



# The Lowell Ledger

Volume 38 Issue 16

Serving Lowell Area Readers Since 1893

Wednesday, March 18, 2009

## Assessments down, but property taxes up by rate of inflation

by Emma Palova

Although the assessments in the city of Lowell have gone down by six percent, the taxable values and property taxes are up due to the rate of inflation set at 4.4 percent.

Jodi Sobota of Lowell appealed her assessment and taxable values last week at the board of review in Lowell. She purchased an old home on Hudson Street approximately a year ago for \$89,000. Sobota believes both assessment and taxable values were way too high for what she has.

However, city assessor Jim Marfia said in general the assessments have gone down by six percent due to the declining house sales. The 2008 sales study used to calculate taxable values does not include foreclosed sales by the banks. Overall the taxable values and property

taxes have gone up by the 4.4 percent rate of inflation.

Last year, there were 30 homes sold in the city not including foreclosed properties.

"We looked at 2008

sales and assessments are going down," said Marfia.

But, there has never been a situation since proposal A passed in 1993, that the market is down, but inflation is up, according to

Marfia. Next year inflation is expected to be between zero and one percent, which will further lower the assessments.

"We have a lot of firsts here," said Marfia. "It's the first time that the rate of inflation will be a fraction."

Lowell board of review member Jim Wood said the board will do something for Sobota.

But, overall not too many people showed up for board of reviews, according to assessor Marfia and Vergennes Township

supervisor, Tim Wittenbach.

"We've had quite a few bankruptcies, but you have to go by true value sale," said Vergennes Township board of review chairman Jim Herb.

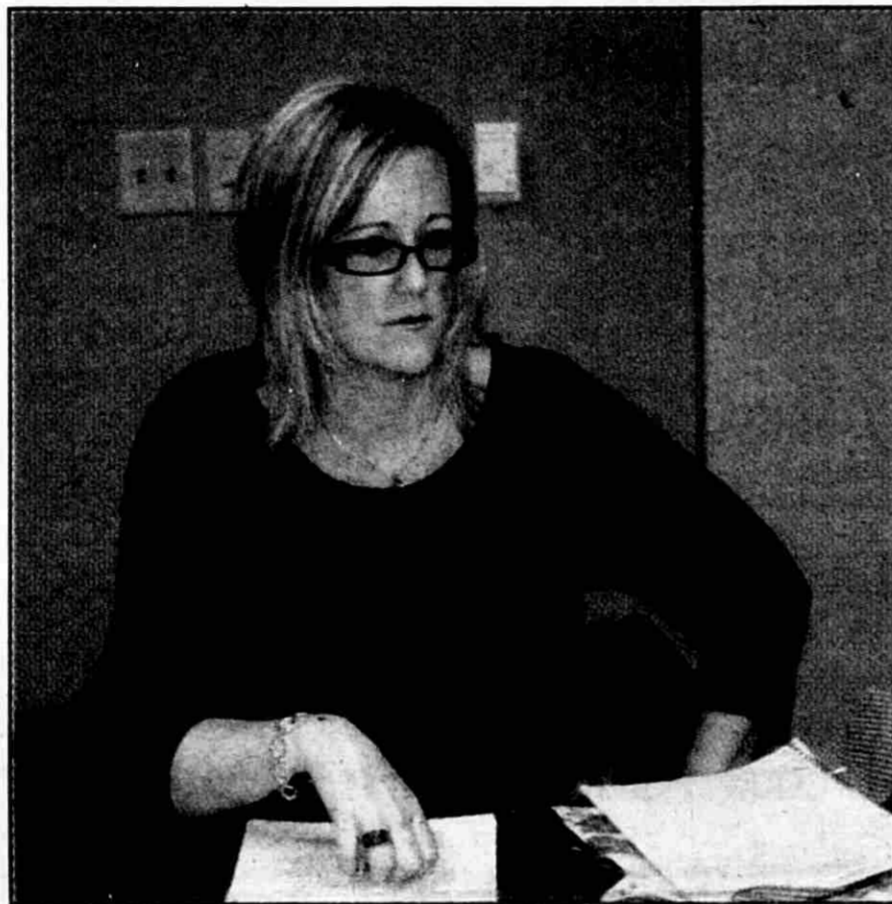
There have been a few instances in the township when the board did adjust the values, according to Wittenbach. The residents are notified within 30 days of their complaints.

"We get the same people every year," said Herb.

Property taxes are based on taxable value which is

defined as the lower of State Equalized Value (SEV) or capped value. This means unless the current year SEV is less than the previous year taxable value multiplied by the Consumer Price Index (CPI), the current year's taxable value will increase by the CPI.

