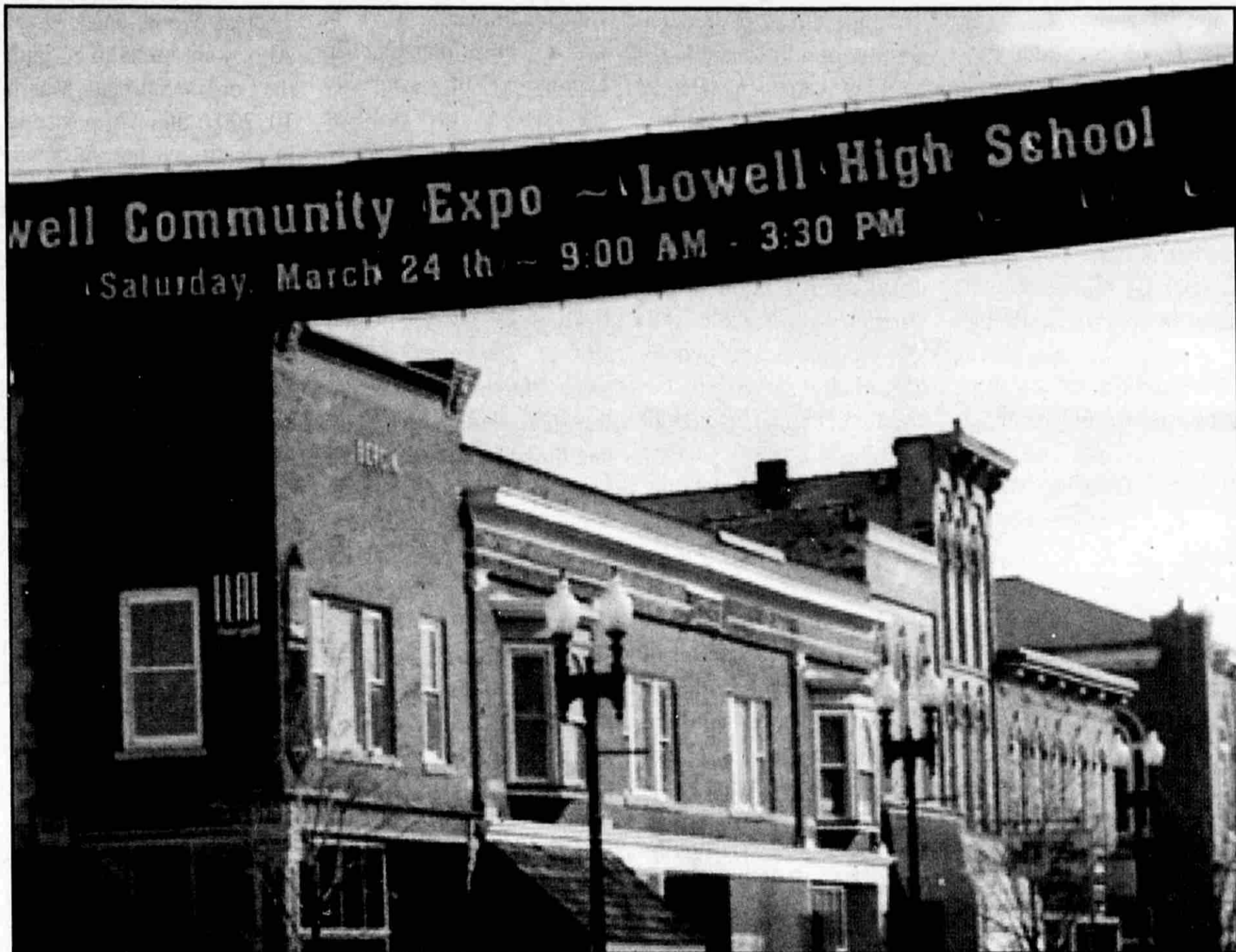


The Lowell Ledger

Volume 35 Issue 19

Serving Lowell Area Readers Since 1893

Wednesday, March 14, 2007



The banner's up! Expo is on the way

The Lowell Community Expo will feature more than 150 area businesses, service groups, churches and government entities on March 24 from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Lowell High School. "The Expo offers a great networking opportunity," said chamber director Liz Baker. "This event increases product and service awareness in the greater Lowell area."

LAS policy spells out no weapons on school property

By Emma Palova

The Lowell Area Schools Board of Education reviewed a new policy on possessing and transporting dangerous weapons on school property Monday.

The policy, a part of the federal mandate "No Child Left Behind," stipulates that no person may transport weapons on the property or in a vehicle, except for on-duty law enforcement officers.

A dangerous weapon may include a firearm, knife, black jack, baton, iron bar, brass knuckles, martial arts devices or explosive devices.

The policy applies to both students, and the staff, according to superintendent Greg Pratt.

