

The Lowell Ledger

Volume 37 Issue 18

Serving Lowell Area Readers Since 1893

Wednesday, March 12, 2008

Property tax increase brings out residents to appeal - GOP proposes reform

by Emma Palova

An increase in property taxes in a depressed housing market brought out twice as many people to appeal their assessments in front of the board of review in Vergennes Township Monday.

In early March, residents received their yellow or white property tax notices showing skyrocketing property tax assessments, while their

home values have plunged due to the housing crisis.

According to Vergennes Township supervisor Tim Wittenbach, this has not happened since 1994 when Proposal A passed.

Proposal A capped the taxable value used to compute property taxes. Prior to the proposal, property taxes were calculated on state equalized value (SEV). SEV is 50 percent of the market value of a property.

Board of review chairman Jim Herb said assessments should be aligned with the market value of properties.

"Taxes should not go up," said Wittenbach.

But, they did, because the assessments are adjusted to the market value based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

For Betty and Lanny Mitchell, who have been living on Murray Lake



Vergennes Township board of review members Dan Faulkner, Jim Herb and Ken Ford listen to Lanny Mitchell.



House Republicans Glenn Steil, Dave Hildenbrand, Dave Agema and Mike Bender discuss the proposed reform.

Road for the last 40 years, the latest increase equaled \$2,500 more on their tax bill.

The couple came Monday to the board of review to oppose their assessment on seven acres of land, of which most is swamp. They had an independent appraisal done by an insurance company, which showed lower value than what the township had

for the property. Moreover, Mitchell's property is not located on the lake.

"Our taxes have gone up every year," said Betty Mitchell. "They should go down - our house is old. It's not worth what they say it's worth. We want it lowered a little bit."

Robert Guthrie had just moved into his new one-bedroom house with a pole barn on Kazemier

Woods in December. His assessment has been set at \$277,000. Guthrie said it's too high and he would like to have it lowered at least by \$50,000.

"It's not fair, property values shouldn't be increasing," he said.

Roger Odell lives on 350 acres on farmland with old, obsolete barns. He too believes that his taxes are

Property taxes, cont'd., pg. 16

Lowell sees double as Morse and Boss take State championships

by Molly Benningfield
Editor

The Lowell wrestling team saw two of their wrestlers take home the

ultimate prize during the individual State finals this weekend at the Palace of Auburn Hills.

Justin Boss, a senior wrestling at 152 pounds, and

Jackson Morse, a sophomore wrestling at 140, ended this weekend's tough schedule undefeated.

Boss finished with a 29-6 record and his first

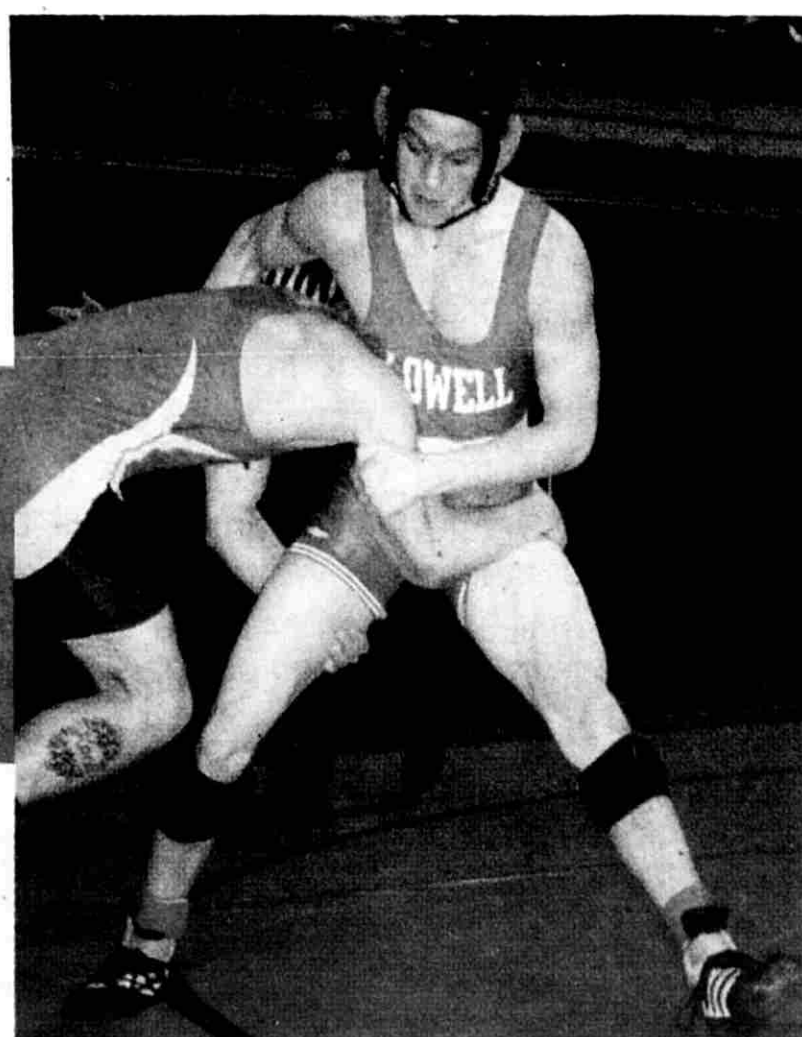
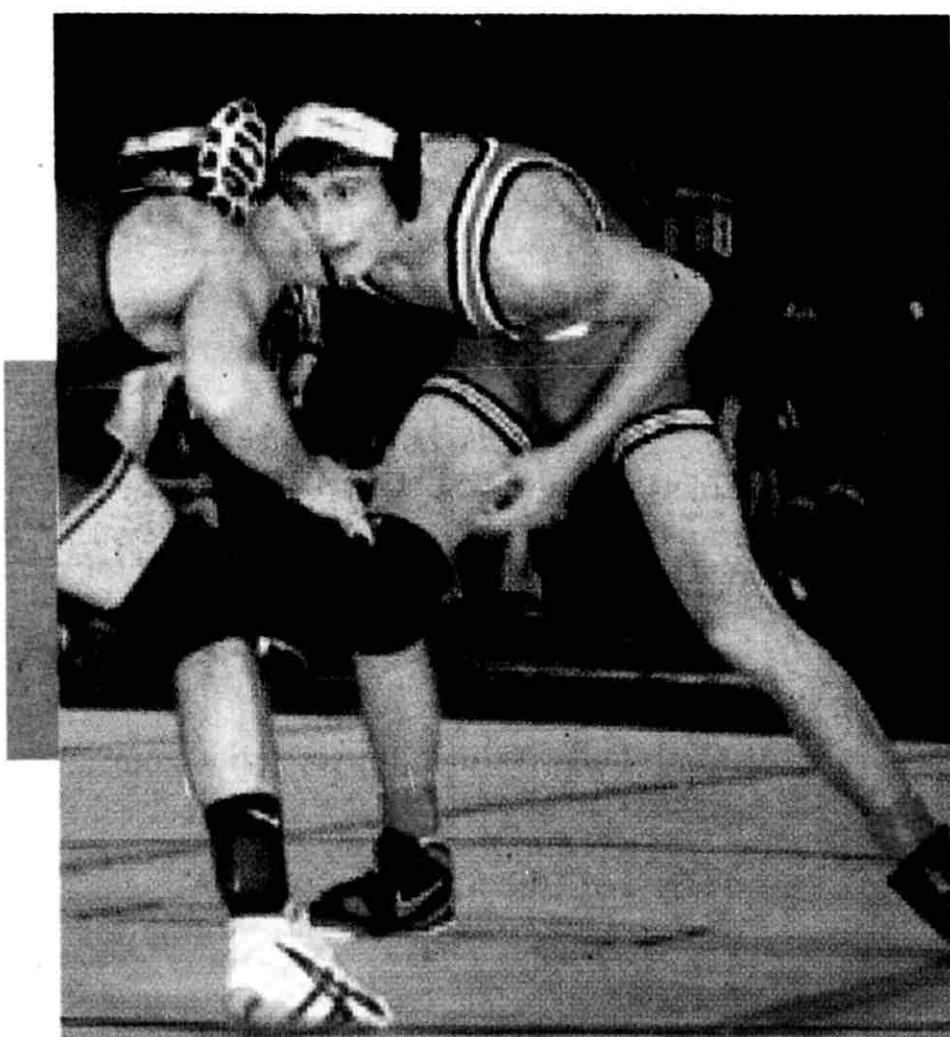
state title. He pinned Jacob Johnson of Dearborn Heights Crestwood in 4:48 during the finals.

Morse finished with a 37-2 record and his first state

title, after taking second in his weight class last year. He beat Brennan Brumley of Warren Woods Tower 11-4 in the championship match. Brumley was undefeated

for the season, with Morse giving him his first loss in 57 matches.

Wrestling, cont'd., pg. 12



Jackson Morse and Justin Boss during state finals last weekend.

Inside
The Lowell Ledger

Behind The Scenes
Pages 8 & 9

Lowell Gymnast
At State
... Page 11

Lowell Area Schools achieve high marks in energy conservation

by Shelly MacNaughton
contributing writer

The Lowell Area Schools Board of Education held its regular meeting Monday night. Jim White reported on district energy efficiency and conservation.

Teachers and staff at Lowell Area Schools are leading the way for other school districts while achieving big savings with energy-efficient behavior. Four years ago, the district formed a strategic alliance with Energy Education Inc., a national energy conservation company. Lowell Area Schools has achieved a 41 percent cost avoidance totaling \$1,916,902 in 48 months since partnering with Energy Education Inc.

"Reaching this level of savings at this stage of the program is a significant achievement. Strong support from Superintendent Greg Pratt and the school board have created an atmosphere of cooperation that should continue to grow and ensure even greater success well into the future," said Dr. William S. Spears, CEO

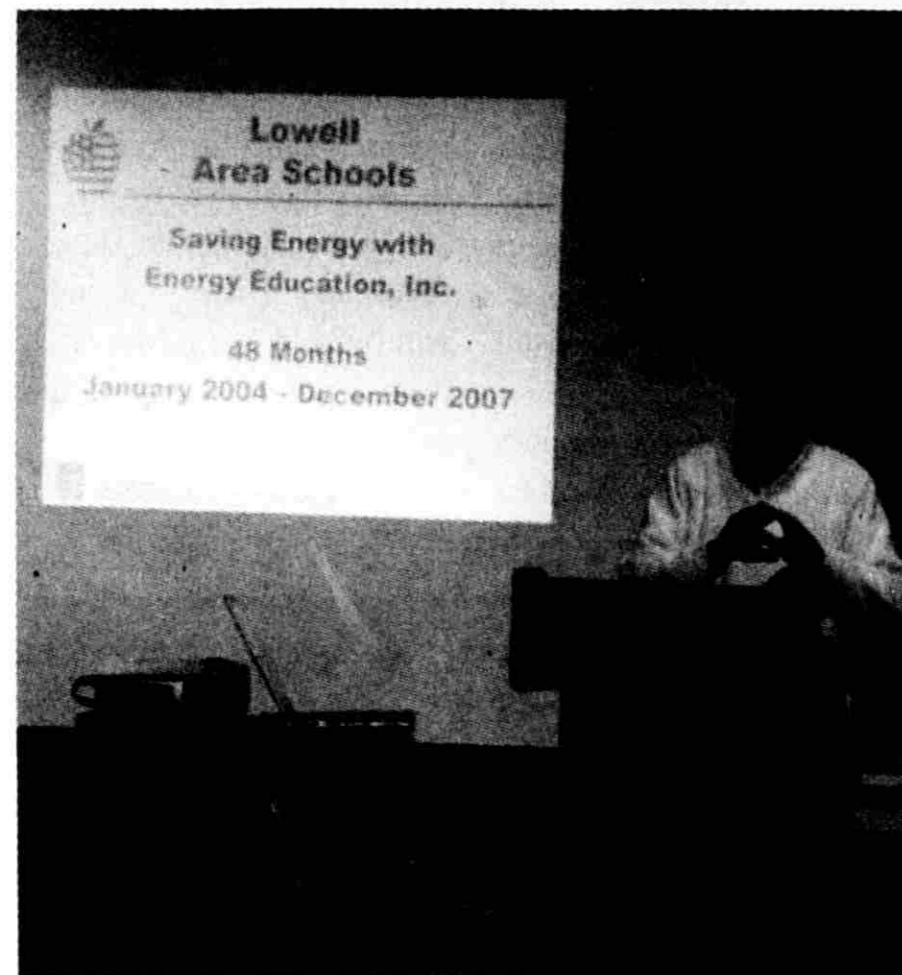
and founder of Energy Education, Inc."