Taxable values can never be higher than the assessed values. The taxable value will continue to increase at the CPI until the SEV falls below capped value.



Jodi Sobota appeals her assessment and taxable value in the city of Lowell.

## Utility may increase rates to offset energy optimization

by Emma Palova

The Lowell Light and Power may increase rates by six percent to offset the costs of evaluating energy efficiency and more expensive purchases of renewable energy mandated by the state.

"We need to get ourselves positioned without significant rate increases later," said general manager

Greg Pierce. "Renewable energy is significantly more expensive."

The city council Monday night approved the proposed Lowell Light and Power budget for 2009 through 2010. The budget with \$5.96 million on the revenue side, and \$5.76 million on the expense side, is similar to last year's budget, according to Pierce.

There has been an overall

decrease in consumption due to the economy, and revenues for the new fiscal year still anticipate slower consumption levels with little or no growth. There could be a small decrease due to energy optimization.

Two percent of revenues will be used to encourage energy efficiency. The utility is required to submit

Utility increase, cont'd., pg. 3

## Rails to trails group stumbles upon disconnect in Greenville

by Emma Palova

A steering committee may hammer out the differences between Greenville and the rest of the Ionia Lowell Greenville rails to trails group.

The group last week uncovered a disconnecting piece of the trail north of M57 on the Lowell to Greenville part of the rail corridor. Currently, in the process of grant applications for the acquisition of the corridor owned by Mid Michigan, it became obvious that the

proposed trail stops at the city's doorway.

"The rail banking stops at M57," said Carolyn Kane, chairwoman of West Michigan Trails and Greenways Coalition.

One easement is missing to connect into the existing Frederick Meijer Heartland Trail north of M57. The city of Greenville has a nine-mile Flat River Trail.

"At what point do you stop adding pieces," said Kent County Parks director Roger Sabine.

Mayor of Greenville, Kenneth Snow, said if the trail doesn't connect into the city trails, it doesn't do any good to Greenville.

"There never has been a point that people didn't support it," said Kathy Jo Vanderlaan, Greenville chamber director.

The rails to trails group has been meeting since 2007, and is already one year out with the initial purchase

Rails to trails, cont'd., pg. 9

## Lowell Expo will showcase area businesses and organizations

by Emma Palova

With spring just right around the corner, the Lowell Expo will showcase area businesses and organizations at the Lowell High School on March 28. "It is one of the choice networking opportunities the Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce offers," said director Liz Baker.

The 13th annual community expo, sponsored by Firstbank of Lowell, increases awareness of products and services, while offering the exhibitors an opportunity to develop sales, leads and customer contacts.

The expo will spotlight more than 150 area businesses, service groups, churches and government agencies.



The Lowell Area Trailway will present their 'Connecting our Communities' announcement at the expo. With Lowell being the hub of trails, all the other trail systems will be featured side by side as well.

The Lowell Light & Power will provide power bucket rides all day long, while Murray Lake Marina will showcase a pontoon boat.

The 2009 Lowell City Directory 2009 will be unveiled.

You can also take the B.C. Pizza Challenge and stuff yourself for \$40 with a 20-inch pizza weighing 5.9 pounds from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m., and win \$200.

Haircuts for \$5 by Great Clips are always a great hit, according to Baker.

Arena Racing #1 car driver Clayton Marvel will give free autographs from 9 a.m. to noon. The event is sponsored by Good Chevy Buick.

There will also be a drop off site in the parking lot, for recycling of electronics, all free except for televisions. Those will be charged \$10.

The Lowell Area Schools will provide free food and beverages, while door prizes will be raffled all day long. The Lowell Community Wellness Weight Loss Challenge will also have an announcement.

You can visit with Jodi Davis, who is the walking ambassador for Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan. You can also visit with area mascots.

The expo will be held from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. For more information go to [www.lowellexpo.org](http://www.lowellexpo.org)



# Obituaries

**HALBEISEN**  
Dennis L. Halbeisen, 59, of Charlotte, MI, died Thurs., February 26, 2009. He was born June 24, 1949 in Charlotte, MI, the son of Donald and Catherine (Henry) Halbeisen. He is survived by his son, Douglas Halbeisen; mother, Catherine Halbeisen; brother, Stephen (Valli) Halbeisen; sister, Mary Ann Halbeisen; sister, Katy (Doug) Shumaker; brother, Ian Halbeisen, all of Charlotte; brother, Alan

## Lend A Hand



### VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

#### HOST FAMILIES NEEDED

International Cultural Exchange Services (ICES) is currently looking for 193 host families to host an exchange student for the 2009-2010 school year. While most of the students are here for a ten month period, a few are requesting a stay of five months. Students from all directions of the world come requesting to experience living in the USA. All students must pass an English proficiency test and be in good academic standing prior to their acceptance. Students come with their own spending money, health insurance and personal needs. The host family furnishes room, board and guidance. You do not need a lavish home. You and your family need only to welcome and include them as a new member of your family. They are not here

to be guests. They are here to be a part of your family. Like your own children, they are expected to share in household responsibilities.