In other business, the district expects to complete the community survey

School policy, cont'd., pg. 9

Local entrepreneur one step closer to building hall

By Emma Palova

Local entrepreneur Kent McKay hopes to break ground in the fall for the construction of a hall on Lincoln Lake Avenue. Target completion date is April 2008 preceded by a public open house in March.

After the successful passage of a proposal to serve liquor in the last general election, McKay pursued financing and marketing for the building. "It is being

financed by traditional and private parties," said McKay. "There is no corporation involved, I am doing it on my own from the ground up."

McKay added more amenities to the original conceptual plan mainly dressing rooms for grooms - called the "Groom's Den."

According to McKay, no facility in the greater area has a groom's den because the major emphasis is always on the bride. "The groom deserves just as much pampering as the bride," he said.

Entrepreneur, cont'd., pg. 4

Small gift yields big results for Rotary community projects

For only \$12.50, residents of Lowell helped make the world and their community a better place.

Local sauce and dressing manufacturer, Litehouse has teamed with the Lowell Rotary club every holiday season for the past 25 years.

Each year, the partnership sells gift packs filled with a number of Litehouse signature products. The company donates the gift

packs so all proceeds go to Rotary projects. Over \$200,000 has been raised from this project.

Wendell Christoff, co-owner of Litehouse, has strong convictions about the program. According to Christoff, a longtime Rotarian, the program goes a long way in fulfilling the mission of the service-oriented Rotary club.

"Rotary is an international service organization, and the motto is 'service above self,'" Christoff said. "Since we make dressings, dips and sauces, we thought that would be a neat way to raise funds to help provide services of the community."

The club has also helped people worldwide.

"We have established a medical clinic in the northern part of Jamaica where we provide health and eye care for people in that very poor part of Jamaica," Christoff said.

Rotary has undertaken many other global issues, such as wiping out polio where it still exists and providing clean drinking water for impoverished people around the globe.

On top of the club's global projects, Rotary also contributes to a number of services in Lowell.

Members have built

Habitat for Humanity houses, and contributed to the Lowell Area Arts Council, Lowell Fire Department, YMCA, and other organizations.

Rotary's college scholarship foundation provides over \$10,000 annually for graduating seniors.



Litehouse president Wendell Christoff, left, with Rotary president Jim White display holiday gift pack.



Girls' Night Out ... Page 3

Lowell Author... Page 11

Talent Search ... Page 13

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Financial Focus

With Christopher C. Godbold
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NEW PENSION RULES BENEFIT 401(K) BENEFICIARIES

As you're probably aware, the traditional pension plan has not fared so well in recent years. In fact, many large companies have frozen or discontinued their plans. Congress passed laws last year to strengthen pensions, but some other provisions of this legislation may interest you even if you don't have a pension — especially if you may be coming into an inheritance that includes a 401(k).

And a 401(k) can be a sizable bequest. By the time many people retire, their 401(k) or other employer-sponsored retirement plan — such as a 403(b) or 457(b) — may be their biggest single financial asset. Even if they died before depleting the funds in their 401(k) or other plan, they might still have a large chunk of money to pass on. It's never been much of a problem to leave this money to a spouse, who could roll the funds into an IRA. Once the money was in this IRA, the surviving spouse could continue enjoying the benefits of tax-deferred growth.

However, non-spouse beneficiaries — such as children, grandchildren, siblings and domestic partners — did not have this luxury. When these beneficiaries inherited a 401(k) or other retirement plan, they were generally forced to take the entire balance within five years of the account owner's death — and some plans required them to take the payout as a lump sum within one year. These accelerated payments were likely to create what is euphemistically called a "taxable event." In plain English, this means that if you were a non-spouse beneficiary, you were likely to take a big tax hit after you inherited the 401(k) or other retirement plan.

Now, however, things have changed, thanks to the new pension laws. Effective Jan. 1 of this year, if you are a non-spouse beneficiary, you can transfer an inherited 401(k) or other retirement plan into an IRA. And that means you can "stretch out" distributions and taxes over your lifetime, rather

than being forced to take withdrawals immediately or over a period of a few years. By stretching this inherited account, you can continue to enjoy tax-deferred growth, which can create a significantly greater amount of income over your lifetime.

Clearly, this can be a huge advantage to you. But you need to make sure you're following the correct procedure. In "legalese," you have to make what's known as a trustee-to-trustee transfer by establishing an "inherited" IRA and have the check from the 401(k) or other plan made payable to the trustee or custodian of this IRA. Once this account is established, you can't contribute anything more to it or roll the money into any other IRA you might have.

School policy, continued ... From Page 1

process at the Lowell Community Expo. Last of the surveys will be collected at the event, where Lowell Area Schools will have a booth.

To date, the district has received 500 surveys back.

School officials are also working actively to develop a master plan along with other entities for the possible donation of 100 acres of land from the Wege Foundation.

Part of the land could be used to build a YMCA pool,

while the balance could be dedicated for open space and a green home development.

"There are a lot of details to be worked out," said Pratt.

A tentative meeting is scheduled for March 29 to further discussions about the Wege property.

