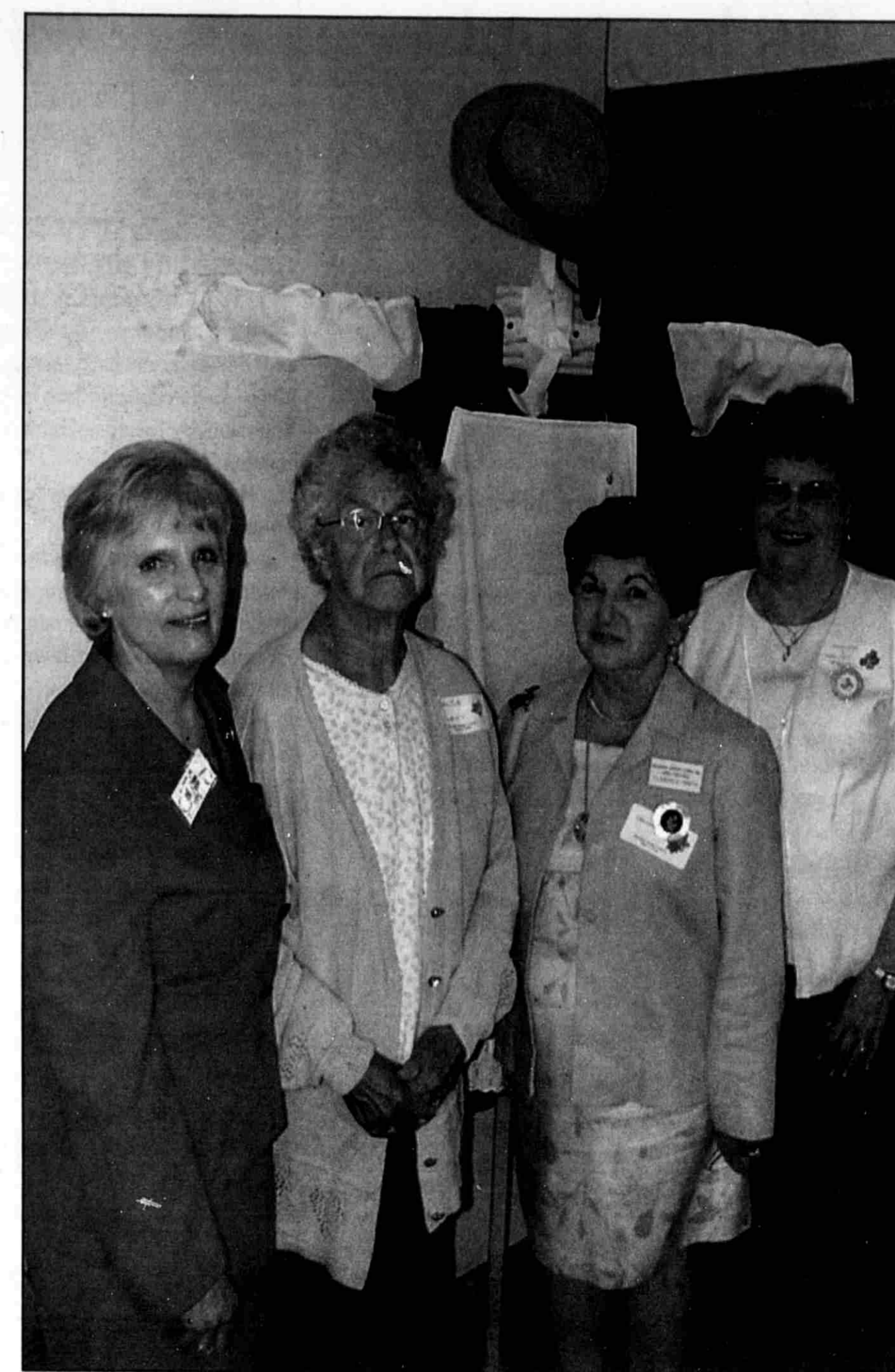
When she needed heart surgery three years ago, she had the doctors schedule it for a Tuesday so as not to conflict with the Monday meetings.

"I asked them how long it could wait, and they set it up so I could go to my meeting," she said.

Cook has been gardening since she was young tending the vegetable garden at her parents' farm. Now she plants mostly flowers.

"I have quite a few favorites. I like pansies for one thing," Cook said.

People interested in joining the club can contact McGregor at 897-1259.



Showboat Garden Club president Carol McGregor; club member Olive Cook; Michigan Garden Clubs, Inc. president Florence Smith; and Michigan Garden Clubs District 4 director Jeanne Poll at the District 4 Spring Meeting, which the Showboat Garden Club hosted May 1 at Deer Run Golf Club.

\*\*\*  
I hope that while so many people are out smelling the flowers, someone is taking the time to plant some.

