

The Lowell Ledger

Volume 35 Issue 4

Serving Lowell Area Readers Since 1893

Wednesday, November 29, 2006

Christmas Magic begins this weekend with Santa parade

By Emma Palova

The upcoming Santa Parade in historic downtown Lowell will retain last year's "Christmas Magic" theme as Lowell

continues to become The Next Place to Be.

More than 70 entries representing the community will proceed along Main Street at 10 a.m. on Dec. 2. New this year is the Preston

High School visiting band, a special guest of the Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce, in addition to local bands.

The Lowell middle and

high school bands will lead the way for the star of the parade, Santa Claus. Prior to the parade, Santa will have breakfast and chat with children in the King

Memorial Youth Center at the fairgrounds from 8:30 - 9:45 a.m.

To enhance the magic, culinary arts students from Grand Rapids Community College will be carving ice sculptures on Riverwalk Plaza. Carving starts at 9 a.m. and runs through 1 p.m. The sculptures will explore various subject matters.

The chamber will award the best sculptors with first (\$150), second (\$100) and third (\$75) prizes.

"Spectators are encouraged to be a part of the excitement in this skillful and artful challenge by voting on the People's Choice award," said chamber executive director Liz Baker. "We usually get a good turnout."

There will be a Rudolph's Craft Workshop at the chamber for children ages two to eight, sponsored by Lowell Area Schools TOTS program, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Visits and pictures with Santa on the Robert E. Lee are scheduled from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., as well. Hot cocoa, cookies and more will be available in the decorated rooms.

Historic downtown, will offer a shopping extravaganza for all tastes. With a variety of new shops that have recently opened, many will be offering hot buttered popcorn, apple cider or a bowl of piping hot Santa Lash.

"We're looking forward to a successful Christmas parade as we start the holiday season," said Baker. "We hope people will check out Lowell and why we are The Next Place to Be."

Baker said Lowell is not quite at that place yet.

"It's work in progress," she said.

Other activities throughout the day include the Sleigh Bells & Holly gallery of fine art and gifts at the Lowell Area Arts Council from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. The Rogue River Artisans Art and Craft Christmas sale will take place at Lowell High School from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

For more information call the chamber at 897-9161 or visit www.discoverlowell.org



Lorain Smalligan, executive director of the Lowell Area Arts Council (LAAC) arranges Christmas artwork by Robin Prawdzik-White. Prawdzik-White is one of 20 local artists whose work is on exhibit at the LAAC until Dec. 23. In the gallery, you will find painted and carved gourds, pastel and watercolor paintings, beadwork, photography, jewelry, fused and stained glass, ceramic ornaments, beeswax candles and honey. Extended hours during the holiday exhibit are Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. For a complete list of artists go to www.lowellartscouncil.org

Ambulance site plan approved, setback variance required

By Emma Palova

The Lowell Planning Commission approved a site plan Monday for an ambulance addition south of Look Memorial Fire Station.

The approval is contingent on several conditions: landscaping, lighting, changing of wording of Rockford Ambulance Building, and setback variance. The building

requires a five-foot setback variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals.

The 2,170-square-foot addition will provide space for two ambulances, sleeping quarters and office space. Rockford Ambulance,

servicing the city of Lowell, is currently housed inside the fire station. "They have been an occupant since the very beginning," said city manager Dave Pasquale. "It became obvious they needed more space."

According to Pasquale, the addition will free up space for the fire department. The original proposal was for an addition east of the fire station. Due to flood plain issues and the potential impact on Kent

County Youth Fair activities, the proposed addition was moved to the south.

This, in turn, had an effect on the addition's

Ambulance site, cont'd., pg. 4

Trees at the root of airport safety

By Emma Palova

Trees in the way of air traffic on the east side of runway 12/30 on Forstrom Drive present a safety hazard, according to Lowell City Airport officials.

"We have a big issue of safety," said airport manager Jim Sowle.

Last week, airport officials held an informational meeting with property owners from Scenic View Plat III at the SMAT terminal. The airport

is home to the School of Missionary Aviation Technology (SMAT).

"There's a good amount of trees in violation," said Dave Helmstetter, URS engineer. "It's a danger."

Some trees, according to Helmstetter, are 25 feet into the air traffic approach. FAA data shows 60-foot-tall tree obstructions on the northwest end of the runway from Lincoln Lake, and 40-foot-tall trees on the southeast end from Forstrom Drive.

Currently, the city-

owned airport is in the process of obtaining air easements from four property owners on Forstrom Drive. Two property owners have already closed on the deal with the city.

"The trees, on four lots, are below state standards for basic utility," said Sowle.

The air easements will allow the city to remove the trees in the way of air traffic approach, according to Chip Kraus, of the Michigan Department of

Airport safety, cont'd., pg. 16



Airport manager Jim Sowle explains the hazards of landings and takeoffs when trees cover the runway approaches.

Silver anniversary



Dave and Jackie Deters

Celebrating 25 years of marriage on December 4, 2006 are Dave and Jackie Deters of Greenville. They have two children, Nicole and Kyle Holst and Michael Deters. They also have one grandson, Brayden Holst.

Stevens family to perform Gospel music

The Stevens family will present a concert at Christian Life Center, 3050 Alden Nash SE, this Sunday at 10 a.m. They have been presenting Gospel music concerts since 1985, ministering the Gospel to people of all ages through a variety of musical styles. The public is welcome to attend.



