

The Lowell Ledger

Volume 36 Issue 45

Serving Lowell Area Readers Since 1893

Wednesday, December 5, 2007

Crowds gather for Lowell's first "Light the Night" parade

With the theme "Light the Night", Saturday's night parade drew record crowds in spite of freezing temperatures to downtown Lowell. The parade kicked off with emergency vehicles, followed by semi-trucks and local organizations on floats and foot. The icy sidewalks were lined with hundreds of people all bundled up.

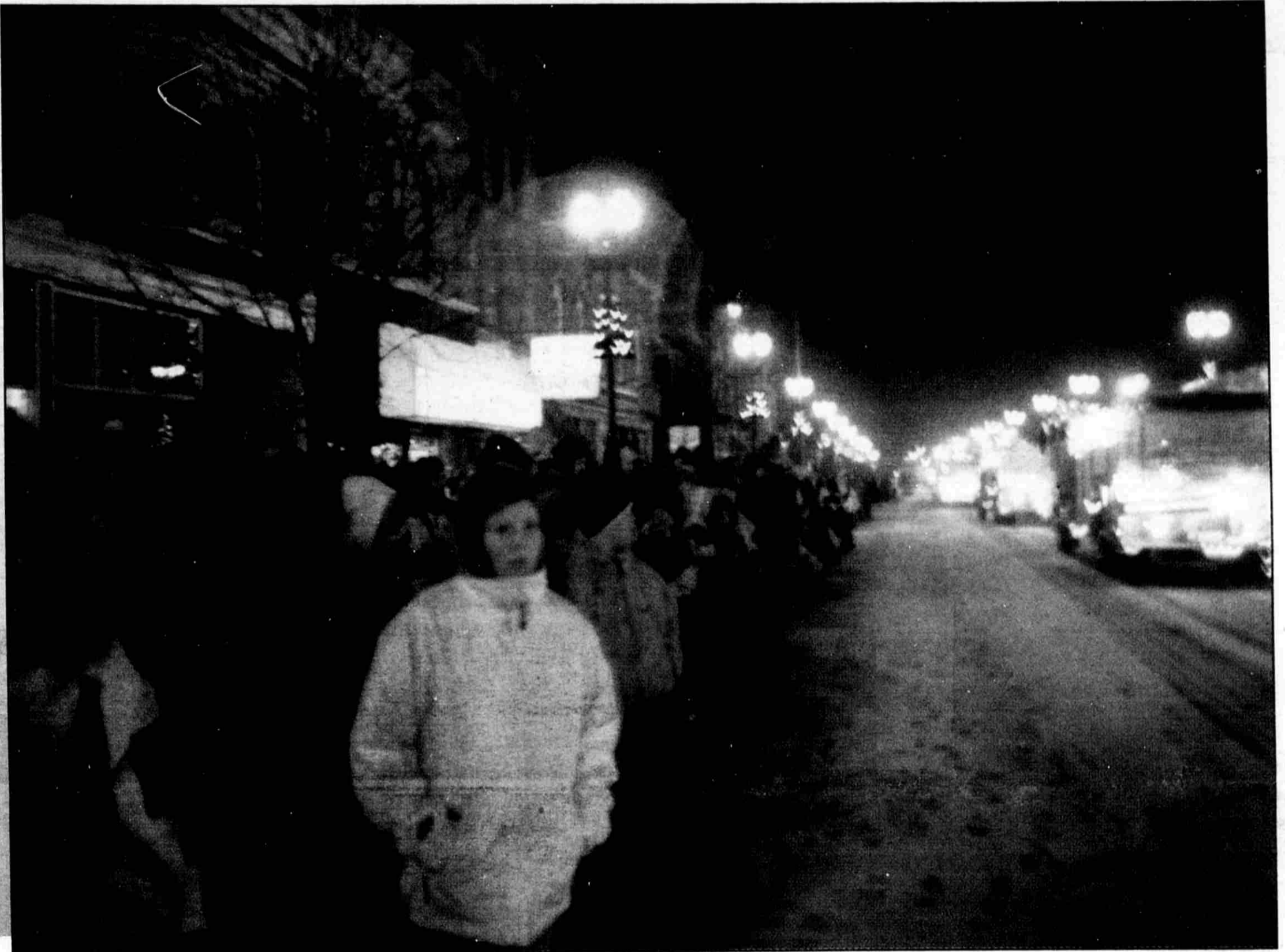
"It was a fantastic parade," said acting mayor Jeanne Shores. "It was long."

Council member Jim Pfaller was concerned about the crowd getting out of control.

"People were getting too far out into the streets," he said. "I'd hate that turned into a tragedy."

However, clerk Betty Morlock, one of the many parade volunteers, said volunteers were working hard pushing the kids back. Next year, volunteers along the entire parade corridor will be needed to keep the crowds back. Flat River Grill

"Light the Night,"
cont'd., pg. 8



The first nighttime Christmas parade attracted hundreds of curious people to Main Street in Lowell. The "Light the Night" spectacle was a moveable feast for the eyes. It was also the debut for the Showboat replica float as rispy ice and snow covered the ground.

Detailed Showboat replica shows community spirit

by Emma Palova

A precise miniature replica of the real Showboat made of scrap shelving wood complete with laser-cut trimmings will serve as another marketing tool for Lowell.

The detailed miniature, christened last week, even has a sag in it much like the Showboat. The only thing missing on both boats is the nostalgic captain holding a cup of tea at the helm.

For builder Ivan Blough,

it all started out with a vision to lift the community spirit much like with the original boat built in the depression era.

Without any blueprints or drawings, the Showboat was the plan for the replica.

Since Blough also built the boat, which now docks by the Riverwalk, based on five slides of the long gone 1932 original, the blueprints were in his mind.

"I first built it in my mind," he said. "The prints were in my head, I had a vision of building a boat."

As Blough, along with 60 volunteers from the ambassador club, got further into discussing the future replica, it became more and more clear that the boat needed to float.