The continued commitment by our staff to save energy is commendable and we will continue to look for additional ways to become more efficient," said Pratt.

As a key part of the program Jim White, retired assistant superintendent and current part-time district energy educator manager, tracks energy consumption, including electricity, water, sewer and natural gas using energy-accounting software.

He works hard to motivate everyone in the district to use energy wisely, conducts energy audits to ensure that students and teachers are comfortable during class time and scheduled activities and ensures that energy is used only as necessary.

"You need to be proud of your entire school district," said White. While Lowell Area Schools has finished the paid contract term of its program and no longer has a financial commitment to Energy Education, Inc., the company's service to the



Jim White reports on district energy savings.

district will continue on an as-needed basis to help ensure that the program continues to achieve considerable cost avoidance.

Tyler Barkacs, a student council representative, reported that students have just finished second trimester exam week. The student council's next big thing will be the blood drive.

"There will not be an alternative Spring Break this

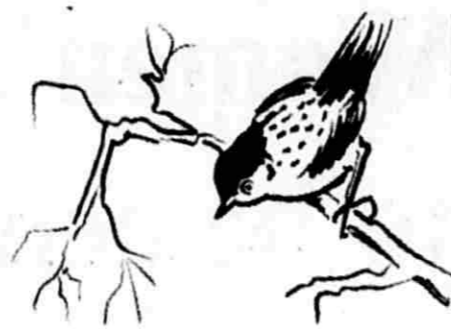
year, we just didn't have the driving force behind it, and the organizations that we spoke to in Mississippi are looking for skilled labor," said Barkacs.

The board approved the purchase of Meal Magic Food Service software and a new work truck for the district. "The new software will be implemented this spring, we will work out kinks so we are off to a fresh start next school year," said Kay Hahn, food service director.

Roger Bearup reported on the Nova Net program that was implemented in the second trimester. It is a credit recovery program for high school students funded by a grant. Bearup reported that four students were able to capture credit through this new initiative. The state of Michigan still has not released to the public the MEAP report. Bearup hopes to speak about the report at the next board meeting.

Outdoors

By Dave Stegehuis



SLIPPING AWAY

In 1955, I was running my trap-line and noticed a number of painted stakes driven into the ground in an abandoned pasture. Within two years, the fields were replaced by asphalt roads lined with closely spaced look-alike houses. It was just the beginning. When I went back years later, I could not recognize the places where I hunted, hiked, and camped out under the stars listening to the drone of clouds of mosquitoes. The two-section area in was under asphalt, concrete, houses, lawns, businesses, and apartments. The kids growing up in that area now have no place to connect with wildlife or natural surroundings. Break out the interactive electronics—let's take a virtual hike.

The current economic slump has tempered the momentum of suburban and rural development, but this will pass, and there will continue to be significant pressure on our remaining open spaces. At the same time, there is, fortunately, a higher level of concern for environmental issues.

It is necessary to monitor land use decisions, especially when public land is involved. The state of Michigan is finishing the task of reviewing state owned property in all counties. Parcels are retained, sold, traded, or bought in order to consolidate holdings. The public has been invited to comment on the recommendations. Large tracts of corporate land are still open for regulated use by the public, although the last few years significant parcels have been sold to buyers who may have an interest in developing the property. Non-profit organizations have secured acreage for public access and habitat protection through conservation easements and purchases.

We need to continue to hold on to desirable public property and purchase additional acreage when possible. An expanding population will demand more space. The difficulty is to balance individual property rights and the requirements for economic expansion with the need for suitable wildlife habitat and public recreation opportunities. We have been fortunate in our area to see steady progress in protecting open spaces, establishing and maintaining parks, natural areas, and trails. This has been possible because of generous donations of property, hard work by concerned citizens, and the cooperation between governmental units.

Establishing public access to natural areas and trails can benefit the physical and mental well-being of residents. Children especially need time in natural settings for a balanced lifestyle and to understand the importance of being good stewards of the land which they can pass on to future generations. Improving the quality of life will also attract new residents and visitors, which will in turn support a growing economy. Because Michigan is known as a premier destination for outdoor recreation, tourism is a major segment of the state's economy. Wise use of our natural resources is critical to our quality of life and economic future. Let's not allow this opportunity to slip away.

When you play, play hard; when you work, don't play at all.

- Theodore Roosevelt (1858 - 1919)

Flat River Outreach Ministries, Inc.

At F.R.O.M. we know that spring cleaning is important, but we think that **SPRING SHOPPING** is even more important!

LOW PRICES AT F.R.O.M.

The Flat River Outreach Ministries THRIFT SHOP/FURNITURE STORE

has an abundance of clothing for the whole family, shoes and slippers in many colors and styles, linens, bedding, towels, etc., stylin' purses, baby equipment, dishes, small appliances, home decorating items and more.

Remember, the purchases you make help feed local families and provide financial assistance in difficult times.

SHOP HOURS:
WEDNESDAY, THURSDAY & FRIDAY: 10 AM TO 6 PM
SATURDAY: 10 AM TO 4 PM
CALL: 897-8567
We are staffed entirely by volunteers

We want Other Family Doctor.

- Sick or Injured Animals Seen Same Day
- Evenings & Saturday Hours Available
- Early Drop-offs & House Calls
- 24-Hour Emergency Service
- Science Diet Pet Foods
- Boarding & Grooming

Dr. Peter Langlois, D.V.M.

ANIMAL HOSPITAL OF LOWELL

Call 897-8484
11610 East Fulton Street • Lowell, Michigan

Viewpoint

To The Editor

To The Editor,

Every other Monday, my father goes for an infusion treatment for a glycogen storage disease he was born with. These days are very long and tiring for him and may soon go to weekly visits. I too get tired, as taking care of a parent is a big journey. I try to do my best for him, which is very important to me. We have a routine on treatment days, after getting him settled and his equipment set up, I head to McDonald's for his breakfast. This week was no different than any other treatment week, except my kids were home sick so I was trying to get home to them as soon as possible. I went to the McDonald's on Leonard in Grand Rapids near treatment as usual and ordered the "usual", Egg McMuffin with regular bacon and a cappuccino for dad and a soda for myself. Only this day was different. I went to the first window to pay for our breakfast and the guy at the window started talking to me about when someone does something nice for you. I thought he was telling me a joke or something. He continued by telling me the lady in the car ahead of me paid for my breakfast. She had a cup of coffee and said she would like to get my tab as well and drove off. Now, I certainly had the money to pay for the breakfast I am sure she knew that. What I am sure she didn't know is what the gesture that morning would stand for me. She had no idea that on the days that I sometimes feel I am giving so much of myself, she took a moment to give to me out of the kindness in her heart. I was very overwhelmed! I guess that is why they call it "pay it forward".

Becky Smith

To The Editor,

A recent comment on how boring a "Sound Off" was and that there had to be only one person writing all that. First you have to understand that the Ledger asked the

Protecting American Consumers

With Senator Carl Levin

March began with National Consumer Protection Week, and in the Senate we took a long overdue step forward to protect consumers from unsafe products. We passed the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) Reform Act, a measure we began working on following widespread recalls of consumer products last year.

As a grandfather and consumer, I am appalled at the lack of resources and enforcement authority of the CPSC and its inability to adequately protect our children, our food supply and the general public from harmful or contaminated products.

The CPSC Reform Act would address the issues that undermined confidence in product safety following recalls of items including millions of toys. It would ban lead in children's products and institute safety measures to protect our children and grandchildren from unsafe products.

This bill would prevent the importation of potentially deadly products by improving information sharing and increasing the number of employees to monitor our nation's ports. And it would protect whistleblowers and increase penalties for those who violate safety measures.

The CPSC Reform Act would also improve the effectiveness of recalls by giving the Consumer Product Safety Commission greater authority to order recalls, by banning the sale of recalled products, and by creating an Internet database of product safety information.

Consumer product safety is an important aspect of consumer protection, but there are other areas that we are

public for comments on a subject. I believe the comment "One person writing all" is nothing more than a cynical and cheap shot that the Ledger would allow that to happen. I would like also to comment on a recent two-hour "Coffee with the Council" meeting that I attended. My question to the council was why has there been a proposal for a lease of the property on North Washington St. to be added to the Boy Scout Lease??? Why a lease when preservation has been the No. 1 agenda in the community??? I was told that the Boy Scouts represent Lowell. Could that answer along with a lease be used to bypass the preservation of the property on North Washington St.??? After two years of confutation and aggravation over preservation, why didn't the council have a straw poll taken??? Will the constituents of Lowell be denied preservation??? I believe the community is tired of being shackled by a city council that's only agenda is being the decider.

Jim Howard

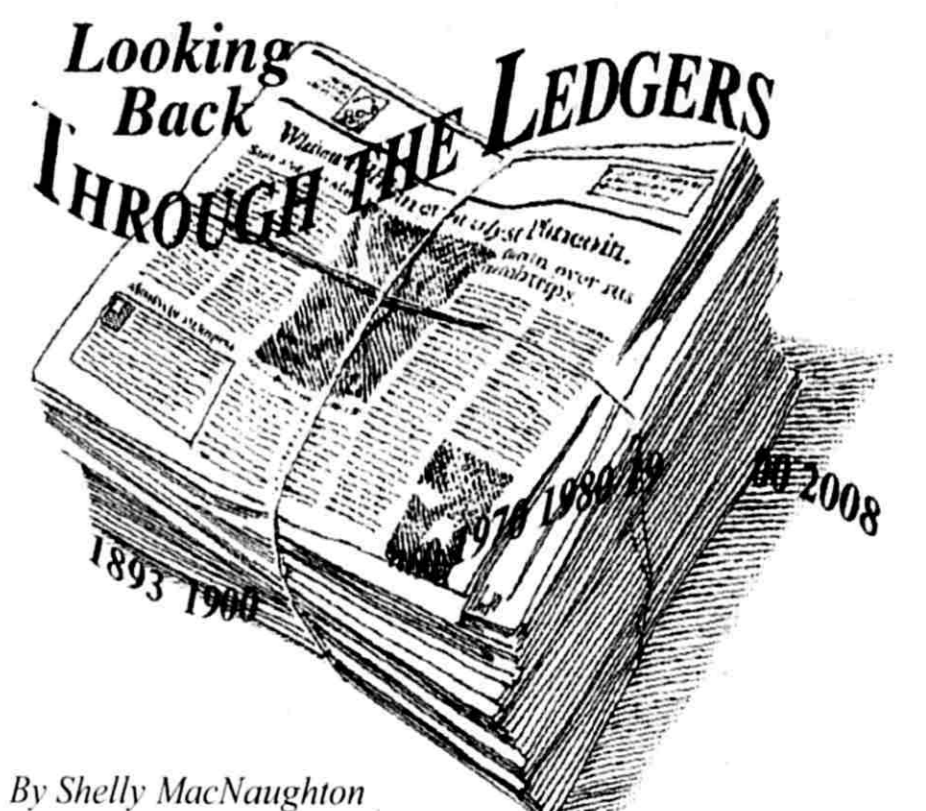
To The Editor,

We have had several accounts with Lowell Light & Power over the past 19 years, from cable and high-speed Internet at our home to electric accounts on three separate houses in the city. During these 19 years, we have never missed a payment and were once late by 15 minutes, and charged a \$5 late fee.

I overlooked an \$8.74 electric charge on our home on Lafayette and was sent a "shut-off notice" with a \$10.17 late charge. I realize that consumers were sent a letter warning of these exorbitant late charges and I guess I will have to pay the ridiculous fee. But I do not appreciate being treated like a deadbeat.