- Herbert Rappaport

# GRADS

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**SUMMARY OF ORDINANCE NO. 06-02 ADOPTED BY THE LOWELL CITY COUNCIL ON MAY 15, 2006**

Ordinance No. 06-02 amends Section 20.08 of Chapter 20 of Appendix A - Zoning Ordinance of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Lowell. Such amendment permits a wall sign in a C-2 Central Business District zone district on any wall of a building facing a street or a public or private parking area. In addition, wall signs may be located on any front or side exterior wall of a building.

Ordinance No. 06-02 is effective 10 days after this publication.

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**Observed Monday,  
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**LOWELL**

*The Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 8303 and American Legion Post #152 invite all Veterans, Civic Organizations, Scouts & other participants to take part in the annual Memorial Day Ceremonies & salute our deceased & living Veterans.*  
**MONDAY, MAY 29, 2006** - The parade forms at Kent County Youth Fairgrounds on S. Broadway St. at 9:00 a.m. with departure promptly at 10:00 a.m.

The parade will proceed North on Broadway St., East on Main St. stopping at the Veterans memorials on the east side of the Flat River for rendering of honors to Those Who Have Perished at Sea.

The parade continues East on Main St., North on Monroe to Oakwood Cemetery for observances at the GAR Civil War Memorial there. Any wishing to participate should please contact Parade Marshal Herman Weststrate at 897-9479.

Patriotic themes shall be permitted. Commercial and political advertising is prohibited. Tossing of candy from floats or passing out of literature along the parade route is strictly prohibited. Memorial Day is a day to remember and honor those who have served our nation and have passed on.

Guest Speaker: Rev. Glen Marks, VFW Post 8303 Chaplain

**BOWNE CENTER**

**Monday, May 29 - 8:00 p.m.** - Meet at the Bowne Cemetery, corner of Alden Nash (M-50) & 84th St. Service will be held followed by a 21-gun salute and taps.

**GRATTAN**

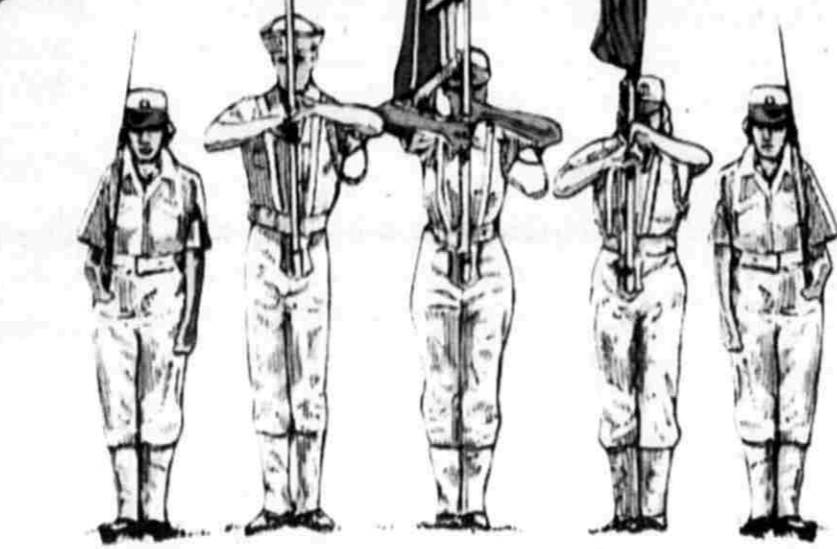
18th Annual Memorial Day Celebration & Bridge Walk  
**Monday, May 29, 2006.**

7:00 - 10:00 a.m.: Pancake breakfast - *New Fire Station*

11:00 a.m.: Memorial Service & groundbreaking for new Veterans Memorial - Grattan Center Cemetery

11:45 a.m.: Bridge Walk & Foot Parade

OTHER ACTIVITIES AT THE TOWNSHIP HALL



**SARANAC**

10:00 a.m. - Parade starts at Erv Taylor Avenue at the rear of business district and ends at the cemetery. All entries welcome. There will be a program at the cemetery.

Speaker: Robert Sykes,  
Ionia County Probate Judge

**ALTO MERRIMAN CEMETERY**

Sunday, May 28 @ 2 p.m. Remembrance program with guest speaker, at Merriman Cemetery 12030 - 52nd St. In case of inclement weather to be held at Alto United Methodist Church.

**SOUTH BOSTON CEMETERY**

The 109th meeting of South Boston Cemetery Association will be held on **Monday, May 29, 2006** at noon at the South Boston Bible Church, 6958 Kyser Road, Lowell. Sgt. Ray Trujillo, recently returned from serving in Iraq, will be the speaker. Service will be followed by a potluck dinner at the Fellowship Building. All are invited to attend.

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1450 W. Main, Lowell  
**897-9231**

**Lowell Ledger  
& Buyers Guide**  
105 N. Broadway  
**897-9555**

**Good  
Chevrolet-Buick**  
1250 W. Main, Lowell  
**897-9294**

**Lowell Tire Center  
Ronda Tire**  
834 W. Main, Lowell  
**897-6200**

**Roth Gerst**  
305 N. Hudson  
Lowell  
**897-7101**

**City Of Lowell**  
301 E. Main  
Lowell  
**897-8457**