Happy Birthday

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| NOV. 30:
Jason Craig, Todd Ryder, Joe Kiczinski, April McClure-Cowan. | DEC. 2:
Morgan Boss, Chelsey Treglia, Kari Bergy, Karly Batt. | DEC. 4:
Tennille Bryant, Autumn French, Casey French. | DEC. 6:
Katie Blough, Kristopher Vezino, Phil Seese, Christopher DeBold, Maria Blough, Marc Wernet. |
| DEC. 1:
Travis Briggs, Deb Anchors, Denny Brenk II, Joyce Watrous, Nate Schoen. | DEC. 3:
Chris Chambers, Chris Darby, Amanda Sterzick, Richard Kline. | DEC. 5:
Christopher Vickers. | |

Reflections of faith

Rev. Randy Meyers
Calvary Christian Reformed Church

OVERWHELMED

Thanksgiving is just barely past so instead of joining those rushing toward Christmas I would like to linger just a bit longer on the last holiday. Psalm 65 is a Thanksgiving song that warrants reflection anytime of year and especially at this time of year. The song seems to start, however, at an unlikely place. It starts with an overwhelmed King David. Now David was not overwhelmed with Thanksgiving Day door buster sales or the oversized paper that precedes them. David was not overwhelmed with 100's of channels to watch on television after the "big-game" of

course. David was not overwhelmed with too much food to choose from in the old buffet line. Only humorously do these things overwhelm us. However, we do know well the feeling of hopelessness, of being at the edge, in the woods, and under the water. These are the times that unless you are currently in them you try to forget them. I'm almost finished with Ted Dekker's first book in his "Circle Trilogy" called "Black." Black is about the introduction of evil into a pristine world. Tom Hunter, the main character, has just discovered what happens when the first wave of evil was unleashed into his world. So thorough, all-encompassing, and invasive is the evil that the mere shadow of it causes the otherwise brilliantly colored forest to char in its wake. Tom is paralyzed with fear, with anger, and in a word, overwhelmed. I can't wait to find out how Tom escapes his overwhelming predicament. David was similarly overwhelmed, not by the introduction of evil but by his commission of it. Before he had the house band warm up the temple courts, David pauses. He takes a moment to silently reflect on a point in his past when his sins almost got the best of him. Praising God

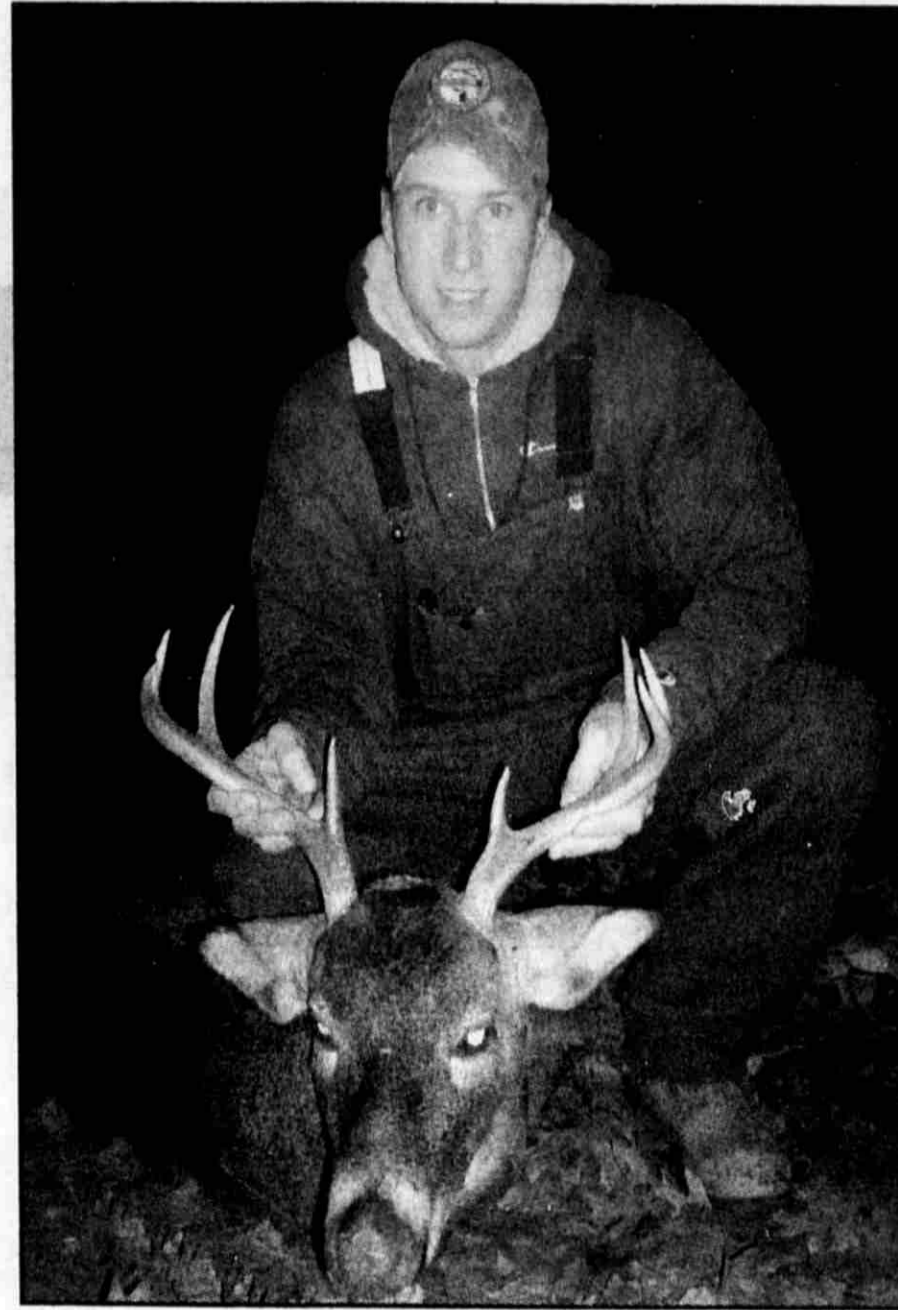
can wait. Prayer comes first. It is out of David's profound sense of deep need which has been filled with an even richer sense of closeness to his savior that David is able to finally get his praise on. Who God is, how God relates to David, and where God's blessings come from and go to are the things David gives thanks for. And finally David commissions a masterpiece painting of how even creation is blessed by God. It is the undoing of a coal forest. It is the separation of the technicolors of the rainbow from the black ashen landscape that once surrounded his soul. It is creation at its zenith and it is more than enough to provide for David. One of the reasons I think so many people get overwhelmed between Thanksgiving and Christmas is that we do not push pause on the rat race. Our radar is out and we fling full speed toward the next end-cap. I recommend extending your Thanksgiving season by getting outdoors. Sit in silence. Start your thinking with some sin that Jesus has delivered you from. Then open your eyes and take in the beauty of a blade of grass, or a snowflake, or a constellation and be appropriately overwhelmed by your creator.