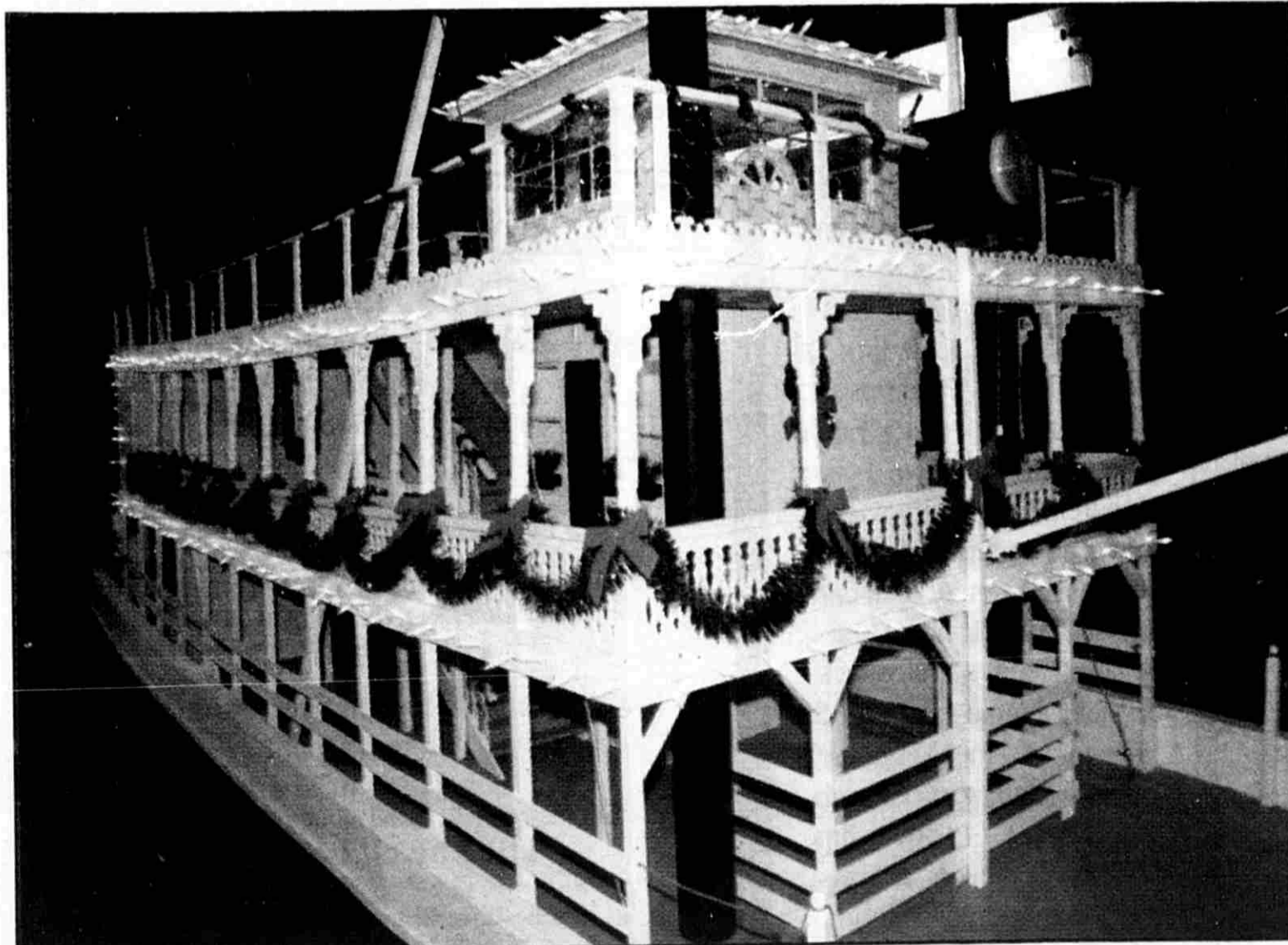
"We didn't just want it to sit there," said Blough. "We wanted it to go out and market Lowell, as the Next Place to Be."

So from the very beginning,

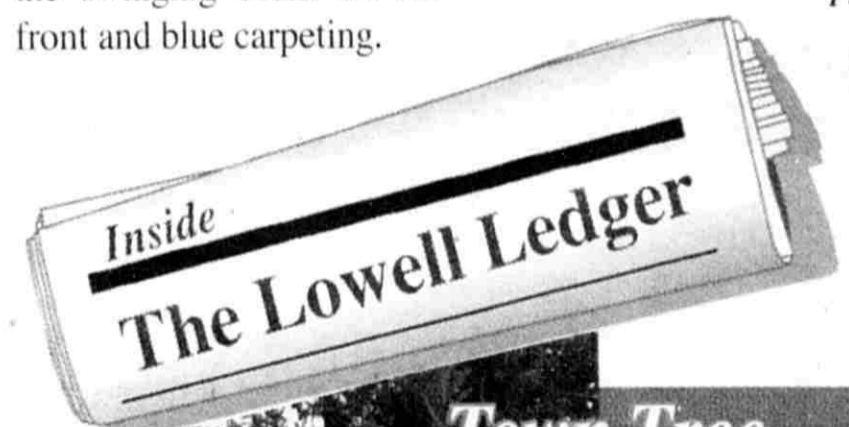
the replica was designed to be a moveable marketing tool sitting permanently on a long snowmobile trailer. The miniature is exactly one sixth of the 18-foot long Showboat to the last painstaking detail, including the swinging beam on the front and blue carpeting.

However, at one point technology had to take over. Although Blough wanted to cut the moldings and the trimmings of the replica with a scroll saw, a coincidence had it different.

Replica, cont'd.,
pg. 4



The one-sixth replica of the real Showboat has been precisely designed to the last trimmings.



Town Tree
All Decked
Out ... Page 4

Dog
Bones &
Magnets
... Page 8





Lowell's tree glows "green" with energy efficient lighting

Christmas will be a little brighter this year as the city's most prominent evergreen tree is now glowing with high-tech low-energy Christmas lights.