Levin, continued From Page 5

a ship. This bill would set tougher standards for ensuring that a ship's ballast water does not contain living organisms and would invest in new technologies for screening and eliminating organisms. Particularly important to the Great Lakes is the requirement that ships reporting "no ballast on board" flush out their ballast tanks before entering the lakes.

The second bill we introduced is called the Asian Carp Prevention and Control Act. This bill would require the government to recognize three species of Asian carp — the bighead, black and silver carp — as harmful to wildlife. By doing so, Congress would prohibit the interstate

transportation or importation of live Asian carp without a permit and therefore reduce the risk that Asian carp will be introduced into the Great Lakes.

There is widespread agreement that the problem of aquatic invasive species needs to be addressed by Congress and specifically that Asian carp must not be allowed to reach the Great Lakes. I am optimistic that we will address invasive species in a comprehensive manner this year and will pass legislation to build a new dispersal barrier before it is too late.

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BUSINESSES SERVICES

Lowell Unity High School team grabs first in Quiz Bowl



Kirsten VanderJagt, Esther Porritt, Marissa Garza, Tim Stevens and Ed Zanderbergen of Lowell Unity High School took first place in the 22nd annual Quiz Bowl.

By Emma Palova

Which country produces the most nuclear energy? That was the tie breaking question that won the 22nd Annual Quiz Bowl for alternative high schools for Lowell Unity earlier this month.

The team from Unity beat out eight strong teams at the competition in Grandville.

Of course, there were other questions about deism and Confucius.

"The deism was very hard," said team leader Tim Stevens. "It was the religion of our forefathers."

Stevens and his team were pretty proud of their victory.

"I knew we had a strong team," said Stevens. "I didn't know we were going to beat everybody else out. (There are) a lot of stereotypes. We wanted to bring the reputation up... It was a great pat on the back."

It was Stevens' second year in the Quiz Bowl testing his memory, history and math skills.

"I've learned how important it is to pay attention in school," he said. "The questions were harder than last year. We want to show the community we are capable."

But what about the nuclear energy question?

"My dad knew it was France," said team member Esther Porritt.

Not only was the team capable, but overall the team members and teacher Jon Bieneman were proud of Lowell Unity High School.

"It was an awesome opportunity to go and see students rise to the occasion and do a good job," said Bieneman. "They practiced throughout the year."

Book comes out at the same time as "Fowl Weather" ends

By Emma Palova

The belligerent Ollie, a.k.a. the Mussolini of parrots, was just one of many animals that inspired a local freelancer to author two books.

After the success of "Enslaved by Ducks" Bob Tarte penned "Fowl Weather" recently published by Algonquin Books.

Holding his favorite Bella, an African grey Timneh parrot, Tarte explained his journey from being a non-animal person to living with two dozen animals.

Wife Linda, who is the primary caretaker of the animals, introduced Tarte to naughty rabbit Binky and from then on it was just chaos.

"It's chaotic living with all these animals," said Tarte. "You never know what's going to happen."

Other than Bella, Tarte was especially attached to naughty Binky, and to Mussolini in a bird's suit. Unfortunately dove Howard passed away at the generous age of 16.

