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The Lowell Ledger

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Wednesday, July 9, 2008

Covered Bridge Bike Tour routes lead through beautiful scenery

by Emma Palova

Trekking from the lovely Fallsburg Covered Bridge along Grand River Drive to the Ada Covered Bridge and back provides for an enjoyable ride.

That is why the 28-mile route is the most popular with families on the annual Covered Bridge bike ride.

"It's flat and good," said Ken Tamke, chairman.

The Fourteenth Annual Covered Bridge Bike Tour will take place this Sunday,

July 13 with registration starting at 7 a.m. through 1 p.m. The registration fee is \$15 per individual or \$25 per family.

"This is our biggest fundraiser for the Fallsburg Historical Society," said Tamke. "This our World Series."

Routes are plentiful to choose from and cover various distances from 12 miles, 28 miles, 40 miles, 50 miles, 62 miles, 78 miles and 100 miles.

The long 100-mile loop ventures down south into Gaines Township, returns to Fallsburg and goes

north into Ionia County and Whites Covered Bridge.

Not too many riders attempt to do the entire 100 miles, but many peddle the southern 50-mile long loop, according to Tamke.

Regardless of the chosen route, the trip is a joyful outdoors experience testing endurance and determination.

"The farther you go, the tougher it gets," said Tamke. "But all routes are on paved roads with scheduled rest stops. Volunteers provide fluids and cookies to boost up energy.

Depending on weather,

the event averages 200 to 240 riders. Many are repeat riders.

"They share our passion for history," said Tamke, "and preserving the village."

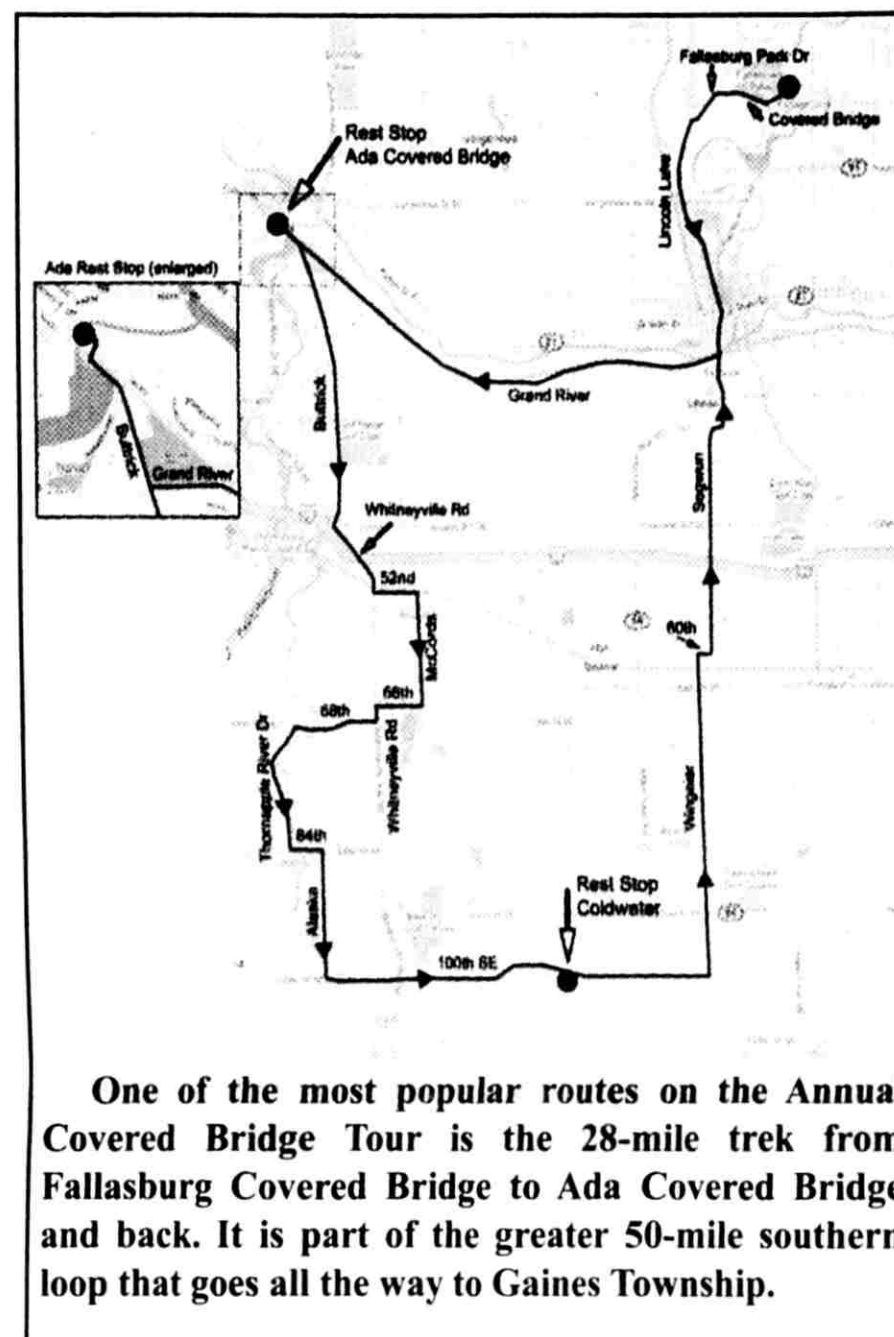
All the proceeds go toward the preservation of the Fallsburg Historical Village.

Each participant gets a self-guided map with designated routes. At the final destination back in the village, riders will get a spaghetti meal.

"I hope all our riders will

have a safe and enjoyable afternoon," said Tamke. "The event has evolved over the years, but it has to be just right."

You can register at www.fallsburg.org or contact fallsburg@yahoo.com.



One of the most popular routes on the Annual Covered Bridge Tour is the 28-mile trek from Fallsburg Covered Bridge to Ada Covered Bridge and back. It is part of the greater 50-mile southern loop that goes all the way to Gaines Township.

Many township elections largely uncontested, but Lowell Township promises to be a good race

by Emma Palova

Although some township elections like Lowell Township are heavily contested due to local issues, many remain

without opponents running against an incumbent slate of candidates in the Aug. 5 primary.

In Grattan Township, the supervisor post is contested. Running against

incumbent supervisor Frank Force is Bill Holmes. Force has been in the office for four years.

Other contested seats are for trustees: Incumbents are Paul Knoerl. Dennis

Heffron and newcomer Jim Vanderploeg. Two seats for a four-year term are open.