While they do not arrive in the USA until the middle of August, you are given the opportunity to correspond with them now, exchange pictures, and become increasingly familiar with them before they arrive. The number of applicants continue to rise as this school year reaches its conclusion. Now is the time to choose from the widest selection of exchange students.

Local resident, Steve Ockaskis, is a field representative for the program and here to assist you with your selection of an exchange student. He is available to help you with any questions you may have and assist you in exploring how taking in an exchange student can be beneficial to your family. Ockaskis can be reached at 897-4830.

## Business Matters

Greenridge Realty announced that Kim Schwacha received Realtor of the Month in Feb. This award recognizes Schwacha for his outstanding success and achievements.

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SE - Suite 4  
Grand Rapids  
616-940-8181  
www.TerryAbelAgency.com

### LOWELL TOWNSHIP IS NOW ACCEPTING BIDS FOR CLEANING THE TOWNSHIP HALL.

SPECIFICATIONS ARE AVAILABLE AT THE TOWNSHIP OFFICES 2910 ALDEN NASH SE, LOWELL, MICHIGAN 49331 ON MONDAY, TUESDAY AND THURSDAY FROM 9AM TO 5PM.

### The Lowell Ledger

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## Seussical cast delivers dinner and song for families

Cast members of Lowell High School's Seussical production visited the Renucci Hospitality House. The Renucci House provides a home away from home for families. While there, they cooked, served and had dinner with families of pre- and post-admission patients and also performed two songs from the show. The songs performed were



puter areas and a healing garden. The Renucci Hospitality House is located at the corner of Crescent and Ransom Streets next to Spectrum Health Butterworth Hospital and Helen DeVos Children's Hospital.



## Thebes Players present the musical Nunsense

Looking for a little diversion and fun during the season of Lent? Then try the Lowell Area Arts Council's Thebes Players musical production of Nunsense the last two weekends in March. Nunsense is a musical written by Dan Goggin, an Alma, Michigan native. The production received many Broadway awards when initially run in New York. Pat Cradit, who plays Mother Superior, is no stranger to this particular musical. Cradit had performed Nunsense for the Flat River Players in Greenville several years ago. Playing a different role then; she's playing the "Head Nun" this time. Playing Sister Mary Hubert is Corrie VanRavenswaay, a well known local talent from many years as a Showboat Endmen and a soprano for the Grand Rapids Symphony Chorus. Jennifer Berg plays Sister Robert Anne. Jayne Werner, playing Sister Mary Annesia, comes to Lowell all the way from Dorr, MI. And our most recent nun to join the convent will be Sister Mary Leo, played by Lowell native Diane Hammerman. Hammerman. In a cameo role is also Lowell native Bonnie Grooters as the "Stage Manager". Directing his very first Thebes Player's production

is Tod Nyson, who has had many years of experience directing the Lowell Area High School's musicals including Grease, Wizard of OZ, Cinderella, and The Pirates of Penzance. Nunsense is set in a Catholic high school gym in Hoboken, New Jersey. So in that vein, this production will take place in the Cherry Creek Elementary cafeteria and stage (12675 Foreman Rd., Lowell) to give it that "school" feel. Old timers familiar with previous productions at Cherry Creek will feel right at home with the table of 4 and 6 seating. Show dates are Friday and Saturday, March 20, 21, 27, and 28 with dinner at 6:30 p.m., show starting at 7:30 p.m. There will be one matinee on Sunday, March 29, with dinner at 1:30 p.m., show at 2:30 p.m. Ticket prices are \$23 for the dinner and show, in advance only. Tickets for just the show are \$8 in advance, or \$10 at the door. (Please arrive 30 minutes ahead of time.) With limited seating, advance tickets are highly recommended. Seating is assigned, so call the Lowell Area Arts Council at 616-897-8545, or stop by the Arts Council on 149 S. Hudson St., Lowell. For more information visit www.lowellartscouncil.org.

### FLAT RIVER OUTREACH MINISTRIES

**SITE FOR FREE TAX PREPARATION ASSISTANCE**

United Way's Kent County Tax Credit Coalition is providing free tax preparations and the F.R.O.M. Building located at 11535 Fulton Street East, Lowell, is one of the sites offering this service. (The F.R.O.M. Building is located between Goodwill and Key Heights Trailer Park.)