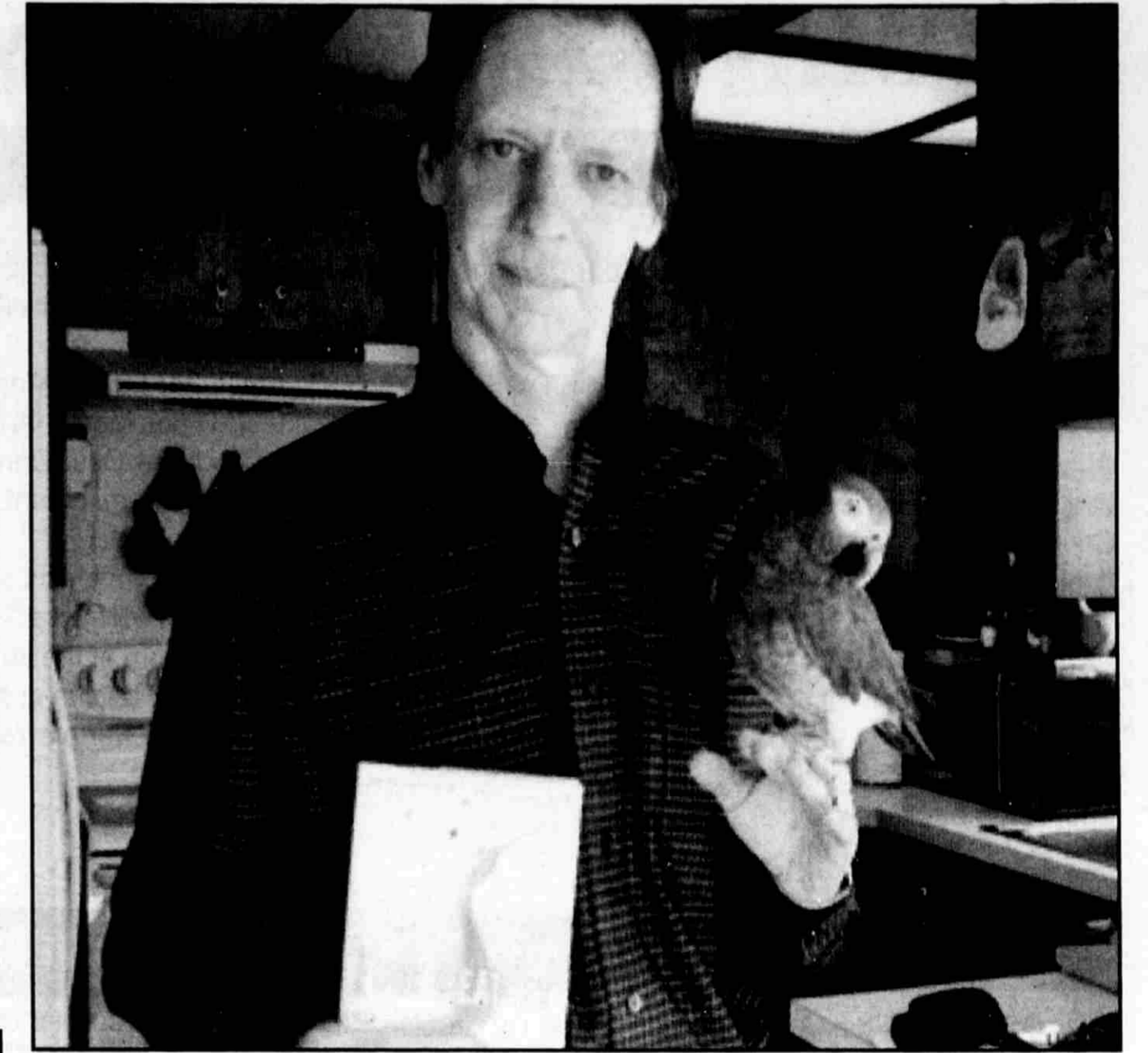
"Parrots are like people in bird's suits," he said.

The couple lives on a

sliver of land between Fulton Street and the Grand River. The annual area floods attract fowl and birds. The Tartes had to build special pens for the fowl. "Ducks are very labor intensive," said Tarte.

As described in his newest book, the trials and tribulations of living with so many animals have helped Tarte overcome his own personal struggles. His mother has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease.

And Tarte finds solace and humor in situations in dealing with the birds that comfort him. He even says



Lowell author Bob Tarte recently published his book "Fowl Weather" which was inspired by the couple's animals.



As winter goes out, fowl comes in and gathers behind Main St. businesses on the Flat River serving as inspiration for the local arts community.

that he has learned patience from the animals.

"I've learned how to deal with trauma," he said. "They're very affectionate."

For Tarte, animals are like friends with feelings and sympathy for him. Sometimes Tarte finds himself in hilarious situations like when he has to hold the water dish for the cat at a certain height.

In response to a question, "Why should anyone read your books?" Tarte answered: "People will be happy they're not living my life."

Once Tarte received an e-mail from a New York woman who was reading his book on the subway.

"I broke down laughing," she wrote.

As a freelance writer, Tarte knows writing is not

the way to make lots of money. Although he remains hopeful his second book will do just as well as the first one.

The author already has plans for a third book that will focus on cats - mainly cat no. 5, Mabel.

Tarte's books are available at Schuler Books and Barnes & Noble. For more information go to www.bobtarte.com



LOWELL AREA SCHOOLS VARSITY SPRING SPORTS SCHEDULE

This Page Brought to You By The Lowell Ledger

BOYS VARSITY BASEBALL

* Indicates a home game at Cherry Creek baseball field
Games begin at 4 p.m. unless indicated
4/7 at 9 a.m. Coldwater Tournament (3)
4/10 Forest Hills Eastern (2)
4/12 Unity Christian*
4/14 at 10 a.m. Lowell Invitational*
4/16 Portland (2)

GIRLS VARSITY SOFTBALL

* Indicates a home game at Cherry Creek softball field
Games begin at 4 p.m. unless indicated
4/10 Forest Hills Eastern (2)
4/12 Unity Christian (2)*
4/14 at 10 a.m. East Kentwood Tournament
4/16 Portland (2)
4/18 Ionia

BOYS & GIRLS TRACK

* Indicates a home meet at LHS Red Arrow Stadium
Games begin at 4:15 p.m. unless indicated
4/12 East Grand Rapids*
4/14 at 9 a.m. Hastings Relays
4/17 Greenville

GIRLS VARSITY GOLF

* Indicates a home meet at Deer Run Golf Course.
All meets begin at 3:30 p.m. unless indicated.
4/10 Forest Hills Eastern*
4/12 Cedar Springs*
4/13 Lakewood
4/16 at 9 a.m. Pre-conference at Thornapple Pointe
4/18 East Grand Rapids*