Elections, cont'd., pg. 3

Thunderstorms, high winds cause flooding, fallen trees in area

by Molly Benningfield
Editor

Last week's thunderstorms caused many fallen tree limbs and flooding, but power outages

were kept to a minimum, according to Lowell Light & Power general manager Greg Pierce.

"There were some outages, but not many," Pierce said. He said they

received between 75 and 80 phone calls for the outages, and a "vast majority" of the houses had power back on within a half hour.

"There were a couple on the outskirts of town

that didn't get their power until later that night," Pierce said.

Throughout Kent County, many places received up to five inches of rainfall. Downtown Grand

Rapids saw 5.05 inches, according to Wood TV 8, while East Grand Rapids took the highest rainfall with 5.18 inches. The Grand River also rose two feet in Ada and Grand Rapids. Residents in Kent County also saw gusts of wind up to 65 mph, and hail up to 1.25 inches in diameter.

The storms took place on Wednesday, the same night that Lowell Light & Power held a board meeting to discuss tree trimming.

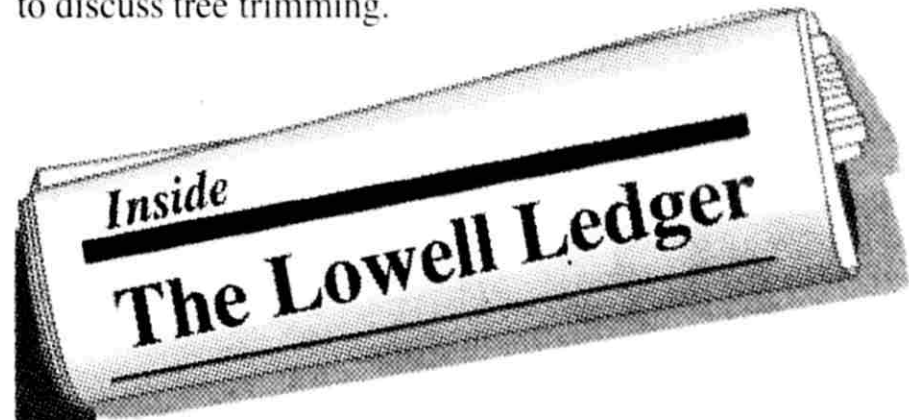
Pierce said that there has not been any "extensive trimming going on."

He did say that there will be some tree trimming on Grand River, as well as extra trimming from the storms, where needed.

Pierce also said that Lowell Light & Power will be providing a weekly list of trees to be trimmed, as a "way of letting people know what will be trimmed."



One of many in the area, this large tree was knocked over, balancing on a power line on Lincoln Lake Road, past Fallsburg Park.



Riverwalk Festival
This Weekend ... Page 3

Alto Teen Off To World Championship Competition
... Page 13

Whitneyville Fellowship Youth Group assembles caregiver kits



In June, the youth group of Whitneyville Fellowship Church assembled Caregiver Kits in alliance with World Vision, a Christian humanitarian organization. The five group members, age 10-17, and their leader presented the program to the church congregation and asked for their support through a special offering. Over the two-month collection period, congregation members donated \$1,400, which was sufficient to assemble 50 kits.

Supplies were ordered in bulk through World Vision. The group spent a Sunday afternoon organizing the many boxes of supplies into an assembly line and hand-packing each of the 50 kits. The finishing touch was a handwritten note of encouragement inserted into every kit for the caregiver.

Through this process, the students learned about the AIDS crisis and that every 14 seconds a child loses a parent to this relentless pandemic. They also learned that even kids can respond to God's call to serve others and make an impact on the world.

World Vision delivers and distributes the kits in communities heavily impacted by HIV/AIDS. They are used by local volunteer caregivers who bring comfort and care while also helping prevent further infection to those living with AIDS. This year, World Vision aims to put 125,000 kits into the hands of caregivers in 20 countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. This event contributed to that effort.

Visit www.whitneyvillefellowship.org to learn more about the efforts of this team and the World Vision Caregiver Kit program.

Ashley Bitely, Morgan Groendyke, Bailey Groendyke, Mackenzie Swendrowski and Lindsey Groendyke assembling the kits.

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- Martha Washington (1732 - 1802)

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Viewpoint

To The Editor

To the Editor,

I wish to comment on the letter submitted by Ellen Mork, VP, Our Love Skatepark Committee. While I am not opposed to the proposed park, I certainly don't see it as the economic boon Miss Mork would have us believe. With gas over \$4 a gallon, I can't envision a parent in Grand Rapids loading their kids and skateboards in the family minivan, driving by hundreds of businesses, just to go to Lowell for a day of shopping and skateboarding. The fact that only five people showed up at an informational meeting should be a hint that there's just not a lot of interest in her cause.

Miss Mork also seems to have overlooked a couple of very important items when she says, "...it's not fair to the teens to kick them out and not give them an alternative...if that is the business' choice, then they need to be aware that it will continue to be a problem." First that would be asking the businesses to ignore vicarious liability. If businesses fail to attempt to keep the skateboarders off their property, they could be held at least partially responsible for injuries which occur on their property. Then there is the matter of the law. Miss Mork seems to be implying that if the businesses and the city don't support her cause and provide a place to skateboard, then they will suffer the consequences. While I am not aware of how the city ordinance reads in regard to every sidewalk, I can read the signs on the Riverwalk which specifically prohibit skateboarding. Not a week goes by though that I do not see kids skateboarding on the Riverwalk and even on the stage of the Showboat, completely disregarding the law. The signs say skateboarding is not allowed, period. They do not say skateboarding is permitted if you have no place else to go.

I, for one, do not want to listen to the "clack-clack" of skateboard wheels and vulgar language while I'm trying to have a nice meal with my wife and friends. Miss Mork needs to understand that respect and support is earned, not given. If she truly wants her cause to proceed and become a respectful part of our community, then she should encourage her fellow committee members to obey the law and respect the rights of business and property owners.

Ben Chapman

Dear Editor,

As my old buddy Popeye used to say, "I have had all I can stand and I can't stand no more." Jim Howard has a lot to say about Lowell and he raises some interesting points, but his recent letter concerning the DDA pushed my buttons.