AREA CHURCH DIRECTORY

ATTENTION: BIBLE BELIEVERS If you would like to attend a church where the King James Bible is held up as the perfect, preserved word of God with all the words of God for all English speaking people, then give us a visit at: 901 W. Main, Lowell Across the street from the Vennin Dodge dealership. 897-6284 or 485-4195 10AM Sunday School; 11AM Morning Service; 6PM Evening Service; Wed., 7:30PM Prayer Meeting.	ALTO UNITED METHODIST CHURCH Kirby and Harrison Alto • 616-691-8011 Worship.....9:30 A.M. Children's Church.....9:30 A.M. OPEN HEARTS - OPEN MINDS - OPEN DOORS Pastor Dean Bailey	DAY BIBLE CHAPEL 9305 Centerline, Saranac 897-6332 Worship.....9:45 A.M. Sunday School.....11:00 A.M. Nursery & Jr. Church Provided Rev. Frank Lattimore, Pastor "A Nondenominational Ministry With A Blended Word Centered Service!"	CALVARY CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH OF LOWELL Rev. Randy Meyers - 897-7060 1151 West Main Street, Lowell, MI Morning Worship.....10:00 A.M. Sunday School.....11:20 A.M. Evening Worship.....6:00 P.M. Nursery available at both services Barrier-Free	APOSTOLIC LIGHTHOUSE UNITED PENTECOSTAL CHURCH SUNDAY SERVICES 10:00 A.M. SUNDAY EVENING SERVICES 6:00 P.M. WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY 7:00 P.M. 119 Lincoln Lake, Lowell CALL FOR FREE HOME BIBLE STUDIES Pastor Robert L. Hubbard Phone: (616) 897-1267 website www.aplighthouse.com
FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF LOWELL 621 E. Main Street • 897-5936 Worship Services.....8:30 & 11:00 a.m. Sunday School.....9:45 a.m. DR. MICHAEL T. CONKLIN, PASTOR Nursery & child care available at both services Barrier - Free Entrance	ALTON BIBLE CHURCH Lincoln Lake Ave. at 3 Mile Road 897-5648 Sunday School.....10:00 A.M. Morning Worship.....11:00 A.M. Evening Praise.....6:00 P.M. Wednesday AWANA.....7:00 P.M. (Sept. - April) Prayer and Bible Study.....7:00 P.M. Pastor Ken Ford (Home) 897-6418 YOU ARE WELCOME!	CHRISTIAN LIFE CENTER (Assembly of God) 3050 Alden Nash S.E. • 897-1100 • Staffed Nursery Robert W. Holmes, Senior Pastor Dave Noonon, Asst. Pastor John King, Youth Pastor SUNDAYS: Worship: 10:00 a.m. - LIFE Home Groups & "XL" Youth Sunday evenings WEDNESDAYS: Family Night (For All Ages): 7:00 p.m. "XL" Youth: 7:00 p.m.	ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH Fr. George J. Fekete 402 Amity St. • 897-9820 www.stmary-lowell.com Weekend Masses: SAT. 5 PM; SUN. 9:30 AM Weekday Masses: 7:45 AM Holy Day Masses: 9 AM & 7 PM Saturday confessions: 10-10:30 AM Prayer & adoration each Wed. 8:15 AM - 8 PM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION, CHILDREN TO ADULTS - CALL THE RECTORY 897-7915 SEE LOWELL CABLE CH. 48, EWTN FOR 24 HR. CATHOLIC BROADCASTING	FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF LOWELL (United Church of Christ) 865 Lincoln Lake Ave. SE • 897-5906 Sunday Worship.....10:00 A.M. Church School.....10:15-11:15 A.M. Thursday Faith Alive Worship.....7:00 P.M. Dr. Roger LaWarre.....Pastor Shannon Hanley.....C.E. Director Barrier-Free.....Nursery Provided Come Join Us For Praise & Worship
GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH 10305 Bluewater Highway (Missouri Synod) Halfway between Lowell & Saranac on M-21 www.goodshepherdlowell.org Sunday School.....9:00 A.M. Worship Service.....10:00 A.M. (Nursery available) Joseph Fremmer, Pastor 897-8307 All facilities are wheelchair accessible	FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF LOWELL 2275 West Main Street • 897-7168 Internet: http://www.fbclowell.org Rev. David O. Sims & Rev. W. Lee Taylor Wayne Haines, Youth Pastor Sun. Worship Service.....9:30 A.M. & 6:00 P.M. Sunday School Hour.....11:00 A.M. AWANA/CLUB JC.....Wed. 6:15 & 8:30 P.M. Contact Church Office For Prayer Meeting Times Nursery Provided • Barrier Free	SNOW UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 3189 Snow Ave. SE, Lowell Rev. Thurlan Meredith 9:45 A.M.Worship/Fellowship 11:15 A.M.Sunday School 897-9863 or 897-9588 Nursery & Children Worship Programs Provided A friend...a family...a mission!	LOWELL CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE 201 N. Washington • 897-8800 Sunday School.....9:30 A.M. Morning Worship.....10:40 A.M. Sunday Evening.....6:00 P.M. Wednesday Family Ministry.....7:00 P.M. PASTOR MICHAEL RHODABARGER Staffed Nursery Provided Barrier-Free Entrance	