I can only hope that the Lowell Light & Power goes the way of their cable and sells to Consumers Energy. Even though they are a monopoly, they certainly treat their customers with much more dignity than our hometown power source.

Sincerely, Melinda Cosgrove



By Shelly MacNaughton

125 YEARS AGO THE LOWELL JOURNAL MARCH 14, 1883

Who will be Lowell's next supervisor? Time to look around and bring out candidates.

Mr. Edson English of South Boston is in very poor health. He was born in 1801 and his life has been one of activities and good deeds.

100 YEARS AGO THE LOWELL LEDGER MARCH 12, 1908

Work on the building for the Muskegon Carving and Art Furniture Company began Monday morning with nine or ten men engaged.

The Lowell Lumber Company and Archie Lewis have the contract and it is expected that the work will be completed in three weeks and ready for the machinery. The present Parks building will be raised eight feet and a ground story of cement blocks will be built under it.

75 YEARS AGO THE LOWELL LEDGER AND ALTO SOLO MARCH 16, 1933

Headline: L. H. S. graduates leading all others
The scholastic records made by the graduates of Lowell High School in the higher institutions of learning during the first semester are very gratifying. We find that the following percents of marks were earned: A's 10 percent, B's 43.3 percent, C's 36.7 percent, D's 10 percent. The normal curve for students at college is as follows: A's 5 percent, B's 20 percent, C's 50 percent, D's 20 percent, E's 5 percent. It will be observed that the averages obtained by the Lowell students is much higher than the general average.

50 YEARS AGO THE LOWELL LEDGER MARCH 13, 1908

Headline: Lowell's bid for city fails by 21 votes; will vote again on different boundaries

In a record turnout of 640 voters from the village and 125 from the proposed annexed portions of Lowell and Vergennes Township, the city proposition was turned down by a vote of 393 to 372.

Mrs. Lila Thaler's first grade class enjoyed a trip to the post office last Friday. Before going there, each pupil wrote a letter to Miss Marion Bushnell, a first grade teacher who is in the hospital. Most of the children felt the most exciting part was watching the canceling machine.

25 YEARS AGO THE GRAND VALLEY LEDGER MARCH 16, 1983

John Pasanen, of 990 N. Hudson, was awakened about 1 a.m. Saturday by the sound of a nearby crash. A short time later, Lowell Police Officers knocked at his door to tell him that his garage had been knocked off it's foundation and smashed in on the north side when a pickup driven by Michael Wright went out of control.



- MARIE PETERSON

She gets a kick out of her job as a theater assistant manager

by Emma Palova

Posing by a poster with Owen Wills, the assistant manager at Ada Lowell 5, Marie Peterson chuckles about her favorite actor and her job.

It all started out as a joke eight years ago, when Peterson, a stay-at-home mom, applied for the job and got it, right out of the blue.

"I love the job and I love the staff," she said. "We're such a team. It's family-oriented."

Peterson loves that the movie theater is right in town and that she knows

everyone who comes in. As an added bonus, she gets to see all the movies.

"My favorite is 'Wedding Crashers,'" she said.

For Peterson and a team of five managers, the job is super fun every day. Every fall and spring, the launch of new movies is accompanied by different activities.

Right now, the theater is working with ranger Steve Mueller on a presentation about beekeeping to tie into the movie, "Bee Movie."

"Our goal is that everyone enjoys their experience," said Peterson.



Position: Assistant manager
Residence: Lowell
Education: Lowell High School
Experience: Movie theater, eight years
Family: Husband, Jim, children Alyshia, Jayme, Grant
Hobbies: Running kids around, loved dating husband, watching kids

Sometimes the occasion may be face painting or firemen coming with fire trucks before the matinees.

Along with people's habits, the movie-viewing business has also changed tremendously, according to Peterson.

"We've lowered the ticket prices to keep us competitive," said Peterson. "And we have coupons for concessions."

Even though the staff gets very busy on Friday nights, they always project a professional image.

"We get very busy on Friday nights, but the staff steps right up," said Peterson. "We want our customers to come back."

And customers do come back. There are five houses in the cinema, two houses have Dolby surround system, three have DTS, a

system that runs on discs like CDs.

"We're not a digital theater," said Peterson.

However, the future five-year plan means going all digital to improve the quality of movie viewing.

"We want to keep the hometown feeling, while bringing people in from the surrounding areas," said Peterson. "We want them to come in with a smile."



Marie Peterson, assistant manager at Ada Lowell 5, wants people to come in with a smile on their face.

VERGENNES TOWNSHIP PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that a public hearing before the Vergennes Township Planning Commission will be held on **Monday, March 31, 2008 at 7:00 PM, at the Vergennes Township Hall, located at 10381 Bailey Drive, Lowell, MI** to consider the following proposed private road extension application:

Hidden Acre Development Co. Inc is requesting to extend the existing private road within Alden Nash West development to the north into the additional 3 acres they are purchasing. There will be 5 new lots served by the private road extension. The 3 acres is adjacent to the Alden Nash West housing development on the north side off Alden Nash Ave north of Foreman, rear property area of 681 Alden Nash and just south of the high school's east driveway. The additional property will meet all development restrictions of the Alden Nash West housing development.

The complete application can be reviewed at the Vergennes Township Hall, 10381 Bailey Drive, PO Box 208, Lowell, MI 49331 - Phone: (616) 897-5671 [fax 897-5674]. Written and oral comments will be received until the conclusion of the public hearing. Written comments may be addressed to the Planning Commission Chairman or the Planning Coordinator at the Township Offices. Comments may be emailed to the Planning Commission at: zoning@vergennewtp.org.

Vergennes Township Planning Commission

CITY OF LOWELL PUBLIC NOTICE

The Lowell City Council will conduct a public hearing at their regularly scheduled meeting of Monday, April 7, 2008 at 7:30 p.m. at the City Council Chambers, Lowell City Hall, Second Floor, 301 East Main Street, Lowell, Michigan for the purpose of receiving comments from the public on the following:

An Ordinance to Amend Section 20.07.B.2 and Section 20.07.E of Chapter 20, "Signs" of "Appendix A - Zoning Ordinance" of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Lowell.

Copies of the proposed Ordinance are available for public inspection during normal business hours at City Hall and the Englehardt Public Library.

Interested persons may submit written comments to City Hall, 301 East Main Street, Lowell, MI 49331 prior to the meeting or appear in person.



Betty R. Morlock
City Clerk

At Your Local Library

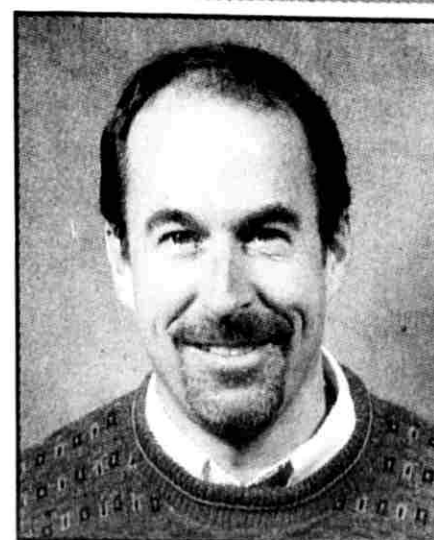


EXPLORE WITH DORA AND DIEGO

If your child loves Dora and Diego from "Dora the Explorer", don't miss this opportunity to go wild with crafts, games and other character-related fun at the Kent District Library. This program is best for children ages six and under. The Dora and Diego fun will be held at:

Englehardt Branch on Thursday, March 27 at 10:30 a.m. Alto Branch on Monday, April 15 at 10:30 a.m. For more information visit www.kdll.org.

Business Matters



Greenridge Realty announced that Kim Schwacha received Realtor of the Month in February.

This award recognizes Schwacha for his outstanding success and achievements.



- KEVIN SMITH



Curtis Cleaners owner stays up to speed with latest methods

by Emma Palova

Back behind the counter at Curtis Cleaners, it's hot even on a frigid day in early March. Neatly - pressed dresses and suits ready to go hang on the conveyors in the model clean facility.

The team prides itself in several awards from the International Fabric Care Association.

Owner of 30 years, Kevin Smith is prepping a wedding dress for a two-round cleaning job. He first has to remove the stains by pre-spotting the bottom of the dress. The dress will get steam-cleaned by hand and pressed.

"The stain removal technique is the art of dry cleaning," Smith says.

The other art is staying current with fast-paced environmentally friendly regulations set by different agencies.

Most recently, Curtis Cleaners has added a wet cleaning process to adhere to the new regulations. Unlike dry cleaning, which uses solvents, wet cleaning uses water and chemicals in special machines.

"Wet cleaning is environmentally friendly," said Smith. "If you can machine wash cold or dry clean, we will wet clean it."

And Smith, who started in the laundromat business, enjoys the everyday challenge of restoring clothes to their new condition.

"Does the team at the cleaners have fun?" one might ask.

Absolutely. Nothing is more fun than cleaning mascots like the Riverwalk Duck, the Easter bunny or Chester Cheetos costume. And of course running around wearing the mascot

heads, and scaring co-workers.

"It's a challenge to clean them," he said. "It's done by hand with a pin point steam gun."

An Elvis costume to clean was a challenge, as well as fun.

"We just play around," said Smith.

Well, not all the time. Smith strives to put out high quality finished products every day in the morning when he comes to work. He likes to be viewed as a co-worker rather than a boss by his employees in a friendly atmosphere.

Among his peer business owners, he is known as a knowledgeable person in his own profession.

"Our credentials are over and above in the same industry," he said. "I want us

to be the best. It's good for the business."

Even in hard economic times, the business continues to grow, thanks to attention to detail and quality.

"We're staying current on new methods and up-to-date with equipment, quality and service," said Smith.

Over the years the business has changed along with the environmental regulations and with more environmentally friendly fabrics and different dyes.

The business has diversified itself by selling equipment and training other dry cleaners with

Smith's partner John Curtis. Since 2005, Curtis Cleaners has held the Award of Excellence from the International Fabric Association.

"We will continue to grow as there will be less dry cleaners," said Smith.

Position: Co-owner of Curtis Cleaners
Residence: Cascade
Education: Grand Rapids Community College
Experience: 30 years of dry cleaning
Family: Wife Helen, children Jonathan, Jennifer, Jodi, Dustin
Hobbies: Nascar and Corvettes



Kevin Smith pre-spots the bottom of a wedding dress.

College News

University officials have announced that the following students received Academic Honors for the semester that ended in Dec. 2007 at Ferris State University and Kendall College of Art and Design:

From Ada: Deborah Anderson, Allison Bedi, Jason Butts, Jill Donabauer, Tyler Flory, Jill Geenop, Lindsey Kicz, Kristie Kurth, Sarah Lockwood, Kari Searls, Alyssa Spielmaker, Lindsey Taber, Tricia Trombly, Sharon Turner, and Paul Kolososki.

From Alto: Matthew Beresford, Thomas Forsberg, Kari King, and Judith Mendez.

From Lowell: Audrey Bailey, Theodore Bergin, Melissa Blattner, Tamara Coffey, Corinne Cozzaglio, Jill Egler, Lori Gleason, Mallarie Hiaeshutter, Tyler Hoard, Brittany Huisman, Whitney Jernigan, Andrew Kelly, Michael Kleinpaste, Carlene Lyons, Paul McKay, Eric Mundt, Andrew Nozal, Scott Shattuck, Blake

Spelman, Linda Stretton, Marissa Tawney, and Andrew Vogel.

To be eligible for Academic Honors, undergraduate students must have accumulated at least a 3.5 GPA in no fewer than 12 credit hours of course work at the 100-level or higher during the given semester, while part-time students must have accumulated at least 12 credit hours of graded coursework at the 100-level or higher with a 3.5 semester GPA and a 3.3 cumulative GPA.

We'll be there!

As your local, independent agent, we'll be there the day you come in for a quote...

The day you buy your first home...

The day your first child is born...

The day you need to file a claim.

Through all the changes in your life, we'll be there to make sure your insurance coverage keeps up.