Among other things, Jim wrote, "the tax money from the DDA has not developed a thriving downtown business district in the approximately 16 years that it has been in effect". I might agree with Mr. Howard on some things, but this one is a doozie and I beg to differ. Julie and I opened

our business just six years ago and when we started working on our building, this end of Main Street was nowhere near as healthy as it is now. Looking out my door to the East, I can see six retail businesses that did not exist when we opened. If I look West on Main Street, I can see several more that have been started or have been revamped in those six years.

The downtown business district of today is head and shoulders above what it was six, ten, and certainly 16 years ago. Is the DDA the only reason for this? No, but it has played a valuable part. Anyone who spends as much time walking on our wonderfully wide sidewalks or on the Riverwalk as Jim Howard does should certainly have a clue as to the works of the DDA. FYI, Mr. Howard, the DDA paid for the sidewalks, lights, and the Riverwalk.

As long as I am on this soapbox, I would like to address the issue of businesses opening and closing in Lowell. Statistics vary greatly, but it is generally accepted that a large percentage of small businesses "fail" within a few years. Such "failure" happens for a number of reasons, including the business owner simply changing his or her mind about being their own boss. I do not believe Lowell has a greater rate of business closing than any other small town or even than most of the big malls in the area. I do not go to the malls often, but every time I do, there are empty storefronts along with new businesses I haven't seen before. That is the nature of business!

One last suggestion if I may. Jim Howard seems to be a man of opinion and ideas. It would be great to see him working on a committee or running for City Council or engaged in some manner that could further Lowell's position as "the next place to be."

Cliff Yankovich

Dear Editor,

Kudos to Lowell Light & Power again! During the July 2 storm, our power went out and we called to let them know. Within ten minutes, we saw a truck arrive and in another five minutes, we had power. This all while the storm was still raging above! Awesome service, as always.

Thanks again!
Chris and Candice Fleszar

Dear Editor,

Enclosed is some information about the singing of our National Anthem. Men not in uniform shall remove headress and salute with the right hand, and headress over their heart. According to the most recent American Legion magazine, "all others present should remove any headwear, face the flag and place their right hand over their heart."

Semper Fidelis William "Bill" Hurt,
Life member V.F.W. of the United States



By Shelly MacNaughton

125 YEARS AGO THE LOWELL JOURNAL

Entry is missing from archives.

100 YEARS AGO THE LOWELL LEDGER JULY 9, 1908

Howard Clare Gibson, fourteen-year-old son of Mr. and Mrs. James Gibson, died Saturday night July 4, 1908, as a result of injuries received in an explosion of powder in a gas pipe cannon. The accident occurred Friday evening about eight o'clock on the corner just east of the mill on East Main Street. He has spent his entire life in Lowell, attending our public schools and finishing the seventh grade the past June with highest honors, having ranked at the head of his class.

75 YEARS AGO THE LOWELL LEDGER AND ALTO SOLO JULY 13, 1933

Steps are being taken for the launching of a new invention, called the "clearrake," which will be manufactured in Lowell and sold through hardware jobbers throughout the country. The inventor of the new device is Adolph Strohm of Lowell and those who will be associated with him in the manufacturing and selling are F. M. Newell and D. G. Look.

50 YEARS AGO THE LOWELL LEDGER JULY 10, 1958

Headline: Nixon receives 500,000th Lowell Showboat Ticket.

Vice President Richard Nixon is presented the 500,000th ticket to the Lowell Showboat to be held July 21 through 26. The ticket, which Nixon is holding, was presented by Congressman Gerald R. Ford, honorary Admiral of the Lowell Showboat.

25 YEARS AGO THE GRAND VALLEY LEDGER JULY 13, 1983

The Kent County Prosecuting Attorney's office released their determination the fatal shooting of James Pfaff, 27, by Lowell Police Officer Calvin Kamphuis on Monday, July 4, 1983. The statement issued by the prosecutor declared the shooting "justifiable homicide." The statement said that the shooting was a clear-cut case of self-defense, and would have been justifiable even if Kamphuis had not been a police officer. Witnesses said that Pfaff repeatedly taunted Kamphuis to shoot him while slashing at him with a knife.

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Writing to the editor ...

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, at times there may be 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.

Relay for Life lists "In Memory" and "In Honor Of"

The luminaria ceremony for this year's Relay for Life was rained out, and the list of those honored both "In Memory" and "In Honor Of" was never shown. The Lowell Ledger has decided to run the names on both lists as a tribute.

In Memory:

Kenneth Adams, Dennis Addorio, Alice Alchin, Gail Aldridge, Doris Anderson, Whitney Jo Anderson, Richard T. Anticiff Jr., Richard T. Anticiff Sr., Anne Arnsteen Scott, Esther Avery, Dick Bancroft, Mary Alice Bancroft, Raymond J. Barber, Diane Barranger, Mariah Beech, Billie Jo Behrendt, Margarito Bernal, Susan Lyn Beute, Judith Bitto, Donya Blaisdell-MiLu, Leona Block

Kelley "Butch" Boggs, Harold Boorsma, Jacqueline Boorsma, Bob Bouman, Elma Breaux, Hattie Breejen, Claude Bungard, Flossie Bungard, Marguerite Bungard, Major Fritz Burnett, Merle Butterfield, Susan Calverly, Lois Calvi, Martha Cameron, LT Joe Campana, Angela Carassa, Verla Carey, Emma Jane Carpenter, Andrea Caruso, Leonard Cavanaugh, Marjorie Cavanaugh, Wilson J. Cavanaugh, Charles Chiodini, Lorne S. Chipman, Delta Chipman, Melissa Chipman, Paul Clark, Earl Clouse, Rex Collins, Tootie Comdure, Victoria Comdure, Jim Cook, Jr., Bruce Cossar, Eleanor Cossar, Nita Czacek, Donald Davis, Agnes de la Vergne, Earl Winfield de la Vergne, Sarah Agnes de la Vergne, Mona Dean Beurkens, Tim DeHaan, Margaret Dekker, Fred Dickas, Helen Dickas, Pop Dommer, Mary Ann Doyle, Alvin Droog, Diane Durakm, Jeff Edsinga, Bob Ellis, John Essenburg, Bernie Falsetta, Ron Fast, My Father