Lowell's State Rep gets his buck

At right, State Representative and life-long sportsman Dave Hildenbrand, of Lowell, with the 8-point buck he shot on Friday, Nov. 17. The buck was shot on Hildenbrand's property.



Saranac teen makes Eagle Scout

The Eagle Award, the highest award in Scouting, was presented by Scoutmaster David Weeks. Additional awards and congratulatory letters of praise for the achievement came from the White House, the U.S. Senate, the Michigan State Legislature, Congressman Vern Ehlers and the Boy Scout National office. His proud parents are Ted Feuerstein of Saranac and Chris Feuerstein, also of Saranac. Nick, a member of Troop #328 of Belding since

1999, worked diligently through the many levels of scouting to earn this honor. To do this, he completed the qualifications of 25 different merit badges.

A 2006 graduate of Saranac High School, Nick will continue with the the troop as an adult leader, helping younger scouts enjoy the scouting experience and by being a role model for all the scouts.

Ask Kathryn, continued ... From Page 4

at a community or religious function. Getting involved and helping others can be a great way to lift your spirits and make new acquaintances. Let go of the past. Don't be disappointed if your holidays are not like they used to be. Life brings changes. Each holiday season is different and can be enjoyed in its own way. Don't set yourself up for sadness by thinking everything has to be just like the "good old days." Look toward the future. Set differences aside. Try to accept family members as they are. Leave old grievances or discussions about differences until a more appropriate time. Budget. Before you go shopping, decide how much money you can afford to spend on gifts and other items, and then stick to your budget. You might also consider giving gifts that can't be bought - your time, sharing of memories or an item you made yourself. Try to make the holiday season more of a family occasion and less materialistic. Plan ahead. Develop a calendar of specific days for shopping, baking, visiting friends and other events. Don't plan more than you can comfortably accomplish, and schedule time for some solitude and relaxation. If you're feeling stressed and overburdened, discuss sharing responsibilities with other family members or friends. You might also consider buying some food items instead of making them all yourself. Don't abandon healthful habits. Don't feel pressured to eat or drink more than you're accustomed to just because it's the holiday season. Before attending social events, decide how much and what types of foods and beverages you

should consume. Get plenty of sleep and, if you're healthy, schedule time for exercise. Not only will exercise help fend off extra pounds, it will make you feel more refreshed and less fatigued. Ask for help. You don't need to do it all or be it all. Look for people or services that can give you support. You can easily do twice as much with the help of others. But that means you need to ask for their help. Don't expect others to be able to read your mind. Know yourself well enough to recognize when you need help. It is the foolish - and stressed - person who tries to do it all alone.

WE ACCEPT

Phone Orders
Welcome
Lowell Ledger
897-9261

NOTICE VERGENNES TOWNSHIP

A Public Hearing will be held regarding a request for a Special Exception Use Permit and site plan review at a regularly scheduled meeting of the Vergennes Township Board on December 18, 2006, at 7:00 pm at the township offices located at 10381 Bailey Dr., Lowell.

Leonard and Ruth Kosnik, of 101 Parnell Ave. NE., Lowell, have requested a special exception use permit and site plan review to construct a pole barn to the side of their home and also within the front yard setback that is between their home and Parnell Ave. This request is addressed in the Vergennes Township Zoning Ordinance under section 201.402 (B) (5).

Copies of the application are available for public inspection at the township offices located at 10381 Bailey Drive, Lowell, 616-897-5671, on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. Public comment will be taken at the meeting, or if received by the Clerk in writing or by e-mail at clerk@vergennewtp.org by 7:00 pm December 18, 2006.

Mari C. Stone
Vergennes Township Clerk

Find Holiday Joy And A Caring Church Family At

DAY BIBLE CHAPEL

SUNDAY WORSHIP 9:45 AM

Family Advent Readings each Sunday in December!

Dec. 2 Church Christmas Party and White Elephant Auction 7 pm
Dec. 8 Sportsman's Dinner 6:30 PM Reservations required \$5.00
Dec. 10 Christmas caroling for all ages 6:30 PM
Dec. 17 Ladies Tea 3 PM
Dec. 20 "The Three Gifts" Christmas Program 7 PM
Dec. 24 Morning Service 9:45 AM Christmas Eve 7 PM

Call the church office at 897-6332 for further information. The church is located just north of M-21 at 9305 Centerline, Saranac, MI

HEALTH

With Drs. Paul Gauthier, Jim Lang, Wayne A. Christenson III, John G. Meier & Tracy Lixie

DO YOU HAVE CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE?