In response to a request from the Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce, the Lowell Board of Light and Power donated the lighting and the labor to decorate the 22-foot Douglas Fir tree on Main Street at the Flat River Bridge. The tree was decorated by Jon Francis and Simon Kelly of Lowell Light and Power's electric service crew. The "Town Christmas Tree" was officially lighted for the season by Mayor Chuck Myers at the kickoff of Saturday's Christmas Parade.

The 1,000 lights on the tree are energy-saving light-emitting-diode or LED lamps. The LED lamps are becoming the popular choice for communities and individuals who want the most energy efficient means to light up the holiday. Lowell's tree will join the nation's most famous trees with LED lighting, including New York's Rockefeller Center Christmas tree, the White House Christmas tree and the National Christmas tree in Washington DC.

"The LED lamps will use only one-tenth of the energy consumed by traditional Christmas lights so they will pay for themselves in energy savings" according to Tom Richards, Lowell Light and Power General Manager. He added that the LED bulbs stay cool to the touch and they have no filaments to burn out, so they are expected to last 50 times as long as typical incandescent lights. Instead of a burning filament, each lamp contains three tiny LED light sources

and two circuit boards. Another benefit is that the LED lights are built with tough acrylic lenses that are faceted like a jewel, so they give off a distinctive shimmering look.

Richards said the Board of Light and Power approved the purchase and installation of the Christmas lights from a special limited fund set aside for such projects. In addition to the utility's monthly financial contribution to the City, the Board's Benevolence Fund is designated for situations where the utility has a unique opportunity to provide a special contribution that will benefit the Lowell Community.

The Board of Light and Power agreed to light the tree for this season and for future Christmas celebrations in Lowell.

CDBG, continued ... From Page 3

"We'd love to have that section paved," said Pasquale.

The council also reaffirmed planning commission's decision not to rezone Keiser's area to commercial, but rather to explore mixed use zoning as proposed in the newly adopted master plan.

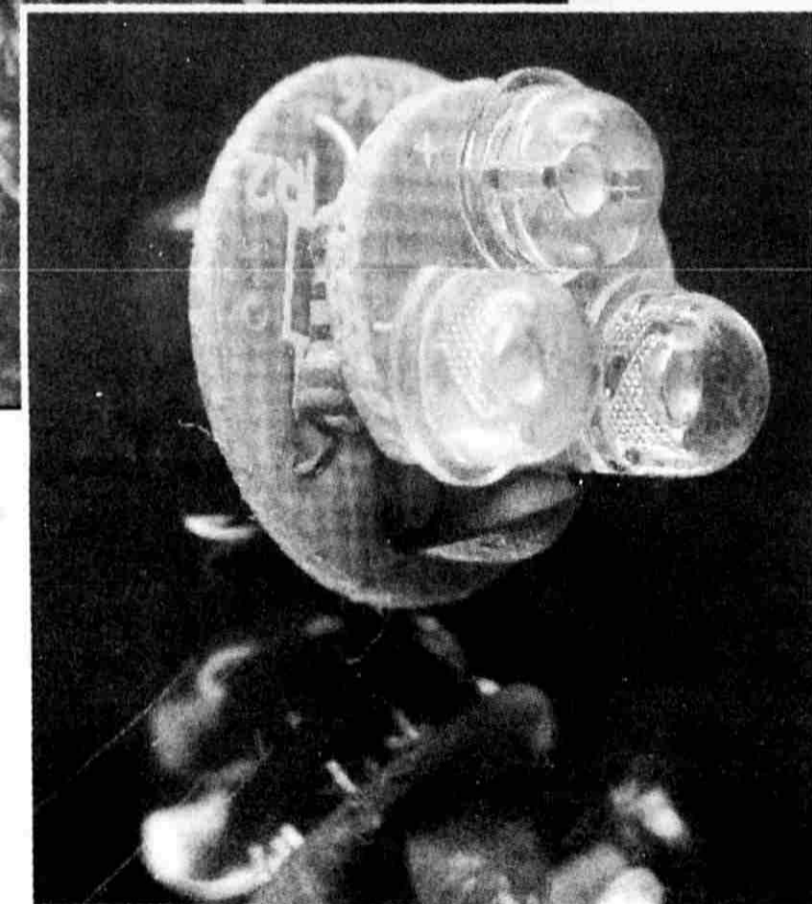
The council is seeking to fill two open board positions on the Lowell Light and Power board.

"It's a complicated but interest board," said Shores.

In city manager's report, Pasquale informed the council the Michigan Court of Appeals reversed the decision of the Kent County Circuit Court granting \$134,100 to Sundry Corporation for damages involved in the Highland Hills Development. The Court of Appeals noted that Sundry did not have any compensable losses due to the fact that the referendum on PUD zoning was correct.

A joint work session of the city council and the Lowell Light and Power board has been set for Dec. 13 at 7 p.m.

The council is seeking to fill two open board positions on the Lowell Light and Power board.



Lowell Light and Power Linemen Jon Francis and Simon Kelly attach the lights.

At left, the LED light source contained in each lamp.

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Replica, continued ... From Page 1

And unlike Blough, the man who did the trimmings as part of the community project, drew up the moldings and digitalized them into CAD System. A large laser machine then cut out the intricate moldings.

"It's very fine intricate

stuff," said Rudy Smith, owner of A-1 Laser. "The Showboat is a big part of this community."

Smith, whose company donates scrap wood to the schools, donated programming and cutting time on the moldings to the uplifting project.

Chamber director Liz Baker said the replica will travel around communities to market Lowell.

"It's another tool for us," she said.

As for Blough, the replica remains a work in progress even after putting in 1,500 hours by countless

volunteers. Blough plans to populate the boat with 12-inch high end men and chorus people.

"We did it again," he said. "The community will pick itself up behind this project. We won't just let it sit there."

Viewpoint

To The Editor

To the Editor,

I would like to thank the Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce for asking me to lead many dedicated people in building a mini Showboat.