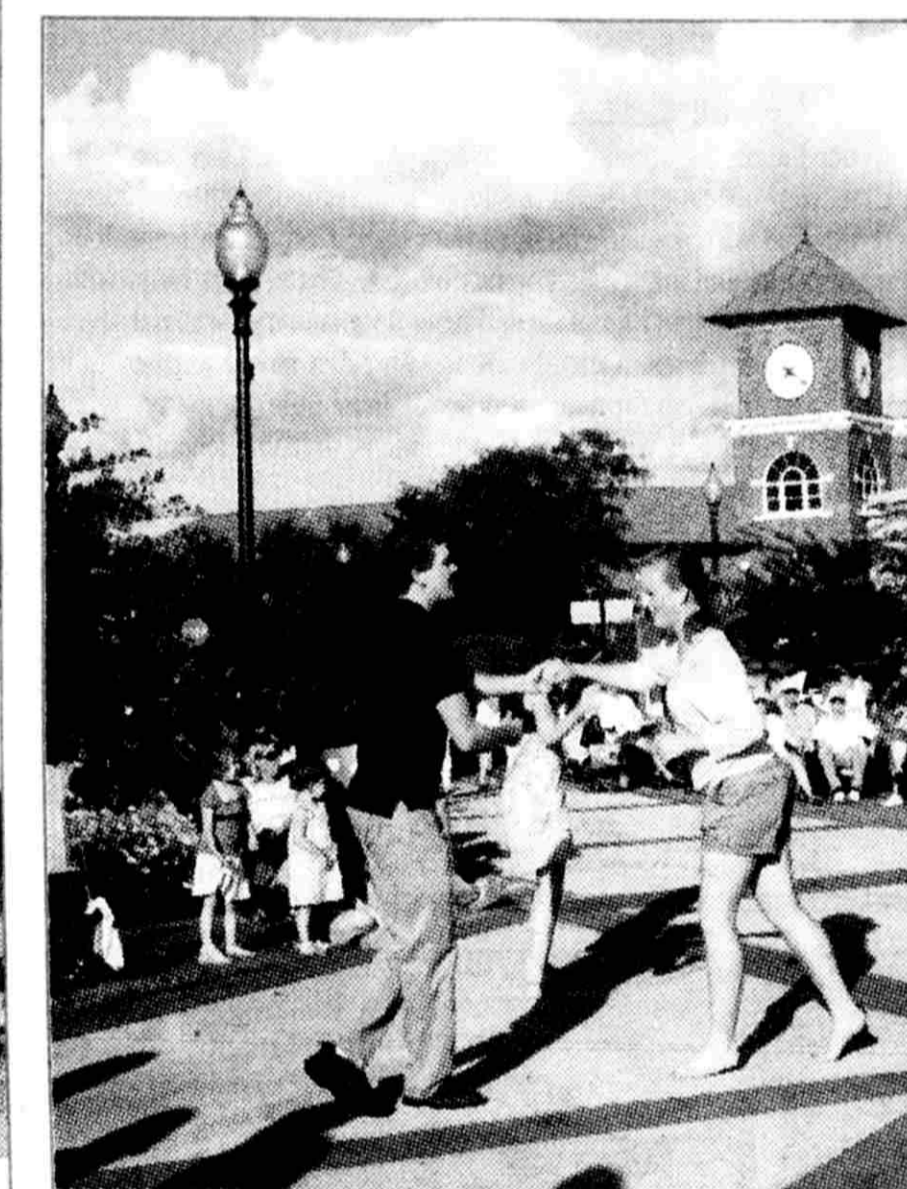
, Robert J. Ferroli, Norma Fitzpatrick, Greg Ford, Gail Friesner, Alna Frorst, Debbie Fusi, Clarence Gable, Helen Galbreath, Clarence Gale, Kerry, Garnett, Joe Geelhoed, Charles Gerben, Frank Gerben, Frank Gerben Jr., Margret Gillard, John Gordon, Rita Gordon, Carol Goudzwaard, Lelani Grezak, Helen Griffith, Lucian Griffith, Gus Gustafson, Betty Hainer, Jack Hale, Sherwood Glen Hall, Barbara Hansknecht, James Hansknecht, Dustin Harmon, Shirley Haroon, Jim Hayden, Godfrey Heim, Thon Helmer, Bill Henderson, Carmen Hendrus, Jud Himes, Lucy Hobson, Michael Hody, Judy Horrigan, Mary Horrocks, Linda Howes, Dwight Hughes, Eddys Fay Hunt, June Hunter, Judy Huseby, Robert D. Huver, Patricia M. Huver-Hoffman, Mary J. Huver-Smyth, Sharon Ingersol, Walt Ingraham, Heather Lynn Ingram, Mary Jenner Pavey, Grandpa Jewell, Richard Jewell, Neva Jingley, Joyce Johnson, Phil Johnson, Phillip M. Johnson, Louis Kaminski, Karma, Margarite Keeler, John A. Kiedis, Charles Klepin, Berwyn Kloosferman, Ken Kropf, Richard Krupp, Ted Kubik, Bruce Lambert, Elayne Lamphere, Margaret Lantz, Tony LaPenna, Bert Lee Lawrence, Joan Liberti, John Lieffecs, John Liepperf, Lois Love, Helen Lowery, Michelle Lunn, Michelle Marie Lunn, Pauleen Luther, Iola Luyke, Elizabeth Malone, Edith Mancik, Frank Mancik, Toni Mani, Betty Mankel, Marian Marcel, Lillian Marry, Patty Maxey, Ron May, Barbara Mayo, Duane "Bill" Mayou, Margaret McLaughlin, Esther Middlewood, Sheryl Miles, Jerry Misiak, Evelyn Morris, Evelyn Margaret Morris, Robert Lewis Morris, Lorena Morris Barkley, Jean Mulliken, Reva M. Munn, Robert Murphy, Dan Murray, Elizabeth Murray, Tom Myers, Clark