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) occurs when there are changes in your blood vessels. These changes can be caused by aging or by unhealthy lifestyle choices, like smoking. CVD may run in families. If you have CVD you are more likely to have a heart attack or stroke. In the U.S., more than 10 times as many women die from CVD as from breast cancer.

You may have no clues that you have CVD, but you are more likely to have it if you : smoke, are obese, have high blood pressure, have diabetes, have high cholesterol, or have a relative with CVD.

The key to dealing with CVD, independent of genetics, is prevention:

- Stop smoking.
- Exercise regularly 4-5 days per week for 30 minutes
- Eat a heart healthy diet, low in fat and cholesterol
- Keep a healthy body weight
- Be compliant with your medicines and regular medical check ups if you have high blood pressure, diabetes or elevated cholesterol.

For more information, call the American Heart Association at 1-800-242-8721.

The Perfect Gift! - A Subscription To The Lowell Ledger! Call 897-9261

ELEMENTARY MENU

Week of Dec. 4, 2006

MON: Pepperoni pizza (egg salad sandwich also offered at Alto & Murray Lake), fresh tossed salad, assorted fruit, milk.

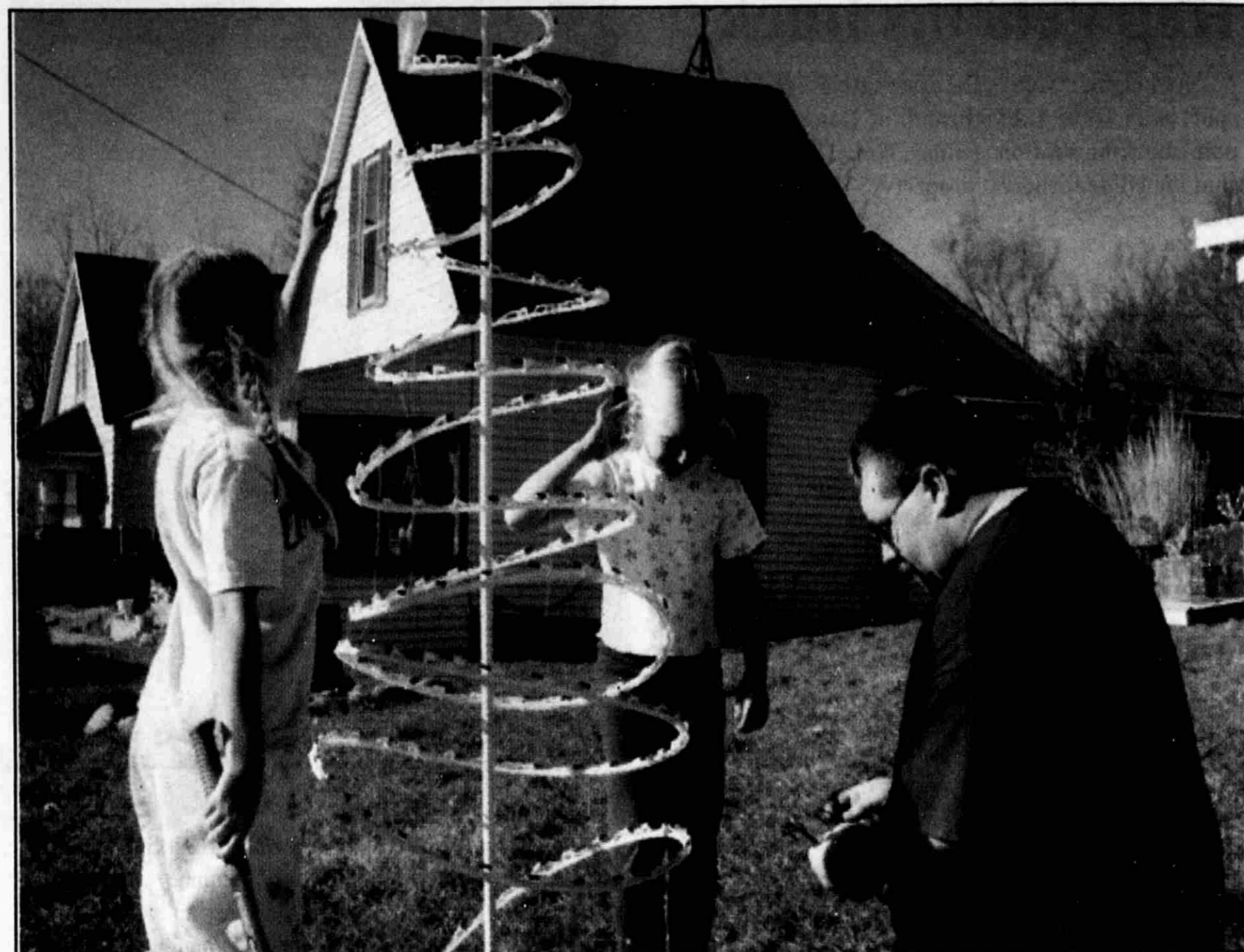
TUES: Chili & crackers (cheeseburger on bun also offered at Alto & Murray Lake), whole kernel corn, fruited gelatin salad, milk.

WED: Pancake w/ syrup or cereal/graham cracker w/scrambled eggs, fresh fruit, applesauce, milk.

THURS: Italian Dunkers (breadstick) w/meatsauce (turkey & cheese on bun also offered at Alto & Murray Lake), vegetable pasta salad, pears, milk.