We are fortunate to have a very talented and dedicated Liz Baker as our executive director, who led a group of Chamber members to identify a NEED in our community to develop a tool that can be used to advertise to the world, "Lowell, the Next Place to Be."

They had a VISION to build a mini Showboat that could travel to other communities. Then they invited other chamber members and friends to develop a PLAN.

Working together they rolled up their sleeves and went to WORK, in the middle of August. The City of Lowell gave them the use of space in the city garage to meet and build on the boat every Monday night.

They showed their skills to make it as exact to one-sixth the size of the original boat, the Robert E. Lee, in every detail. This coupled with their DETERMINATION to finish it on time for Dec. 1 parade, made it a very useful tool of which they, and the community, can be very proud.

This kind of volunteerism and cooperation, which is present in this community in many projects, is why Carolyn Jane and I feel blessed to live and participate in the Lowell community.

Ivan K. Blough

To the Editor,

I'm reflecting upon the article in the Lowell Ledger, "Keiser's area not rezoned to commercial for time being". I believe the reason for not rezoning this area at this time was because of opposition from residents and the withdrawal of a rezoning request. And so should it be. But it was stated that the ideas and concepts of mixed use put forward by the master plan fit the block perfect. It was also stated, "You can create a new district, put it in the ordinance and decide where it will be." I don't know about you, but to me, those statements sound like the city can do whatever they want, whenever they want. I believe our community has seen enough of that kind of attitude in the past with the sale of Lowell Cable TV and now the confutation over property bordering the city airport. You would think that the planning commission would be more concerned about the buildings and land not occupied already zoned commercial before forcing an unwanted master plan on an aging neighborhood. It seems to boil down to what the planning commission, the city council and the master plan dictate.

Sincerely,
Jim Howard

Outdoors

By
Dave Stegehuis



IT'S YOUR CHOICE

For those who thought deer hunting season was over for another year—guess again. In the Upper Peninsula and southern Lower Michigan (zones 1 and 3) muzzleloader season begins Dec. 7th. In the northern Lower Peninsula (zone 2), it begins Dec. 14th.

The first muzzleloading seasons gave hunters the opportunity to use primitive firearms to take deer. Guns available at the time were flintlock and caplock models which looked and operated like those used during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The old flintlock functions by striking a flint chip on steel which ignites priming powder in a pan which then sets off a black powder charge. The resulting explosion pushes a lead ball wrapped in a cloth patch out the smooth barrel. The caplock uses a small explosive metal cup which when hit by a spring-loaded hammer ignites the main charge of loose black powder.

Most hunters were unfamiliar with these primitive weapons, so only a relatively small number of hunters participated in the early seasons. Today things have changed

considerably. Muzzleloading rifles have evolved into what are now called modern muzzleloaders. These are not your grandfather's guns.

The latest models available to hunters use 209 shotgun shell primers placed directly behind the powder charge which is still poured down the front of the barrel. One new rifle has an electronic ignition—batteries included. New improved powders now come in solid pellet form and are easier to handle and measure. These propellants are less corrosive than black powder which make cleaning the firearm much easier. Most modern muzzleloading guns are drilled and tapped for mounting scopes or other high-tech aiming devices. The lead ball projectile has been replaced with jacketed bullets in plastic sleeves called sabots. These are pushed into the barrel which has rifling grooves to spin the bullet for better accuracy. Gunstocks are made from composite materials and barrels from stainless steel.

All of this technology has made the guns very accurate, more dependable, and easier to maintain. My wife and many other hunters have enough confidence in their muzzleloaders to use them instead of a shotgun during regular firearm season. The number of muzzleloader hunters has grown in proportion to the advances in technology. A similar phenomenon has occurred with archery equipment and bowhunting.

All of this technology still allows a hunter to make a choice between traditional and modern equipment. We each need to ask ourselves why we hunt and decide which legal hunting methods will meet our hunting objectives and expectations, and then make a choice.



125 YEARS AGO THE LOWELL JOURNAL DECEMBER 6, 1882

Quite a number of Grand Rapids parties took turkey in Lowell Thursday.

E.R. Crew expects to have the Springbrook Mills in working order next week.

A case of diphtheria reported at M. Hunter's about five miles south of here. The patient brought the disease from Big Rapids.

100 YEARS AGO THE LOWELL LEDGER DECEMBER 5, 1907

No entries.

75 YEARS AGO THE LOWELL LEDGER AND ALTO SOLO DECEMBER 1, 1932

Dr. J.D. Brook, Kent County health officer, has issued a schedule for school district vaccinations against smallpox under the auspices of the Kent County Health Department.

Stanley Fahrni, son of Mr. and Mrs. Chris Fahrni of Boston Township, had the misfortune to lose three fingers Monday in a corn husking machine.

50 YEARS AGO THE LOWELL LEDGER DECEMBER 5, 1957

Barbara Krebs, eighth grade at Lowell School, was the high salesman in the magazine sales campaign in its final week; and she received a watch as her prize. She brought in a total of \$104 in subscriptions, more than anyone else in junior high and high school. Because of this outstanding work, Barbara has been selected Teen of the Week.

25 YEARS AGO THE GRAND VALLEY LEDGER DECEMBER 1, 1982

Prompted by a recent rash of home burglaries, primarily in Vergennes Township, Roger Odell and other Lowell area citizens are attempting to organize a "neighborhood watch" program for the area.

Lowell's new downtown Christmas decorations are a vast improvement over the old Santas that had gotten rather dingy and tattered over the years.

Writing to the editor ...

The Lowell Ledger welcomes letters to the editor from readers, but there are a few conditions that must be met before they will be published.

The requirements are:

- All letters must be signed by the writer, with address and phone number provided for verification. All that will be printed is the writer's name and community of residence.
- Letters that contain statements that are libelous will not be published.
- All letters are subject to editing for style, grammar and sense.
- Letters that serve as testimonials for or criticisms of for-profit businesses will not be accepted.
- Letters serving the function of "cards of thanks" will not be accepted unless there is a compelling public interest, which will be determined by the editor.
- Letters that include attacks of a personal nature will not be published or will be edited heavily.
- "Crossfire" letters between the same two people on one issue will be limited to one for each writer.
- In an effort to keep opinions varied, there is a limit of one letter per person per week.
- We prefer letters to be printed legibly or typed, double-spaced. For e-mailed letters, please copy letter as part of the e-mail body and send to ledger@lowellbuyersguide.com.