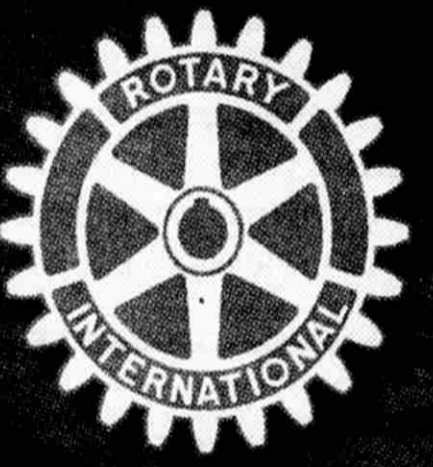
Nellist, William F. Noble, Jack B. Norton, Aunt Suzie Nowakowski, Phyllis Nulph, Celeste Ostrander, Grandpa Paauwe, Bubzi Parmeter, Sheri Parmeter, Ron Pawloski, Lester Pearson, Dick Pfishner, Dale J. Phillips, Jackie Phillips, Helen Philo, Charlie Pierce, Elmer Pitchford, Edith Pletcher Roth, Esther Pohl, Janet Pohl, George Polick, Carla Poll, Gordon Pollock, Ernie Popiel, Bonnie Potter, Fran Powell, Richard Price, Delores Quigley, Carol Reagan, Lind Rhondes, Doris Richardson, Adaline Rifenburg, Betty Roth, Dick Roth, Ilene Roth, Sandy Rowe Brown, Rowland Ryder, Mary Ryskamp, Marva Sanborn, Edward Savoie, Bessie Savoie Frugé, Pearl Savoie Jacobs, Molly Sayers, Robert Scharfschwerdt, Patrick Schichtel, Paul Schichtel, Phil Schichtel, Mary Beth Schwark, Terry Scott, Ruth Walterick Searfoss, James Serne, Tom Serne, William Serne, Sr., Marian Shade, Bill Short, Mary Shull, Debra Smoes, Midge Snodgrass, Walt Sobleskey, Beverly Spillane, Truman Stahl, Mary Alice Starkweather, Dave Stauffer, Kenneth Swift, Debby Taylor, Cathy Thomet, Marilyn Thomet, Stew Thomet, Neva Tingley, Linda Vandenberg-Brown, Margaret "Rusty" VanderVeen, Paul Vaught, Wilma Vaught, Julie Versluis, Bob Vreeland, Bill Wade, Marion Wagner, Katherine Wagner-Koglin, Gloria Waidelich, Dewey Waller, Edward Walter, Peggy Weller, Bill White, Dorothy White, Nancy White, Ward White Sr., Carol Wieland, Edith Wieland, Roger Wolf, Gordon York, Quentin York, Olivia Zamora, and Roger Zwak.

"In Honor Of" cont'd., pg. 9

Voices of Freedom "sizzle" with patriotic spirit on the Riverwalk


Just on the eve of Independence Day on a chilly night on the Riverwalk, the energetic patriotic Americana band "Voices of Freedom" took to the stage. Beautiful music and songs echoed into the summer evening. A decent size crowd enjoyed the patriotic music, along with dancers doin' the swing. Next on July 10, country Bronk Brothers will perform as part of the ongoing Sizzlin' Summer concert series.






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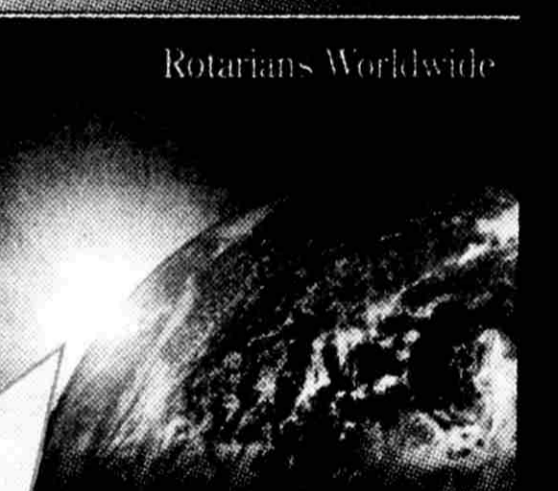
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"In Honor Of" continued ... From Page 8

In Honor of:

Bev Accardo, Ken Alexander, Amber, Carol Anderson, John B. Ault, Aunt Mary, Dick Barnes, Jordan Basinger, Diane Bennett, Michael Bieri, Ruthann Blaisdell, Ivan K. Blough, Mary Jane "Cookie" Boda, Kelley "Butch" Boggs, Jacqueline M. Boorsma, Kae Boss, Burt Bothell, June Breuker, Kip Brunson, Philis Bukoucik, Bill Burnett, Kathleen Cavanaugh, Shirley Cheyne, Spc. Skyler Cinco Serving in Iraq, Michelle Clatterbuck, Evelyn Clinton, Ronald Clouse, Donna Cody, Bonnie Cole, Alice Cornelisse, Betty Cotter, Gloria Coulter, Becky Cribley, Rose Crocker, Maria Davis, Darl L. Decator, Linda Decator-Highway, Robert Decker, Cindy DeRuiter, Patricia Dobbs, Greg Earhart, Billie Fallstrom, Wilma Fallstrom, Nic Falsetta, Larry Ferguson, Marge Fetterley, Bobbie Fike, Dawn Fisher, Laina Fisher, George Ford, Katherine Ford,

Sunshine Frausto, Ruth Frens, Julie Goble, Rita Gordon, Marian Goudzwaard, Christine Grames, Clarence Gray, Sue Harrison, Bill Hart, Alice Harwood, Jan Herb, Donald B. Highway, Eva Huver, Marvin Huver, Lexi Idemam, Stacey Irwin, Lindsay John, Christine Johnson, Ivan Judson, Mike Kalkbrenner, Rosemary Kalkbrenner, Ruth Kamminga, Tracy Kopitsch, Nancy Kuyers, Sandy Lambert, Rick Lanting, Sharon LaPointe, Julie Larsen, Chris Lefor, Barb Lucas, Cindy Mack, Ken Mankel, Michelle Marin, Sandy Mast, Sue Mayo, Shawn McBryde, Chuck McCastle, Arthur Melendy, Velma Melendy, Betty Mertz, Debbe Miller, Nancy Miller, Kay Moore, Lisa Moore, Bob Morris, Samantha Moseley, Sister Colleen Ann Nagle, Jean Neuber, Linda Niles, Gladys Nobles, Mary Beth Novak, Jamie Nugent, Penny Nyman, Mary Ollis, Anna Organeck, Kathy


Ormiston, Yvonne Ottensma, Our Service Men & Women Serving in Iraq, William Overbeck Jr, Michelle Overholt, Hector Padilla, Lila Pfishner, Tracy Phillips, Kathy Pohl, Janet Price, Andrew Raich, Bob Reagan, Doris Roza, Linda Ruppert, Greg Rutkowski, Cindy Ryskamp, Patti Sanborn, Donna Schomer, Dale Shade, Pamela Sigafooze, Carol Simpson, Olive Skinner, Leah Smith, Linda Smith, Rachel Ross Smith, Gerriane Smith Schuler, Barbara Stamm, Ranger Steve, Dawn Swift, Elaine Swonk, Damon Taylor, Sheryl Tessmer, Darrel Thomas, Ken VanDerWarf, Nancy VanOverring, Beth Vaught, Nathan Vlcek, Carol Walsh, Jill Warden, Connie Waybrant, Audrey Westdorp, Lucille Whitaker, Bob White, John Wierenga, Marsha Wilcox, Janet Williams, Irene Willmarth and Jackie Wrona.