Providing Safe, Sound, Secure,* protection from Auto-Owners Insurance Company.

Auto-Owners Insurance

AIC INSURANCE SERVICES

7275 Bronson SE • 616-676-4000

Building relationships - providing peace of mind

A TRUSTED TRADITION OF AFFORDABLE, PERSONALIZED, AND COMFORTABLE CARE

LIFETIME DENTAL EXCELLENCE

- Professionally Trained, Caring, and Courteous Staff
- State-of-the-Art Procedures, Instruments, and Techniques
- Cosmetic Care: Porcelain Veneers, Bonding, and Whitening
- Mercury-Free Dentistry • Filtered Water Lines
- Orthodontic Care (Braces) • Wisdom Teeth Extraction
- Implants • TMJ (Jaw Pain Therapy)
- Treatment of Periodontal Disease (Latest Non-Surgical Techniques Available)
- Dentures • Partials • Root Canals • Crowns and Bridges
- Emergencies Accepted • Convenient Payment Plans
- Serving the Area Since 1981

TODD GILLAN, DDS, PC
 2186 MAIN STREET • LOWELL
 LOCATED ACROSS FROM ARBYS

WE CORDIALLY INVITE YOU TO CALL
(616) 897-8491

CONVENIENTLY LOCATED IN LOWELL

copyright © 2004 dntread



Financial Focus

With Christopher C. Godbold
Edward Jones
Serving Individuals Investors Since 1871

(ALMOST) EVERYTHING YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT BONDS

In the financial world, stocks tend to get most of the attention. But if you're going to make progress toward your long-term goals, you need to be aware of all types of investments — and bonds can be an important part of your portfolio.

Many people, however, don't fully understand how bonds work. So before you invest in them, familiarize yourself with the "bond basics." Here are a few of them:

- Bonds are "debt" instruments. When you buy shares of stock, you're actually becoming an owner — although one of a great many — of a company. But when you purchase bonds, you are, in effect, loaning money to whomever issues

the bond — a business or the government. If you hold the bond until it matures, you'll get your principal, or "par value," back (provided the issuer doesn't default) and, along the way, you'll receive regular interest payments. A bond's interest rate is known as the "coupon."

- Bond prices will fluctuate. Your bond's interest rate will not change over the life of the bond. However, bonds are subject to "interest rate risk," which means that when interest rates rise, the prices of bonds can decrease, so if you sold your bond before it matured, you could lose some of the value of your principal. For example, suppose you own a \$1,000 bond that pays a 4 percent interest rate. If new bonds are issued at 5 percent, no one will pay you the full \$1,000 for your 4 percent bond, so if you wish to sell, you will have to offer it at a discount. Conversely, if market rates fall to 3 percent, your 4 percent bond will become highly desirable, so you could sell it for more than the \$1,000 par value.

- Different bonds have different "ratings." If you buy a corporate bond, you can choose between investment-grade bonds — those receiving the higher "grades" issued by rating agencies such as Moody's and Standard & Poors — and

"junk" bonds — those getting the lowest grades. Higher-quality bonds carry less risk of default but pay a lower interest rate than "junk" bonds, which must offer higher rates to attract investors who may be worried about default risk. Generally speaking, you're probably better off by sticking with investment-grade bonds and staying away from the "junk."

- Some bonds can be "called." A callable bond is a bond that can be redeemed — or "called" — by the issuer before its maturity. If interest rates have declined since the bond was issued, companies can call bonds and reissue them at the lower, prevailing interest rate, thereby saving money on interest payments. As an investor, this could be cause for concern, because if your bond is called and you want to reinvest the proceeds in another bond, you'll likely have to accept a lower coupon rate. Consequently, you may want to look for a bond that offers "call protection" — a guarantee that the bond can't be called before a certain time.

To determine if bonds are appropriate for your individual situation — and, if so, what type of bonds — see your financial advisor. By adding bonds to your portfolio, you may well give yourself a broader platform for success.

Red Arrow SPORTS

"SHE NOW IS A ROCK AND A MATURE YOUNG LADY WHO HAD GREAT SPORTSMANSHIP ON SATURDAY."

- Coach Skye Fisher

Richelle Kimble receives 8.6 on vault at State finals

by Molly Benningfield
Editor

Richelle Kimble, a junior on the Lowell gymnastics team, finished her season Saturday morning with a half-full on the vault,

a technique she learned for the finals.

"She ended with a half-full, which was impressive as she just learned it last week," gymnastics coach Skye Fisher said of Kimble's performance.

Kimble didn't medal, but was in the top half of the 59 vault competitors, Fisher said. She received a score of 8.6, as she had at the regional finals. Kimble had scored in the Top 6 to move her on to state finals.

The season for Kimble proved to be one dedicated to her hard work and strong will. In August, she broke her femur (the bone in her upper leg).

"She couldn't feel the nerve in her leg," Fisher said. "We didn't even know if she would be competing. They had to build her a special brace, which she wore for the first part of the season."

Fisher said Kimble has also grown a lot, both as a gymnast and a person.

"Richelle was my freshman who had good scores, but was not consistent," Fisher said. "She used to come apart under pressure. She now

is a rock and a mature young lady who had great sportsmanship on Saturday, by cheering all the other girls that were in our region on."

Fisher, who traveled with Kimble to Canton High School Saturday for the finals along with Kelsey Teft, a teammate and friend, said the experience was "such a bonding moment."

At the beginning of the season, Fisher said of Kimble, "She is very strong all around." Kimble had a strong season, excelling in not only vault, but all apparatuses.

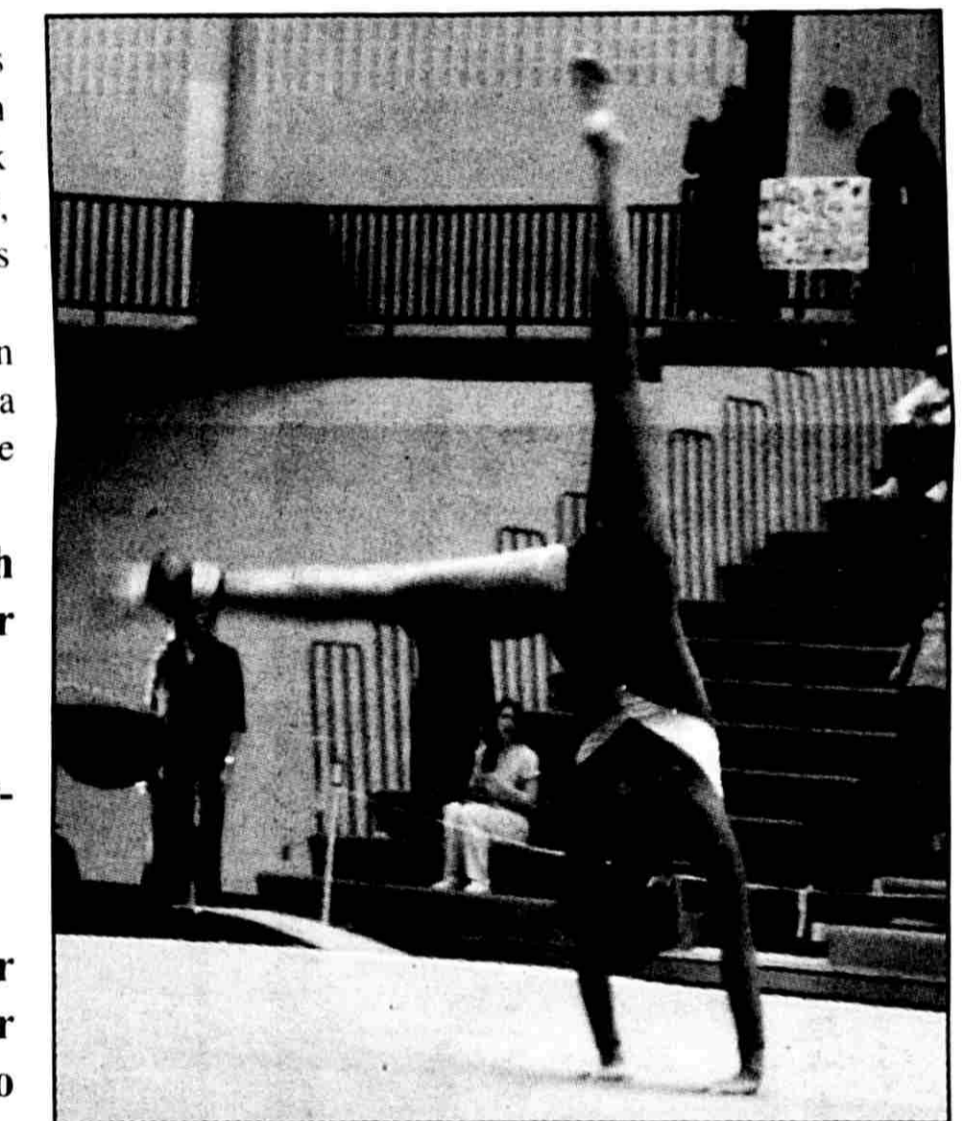
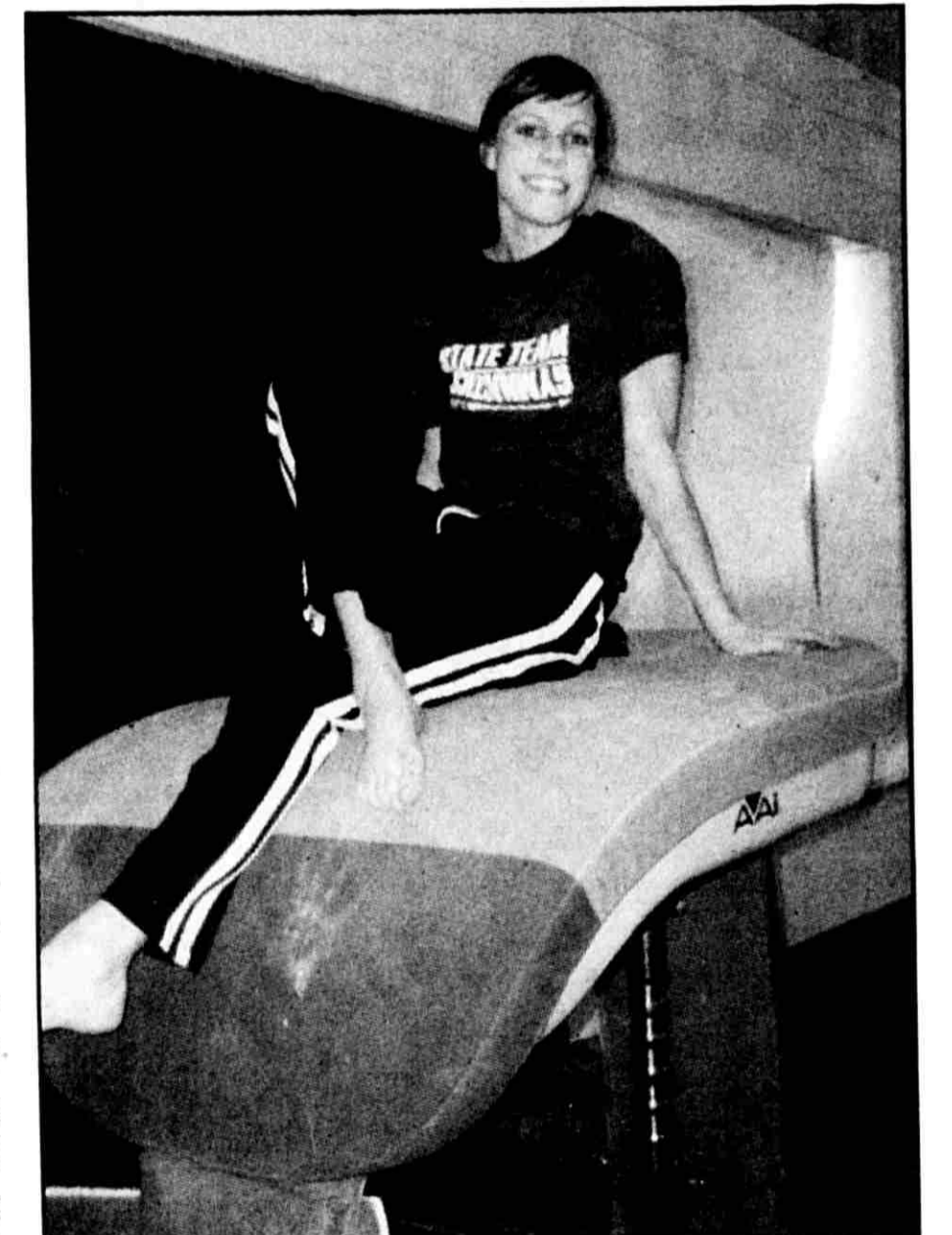
At the St. Johns Invitational early in February, Kimble took second place in the vault, floor and uneven bars, as well as in all-around.