FRI: Chicken patty on bun (grilled cheese sandwich also offered at Alto & Murray Lake), carrot coins, assorted fruit, milk.

Getting decked out for the holidays



With the temperature at 55 degrees the day after Thanksgiving, Scott Baldwin decorates his front yard on Bowes Road for Christmas with daughters Kaitlyn, 7, and Rachel, 5.

The Mark Mundt family on Bowes Road dressed their bear, carved from a tree trunk, to suit the seasons. While last week the bear had an orange vest and rifle for hunting season, this week the bear donned a red Santa Claus outfit to celebrate the holiday season.

The difference between a moral man and a man of honor is that the latter regrets a discreditable act, even when it has worked and he has not been caught.

H. L. Mencken (1880 - 1956)

Lowell High School presents

Much Ado About Nothing

A Comedic Masterpiece by William Shakespeare

November 30, December 1 & 2

7:30 pm

\$5 Students / Seniors • \$7 General Public

\$8 All Tickets at the Door

Come Support the Cast and Crew

Haley Briggs	Sean Briggs	Rachel Brinks	Renee Buist	Dakota Bunn	Deanna Bunn
Listyn Capman	Regan Doyle	Kristin Dunn	Chelsey Dye	Garet Foote	Garrison Fredline
Doug Halbeisen	Shaun Hale	Becca Happie	Shelby Herb	Mallory Hines	Eric Holmgren
David Huffman	Rebecca Hommowun	Heather Jousma	Stan Karas	Gary Kilgore	Mike Kleinpaste
Anna Lane	Gabbie MacDonald	Jim McCormick	Sierra Moore	Sarah Mosher	Alisa Muller
Andrea Murray	Andy Oesch	Megan Padgett	Sia Price	Erica Raymond	Sam Rinke
Meghan Ross	Nick Ruse	Katie Sefto	Brian Sejat	Sam Snyder	Erin Soules
Zac Steckler	Marin Tawney	Michelle Thompson	Holly Vaught	Darcie Whittum	Heather Walendzik
Cody Acker	A.J. Freeburg	Cory Grzyb	Tim Hollister	David Holmes	David Hommowun
Audra Hysell	Joe Johnson	Alisha McGlamery	Nick Poulias	Culver Redd	Adam Schollaart
Brooke Spoelman	Ryan Verdon	Thomas Wodarek	Andrew Wright		
Kate Wenby	Cody Herring	Adriel Stout			

Featured Artist

Odd Jeppeson

By Emma Palova

Grand Rapids photographer Odd Jeppeson concentrates on quiet images in his work to give the viewer a haven from the surrounding noise. Rather than telling the story, Jeppeson lets the viewer make the story out of his images.

An exhibit of his work is now on display at Huntington Galleria until Dec. 26.

Jeppeson, a native of Toronto, lost a lifetime worth of negatives and prints four years ago when he was moving. After the loss, he changed the subject matter of his photography from day-to-day life to the quiet.

Whether it's his "Sunday Walker", "To the Light", "Afloat" or "Blue", the work

breathes complete stillness, sometimes solitude.

"I focus on quiet scenes," said Jeppeson. "I don't want to throw the story at people, but trigger it in people's heads."

He draws inspiration just by walking or driving around with his digital Canon Rebel camera at his side.

"I want to create a mood rather than tell the story," he said.

Most recently, Jeppeson has focused on old farms and barns. One of his photos is of a barn located in Crockery Township. He also mounts, mats and frames his pictures.

"West Michigan is a great place to take pictures," he said. "There is a lot of variety."

Show organizer David Davis met Jeppeson at the Fulton Street Art Fair and was impressed by his work at the Farmers' Market.

"I admire the simplicity and clarity of his work," Davis said. "I am fond of

the images he captures and the subject matter. I like the way he treats his subject."

His first name Odd is a Norwegian name, while Jeppeson is Danish. Jeppeson has also been taking photos in Canada and

Denmark. "I'll take pictures of anything that just feels quiet, to capture that quiet idea," he said.

Jeppeson used to take pictures of everything, including family, friends and discarded junk.

"I take less pictures now because they're harder to find," he said.

Jeppeson plans to open up a store or gallery with his work in the future.



Odd Jeppeson captures the quiet in his images. He is pictured hanging his "To the Light" photo taken at Holland State Park.

LHS Students of the Month

Lowell High School is proud to announce that **Kate Bailey** and **Kyle Bardwell** are the November Students of the Month. In order to be eligible for this honor, one must be nominated by a teacher. All the nomination forms for the month are reviewed and voted on at the monthly department chair meeting. The department chairs select two students each month. Those students receive a \$20 gift card and a certificate. Students are selected based on academics, character and work ethic.

Kate was nominated by Cyndi Gibson, and she writes, "It has been my pleasure to know Kate for the past three years. During this time, she has repeatedly demonstrated her persistence and dedication to achieve her goals. I look forward to her challenging questions and respect her because she is continually striving for excellence."

Kyle was nominated by Kristin Schutte, and she writes, "He has struggled with English, but he has always asked questions and

sought extra help. I'm pleased to say that he has earned an A for the first marking period. I'm truly proud of his efforts even though he had grumbled to his mom at the start of the year that my class is too hard."

PASSPORT FAIR
AT
LOWELL CITY HALL
301 EAST MAIN STREET
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2006
5:00 P.M. TO 9:00 P.M.