•• ASK THE EXPERT ••

What are various windows made of and what will work best for me?

Basically there are three types of materials used. Aluminum windows, with their easily scratched painted surfaces, conduct both heat and cold, so they're very poor insulators. Wood windows, which require constant painting and caulking, can absorb moisture, making them difficult to open and close. They can even rot. All Weather Seal's solid vinyl windows, however, never need painting and won't show scratches, because the color goes throughout the material. This is why vinyl windows are quickly becoming the most popular choice for both new construction and replacement applications.

In addition, you should certainly consider custom-sized windows for the very simple reason that they'll fit better. Stock-sized windows require extensive carpentry work both inside and outside your house. That can be very costly and inconvenient. All Weather Seal custom-sized windows, on the other hand, are manufactured to fit your existing window opening. You get the style and options you want while maintaining your glass area.



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BBB receives thousands of complaints on mysterious credit card charges

U.S. marketing company is charging online shoppers every month without their knowledge

Better Business Bureau is warning consumers to closely check their credit card statements for mysterious charges that are cropping up by the thousands across the country. Upset online shoppers have contacted BBB about unwanted credit card charges that are ultimately being traced back to Connecticut-based Affinion Group, an affinity-marketing company that recently changed its name from Trilegiant.

In the last 12 months alone, BBB has received nearly 1,800 complaints regarding Affinion Group. Most complainants state that they were shocked when they discovered unwanted charges on their credit card for membership services such as "Shoppers Advantage," "Privacy Guard" or "Great Fun." Charges ranged from \$12 to as much as \$59.99 every month. Some complainants had been charged by Affinion Group every month for several years, resulting in hundreds of dollars being paid for services they never

took advantage of or even realized they had signed up for.

"Consumers who get signed up for Affinion's programs never actually provide their credit card information and therefore don't suspect that the company will immediately begin charging their credit card every month," Ken Vander Meeden, BBB of Western Michigan CEO. "The large volume and pattern of complaints BBB has received indicates that Affinion is not taking enough steps to ensure consumers understand exactly what they're getting into when they click on enticing pop-up ads - and that's why they have a longstanding unsatisfactory record in BBB's book."

Some complainants were able to retrace their steps and find out how they were inadvertently signed up for membership services that resulted in the monthly charges. Typically, consumers had purchased items online - such as movie or airline tickets - from a reputable Web site. At some point in the transaction process, pop-up ads or chat boxes appeared

offering incentives, such as \$20 rebate cards for the Web site or claims like, "Click here for your 10 percent savings."

Complainants allege they were signed up for unwanted services simply by clicking on pop-up ads or replying to chat windows, even though they ultimately declined the offers. Complainants never provided their credit card information to ads or chats because the company with which they had just made their online purchase had a pre-established agreement with Affinion Group to automatically transfer consumer information when

they clicked on the ad or chat.

"Most complainants report to BBB that they have no idea how or why they were being charged and were extremely angry when they discovered how much money they had lost through affinity marketing practices," added Vander Meeden. "Unfortunately many credit card holders are learning the hard way about the value of reviewing their statements and finances every month."

BBB has also received complaints from consumers who knowingly signed up for the memberships or services - with the promise

that they could cancel after a month and pay nothing - but then never received the promised rebate cards or other incentives, or were given the runaround when they tried to cancel their membership.

In 2006, 16 state Attorneys General reached a settlement with Trilegiant Corp. and Chase Bank totaling \$14.5 million, to resolve allegations that the two companies partnered to deceive consumers into paying for membership programs. According to BBB records, Trilegiant is now doing business as Affinion Group - but it's the same

business and same people continuing their pattern of misleading consumers by not making it clear when a consumer has purchased something. The State Of Michigan was part of this settlement.

For more information on Affinion Group and to see the more than 50 names the company is doing business as, see BBB's reliability report online.

To find trustworthy businesses in thousands of industries, search BBB's database of more than four million reports free-of-charge at www.bbb.org.

Vertical ID reduces underage drinking

by Terri Lynn Land

Five years ago, Michigan began to approach the problem of underage drinking in a different way - vertically rather than horizontally.

A law went into effect on July 1, 2003, requiring the issuance of vertical (portrait) style driver's licenses or personal identification cards to individuals under the age of 21. As a result of this major change, purchasing alcohol has become more difficult for minors in our state. Every driver under 21 in Michigan now has

a vertical license. The horizontal format has been gradually phased out over the last several years for minors as their licenses came up for renewal. The new format has been welcomed by many parents as a smart innovation.

The vertical card gives restaurants, bars, convenience stores, casinos and law enforcement an instant visual cue to correctly determine a license-holder's age and to immediately spot those not old enough to purchase alcohol. It also has a more tamper-resistant

design to thwart attempted alterations or forgeries.

There are more than 731,000 people under age 21 who currently possess a Michigan vertical driver's license or personal ID card. I'm pleased to say it's less likely these young adults will succeed in using their ID to obtain alcohol than if they were using the old horizontal cards. That difference can save lives.

One indicator of the Vertical Identification Program's success is the steady decline in convictions under Michigan's "zero

tolerance" law. The law prohibits underage drivers from having any alcohol in their systems. In 2004, the first full year of the vertical license program, there were nearly 1,700 convictions. The number has fallen each year to about 1,340 in 2007.

During the transition to the new license, the Department of State has teamed with a broad coalition of retailers, law enforcement groups and other organizations to

I.D., cont'd.,
pg. 14

Social Security travels with you

by Vonda VanTil,
Social Security
Public Affairs Specialist

If you receive Social Security benefits and you're planning to travel abroad

this summer, there are some things you should know to make your trip - and the delivery of your Social Security payments - go smoothly.

First, if you haven't already done so, sign up for direct deposit. It's the easiest and most secure way to receive your benefit payments, whether you're

at home or halfway around the world. With direct deposit, you never have to worry about your check being lost or stolen. And direct deposit makes funds instantly available to you even when you are not at home to receive and cash your checks.

You should also be familiar with how your Medicare coverage works outside the United States. Be aware that Medicare, in most cases, does not pay for hospital or medical services outside the United States, except for some emergency services in Mexico and Canada. That is the case even if you get sick or hurt while traveling.