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Local die maker builds dog bone cutters for Mackinac Island baker

by Emma Palova
 What does a specialty baker living on Mackinac Island have in common with a die maker in Lowell? Well, a cache or a niche. In this case stainless steel dog bone cutters made to order

regular cutters to cut the treats at the kitchen table, but as the niche business grew with Pet Expos, the need for dog bone cutters became obvious. Through various contacts in Traverse City,

Bobinsky found the right man who could make the dog bone cutter prototypes, that is A-1 Laser in Lowell. Without calling ahead of time, Bobinsky headed mainland to Lowell on a beautiful crisp winter day.

As he arrived in Lowell, he fell in love with a town that reminded him of his home town in Ohio. Not only did he find Rudy Smith, Lori and the crew at the die company, but he was finally able to put the flour product he had been using at the Grand Hotel and at Double Oven with the name King Milling together.

He was astounded to see the silos and the grindstone. "I had never been to Lowell before," he said. "I was extremely well treated by Rudy and the crew. It was amazing to see the source, King Milling."

Holding a box with

the dog bone cutters, Smith proudly showed off the prototype last week at the die shop along with other orders and final products.

Maybe, Smith should have been better known for building 15 different dies for the famous magnetic "Support our troops" ribbons. But, it was actually the manufacturers, who made a lot of money.

"I've worked with manufacturers in Ohio and Missouri," he said. It was this diversification like with the dog bone cutters that kept the steel rule die company vibrant in a hurting economy.

"This guy is a baker," Smith said.

And truly, as Bobinsky awaits his dog bone cutters, he is amazed at the strange set of circumstances that led him to Lowell.

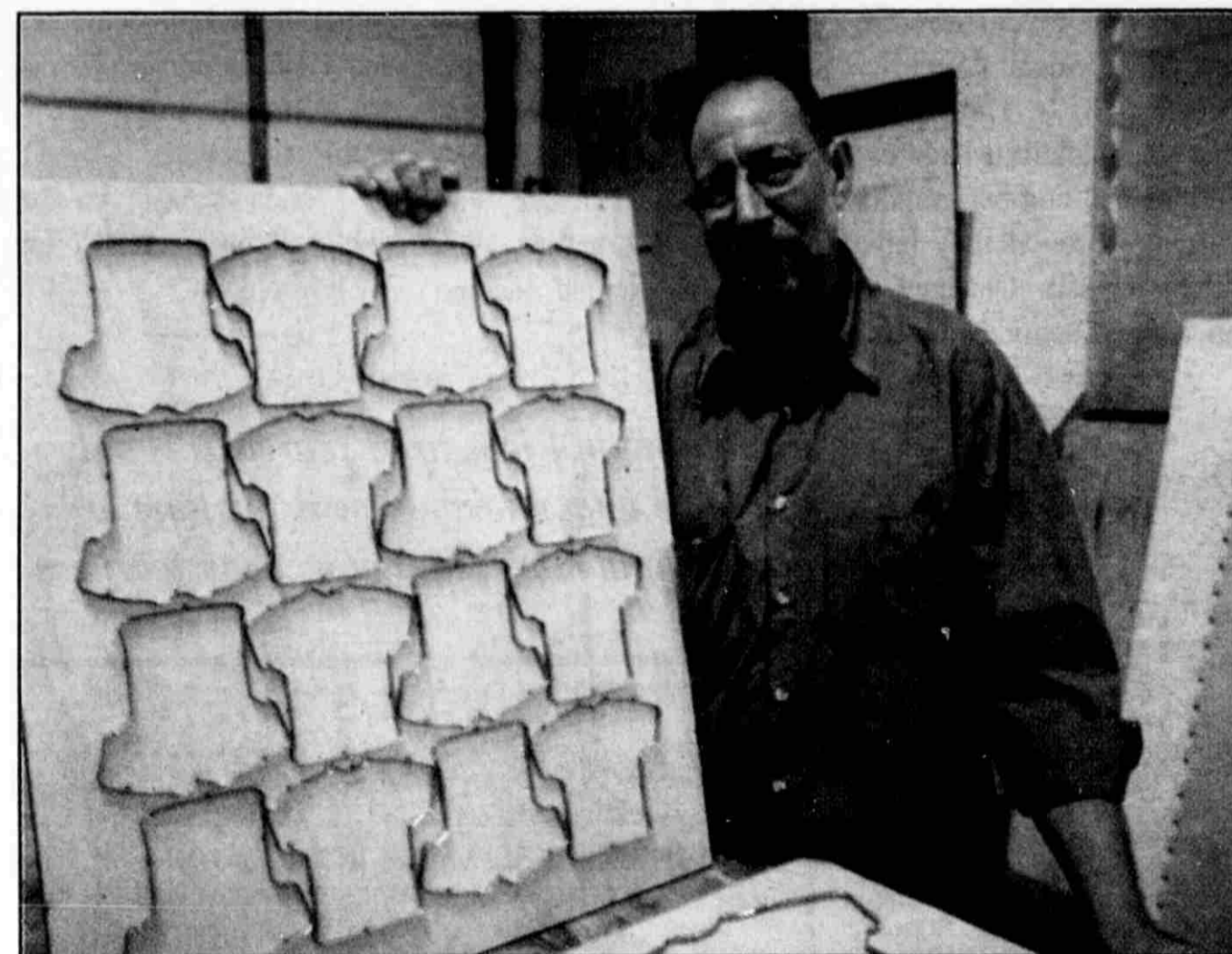
"It's a fantastic place to live," he said. "I still get a chuckle out of this whole deal."

If everything goes well at the winter pet shows, Bobinsky plans to automate and get an extrusion oven. But, he will keep the NSF certified dog bone cutters no matter what.