The service is being offered on Tuesdays from 4-8 p.m. and is available by appointment only. To register, or to see if your family is eligible, please call 897-8260.

### LOWELL LIGHT AND POWER PUBLIC NOTICE

Lowell Light and Power will be submitting its Renewable Portfolio Standards (RPS) Plan and its Energy Optimization (EO) Plan to the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) for review, in compliance with Michigan Public Act 295, by April 4th, 2009. As part of the review and submission process, Lowell Light and Power is soliciting comments to these Plans from its customers. The comment period will be from March 27th, 2009 through May 15th, 2009.

Copies of the Plans may be obtained from the Lowell Light and Power office located at 127 N. Broadway, Lowell, MI on or after March 27th, 2009. Interested persons may submit comments in writing to the General Manager anytime before May 15th, 2009 or in person at the Lowell Light and Power Board Meeting scheduled for April 1st, 2009.

The Board Meeting will be held at the Lowell Light and Power offices, 127 N. Broadway, Lowell, MI at 5:30 PM. Please note that this meeting date is not the regularly scheduled meeting time for the Lowell Light and Power Board. The meeting has been changed to the April 1st date for April's Board Meeting.

3-11-09 Daniel Blauw P37283  
1515 Michigan NE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49503  
616-336-5098

James Kozlowski  
2709 O'Brien SW  
Grand Rapids, MI 49544  
616-453-0475

Gayle Coleman  
PO Box 448  
Belmont, MI 49306  
616-863-8924

### LEGAL NOTICES

**STATE OF MICHIGAN PROBATE COURT COUNTY OF KENT**

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**  
Decedent's Estate

File No. 09-186,365-DE

Estate of WILLIAM T. QUILLAN  
Date of Birth 1/20/1928

TO ALL CREDITORS:

NOTICE TO CREDITORS:  
The decedent, WILLIAM T. QUILLAN, who lived at 3000 Monroe NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49505, died 11/20/2008.

Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to GAYLE COLEMAN, named personal representative or proposed personal representative, or to both the probate court at 180 Ottawa NW, Suite 2500, Grand Rapids, MI 49503 and the named/proposed personal representative within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.

**STATE OF MICHIGAN PROBATE COURT COUNTY OF KENT**

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**  
Decedent's Estate

File No.09-186515-DE

Estate of STANLEY JOHN KOZLOWSKI  
Date of Birth February 14,1918

TO ALL CREDITORS:

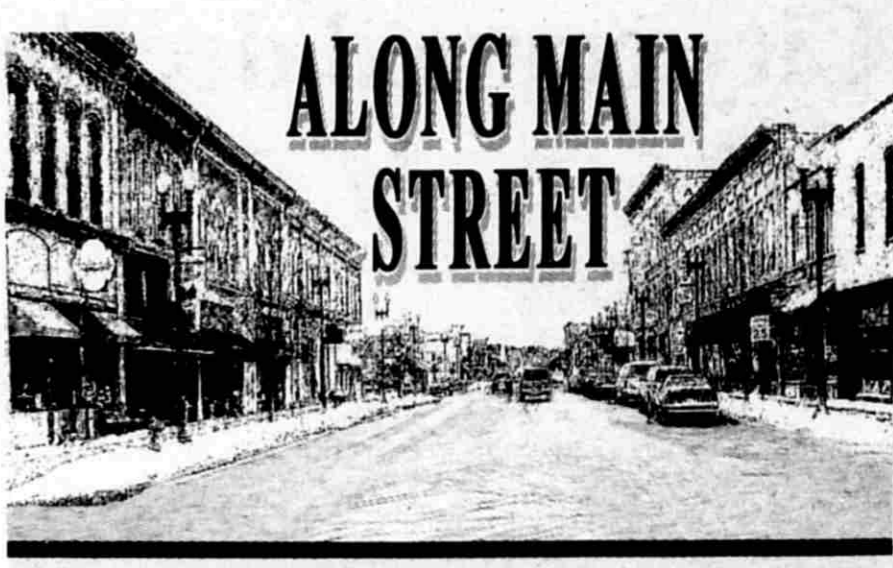
NOTICE TO CREDITORS:  
The decedent, STANLEY JOHN KOZLOWSKI, who lived at 55 Garfield NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49504, died February 7, 2009.

Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to JAMES KOZLOWSKI, named personal representative or proposed personal representative, or to both the probate court at 180 Ottawa NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49503 and the named/proposed personal representative within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.

## Utility increase, continued ... From Page 1

an energy efficiency plan by April 4. To save money and personnel, the utility will work with the city for joint meter reading and joint billing. "We're looking at joint billing," said Pierce. "We anticipate cost savings on personnel."