The length of your journey may also make a difference. Keep in mind that if you plan to stay outside the country more than 30 days, other rules may apply. For example, in some countries, you cannot continue to receive benefits if you reside there for more than a month.

Whether you're visiting relatives in Europe or simply traveling across the country, visit us at www.socialsecurity.gov before you lift off.

**If Jerry Hale
is a dairy farmer,
I am the Bishop of Cork.
Before casting your vote
for Lowell Township
Supervisor, repeat
this phrase:**

**"Why don't you pass the time
by playing a little solitaire?"**

This dispatch from Harbin courtesy of
G.M. Ross, 10561 36th S.E., Lowell Township.

Betty R. Morlock
City Clerk



Alto teen headed to Philippines for World Stick Fighting and Forms Championship

by Molly Benningfield
Editor

During summer vacation, most teens will find a part-time job, visit friends and spend days not worrying about homework and tests. Mariah Moore is a pretty regular 14-year-old - she is heading into her sophomore year at Lowell High School and tries to find time hanging out with friends and preparing for her first season on the JV cheer team.

So, what makes her stand out? It could be the six nights a week that she practices weapons-based martial arts. Or the extra time she puts in with daily cardio conditioning. How about the fact that she leaves for the Philippines next week to compete in what is deemed as the "Olympics of the martial arts world", the World Stick Fighting and Forms Championship?

Moore is well-known in the Lowell community as she has practiced different forms of karate since she was 8, quickly rising in the ranks to become a world-class athlete. She already has two world titles under her belt, when she went to the 2006 world championship as a 12-year-old.

Not only has she had to

face stereotypes regarding her age and gender, but she doesn't quite look the part of a focused martial arts expert. Tall and thin, with long brown hair and expressive eyes, Moore has had to overcome perceptions to gain respect.

"There aren't many females - it's a very tough sport." She said she'll find the most opposition in local tournaments, especially with comments from opponents' fathers.

But her mom, Marjorie, was quick to point out that once Mariah starts fighting, all the talk is quieted. "They gain respect after watching her," she said.

Moore has gained the respect of many around her. Her coach for Eskrima, a weapons-based martial art native to the Philippines, is Bong Jorales, the Grandmaster and founder of Jorales System FMA. Mariah has trained with him since 2004 and he will accompany her to his native country.

"I am delighted and pleased with Mariah's accomplishment in the Filipino Martial Arts," Jorales said. "She has worked hard to earn her spot on the team and I have confidence that she

will perform her best. She is a young lady with many talents and continues to demonstrate her passion to excel in the world of martial arts."

Not only has Mariah earned the respect of those in her sport, but around the community as well. She frequently donates her time in teaching self-defense to groups from Girl Scouts to inner-city children. She promotes safety awareness and stranger danger.

"I believe I can make a difference. It's worth it, if it'll save someone's life." She said she thinks her message resonates with those she teaches because it's "different to hear from a girl closer to their age."

One of her favorite times serving the community has been with Maranda of WOTV fame. She has performed in the West Michigan Park Parties, as well as working with the TV host on "Take a Kick at Cancer", a benefit that has raised thousands of dollars. She said that "giving back is the right thing to do."

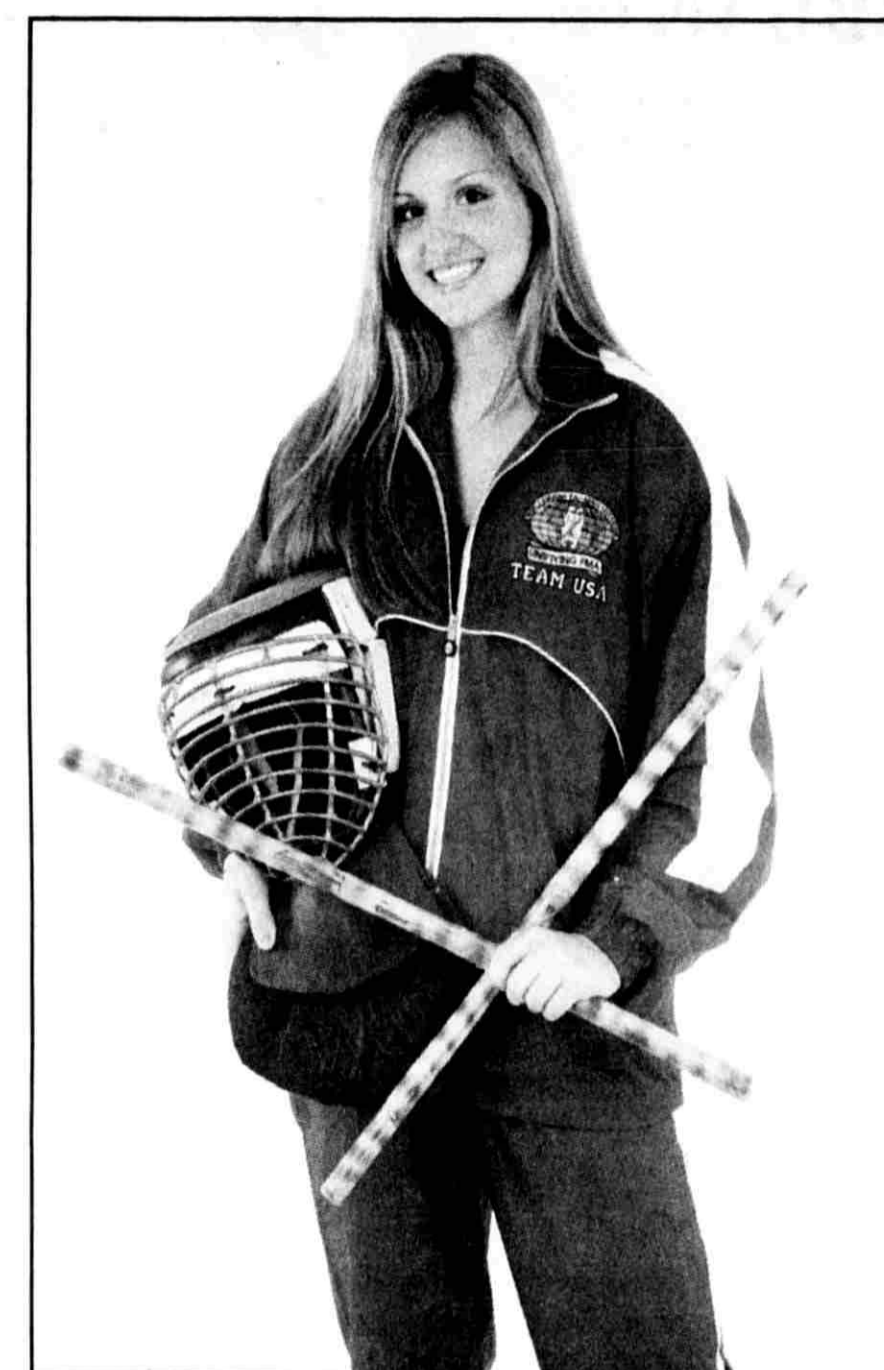
She hopes that she can also open a school by the age of 16, to help teach others, both in karate and self-defense. She wants to teach people how to be prepared at all times. Her mom said Mariah "just gets ideas in her head and goes with them", rather than letting them fizzle out.