"It's an interesting twist in life," Bobinsky said. "I guess the die industry has a close knit network."

In the wake of the recent pet food recalls, Bobinsky claims to make nothing exotic or proprietary, only a clean label product using whole wheat flour.

And that's were the story started with whole wheat flour from King Milling squirreled up at the Double Oven bakery on 3rd Street past the barns beyond the Grand Hotel.



Rudy Smith, owner of A-1 Laser, shows box with dog bone cutters and other specialty products.

"Light the Night," continued ... From Page 1

served up hot cider, while Springrove Variety offered hot buttered popcorn.

The parade winners were first place Backwater Café, second place Lowell Crew Club and third place

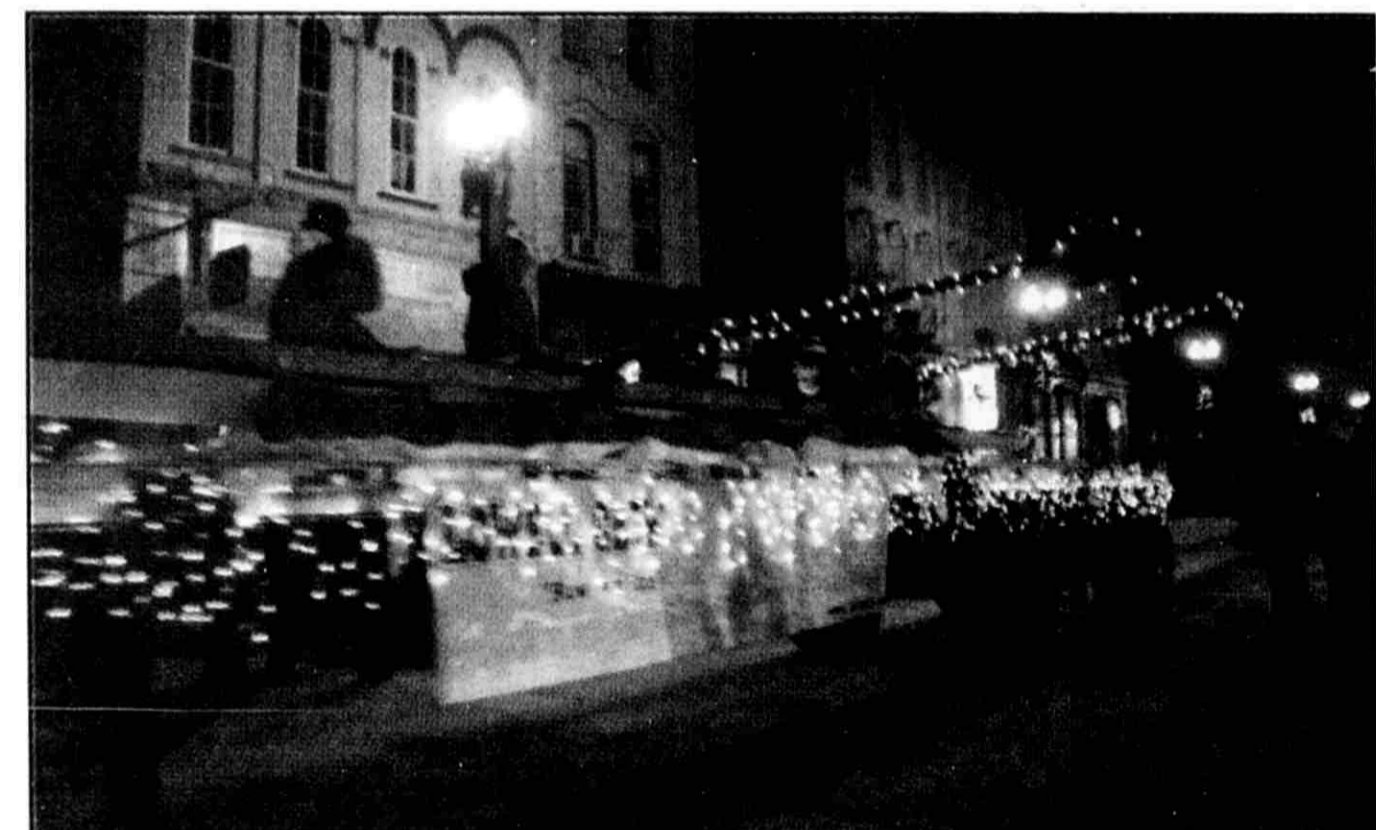
the King Milling Company. Honorable mention went to Lowell Light & Power, Flat

River Girl Scouts, historical museum and YMCA Autumn Athletes.

The ice sculpting

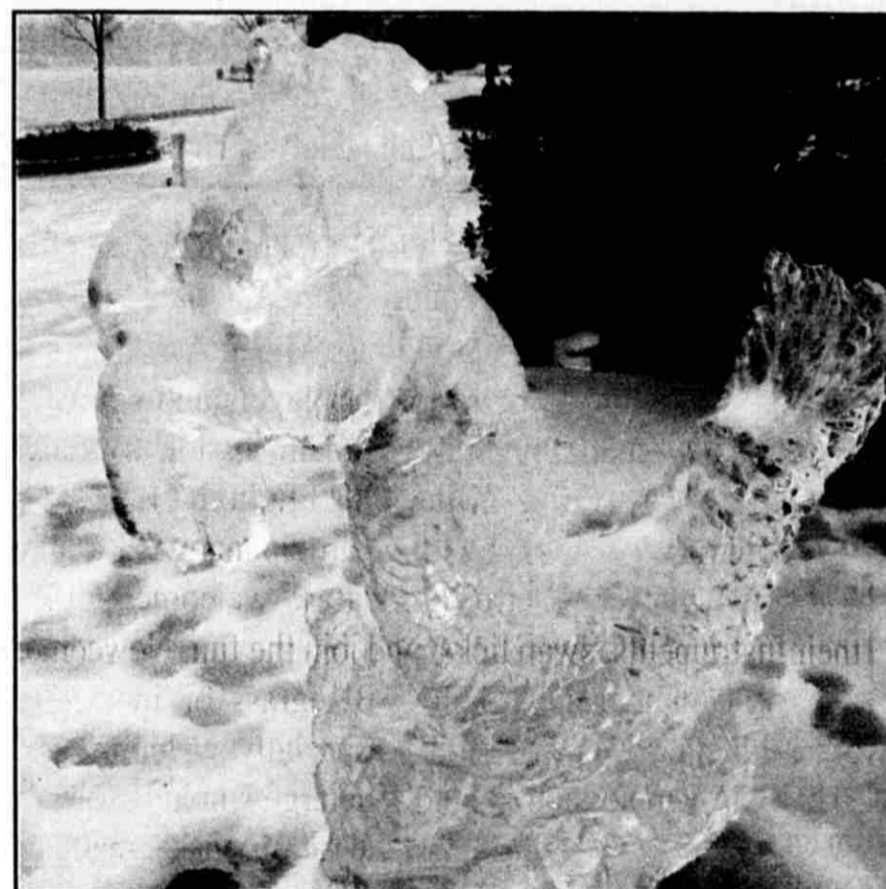
challenge resulted in four sculptures on the Riverwalk Plaza. First place went to Mark Richardson for the eagle