The utility's capital improvement plan reflects a \$40,000 investment into hand held meter readers rather than the current paper route book system. "We're looking at an investment into meter readers that could read water and electricity," said Pierce. The utility will offer rebates for compact fluorescent bulbs, as well as start energy audits for commercial customers. The Lowell Light and Power will also work with low income housing on energy efficiency



**BAKE POTATO FUNDRAISER**  
The Lowell Senior Center will host a bake potato and salad fundraiser on Sat., March 21, noon-2 p.m. Free will donations will be accepted for the Lowell Senior Center Building Fund.

**LWC GRANT REQUESTS**  
The Lowell Women's Club is now accepting grant requests from Lowell Community Organizations which are in keeping with our philosophy, goals and mission. This application does not apply to LWC Scholarships. You can access an application form from www.lowellwomensclub.org or call Karen Thomure at 897-9862. Deadline is Mar. 18.

**LOWELL QUITTERS MEETS TUESDAY**  
Lowell Quitters group is meeting Tuesday, March 24, 6-8 p.m. at Lowell Family Medical Center, 2550 East Main St. This group meets to support those who have quit smoking or those who want information on quitting, including free local classes. Questions, call Jodie Seese, 616-446-7058.

**LOWELL HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS**  
General Local Scholarship applications are due to Mrs. Nauta in the Student Services Center no later than 3 p.m. on Friday, March 20, absolutely no exceptions. Don't forget your two letters of recommendation and personal statement. For more information please call 987-2913.

**SPAY NEUTER EXPRESS**  
The Spay Neuter Express will be offering spays and neuters for cats at the West Michigan Pet Expo on April 4. The fee will be \$25 for the surgery. The Spay Neuter Express is a mobile veterinary surgical hospital that focuses on sterilization of pets for low income families, rescue groups, and barn and cat colonies. Call 616-897-8865 for information.

## LOST DOG

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MON/WED/TH 4:35, 6:50, 9:00

THE LAST HOUSE ON THE LEFT (R)  
TUE 12:15, 2:40, 5:05, 7:30, 9:55  
MON/WED/TH 5:05, 7:30, 9:55

WATCHMEN (R)  
TUE 12:00, 3:15, 6:30, 9:45  
MON/WED/TH 6:30, 9:45

INKHEART (PG) TUE 12:20, 2:45, 5:00  
MON/WED/TH 5:00

THE UNBORN (PG-13) DAILY 7:20, 9:30  
FIRED UP (PG-13) DAILY 5:10, 7:10  
TAKEN (PG-13) TUE 1:00, 3:05, 9:20  
MON/WED/TH 9:20

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# City council decides to keep Lowell clean and well kept

by Emma Palova  
 Lowell will keep its streets clean and roofs patched in good times or bad times. After much ado, the city council approved five street sweeps to keep Lowell clean for the upcoming activities in spite of a cheaper proposal. Department of Public Works director Dan DesJarden proposed four sweeps due to budget constraints and the uncertainty of the economy. But, the majority of the council members felt that

the city should be kept clean, even in tight economic times. "Let's keep what we're accustomed to," said Mayor Hodges. "Five is better than four. We need a sweep before Riverwalk." The bid for five sweeps was awarded to Street Sweep, Inc. of Holland. The price is based on 40 curb miles. The Michigan Department of Transportation reimburses the city for sweeping M21. In the same spirit of cleaning up, the council approved \$490 for patching

up the flat roof on the cable television building. The anchor bolt holes from the removed satellite dishes will be patched. Further, DesJarden will explore the construction of a pitched roof with potential funding from the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) or the cable TV fund.

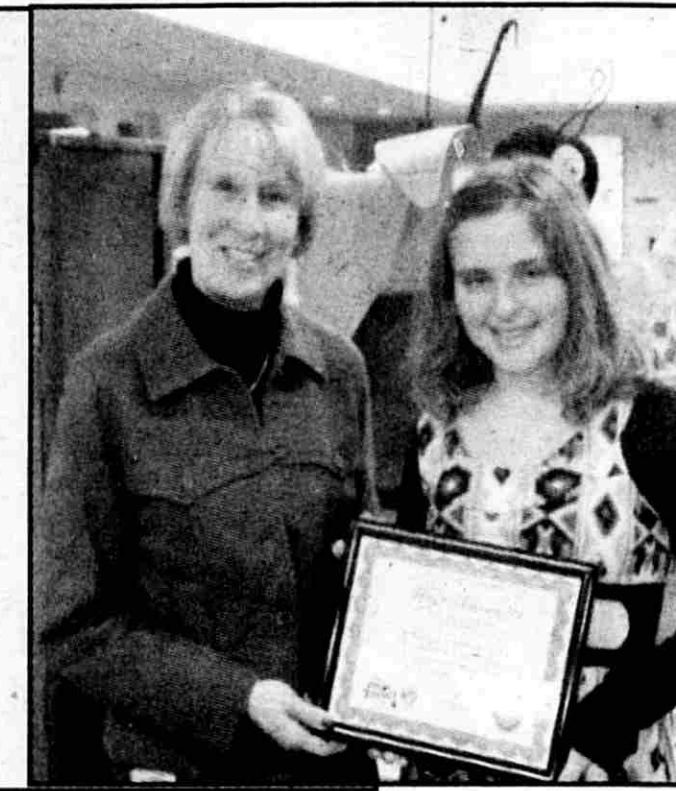
Council member Jeff Altoft said cable TV funds should be used for this, since the cable TV leased it. Neither the city or the cable put any money aside for maintenance. "The cable TV leased it, and didn't make sure money was set aside," said Altoft. "Let's take care of