Moore wants to open the school because she knows how important it is to be able to defend yourself. "To save your life, you have to use anything around you. It's not your strength, it's having the confidence in your technique."

Before she does that, though, she has a few world titles to defend. She will be looking to get another gold in forms and double stick, while trying for the first time in single stick. In this particular competition, there are three contests. One is forms, which the judges score on how well the techniques are used, while the fighter is going against an imaginary performance. This contest is choreographed, and under two minutes in length. Mariah will perform using double knives on ropes.

There will also be full-contact stick fighting, in single and double stick. For this one, she will put on around 50 pounds worth of padding, including a metal cage mask.

The World Stick Fighting and Forms Championship is the highest level one can attain in Eskrima. Moore made it to the finals and earned a spot on the U.S. team by competing at the national championship, earning gold medals in traditional multiple weapons, full-contact double stick fighting and a silver in full-contact



Mariah Moore in her Team U.S.A. warm-ups. (Photo courtesy of Lawrence Heibel)

single stick. Only those who take first or second are allowed on the team.

"It was amazing," she said. "Not only is it an honor to be on the U.S. team, but also to be going to the Philippines - to have the work pay off is nice."

She swept the regional tournament, taking first in all three in November.

She said she's more excited than anything, and doesn't get nervous "until about five minutes before I go on."

Her dad, Randy, will accompany Mariah to the Philippines, where they will spend two weeks, starting

July 17. She will be able to train in the Philippines and tour the country with her coach, Jorales.

She has also received a sponsorship from Kwon, which Moore described as the "Nike of the martial arts world". With that, she receives equipment, clothes, and weapons for competition. Her mom said she knew it was special when she walked into their offices and saw a life-size poster of Mariah. "She has arrived," Marjorie said.

After the world championships, Mariah will continue training and get ready to go back to school, where she said she has to keep up good grades. "or I can't train."

She said she does martial arts because it's what seems right to her. "I don't know what kind of person I'd be without it," Mariah said.

IT WAS AMAZING. NOT ONLY IS IT AN HONOR TO BE ON THE U.S. TEAM, BUT ALSO TO BE GOING TO THE PHILIPPINES - TO HAVE THE WORK PAY OFF IS NICE.

- Mariah Moore, on heading to the world championship

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Riverwalk Festival July 11 & 12, 2008

FRIDAY JULY 11

along the Riverwalk and Downtown

6:00 PM to 9:00 PM River Valley Credit Union Arts & Crafts, Antiques & Re-found Treasures
 Avery Street Grilling & Chilling
 Englehardt Friends of the Library Used Book Sale *Library*
 Showboat Cash Bar *on the Lowell Showboat*

5:00 PM to 7:00 PM Street Musicians
 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM Historic Pontoon Tours *on the Flat River at the boat launch*
 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM Entertainment Stage *sponsored by Fifth Third and Farmers Insurance featuring Dixieland DeJour*

Until 9:00 PM Late Night Shopping *Along Main Street & Historic Downtown*

SATURDAY JULY 12

along the Riverwalk and Downtown

10:00 AM to 4:00 PM River Valley Credit Union Arts & Crafts, Antiques & Re-found Treasures
 Avery Street Grilling & Chilling
 Englehardt Friends of the Library Used Book Sale *Library*
 Bill & Paul's Kayak Fun *on the Flat River at the boat launch*
 Lowell Community Wellness Health & Fitness Fair *Lowell Police Garage & Avery St.*
 Chainsaw Sculpture *along the Riverwalk*

10:00 AM to 4:00 PM *KIDS!!! GOOD* Chevy Buick Youth Zone *Avery Street \$1 per child*
 10:00 AM to 7:00 PM Street Musicians
 10:00 AM Bill & Paul's Kayak & Canoe Race *on the Flat River at the boat launch*
 11:00 AM **Parade** *Historic Main Street (Brng nonperishable food items & give to the CLOWNS!)*
 12:00 PM to 4:00 PM Flush Tank *famous Lowell personalities*
 12:30 PM Horseshoe Tournament *at Larkin's Restaurant (preregister at Larkin's)*
 1:00 PM Rumble the Riverwalk *classic cars and motorcycles cruising Main St*
 2:00 PM Laurels of Kent Pet Parade *Laurels of Kent North Center Street (Registration 1:30pm)*
 4:00 PM to 8:00 PM Historic Pontoon Tours *on the Flat River at the boat launch*
 6:00 PM to 9:00 PM Showboat Cash Bar *on the Lowell Showboat*
 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM Entertainment Stage *sponsored by Fifth Third and Farmers Insurance featuring Eschelons*

10:15 PM Laurels of Kent Fireworks *at Stoney Lakeside Park on Bowes Rd*

Lowell Fairgrounds

9:00 AM to 1:00 PM Brian Mead Memorial Cruise-in *classic cars, motorcycles*
**Shuttle Van between King Milling/Main Street provided by Good Chevrolet*
 Antique Fire Truck Muster *Grand River Boat Launch*

8:30 AM Motorcycle Poker Run *starts at Look Memorial Fire Station, ends at Fairgrounds*
Supporting the Flat River Outreach Ministries

4:30 PM Jaws of Life Demonstration *sponsored by the Lowell Area Fire Department*
 5:00 PM **\$1500 State Farm Insurance Duck Race** *on the Grand River*
 Adopt a Duck (\$2)OR(3/\$5)OR(10/\$10) . \$1000 DUCK WINNER & (5) \$100 DUCK WINNERS

\$1500 State Farm Insurance Duck Race!



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