which also won people's choice; second place was Zach Cross' bear and third place went to the seahorse carved by Andrea Stahl.



The Lowell Crew Club's second-place float above and at right the float designed and built by Girls Scouts won an honorable mention.

This seahorse sculpture placed third.



Featured Artist Jack Eppinga

by Emma Palova
 A cherry wood giant head of daughter Maddie by power carver Jack Eppinga is the result of an evolving artist.

Eppinga, who never stays stagnant with one subject, has been working through different subjects such as slender herons, cranes, long limbs, skinny bodies and parabolic curves.

"I am never done with a certain theme," he said, "but I don't like staying with something too long."

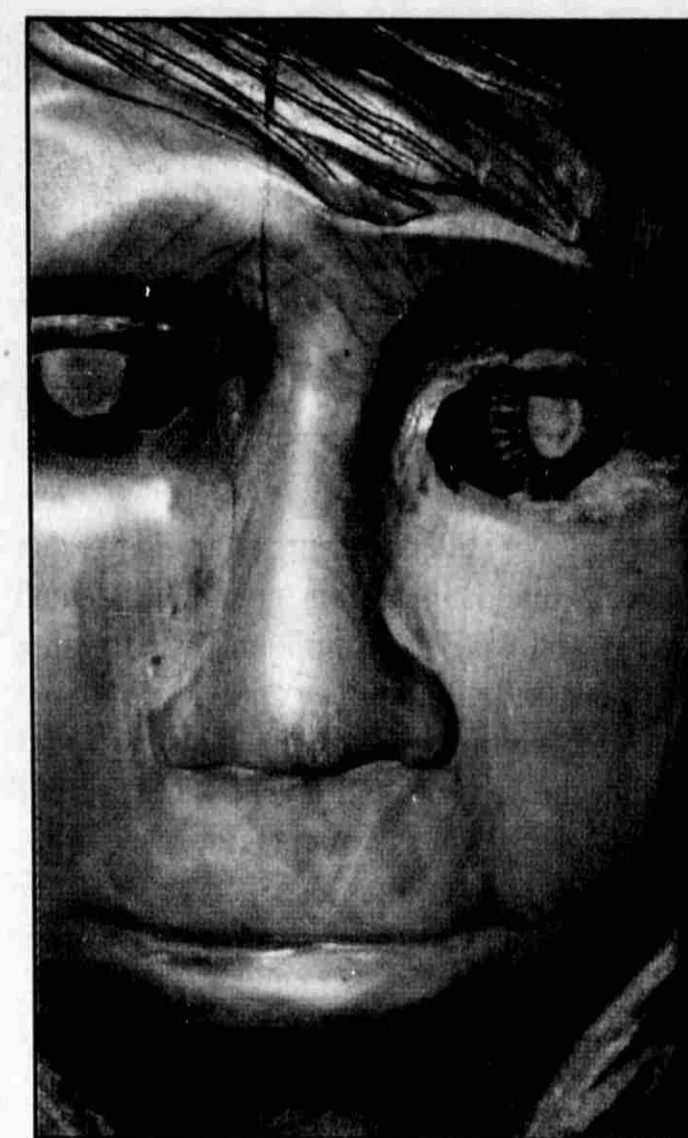
Eppinga calls the evolution process feeding on time. That was the case with the oversized head. Many years ago, when Eppinga lived in Yellowstone, his friend had an Indian head on display in a local gallery for \$35,000.

That head continued to fascinate Eppinga over the years until he recently created his very own giant head which happened to resemble his daughter, "Untitled."

He started out as an artist sketching landscapes, fast contour drawings and moved to cattle marker paintings, a sort of an oil pastel. What really contributed to Eppinga's evolution as an artist surprisingly enough was working in a silk screen factory. "I had that factory mindset that you have to complete a project," he said.

And although Eppinga still has a few unfinished pieces surrounding him, he finishes them with the tenacity of a metal worker.

His work is now on display at the Riverwalk Gallery under the common theme, "Pieces I've been feeding off this year." The exhibit also includes a mysterious carving of a crow-eating plant.



As a power carver, Jack Eppinga uses random orbit grinders and a chain saw. Eppinga is the featured artist at the Riverwalk. He carved this oversized cherry wood head of his daughter Maddie.



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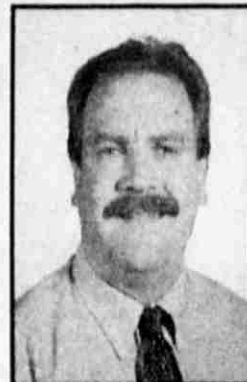
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Sharing The Vision

With Mark Lessens
Board of Education President

Happy Holidays from Lowell Area Schools to you and your families! With the recent time change back to Eastern Standard Time and as winter begins to take hold of our area, we realize that we have to turn the lights on in our home for longer periods of time each day, and the furnace seems to run constantly! Of course, this also applies to our school

buildings. However, at Lowell Area Schools we have taken steps to help conserve our natural resources by reducing our consumption of electricity, natural gas and water. We have also replaced or added equipment and controls, as needed, to become more efficient. LAS decided to do this for two reasons: 1) it is the right thing to do for the environment, and 2) we need to be good stewards of taxpayers' money.