Kimble will return to the team next year as a senior. Fisher said it will be "a good year."

(Top Left): Richelle Kimble at Canton High School for State finals with coach Skye Fisher and teammate Kelsey Teft.

(Top right): Kimble on the vault after Saturday's finals.

(Bottom right): Kimble performs on floor during the individual regional finals, where her vault performance landed her in the Top 6 to go to State.



THE BENNING-FIELDER



by molly benningfield
sports editor

Should the sports schedule change to four seasons?

It's a topic that has been discussed to great lengths, but with no exact outcome showing. The need for a change in high school sports seasons is one that will go on for a while, by the looks of it.

According to the Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA) Web site, there needs to be some sort of change so that schools and kids will not "become the losers."

With the change of seasons implemented this year, many sports have suffered in participation, media coverage and fan support. One of the most visual examples of this was the move of girls' basketball to the winter season, resulting in two basketball teams playing at the same time.

The MHSAA and school administrators and coaches from Michigan are currently deciding how to improve the existing calendar.

The Grand Rapids Press said the best plan right now is a four-season model, with the start dates overlapping currently-playing sports. Season 1 would include the current fall sports, as well as volleyball (like this year) and gymnastics. Season 2 would feature girls' basketball, wrestling, skiing, bowling and hockey, and begin the second week of November. Season 3, then, would have boys' basketball, boys' swimming and competitive cheer, starting in mid-December. Season 4, which would include the traditional spring sports, starts in late March.

That was exhausting just writing it out and then thinking about it. It's hard to imagine all that going on, but it could work.

What I'm wondering, is what the general public — the people who are playing the sports, watching the sports and driving their sons and daughters to the events — is thinking. How do you think it would work out?

I think it's a good idea to be in discussion about how to improve the sports schedule. There needs to be a change to make it all fair. Is four seasons the best idea?

Write in and let me know. You can send your thoughts in by e-mail, at ledger@lowellbuyersguide.com or regular post, at P.O. Box 128, 105 N. Broadway, Lowell, MI 49331.

BUSINESSES SERVICES

TO ADVERTISE IN THE LEDGER BUSINESS DIRECTORY Call 897-9261

MIKA MEYERS BECKETT & JONES PLC
ATTORNEYS
John T. Sperla
Mark A. Kehoe
Ross A. Leisman
Benjamin A. Zainca
Heidi A. Lyon
Matthew E. Fink
Neil P. Jansen
307-A E. Main Street
Lowell, Michigan 49331
(616) 897-3111 www.mmbjlaw.com

Quality Car Wash & Lube Center Express
QUICK LUBE • LASER WASH/DOG WASH
CAR DETAILING CENTER
11729 E. Fulton • Lowell • 897-2700
FREE CAR WASH WITH EVERY OIL CHANGE
Locally Owned & Operated

Rich's Service Co.
In-Home Appliance Repair
INSURED • 20 YEARS EXPERIENCE
WASHERS • DRYERS • REFRIGERATORS
GARBAGE DISPOSALS • STOVES • DISHWASHERS
209 E. Main St. RICH CURTIS
Lowell, MI 49331 (616) 897-5686

Curtis Accounting & Tax Services
209 E. Main St. - Suite A, Lowell, MI
Complete accounting, payroll and tax services
(616) 897-4120 • (616) 262-4873

FRY DADDY'S
608 West Main Street
Lowell, MI 49331
FISH, CHICKEN & SHRIMP
897-FISH
LAKE PERCH BASKET \$7.99
Check Out Our Daily Specials
OPEN TUESDAY - SATURDAY

Certified Garment Care Professional
CURTIS CLEANERS • LAUNDRY
FREE PICKUP & DELIVERY
Lowell • Ada • Cascade
• Ionia • Grand Rapids
2008 AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

KIRK COLLINS Owner
Snowboat
AUTOMOTIVE SUPPLY, INC.
Auto Value
1450 W. Main St., Lowell, MI
(616) 897-9231
HOURS: MON - FRI 8-7; SAT 8-5:30; SUN 9-3

BILL WHEELER
Certified Public Accountant
W.J. WHEELER MICHIGAN
103 Riverside Dr.
Lowell, Michigan
49331
616-897-7711

MARCH SPECIAL
20% OFF
WINTER COATS & JACKETS
DRYCLEANING ONLY
(616) 897-9809 • 1410 W. Main • Lowell

Good
CHEVROLET BUICK
GREAT DEALS FROM GOOD PEOPLE!
897-9294
goodautomotive.com

Looking for attractive tax-free bonds?
Sign up for our FREE recorded Bond alerts!
Recorded alerts can be via phone or e-mail.
Visit www.bondalerts.signup.com for details or call (616) 942-7680
Centennial Securities Co. LLC
Grand Rapids, MI MEMBER FINRA/SIPC

PEBBLE BEACH APARTMENTS
✓ 1 & 2 BEDROOMS
✓ GAS AND WATER INCLUDED
✓ CARPORT INCLUDED
✓ LAKEFRONT
✓ 24-HR. MAINTENANCE
✓ A GREAT PLACE FOR SENIORS
AFFORDABLE, QUIET, SAFE & CLEAN
1112 Bowes Rd., Lowell, MI
www.pebblebeachapts.com • 616-897-6880

VENTS
AIR DUCT CLEANING
Breathe Easy...Breathe Free
Bill Hatchett • Owner
Office (616) 897-7777
Toll Free 866-4MYVENTS (866-469-8368)
PO Box 212 • Lowell, MI 49331
email: bill@myvents.com
www.myvents.com

A BUSINESS AD THIS SIZE ONLY
\$850 PER WEEK!
Call 897-9261

A CROWN IN ONE VISIT ...SIMPLE!

"If I had known it would be this easy, I wouldn't have put off getting a crown for so long. One visit and it was done. The crown fits and looks great. I have my smile back...simple!"

Family Dentistry of Lowell
- ANN WILSON, D.D.S. -

Tel. 897-4835 • 147 North Center Street • Lowell



NOW ACCEPTING NEW PATIENTS 897-4835

Red Arrow SPORTS

Red Arrow wrestling continues winning ways



Lowell wrestling gets two firsts and two seconds in dominant weekend at the Palace

(Left): Justin Boss was State champ at 152 pounds, Tim Gingerich was State runner-up at 145 pounds, Jackson Morse was State champ at 140 pounds and Ryan Olep was State runner-up at 160 pounds.
(Photo courtesy of Laura Morse)

Justin Boss takes first State title in senior year

Boss finished his season with a 29-6 record and as an individual state champion. Boss wrestled his way to first last weekend at the Palace of Auburn Hills, knocking out four opponents in three days to achieve his first state title.

Boss, a senior, said the moment felt "really good" and was happy to end his senior year with a title.

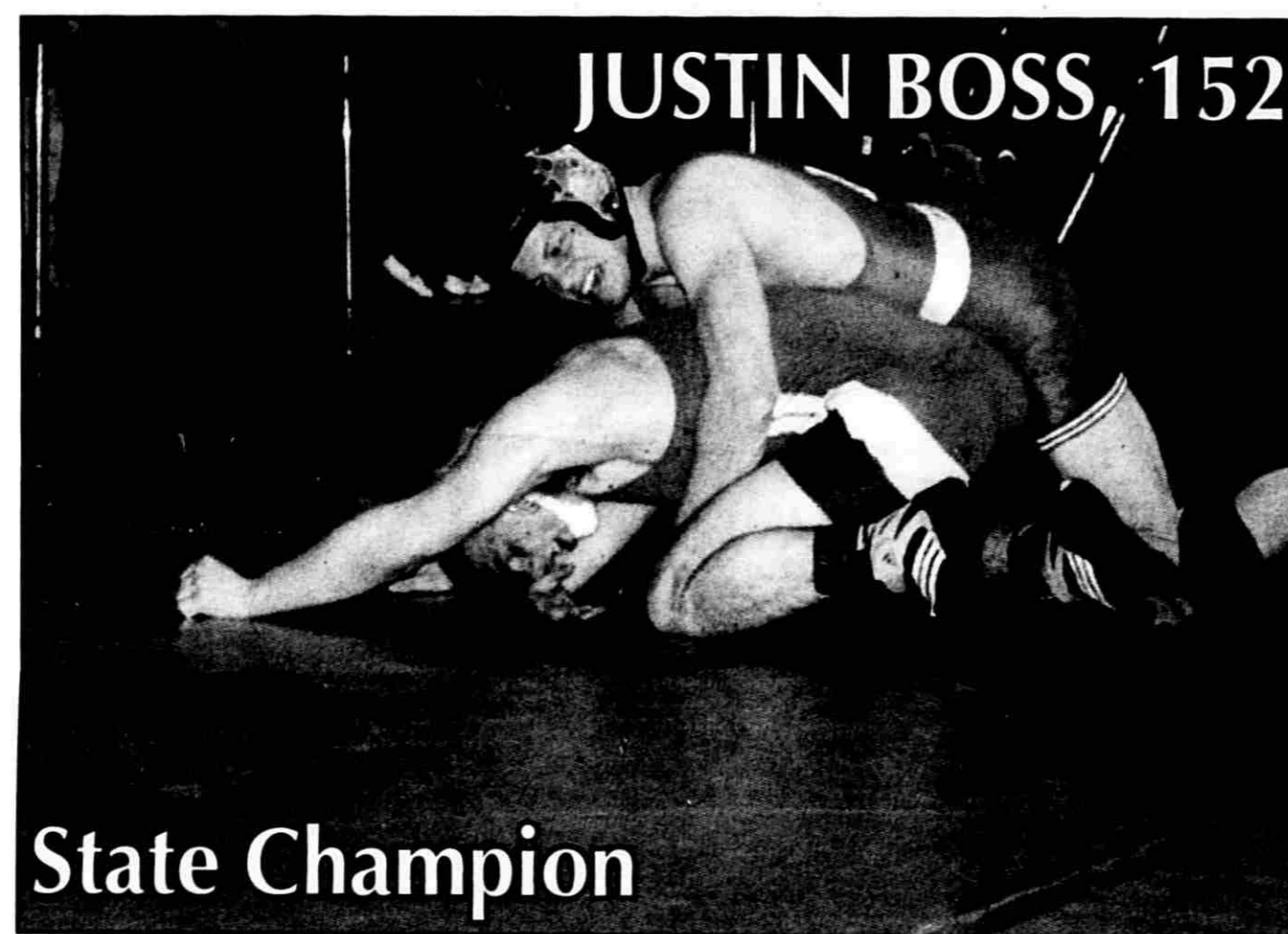
"Oh yeah, it feels great to do that."

In the championship match, Boss defeated Jacob Johnson of Dearborn Heights Crestwood by pinning him in 4 minutes, 48 seconds. In the semifinals, Boss pinned Brian Plummer of Byron Center in 3 minutes, 37 seconds. Boss said his best match of the weekend was "the one that got me into

the finals - that was a good one."