EACH APPLICANT WILL NEED TO COMPLETE AN APPLICATION AND:

(Application available on line at travel.state.gov or at City Hall)

1. Provide a certified birth certificate; previously issued passport or Certificate of Naturalization.
2. Two passport photos (Meijer, Modern Photographics or Rite Aid).
3. Valid driver's license or State issued ID (or that of a parent if under 16 years old or both parents if under 14).
4. Application fee (check or money order).
\$67.00 (16 years or older)
\$52.00 (under 16 years old)
5. Execution Fee - cash, check or money order - \$30.00.

All applicants including children must appear at the time of processing. Passport applicants under 14 years old must have both parents present. Please allow 8 weeks for processing. Expedite services available for a fee!

Questions call 897-8457

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To The Editor, continued ... From Page 5

day if the temperature was 85 or 90 degrees, the pilot would now have an unsafe runway. Period!!! But the runway still meets the state requirements for 1200 feet to be Basic Utility. It should be obvious that 1200 feet does not imply safe or unsafe. It only says to be a public use airport, it must be that long.

As the owner of a public use airport, the City of Lowell wishes to have an airport that has runways that offer the greatest possible safety within the land we have available. We also wish to be the best neighbors possible and longer runways allow planes to takeoff and attain higher altitudes over the bordering homes. Should a land developer be allowed to determine that we cannot use our entire current runway to enhance safety to the max? I do not believe so. These days we are basically a training airport and will be far into the foreseeable future with SMAT providing training for student pilots.

Let's talk for a minute about why we are attempting to achieve General Utility status. The trees growing on the end of runway 12/30 are restricting our use of the full length of the runway on our normal daily training mission under the current Basic Utility status. This reduces our safety margins. Those trees in our judgment have to be

removed for safety reasons. To buy the air easements and remove the trees costs money that we don't have. However, the State, because of its interest in maintaining a safe flying environment in Michigan, will supply us with grant monies on a 90/10 split provided we upgrade the safety standards to the General Utility status. That could be easily interpreted to mean that the state considers Basic Utility to be inherently less safe than General Utility with its expanded safety requirements. Therefore, we applied for General Utility status. If we could extend the runway within the current borders to maintain the current safe runway lengths for our needs, it would be a no brainer. This is what we did when we extended runway 6/24 which many of you have noticed near the entrance to the airport. And we did this without asking for State money or a General Utility upgrade ... But all we can get on runway 12/30 is 350 feet more to the northwest. And even if we added the 350 feet now, we would still need to remove or trim the offending trees. We will add to that runway sometime in the future, as we believe longer is safer for runways. 350 feet isn't a lot but it adds some additional measure of safety and we are at first and foremost interested in safety

and additionally we are interested in the comfort of the airport neighbors. But we do not have the money until we achieve General Utility status.

It is also argued that the trees provide a safety buffer for the homes, which, incidentally, were all built 70 feet from the end of the runways. 70 feet!!! Why would a responsible builder build homes for families 70 feet from the end of an established runway? It is not a question of whether he has a right to. He does under Vergennes Township zoning. It is a question of whether, with hundreds of lots he already owns in the immediate area, it is morally right to build the very first homes in the plats adjacent to the airport directly under runway centerlines and sell them to families knowing full well the potential for tragedy he is creating by also planting trees on the edge of the airport. A plane that hits the tops of these trees while landing would carry forward and crash on the airport and therefore the trees offer no protection to the homeowner and perhaps even some liability for allowing those trees to jut into the airspace. However, if the plane hit the trees on

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To The Editor, continued ... From Page 10

takeoff, its momentum would continue to carry it forward and the crash scene might very well be into one of the homes just 70 feet beyond the runway. We have had this exact scenario at the airport in 1996. We do not want it to ever happen again.

As for the argument that trees force pilots to fly higher, that is not the case. A pilot trying to land on a short runway tries to be as low as possible to have the greatest runway length available. Keep in mind that the pilot must be higher than 25 feet when they cross the fence line anyway and proportionally higher over the homes. Tall trees decrease the safety of the pilots and the homeowners by increasing the likelihood of a tree strike accident.

The current situation at the airport is that developers of property to the east of the airport have decided to limit the safety of the airport to what they consider to be adequate. They have decided to do this by growing trees at the end of the runway, thereby effectively shortening the useable runway to what they say is safe.

These developers have also threatened to sue the four families who have already negotiated a financial settlement with the city of Lowell for the right to buy air easements over their property and have the offending trees trimmed or removed. These property owners wish to increase the safety of their families and for that they are threatened with a lawsuit. The developers have no legitimate interest in the properties once they are sold, and this legal threat is merely an attempt to intimidate the homeowners. The developers even went so far as to put a covenant in the plat restrictions preventing the homeowners from cutting their trees, thereby guaranteeing an increase in the danger to the homeowners' safety and that of their families as the trees grow. I have been told by current homeowners this covenant was not pointed out to them specifically.

Our goal is to be able to use the full length of our current runway to provide the greatest safety margins available within our current borders. Nothing more. We do not intend to expand our borders, and our current runway lengths, being much shorter than most General Utility airports, do not encourage bigger airplanes.

In a nutshell, we need state General Utility status to obtain funds to fight developers who threaten the safety of our runways, the safety of pilots who choose to land here, and the safety of families who live directly under the center line of the runways.

It is as simple as that.
Jim Sowle
Manager
Lowell City Airport

To the Editor,

We are a week behind with our Ledger here, so I apologize if my comments are not topical.

Having read the front page article published November 15th concerning "chaotic airport expansion", I feel compelled to make public the cause of the current circumstances concerning licensing and safety at the Lowell airport.