Approximately four years ago, LAS entered into a contract with Energy Education, Inc., of Dallas, Texas. As part of this contract, we have employed an energy manager, Mr. Jim White, who has received specialized training, both off-site and on-site, so that the district is more educated and aware of our energy and water consumption. This training includes analyzing our utility bills so we know what we are paying for and are charged the correct rates. It also includes learning more about the systems and layouts of all of our buildings so we can take advantage of energy conservation opportunities. Our custodian staff has also received training in identifying areas where we can conserve and operate more efficiently.

Energy Education personnel also visits our buildings with Mr. White at many different times of the day, including at system start-up, day-time, night-time and on weekends. This provides us with real time information on how the

building lighting and HVAC systems are operating. By using our system controls and sophisticated software provided by Energy Education, we can maximize our savings, while maintaining ideal lighting and conditioned spaces for teaching and learning.

Since the beginning of this contract, LAS has substantially reduced our energy and water usage. This includes:

- A 45 percent reduction in electricity consumption.
- A 33 percent reduction in natural gas consumption.
- A 27 percent reduction in water usage.

These reductions in consumption have allowed LAS to avoid paying over \$1.8 million for these utilities over the last four years! It is estimated by Energy Education that we will avoid paying nearly \$6.4 million over a 10-year period!

The real heart of this program is people. From Jim White, to our custodians and building principals, to every staff member at LAS, we have all taken the conservation of energy and water seriously. By avoiding these utility costs we have provided more money to be spent where it belongs: in the classroom for teaching and learning. Hey, if you're the last one out, turn off the lights!

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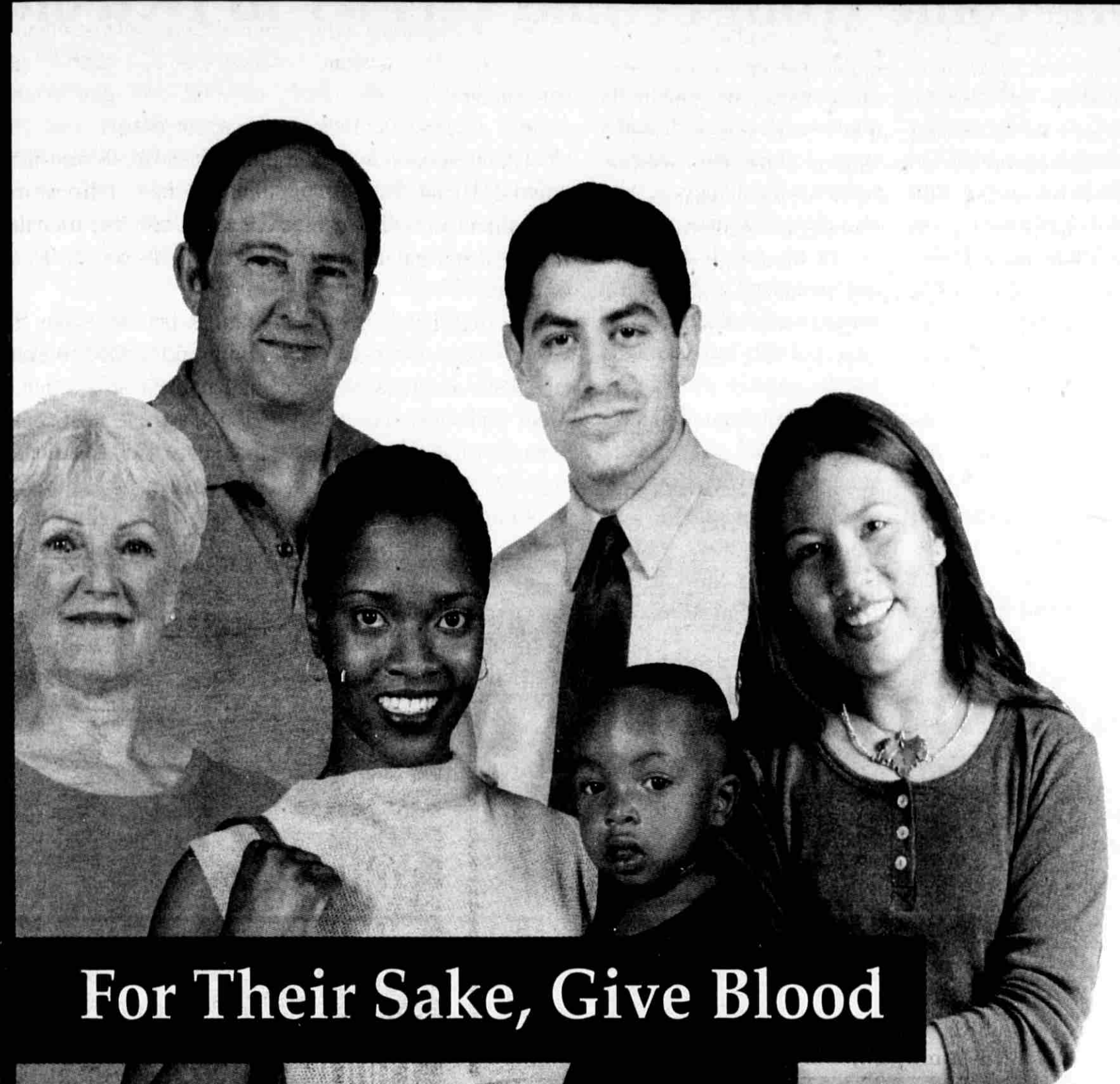
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FOCUS	10,500	\$0	\$699	36	\$1,226
FUSION	10,500	\$0	\$999	36	\$1,546