GIRLS VARSITY SOCCER

* Indicates a home game at Red Arrow Stadium.
Games begin at 6:45 p.m. unless indicated.
3/26 at 5:45 p.m. Caledonia*
4/11 Cedar Springs*
4/14 at 12:45 p.m. Jenison*
4/16 Rockford*
4/18 Zeeland East

BOYS VARSITY TENNIS

* Indicates a home game at LHS tennis courts
Games begin at 4 p.m. unless indicated
4/10 Thornapple Kellogg
4/12 Lakewood*
4/14 at 9:30 a.m. Lowell Invitational*
4/17 Whitehall*
4/18 East Grand Rapids*

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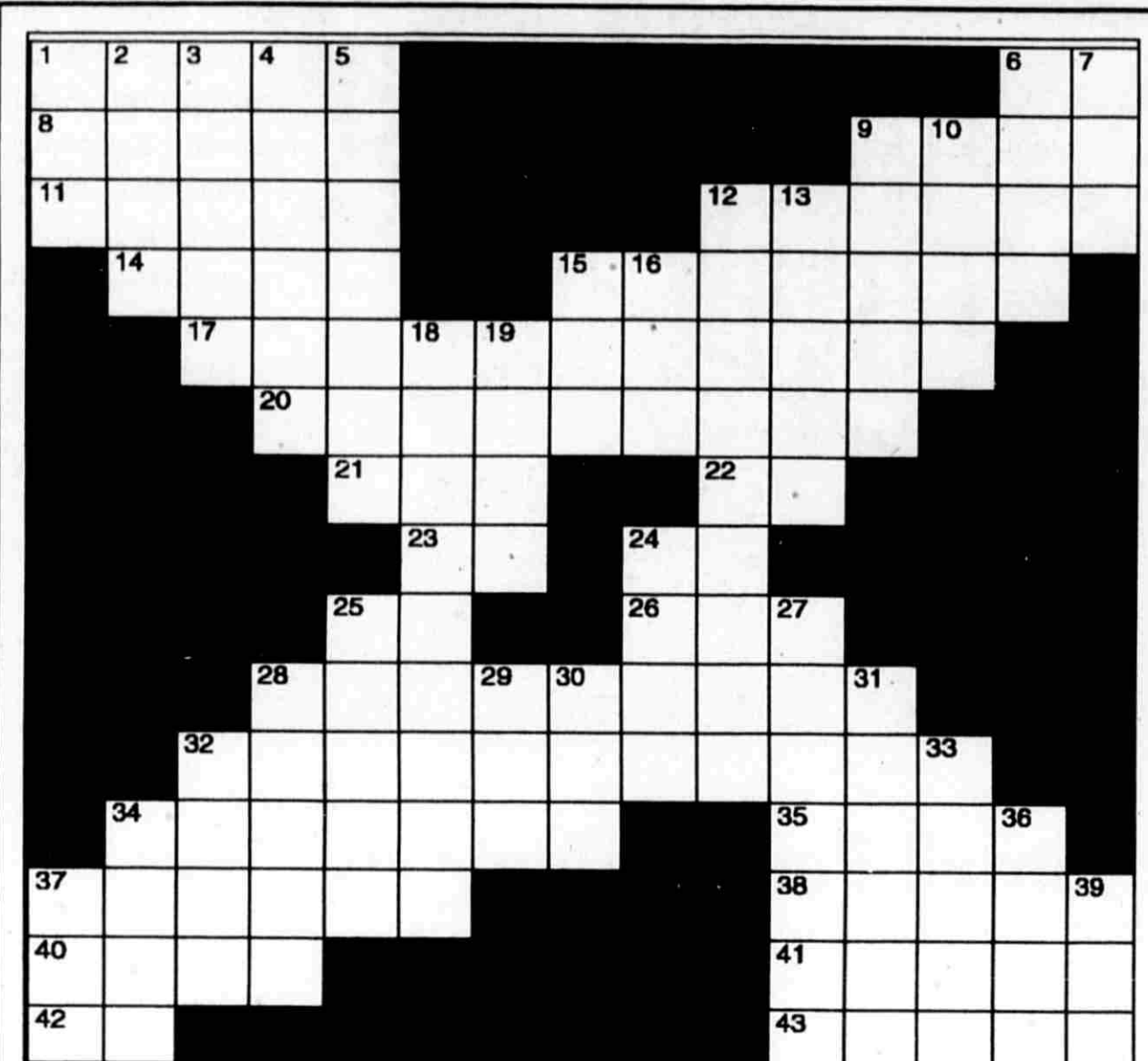