the problem right away, no patching and let's use the cable TV money." However, the majority of the council members was against using the cable TV money for the roof repairs. "If we improve the building, it's best to use the DDA funds," said council woman Sharon Ellison.

Hodges said it's better to go to the DDA rather than looking into using cable TV funds. "DDA is a good first step," said Hodges. "We're looking into the future at something with a pitch. There's nothing good about a flat roof."

## Alto teacher winner of Cool Teacher award

Barb Schneider, fifth grade teacher at Alto Elementary is the latest teacher to receive the WGUV Cool Teacher award. WGUV honored Schneider and her class with a pizza party on March 13. Each month, WGUV judges all new entries and selects the three best letters based on the students' evidence of learning. WGUV hosts a pizza party for the winning teachers and their nominating student. Lexie Bowen nominated Schneider. Both will receive four vouchers each, from Amtrak, for a trip from Grand Rapids to Chicago on an Amtrak train. On May 12, WGUV will host a year end awards celebration at The Pinnacle to honor all of this year's winning teachers. WGUV videotaped a group shot of the entire class waving to the camera. Bowen presenting Schneider with the award and also taped Bowen telling why she thinks Schneider is exceptional. The taped segments will be put together in a promotional spot that will air on WGUV around children's programming.



**PASSPORT DAY IN THE USA AT THE 13TH ANNUAL LOWELL COMMUNITY EXPO LOWELL HIGH SCHOOL 11700 VERGENNES ROAD SATURDAY, MARCH 28, 2009, 9:00 A.M. TO 3:30 P.M.**

VISIT **LOWELL CITY HALL & MODERN PHOTOGRAPHICS BOOTHS (GYM "A")**

**EACH APPLICANT WILL NEED TO COMPLETE AN APPLICATION AND:**  
 (Applications are available online at [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov) or at Expo)

1. Provide a certified birth certificate; previously issued passport or Certificate of Naturalization
2. Two passport photos - Modern Photographics will do photos for \$20.00 at the Expo
3. Valid drivers' license or State issued ID (or that of a parent if 16 or 17 years old and both parents if under 16)
4. Application fee (check or money order made out to "U.S. Dept. of State") for: U.S. Passport Book (valid for travel by air, sea or land):  
 \$75 (16 years and over)  
 \$60 (age 15 years and under)  
 U.S. Passport Card (Not for travel by air - valid for land and sea crossings between the U.S. and Canada, Mexico, Bermuda and the Caribbean only)  
 \$20 (16 years and older)  
 \$10 (age 15 years and under)
5. Execution Fee (check or money order made out to "City of Lowell") for \$25.00

All applicants including children must appear at the time of processing. Passport applicants under 16 years old must have both parents present. Please allow 4 to 6 weeks for processing. Expedited services are available.

**NOTE: On June 1, 2009, U.S. citizens must present a passport book, passport card, or other travel documents approved by the U.S. government to enter the United States from Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean and Bermuda at land borders and sea ports of entry.**

Questions call City Hall at 897-8457 prior to Expo. Passport applications processed Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at City Hall, 301 East Main Street, Lowell, Michigan.