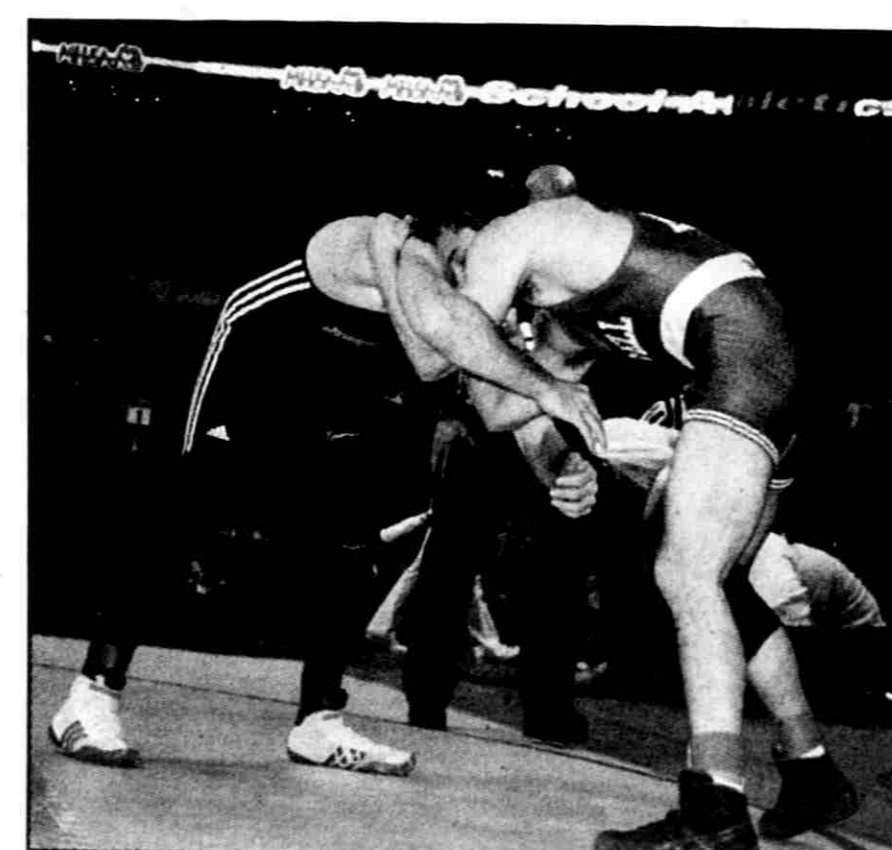
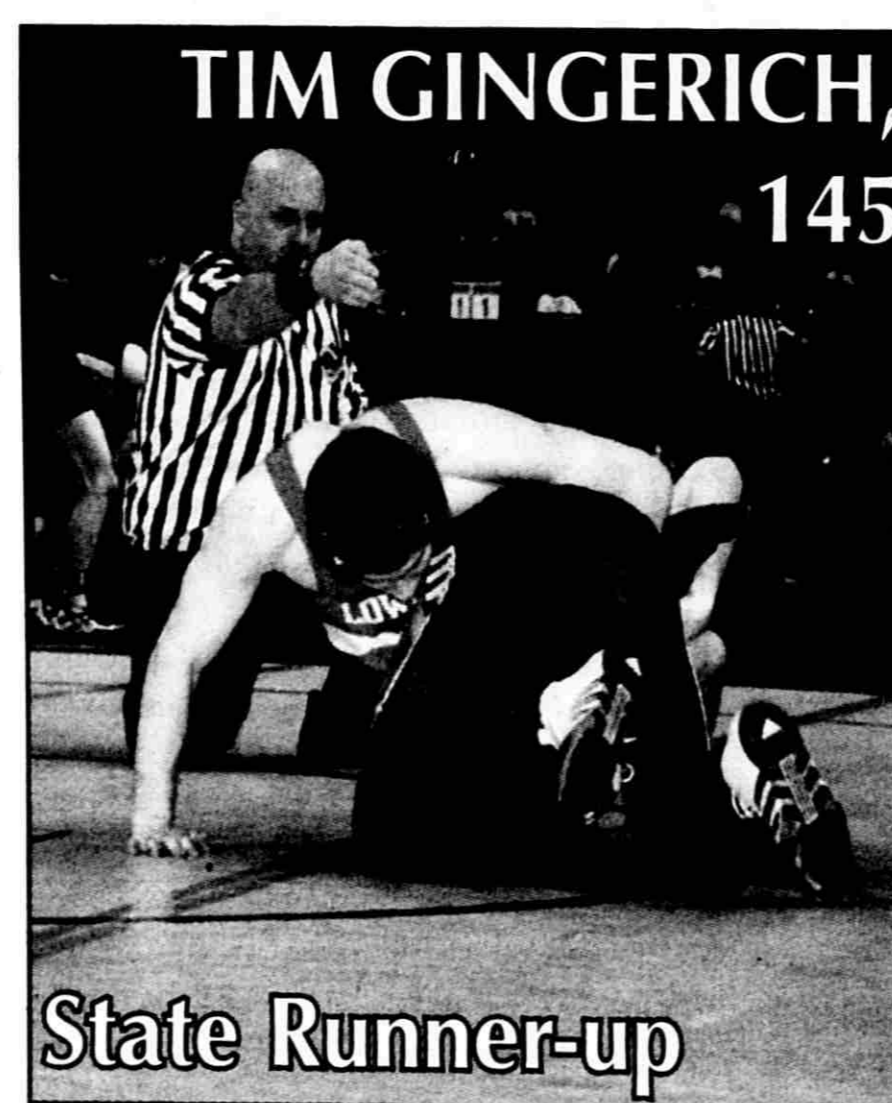
Boss also defeated Chad Koch of New Boston-Huron in a 7-4 decision during the quarterfinals and Derek Horde of Sault Ste. Marie 21-6 in 4 minutes, 26 seconds in the first round.

Boss will attend Grand Valley State University next year, and is unsure whether or not he'll wrestle.



(Left and Top right): Justin Boss wrestles against Chad Koch of New Boston-Huron during the quarterfinals Friday morning.

(Middle and bottom right): Tim Gingerich wrestles against Martin Bell of Eaton Rapids during the quarterfinals Friday morning.



State Runner-up



BOWNE TOWNSHIP
Bowne Township is now accepting Bids for the 2008 Lawn Maintenance Season
Specifications are available at the Township Office.
8240 Alden Nash SE.,
PO Box 35, Alto, MI 49302 or telephone 616 868-6846
Wednesday, Thursday 9-5 or Friday morning 9 a.m. to 12 noon.

Tim Gingerich is second at 145

Gingerich ends his junior year with a 36-7 record and a second place trophy in his weight class. He was defeated in an overtime match by Deven

Brown of Carlton Airport, with a 3-1 decision.

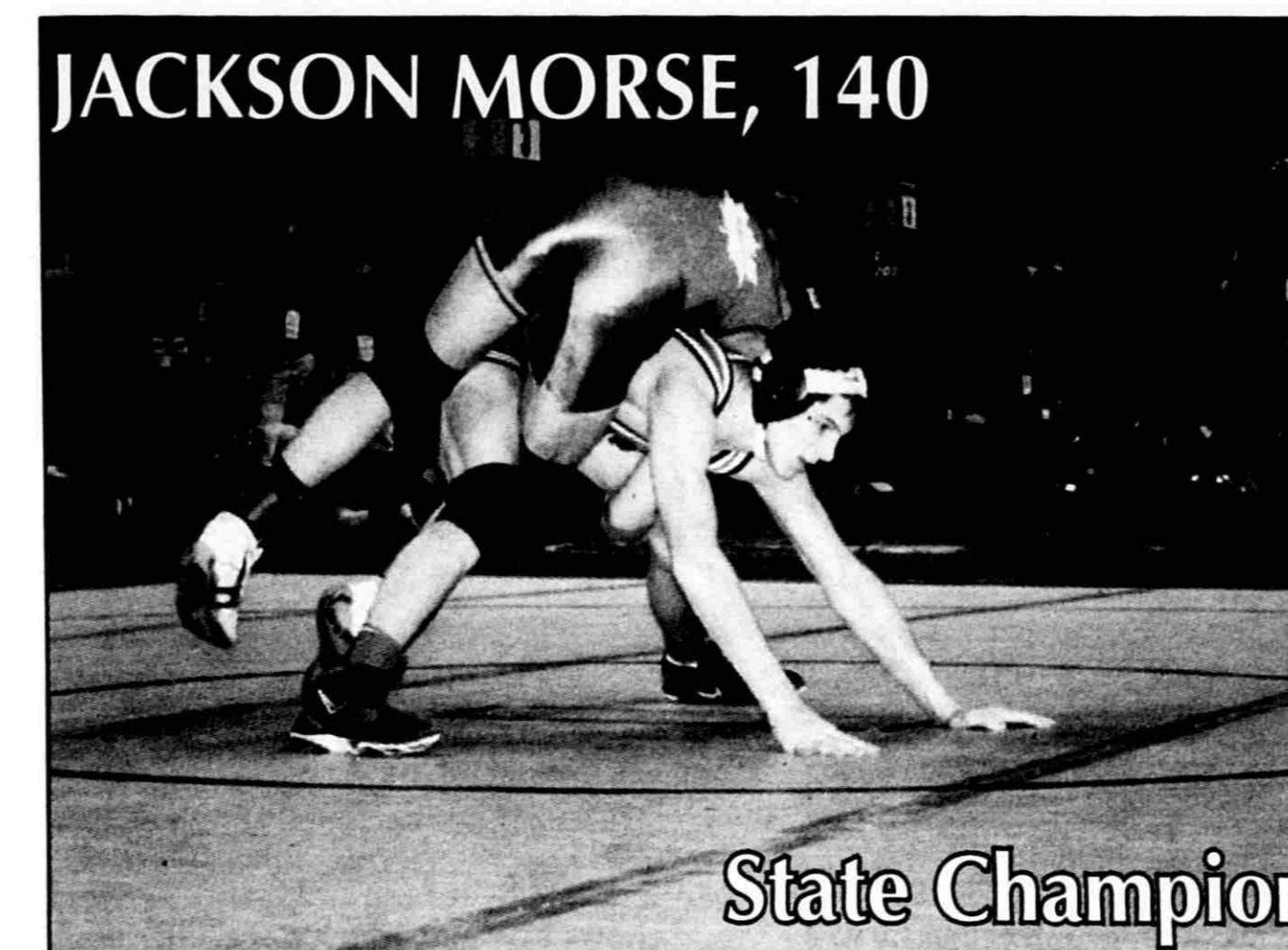
Gingerich wrestled his way to the finals by knocking out three opponents from around the state. In the semifinals, Gingerich defeated Jake Potyraj of Wyoming Park in an 8-1 decision. He defeated Martin Bell of Eaton Rapids in an 8-5 decision in the quarterfinals and Anthony Balmaceda of Warren Fitzgerald 10-2 in the first round.

Gingerich will be back as an Arrow next year for his last season.