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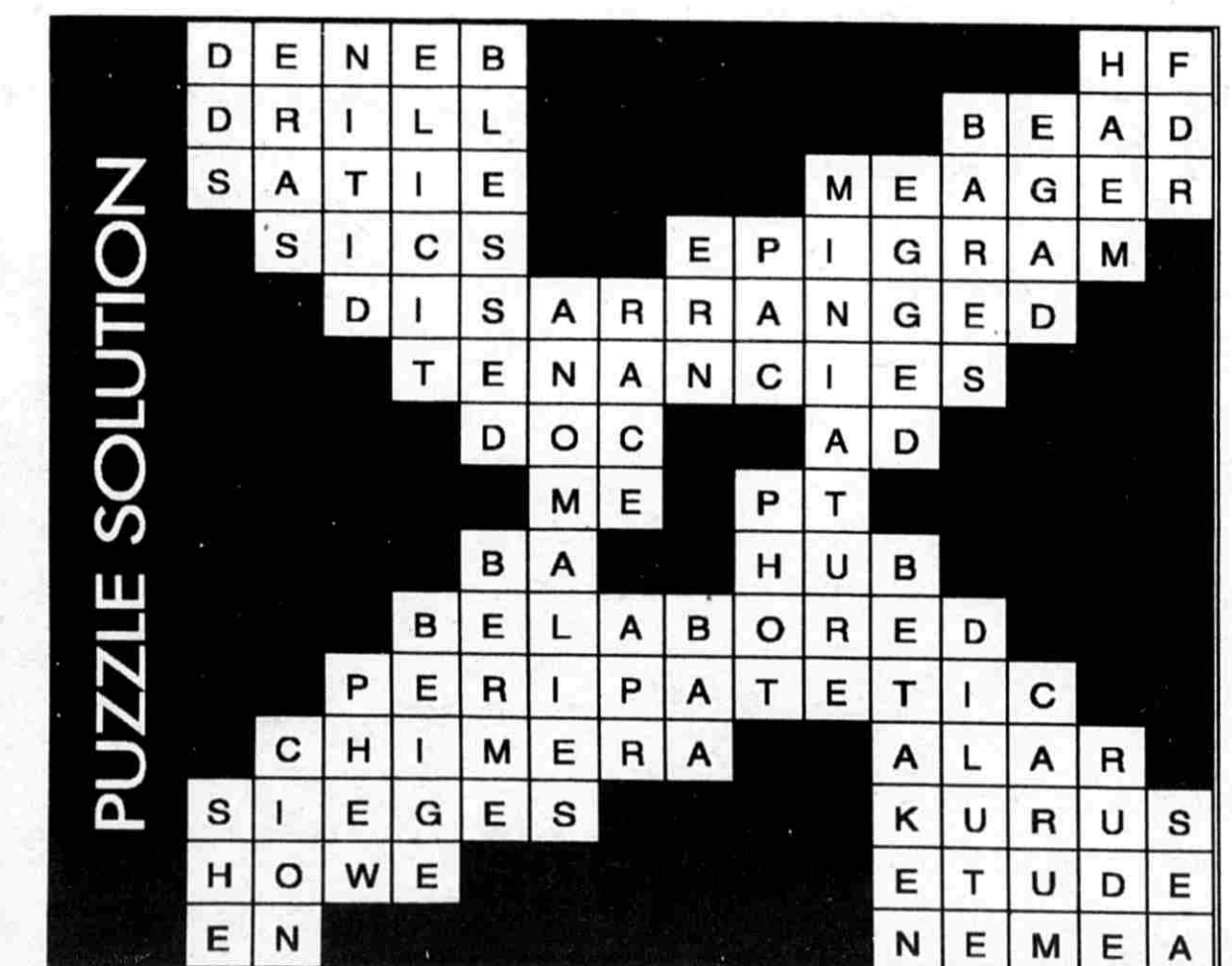
CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Cygnus star
- 6. Hafnium
- 8. Learn by repetition
- 9. Small pierced object for stringing
- 11. Erik ____, composer
- 12. Scanty or spare
- 14. Incites hostile action
- 15. A witty saying
- 17. Upset the order of
- 20. Occupancies
- 21. Medical practitioner
- 22. Anno Domini (in the year of Our Lord)
- 23. Of I
- 24. Special therapy
- 25. Barium
- 26. Center
- 28. Discussed at length
- 32. Walking about from place to place
- 34. Composite Greek she-monster
- 35. Trademark used for daminozide
- 37. Blockades
- 38. Turkish monetary units
- 40. British Revolutionary War general
- 41. Opus
- 42. Linear unit
- 43. Site of Greek games in 573 BC

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Tooth caregiver
- 2. Geological times
- 3. Gleaming
- 4. Evoke
- 5. Sacred
- 6. Heme (var.)
- 7. 32nd President
- 9. Uncovers
- 10. Oh, God! (var.)
- 12. Small replica
- 13. Encouraged
- 15. Any of several sea eagles
- 16. Political action committee
- 18. Departures from the norm
- 19. Type of sports competition
- 24. ____osynthesis: light conversion
- 25. Ground along a dike
- 27. Cause oneself to go
- 28. Light brown
- 29. 4th month (abbr.)
- 30. Sheep sound
- 31. Reduce a liquid's concentration
- 32. Stinks!
- 33. Caraway
- 34. Coer ____: compel by force
- 36. Ill-mannered
- 37. The woman
- 39. Ocean

CW07311A



RANDOM THINGS...