## Free IRS tax help available this Saturday

This year's "Super Saturday" program, which provides free IRS tax preparation assistance, will take place on March 21, 2009. The IRS program helps citizens across the country understand and complete their federal tax returns. Those earning \$42,000 or less are eligible for free tax return preparation. Representatives will also be on hand to assist those who, regardless of income, have a tax problem or who may be unable to pay their tax bill. "In times of economic distress, this program will help Michigan families save money and rest easier," said Senator Debbie Stabenow. Individuals looking for help preparing their return are asked to bring:

- Valid driver's license or photo identification (self and spouse, if applicable).
  - Social Security cards for all persons listed on the return.
  - Dates of birth for all persons listed on the return.
  - All income statements: Forms W-2, 1099, Social Security, unemployment, or other benefits statements, self-employment records and any documents showing taxes withheld.
  - Dependent child care information: payee's name, address and Social Security Number or Taxpayer Identification Number.
  - Proof of account at financial institution for direct debit or deposit (i.e. cancelled/voided check or bank statement).
  - Prior year tax return (if available).
  - Any other pertinent documents or papers.
- Times and locations of IRS "Super Saturday" sites in the Grand Rapids area are listed below:
- IRS Office, 3251 N. Evergreen Drive NE, 49525, hours 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.  
 Baxter Community Center, 935 Baxter Street SE, 49506, partner: AARP, hours 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.  
 Creston CRC, 1351 Buffalo, 49505, partner: Kent County Tax Credit Coalition, hours 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.  
 The Source VITA, 1409 Buchanan SW, 49507, partner: Kent County Tax Credit Coalition, hours 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

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# Viewpoint

## To The Editor

Dear Editor:

Have they no shame? How can corporations give bonuses from taxpayer bailout money? As an American, I am saddened beyond belief that greed has so overcome common decency. Screw your neighbor, just be sure it's in the contract and your hands are tied! Doesn't the contract become null and void when you accept a bailout from your government? What about the real victims losing their homes and living in tents? What's more, why should we continue to throw good money after bad? This is corporate welfare. Let corporate America donate their big bonuses, sell their assets and bailout their own companies or let them fail. Give a man a fish, he'll expect one tomorrow, teach a man to fish and he will learn to survive. When will politically correct meet common sense? Have we grown so complacent that we shall now allow the "fleecing of America" to grow to a deficit in the trillions? How can we create a healthy new economy and prosperous business environment with this amount of debt? Americans voice your opinions, e-mail your local TV

station, your local congressman, local newspapers and anyone else you can find. Let them know this is a bunch of bull dew and you're not going to keep a politically correct attitude any longer.

It's time to throw the tea into the sea!

Veronica Blough

Dear Editor:

Our nation is going through a world wide recession or depression depending who is evaluating it. Michigan alone has been in a recession for almost eight years. 670 million in spending cuts and the reduction of 1500 state employees have been recommended for Michigan's State budget. Every area from correction facilities to education will be affected. Michigan has lost 400,000 manufacturing jobs since the decade began and revenues have declined sharply. What I can't comprehend is how some can continue to ignore the bleeding of funds from the state of Michigan for unnecessary projects. We continue to conform to ways of the do-gooders and their pet projects. You don't have to look any farther than our own community to understand what I'm talking about. Our true needs should be our agenda not our wants.

Jim Howard



## Financial Focus

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

### GIVE YOUR INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO A SPRING CLEANING

Spring is almost here - time to spruce up your house and get rid of your clutter. But this year, don't confine your spring cleaning to your home and yard. Why not "freshen up" your investment portfolio at the same time? Of course, you can't just take a mop and broom to your brokerage statement. But some of the same principles that apply to your basic spring cleaning can work just as well when you tidy up your investments. Consider the following suggestions:

- Take an inventory of your belongings. If you're like most people, you've got some things lying around your house that have outlived their usefulness. It might be that lawn mower that died in 2004 or the toaster that warmed its last slice during the Clinton Administration, but whatever it is, it's beyond repair - and it should go. And the same may be true of some of your investments. If one hasn't performed the way you had hoped or no longer fits into your long-term goals, this might be a good time to speak with a financial advisor.
- Dispose of your duplicates. If you went through

your house carefully, you might be surprised at how many items you have that do the same thing. Do you really need two colanders? And how many radios can you listen to at one time? If you looked at your investment portfolio the same way, you might be surprised by some of the redundancies that pop up. For example, you may have several stocks issued by similar companies that make similar products. This might not be a concern when the stock market is booming, but it could be a definite problem if a downturn affects the industry to which these companies belong. Always look for ways to diversify your holdings. While diversification, by itself, cannot guarantee a profit or protect against a loss, it may help reduce the effects of market volatility.

- Put things back in order. Over time, and almost before you're aware of it, the spaces in your home can get "out of balance." Perhaps you have too many chairs in one corner, or maybe your new desk takes up too much space in your home office. With some rearranging, however, you can get things back in order. The same need for rearrangement may apply to your portfolio, which might have become unbalanced with too much of one investment and too little of another. This situation could undermine your financial strategy, especially if the imbalance means you are taking on too much risk or, conversely, if your holdings have become too conservative to provide the growth you need. So, look for ways to restore your portfolio to its proper balance.
- By giving your portfolio an annual spring cleaning, you can help make sure it's up-to-date, suited to your needs and well-positioned to help you make progress toward your key financial goals. And you can do it all without going near a dust cloth.