FROM: **2%**
Includes MLS
Cut the "fat"
Sell Faster
19 Years experience
www.robertrealty.net
616-363-7900
ROBERT REALTY • DEAL BROKER DIRECT

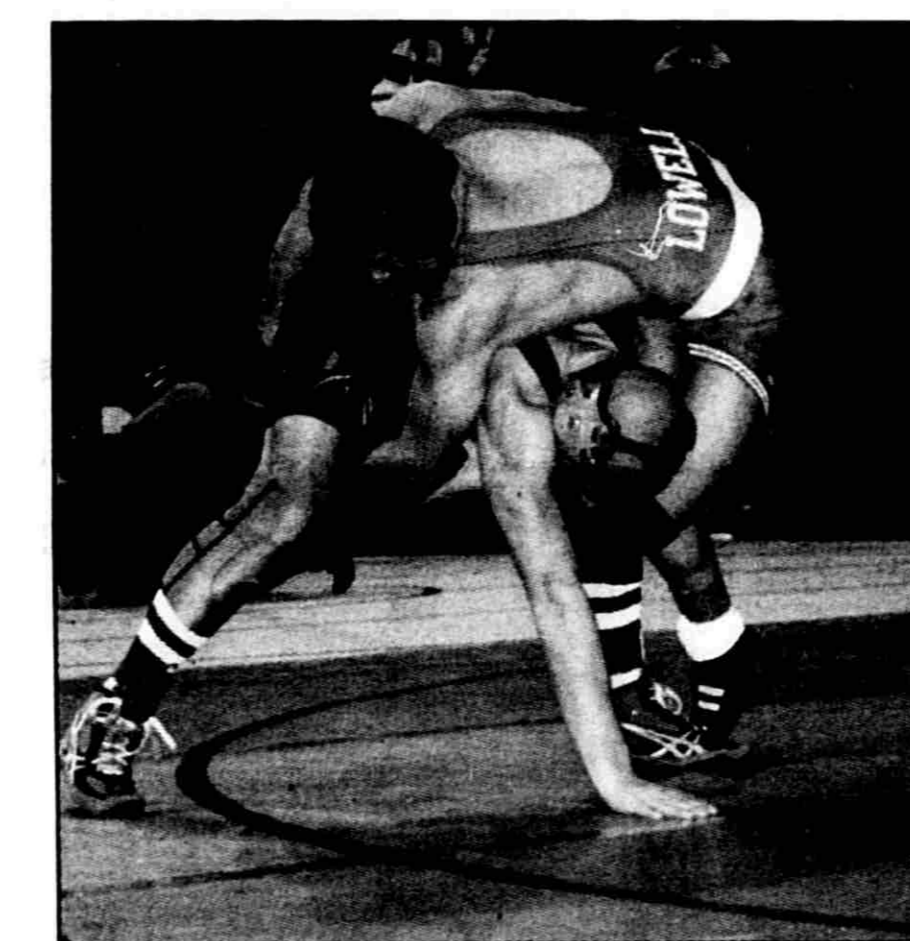
Red Arrow SPORTS

State finals continued ...



JACKSON MORSE, 140

State Champion



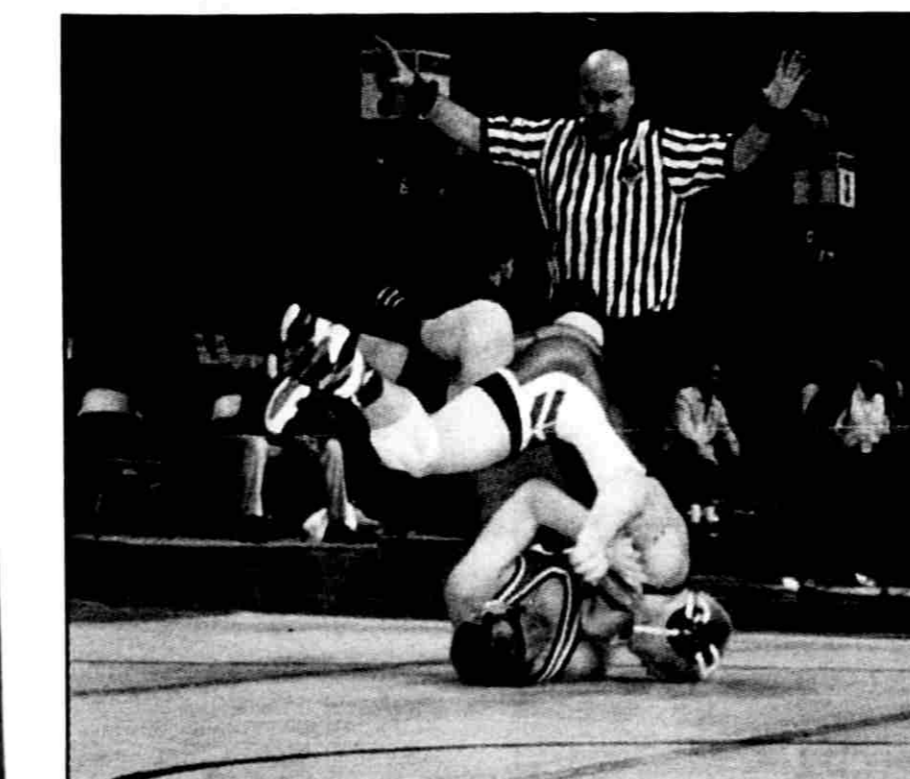
Ryan Olep takes second at 160

Olep ends his year at 39-8 and at second place in his weight class. Olep, a sophomore on the team, was defeated in the final round by Adam Miller of Sparta, in a 1-0 decision.

Olep wrestled his way to the finals by knocking out three opponents from all over the state.

In the semifinals, Olep defeated John Rizgallah of Allegan, in a 5-3 decision. He also took out Larry Cervantes of Allen Park by pinning him in 5 minutes, 51 seconds and Dan Anderson of Mason in the first round, with a 4-0 decision.

Olep has two more years as a Lowell wrestler.



Senior Nate Vaught went 0-2 for the day at 171 pounds, losing in the fourth round of the consolation bracket. He defeated Jimmy Mann of New Boston-Huron by pinning him in 1 minute, 10 seconds. He was defeated by Nick Humes of Stevensville Lakeshore 17-2 in the quarterfinals and Andrew Funsch of Ogemaw Heights by a 7-6 decision in the consolation round.

Jackson Morse is State champ as a sophomore

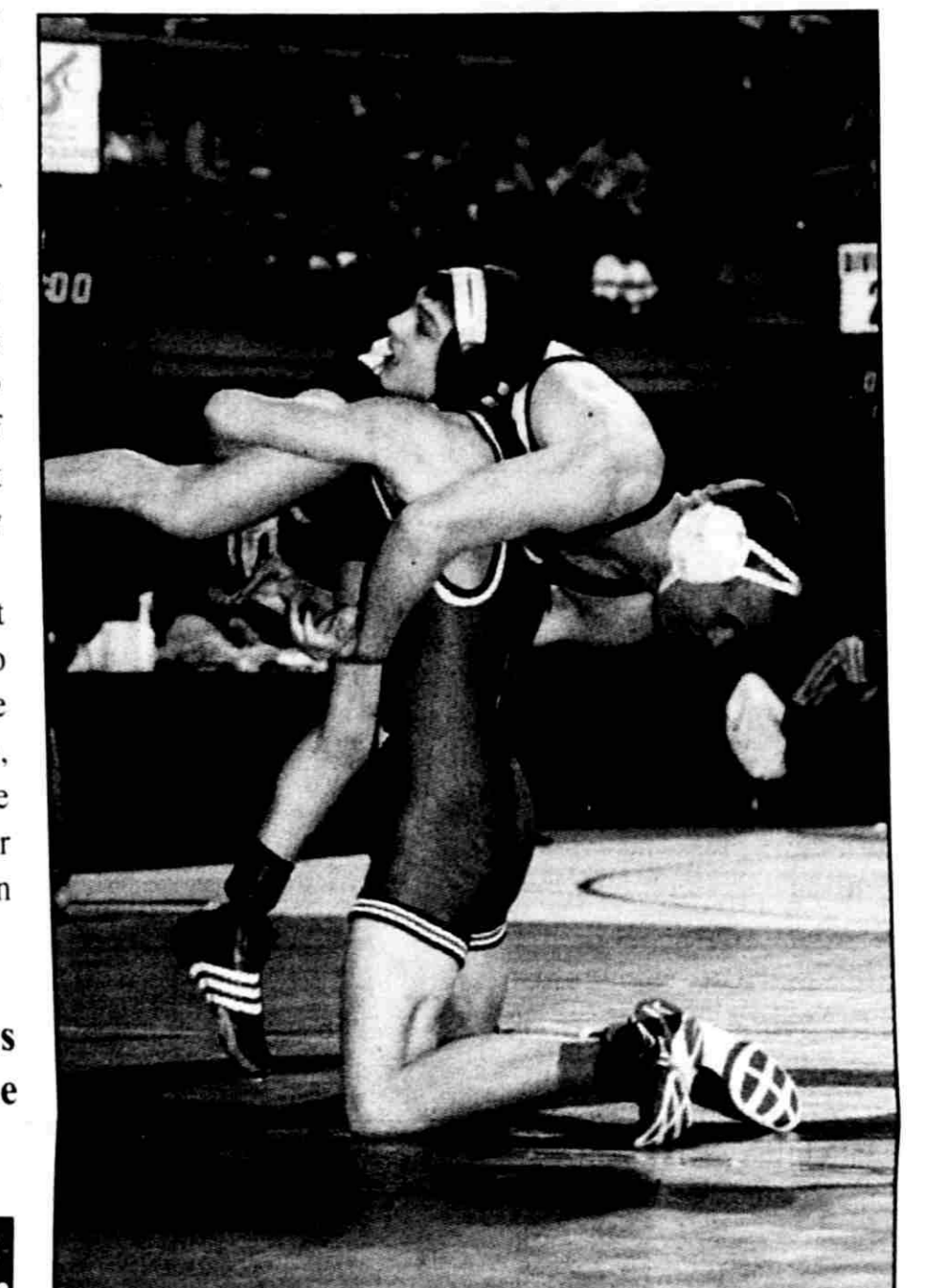
Morse ended his sophomore season as an Arrow with a 37-2 record and an impressive state title in one of the toughest weight divisions. Morse wrestled four opponents in his journey at the Palace this weekend.

Morse said simply of his win, "It feels great."

He defeated Brennan Brumley of Warren Woods Tower in the championship match, by a decision of 11-4. He said that his best wrestling came "definitely at the finals match."

Morse defeated Garrett Rozeboom of Mason, who was the defending state champ at 130 pounds, in a 10-4 decision in the semifinals. Westly Verner of Adrian in a 6-1 decision

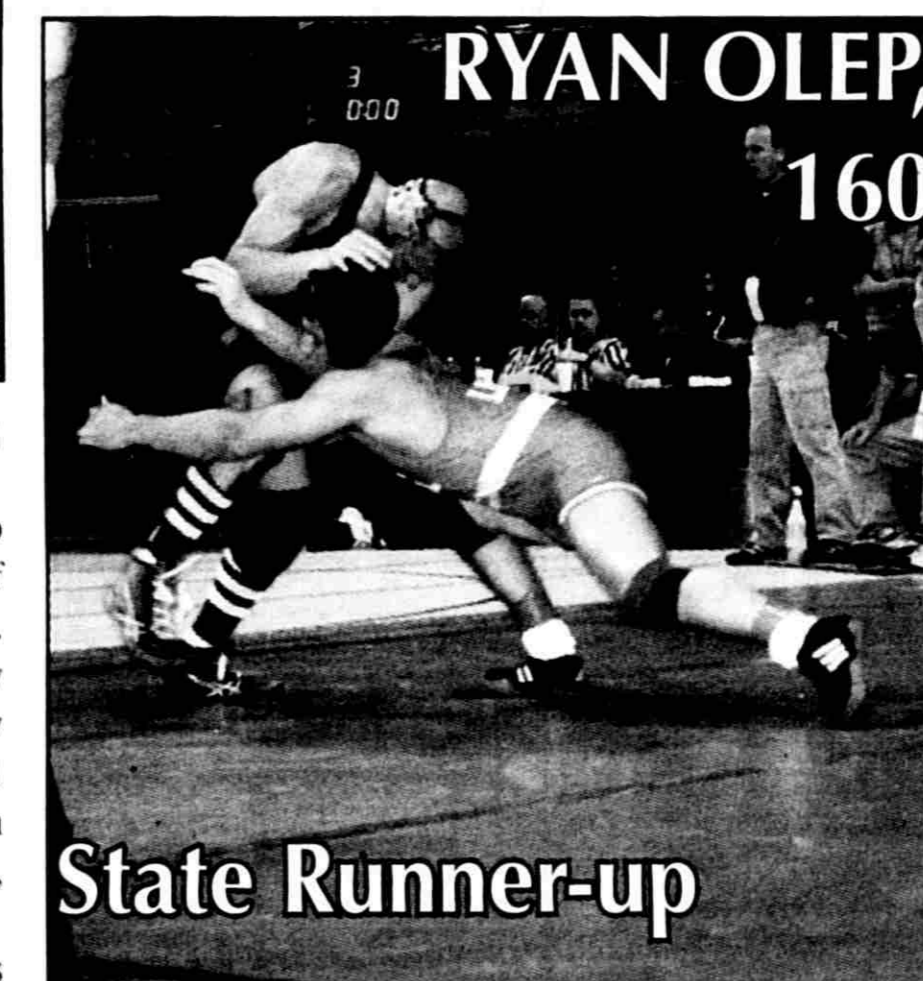
during the quarterfinals, and pinned Sean McCoy of Eaton Rapids in 3 minutes, 26 seconds in the first round. Morse still has two more years on the team, and said that one of his main goals for next year is "to win a team state title."