As long ago as the early 1960's, a dedicated group of mostly local users and enthusiasts began the expensive and laborious process of improving conditions at the Lowell airport. Determined to enhance the safety and usefulness of the field, brush was cut, telephone and electrical service was added, a well was sunk, runways were improved, and the airport was licensed by 1964. It appeared the following

year on all aviation navigational charts as a viable and safe alternative landing point.

At that point in time, over 40 years ago, the field to the east of the airport was completely vacant. To the great surprise and dismay of those who had worked so diligently to improve the safety of the airport, shortly after licensing, red pine seedlings were deliberately and insidiously planted in that fallow field directly adjacent to the runway ends. The question in everyone's mind at that time was, "Why would anyone purposely endanger the safety of those who used the airport by planting trees that would certainly eventually encroach upon the established flight path?"

The answer to that question was revealed a short time later when several foundations were laid for small homes, not on the south edge of the pine field, not on the east edge of the pine field, not even in the middle of the pine field, but exactly on the extended center line and as close as legally possible, directly on the end of and directly in the flight path of the most active runways on the airport.

Now, all these years later, the divisive plan has come to fruition. The homes built purposely on those very runway ends are occupied and the trees planted there a generation ago have served their shameful purpose. Just as intended, flight operations at Lowell have become increasingly more dangerous, not just to those who fly in and out, but to the unwary residents living nearby as well.

Now a new question arises, "Why should consideration be given to those who cry 'chaotic airport expansion' when they, and they alone, are solely responsible for the circumstance that now exists there?"

Jim Speerstra

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Airport safety, continued From Page 1

Transportation, Airports Division.

The city already received \$160,000 in grant money for tree trimming from the state in 2005 and 2006. The local share was \$16,000.

The licensing upgrade of the airport from basic utility to general utility will determine the amount of trees to be cut, according to Kraus.

"The licensing doesn't dictate whether the airport needs to expand," said Kraus. "This project is not about expansion, but about clearing the approaches."

By clearing the approaches, the airport will gain approximately 200 feet of usable runway and a wider approach. "They're losing more runway every year as the trees are creeping

closer to the middle of the runway," said Kraus. "They are trying to recapture their runway. A longer runway is always safer."

According to Kraus, the airport has everything in place to become licensed as a general utility except for the clear approaches.

"We feel if you want money for tree trimming you should move toward general

utility because it is safer," said Kraus.

Helmstetter said the state would not put money into a basic utility. If the airport obtains a general utility license, the city will be able to trim more trees.

"If you're taking state money, then you must upgrade to general utility," he said.

Some issues also

evolved around the covenant restrictions that limit tree cutting on the Scenic View Plat III property.

According to Kraus, these deed restrictions are not being broken by the acquisition of the air easements.

"But the act of cutting the trees would violate the deed restrictions," he said.

It would be up to the legal opinion of city attorney Dick Wendt whether the remaining 10 property owners on Scenic View Plat III could sue their neighbors for violating the deed restrictions by cutting the trees.

Wendt may draw up a legal document for the 10 property owners to sign stating they would not sue.

Even the existing restrictions, however, could not prohibit the city from condemning the air easement rights for a public utility.

When plat developers, the Schreur family, insisted the plat was there before the airport, Kraus said it didn't matter who was first.

"It's the same thing as if you live next to a road right of way," he explained. "There are state laws that allow governmental entities to condemn for public use."

Sowle assured the residents the airport has

no intentions of expanding beyond the airport property. The property boundaries only allow a 350-foot extension of runway.

"We want to create and maintain clear approaches," he said. "Our goal is to cooperate with neighbors. We're never going to get bigger. All we want is clear airspace for safe landing."

And the airport will not get shut down because of the 20-year grant, according to Kraus.

"The project is to clear the approaches to general utility standards," he said.

Mayor Chuck Myers said the airport has been self-sufficient. The hangars brought in revenues for the airport.

"I don't see this airport becoming anything more than it is now," Myers said. "The city supports safety standards and we have no intention of expanding the airport."

Forstrom Drive resident Bob Coffey requested something in writing saying that the airport will not expand.

The city council may pass a resolution stating the intention of the airport is to remain the same size, said city manager Dave Pasquale.

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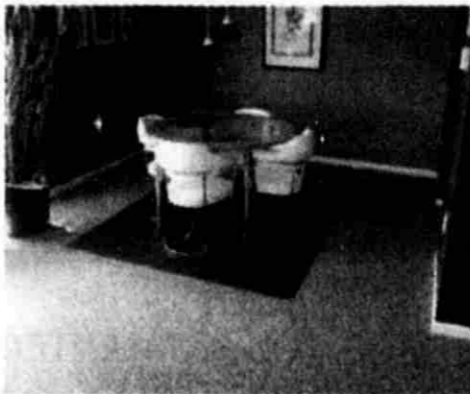
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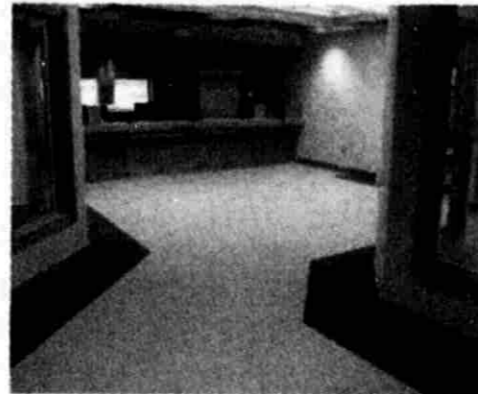
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