March ushers in Spring on March 21st!

In the old Roman calendar the Ides (the 13th of all months except March, May, July, and October when it falls on 15th. Julius Caesar was assassinated on The Ides of March.

The March of Dimes agency was established in 1938 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt to combat epidemic poliomyelitis, or polio. It was then called the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis. It funded the development of the Salk and Sabin vaccines that help prevent polio. The agency adopted its present name in 1979.

Send Winter Off With Soup

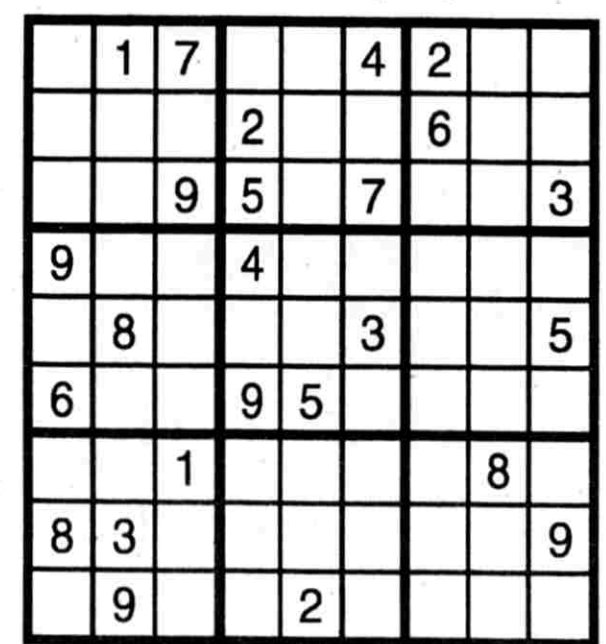
While spring may be right around the corner, here in Michigan chances are it has yet to completely give up the ghost. That said, a few more cold days are likely on the horizon, making a hot bowl of soup just as valuable now as it was last month.

Perhaps no soup is more worthy of meal status than minestrone. Recipes can vary depending on the cook, but most minestrone soups, such as the following recipe from the Culinary Institute of America's "Book of Soups" (Lebhar Friedman), come loaded with pasta, vegetables and beans. This recipe, exhibiting the varied ingredients of minestrone soup, even features pancetta, a type of Italian bacon that can be found in most delis or butcher shops. If not, it can be removed from the recipe.

MINESTRONE SOUP Makes 8 Servings

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 ounce pancetta, chopped (5-6 thin slices)
- 1 1/2 cups chopped green cabbage
- 1 cup chopped onions
- 1/2 cup peeled, diced potato
- 1 ounce Parmesan cheese rind
- 1/4 cup drained, canned chickpeas
- 1/3 cup pesto
- 1/2 teaspoon salt (or to taste)
- 3 ounces vermicelli or angel hair pastas, broken into 2-inch pieces
- Freshly grated parmesan cheese, as needed
- 1/4 cup chopped celery
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 cup chopped, drained, canned tomatoes
- 1 cup sliced carrots
- 2 quarts chicken broth
- 1/3 cup drained, canned kidney beans
- 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper (or to taste)

SUDOKU



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Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!

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Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!



Heat the oil in a soup pot over medium heat. Add the pancetta and cook until the fat melts, 3 to 5 minutes. Do not brown.

Add the cabbage, onions, carrots, celery, and garlic. Cook until the onions are translucent, 6 to 8 minutes. Add the tomatoes and sauté another 2 to 3 minutes.

Add the broth, potato and parmesan cheese rind. Bring to a simmer and cook until the vegetables are tender, about 30 minutes. Do not overcook. Meanwhile, cook the vermicelli according to package directions, until tender. Drain.

When the vegetables in the soup are tender, add the cooked vermicelli, chickpeas and kidney beans. Remove and discard the parmesan rind. Season the soup to taste with the pesto, salt and pepper. Serve in heated bowls, sprinkled with cheese.

Lowell FFA members attend state convention

Twenty-eight FFA members from Lowell attended the state FFA convention March 7-9 to compete in state leadership contests or to receive awards.

The convention was held on the campus of Michigan State University in East Lansing.

Two Lowell teams competed in the state FFA leadership contests which are designed to help the students build teamwork and communication skills in order to make them better leaders and more prepared for the future.

Katie Bartholomew, Audrey Blodger, Caitlin Clover, Mark Harden, Alli Oesch, Emma Roderick, and Kelsey Ward competed

in the Junior High Conduct of Meetings contest taking home a Silver award. Josh Bartholomew and Kendra Merriman also attended as alternates.

In the contest, middle school members had to demonstrate that they could run a meeting using correct parliamentary procedure.