(Photo by Brett Bremer)

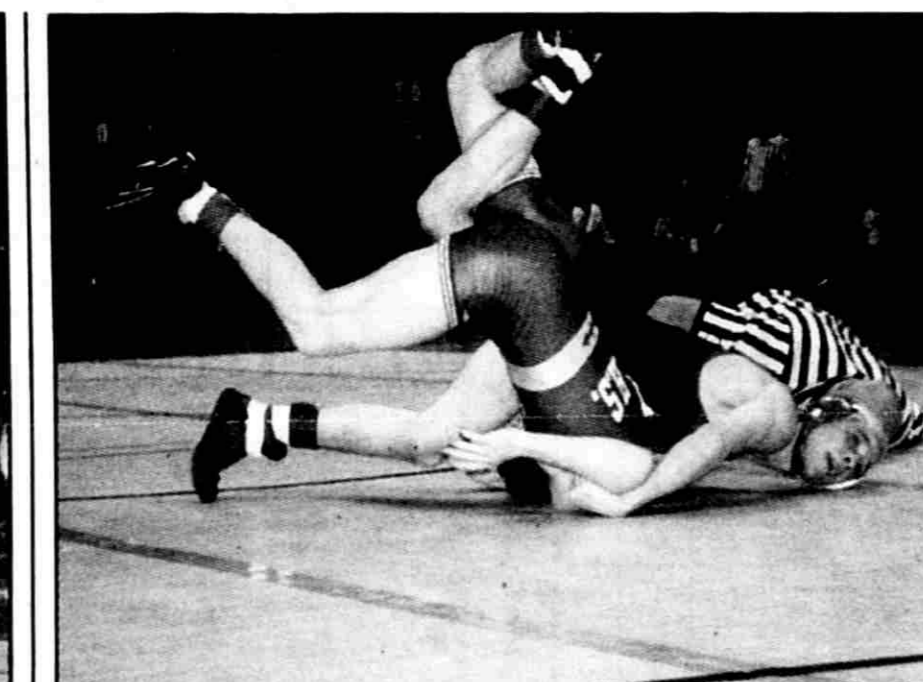
(Left and below): Ryan Olep takes on Larry Cervantes of Allen Park in the quarterfinals Friday morning.

(Top and right): Jackson Morse wrestles against Westly Verner of Adrian during the quarterfinals.



RYAN OLEP, 160

State Runner-up



Senior Zach Baum went 1-2 for the day at 130 pounds, losing in the fourth round of the consolation bracket. He defeated Jimmy Mann of New Boston-Huron by pinning him in 1 minute, 10 seconds. He was defeated by Nick Humes of Stevensville Lakeshore 17-2 in the quarterfinals and Andrew Funsch of Ogemaw Heights by a 7-6 decision in the consolation round.

CITY OF LOWELL
PLANNING COMMISSION - CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE
PUBLIC NOTICE
The City Planning Commission-Citizen Advisory Committee will conduct a public hearing at their regularly scheduled meeting of Monday, March 24, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. at the City Council Chambers, Lowell City Hall, Second Floor, 301 East Main Street, Lowell for the purpose of receiving comments from the public on the following:
An Ordinance to Amend the definitions of the Residential Zoning Districts.
Copies of the proposed Ordinance are available for public inspection during normal business hours at City Hall and Englehardt Public Library.
Interested persons may submit written comments to City Hall, 301 East Main Street, Lowell, MI 49331 prior to the meeting or appear in person.
Betty R. Morlock
City Clerk

Property taxes, continued ... From Page 1

exuberant on the dilapidated buildings. He requested the board of review to bring down the values of the buildings to zero.

"I am arguing about the value of the barns," he said. "The buildings are old."

Odell said the taxpayer is getting squeezed from both ends by higher taxes and lesser values of property.

While the board of reviews listened to appeals, earlier in the morning House Republicans proposed a

reform to help the struggling homeowners at the Home and Builders Association in Grand Rapids.

Presented by Republican Floor Leader Dave Hildenbrand of Lowell, the proposal would prohibit tax increases if a home value decreases.

"If home values go down, taxes cannot go up," he said. "We cannot tax ourselves to prosperity."

The second goal of the proposal is to make the appeals process in front of

the board of reviews easier by expanding their hours and extending the time frame for the appeal.

Currently, many board of reviews meet during the day. In some cases residents have 10 days to appeal their taxes, a short time frame between the mailing of the notices and the meetings.

"This is one of the worst housing markets in the history of the state," said Hildenbrand. "Our reform will help keep at-

risk families in their homes and reduce the overall tax burden."

The plan would ensure that assessments reflect reality by using calculations to determine property values based on current data and to include foreclosures.

"I think it's a step in the right direction," said Odell in response to the GOP reform. "We're all upset."

Wittenbach considered the GOP's proposal to be fair.

Remaining board of reviews:

- City of Lowell March 12 from 9:30 a.m. to noon, 1:30p.m. to 5 p.m. and 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. if necessary.

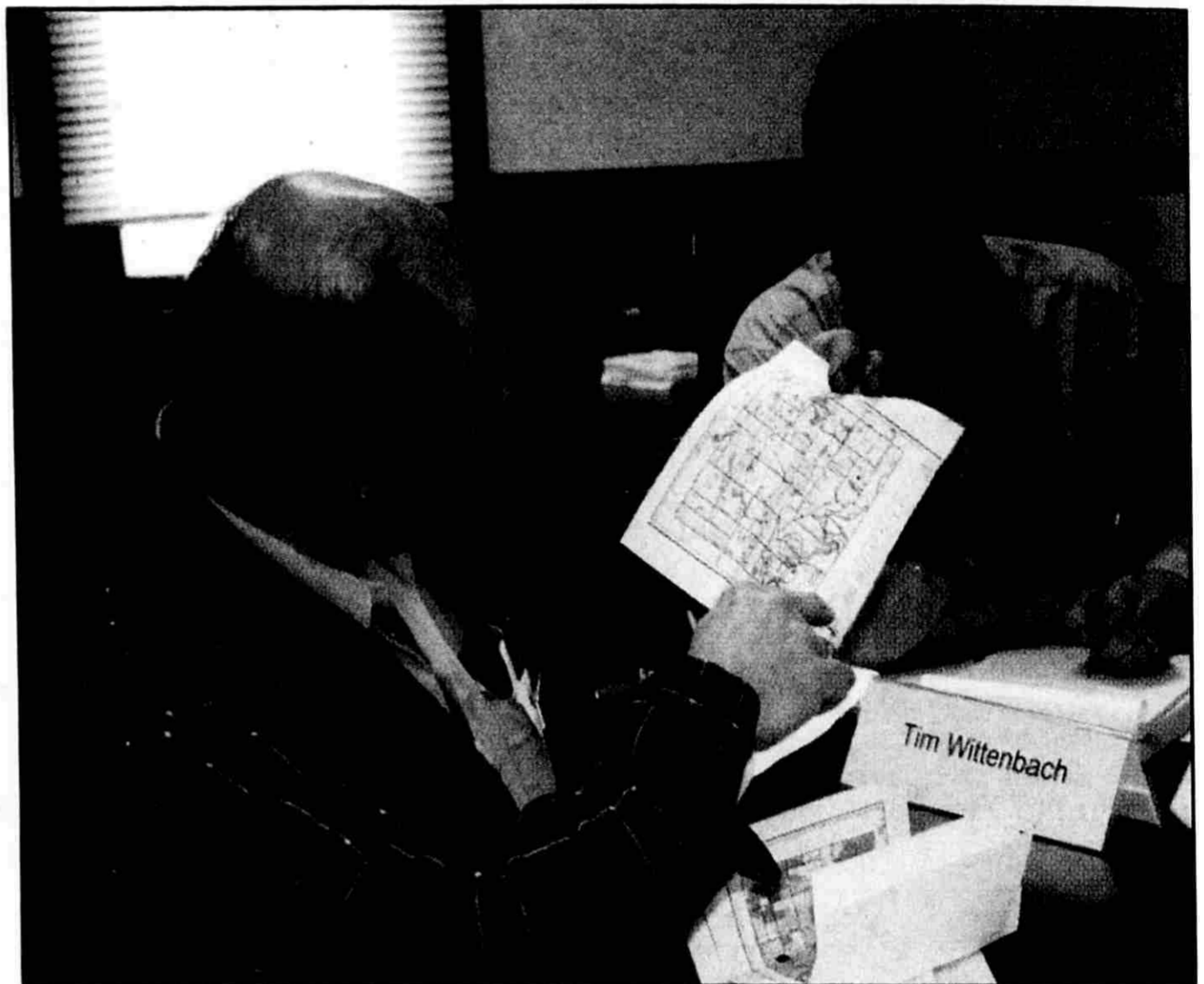
- Lowell Township March 13 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.



WE SHIP UPS!
The Lowell Ledger
105 N. Broadway
897-9261



Arctic Inc.
Heating & Cooling
(616) 897-4123
www.HeatingCoolingOnline.com
info@HeatingCoolingOnline.com
Licensed and insured. Serving the area since 1984



Resident Jeffrey Morgan shows a parcel of wetland while Tim Wittenbach looks on.

Unquestionably, there is progress. The average American now pays out twice as much in taxes as he formerly got in wages.

- H. L. Mencken (1880 - 1956)

Make it Michigan
Great Lakes Great Products Great People



Although Michigan is facing tough economic times, new companies are moving to the state and existing companies are growing and creating new job options. Stand by your state and Make it Michigan - Great Lakes, Great Products and Great People.

Grow your business!

Michigan's
Small Business Advocate
800.946.6829



The Lowell Ledger

Make it Michigan is sponsored by:

ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS

BID PROPOSAL

Sealed bids, in triplicate, for Lowell Area Schools High School & Cherry Creek Renovations, will be received at Lowell Area Schools Administration Building, 300 High Street, Lowell, Michigan on Thursday, March 20, 2008 at 2:00 p.m.

All proposals received (mailed and delivered) will be opened and read publicly shortly after 2:00 p.m. local time in Lowell Area Schools Administration Building Board Conference Room 300 High Street, Lowell, MI.

Bids may be mailed to Lowell Area Schools, 300 High Street, Lowell, Michigan 49331. Mailed bids **must** be received prior to the bid due time and date stated above. **FAXED BIDS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.**

SITE INSPECTION

A construction pre-bid meeting will be held at Lowell High School, 11700 Vergennes, Lowell, MI on Thursday, March 13, 2008 at 3:00 p.m. until 5:00 p.m. local time. The meeting will be held in Room A120 Cafeteria/Commons. All bidders are encouraged to attend.

BID DOCUMENTS

The Bidding Documents may be obtained at Owen-Ames-Kimball Co., 300 Ionia N.W., Grand Rapids, MI. A deposit of \$100.00 is required. The deposit will be refunded if documents are returned within 60 days after bid opening. A non-refundable charge of \$20.00 will be required for mailing documents.

BIDDER QUALIFICATIONS

- Bidders submitting a Bid for this Project shall have qualifications as follows:
- Shall be a reputable, recognized organization, with at least five (5) years successful experience on work of this type and scope of this project.
 - Shall have a license where required by public authorities having jurisdiction.
 - Shall have ample financial resources for work of this magnitude.

BID SECURITY - PERFORMANCE BONDS

Each bid shall be accompanied by good and sufficient bid security or bid bond in an amount not less than 5% of the Bid amount and shall secure the Owner from loss or damage by reason of the withdrawal of the Bid by a Bidder or by failure of the successful Bidder to enter into a Contract with the Owner if his Bid is accepted by the Owner.

The successful Bidder will be required to secure Performance, Labor and Material bonds for all contracts exceeding \$50,000, from a surety company having a rating of A- or better, for the full amount of the Contract.