In the extemporaneous public speaking contest, Ian Blodger also received a Silver award. Extemporaneous speaking tests the student's knowledge of a broad topic area. Students select the topic area and at the contest, draw a specific question to write their speech about. After one half an hour prep time, the students present their five-minute speech. Lowell also had

several members receiving individual recognition.

Morgan Olin, Mike Roth, Katie Rottier, Stephanie Wade, and Patrick Walsh all received scholarship recognition, given to senior FFA members with at least a 3.3 grade point average.

These students also received the State FFA Degree, the highest award the State Association can bestow upon a member. The State Degree is awarded to senior members that have shown they have earned a certain amount or have invested a set number of hours in an FFA Supervised Agricultural Experience project.

Nick Canfield, Regan Doyle, Grady Drown, Brian Langlois and Andy Oesch

also received this award from Lowell.

Brian Langlois and Mike Roth received Proficiency Awards for their Supervised Agricultural Experience projects. The Proficiency Awards take a student's SAE and judge it compared to others in the same area.

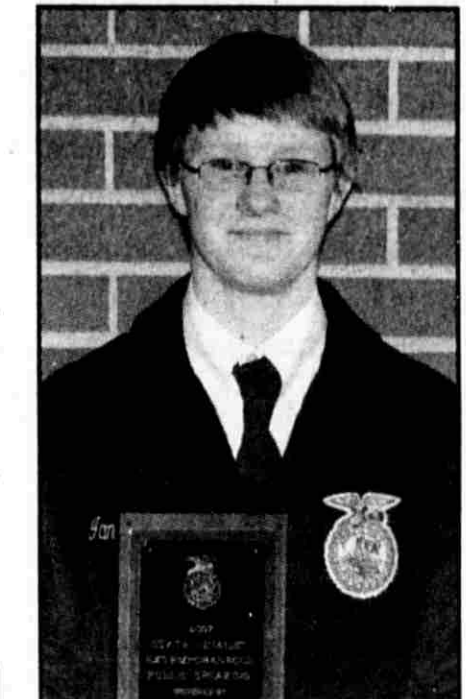
Langlois received a

Silver award in the Small Animal Care area for his work training dogs and working at Brooknelle Kennel. Roth was named the state winner in Forage Production for the work he

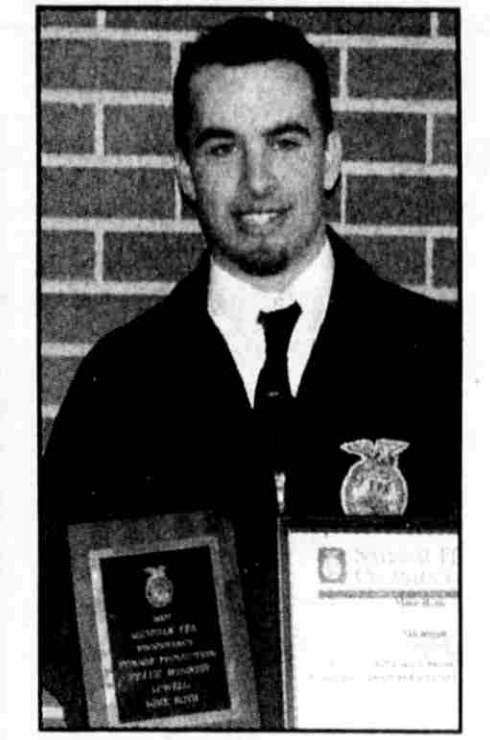
does growing, baling and selling hay at his family's farm. As the state winner, Roth's application will be forwarded to national level.

Briana Buck, Jim Crosby, Leara Glinzak, Jenny Humphries, April Wolf and Blake Zigmont each received the Outstanding Junior Award. This award is similar to the State Degree but with smaller time and money requirements.

Lowell was represented in the State FFA Band also. Rachel Folkersma and Katelin Schramm auditioned and were chosen to perform in front of over 1,500 people at the Convention sessions held at the Wharton Center. In addition to performing in the State band, Folkersma and Schramm were asked to audition for the National FFA Band that performs at the National FFA Convention in Indianapolis, Indiana this October.



Ian Blodger received a Silver award in Extemporaneous Public Speaking.



Lowell Senior Mike Roth was named the State Winner in the Forage Production Proficiency Area. He is now eligible to compete for the award at the National level.



Receiving a Silver award in the Jr. High Conduct of Meetings Contest were: (front row, l-r): Emma Roderick, Mark Harden, Kelsey Ward; back row: Audrey Blodger, Katie Bartholomew, Alli Oesch and Caitlin Clover.



Katelin Schramm and Rachel Folkersma participated in the State FFA Band. They have been asked to audition for the National FFA Band.

Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other.
- John F. Kennedy (1917 - 1963)



Receiving the State FFA Degree from Lowell were: (front row, l-r): Katie Rottier, Morgan Olin, Mike Roth, Regan Doyle, Stephanie Wade; back row: Brian Langlois, Andy Oesch, Nick Canfield, Grady Drown, Patrick Walsh.

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