This notice paid for with public donations

# FREE to the public!

## Weight Loss & Stop Smoking Hypnotherapy

Health Awareness Clinics is providing therapists to administer weight loss, stop smoking, and stress relief group hypnotic therapy. For many people, this therapy reduces 2 to 3 clothing sizes and/or stops smoking. Funding for this project comes from public donations. Anyone who wants treatment will receive professional hypnotherapy free from charge.

An appointment is not necessary. Sign in and immediately receive treatment. Health Awareness Clinics is a non-profit organization. They rely on donations to make treatment available to those in need. A modest \$5.00 donation when signing in is appreciated. Only one 2 hour session is needed for desirable results. **Sign in 30 min. early**

**Monday Mar 30, 7:30pm**  
 VFW  
 3116 Alden Nash  
**LOWELL**

**Wednesday Apr 1, 7:30pm**  
 VFW  
 1324 E. Bridge St.  
**PORTLAND**

HealthAwarenessClinics.org  
 (713) 927-3364



By Shelly MacNaughton

### 125 YEARS AGO THE LOWELL JOURNAL MARCH 19, 1884

Merritt Moore, who has been engaged to organize a new political party in this state, openly boasts that he is doing what he can to crush the Republican Party. The amount of his salary is not stated. High water invited the water power mills here to shut down again last Thursday and present indications indicate that they will remain shut down for some days yet.

### 100 YEARS AGO THE LOWELL LEDGER MARCH 18, 1909

Reconstruction work on Train's opera house was stopped Thursday evening March 11 by an injunction served upon Mrs. Train and her agent V. S. Raymond by the village authorities. The owner insisted on believing that the village has it in for her, a charge in which there is not one iota of truth.

### 75 YEARS AGO THE LOWELL LEDGER AND ALTO SOLO MARCH 22, 1934

Headline: Not Guilty Says Skellenger Jury Rosten Skellenger, 53-year-old Grattan Center garage man, was acquitted by a circuit jury Friday of the murder of his brother Andrew, 57, on the afternoon of February 1. Charles E. Bowen, well-known farmer residing near White's Bridge, about 9 miles north of Lowell, had an experience with lightning while feeding his livestock during the electrical storm last Saturday morning which he will not soon forget. Although Mr. Bowen fortunately escaped death himself, three of his cattle were killed instantly and ten other cattle were knocked down by the bolt.

### 50 YEARS AGO THE LOWELL LEDGER MARCH 19, 1959

The open house at the school on Monday night, sponsored by the Parent Teacher Association, proved to be a huge success. Hundreds of parents and others interested in what the pupils have been doing went from room to room and usually wound up at the all purpose room, where coffee and cookies were served by a committee of the P.T.A.

### 25 YEARS AGO THE GRAND VALLEY LEDGER MARCH 21, 1984

Don Fizer, owner of Michigan Wire Processing Co. told members of the Lowell City Council Monday night that his company was prepared to pay \$75,000 for the five-acre parcel that is now the site of Recreation Park.

**FAXING**  
 Sending or Receiving  
 \$1 for 1st sheet, 50c each additional sheet  
**The Lowell Ledger**  
 105 N. Broadway, Lowell



# Economy and new tax hit smokers hard

by Jodie Seese  
Effective April 1, there is a tax increase on tobacco products. The Congress and President Obama passed the new tax in February to expand funding for the State Children's Health Insurance Programs (CHIP). It will add a 62-cent per pack increase of the current cigarette tax.

According to the US Treasury Department's Alcohol and Tobacco Tax Bureau, the tax will also affect cigars, smokeless tobacco, known as chew tobacco and loose tobacco sold by the pound. The Roll Your Own or RYO as it's called, had a federal tax of \$1.09 before the hike. Now that will increase to \$24.78 per pound.

Local cigarette retailers in Lowell have reported that the cigarette manufacturers have jumped the gun with Phillip Morris (manufacturers of Marlboro brand) and RJ Reynolds (who make Camels) increasing their prices 20-70 cents per pack, before the tax increase has even taken effect.

Fortunately in Lowell, local programs can help ease the pain- financially and emotionally for smokers. The Lowell Quitters meet Tuesday evening, March 24 at Lowell Family Medical from 6-8 p.m. These meetings are helpful for those who have quit and are looking for support or those who want accurate information on how to quit. Also available is a free resource guide, which includes information on local classes, Internet educational programs, phone counseling options and medication assistance plans.

"Recent economic conditions are particularly hard on smokers. For this population, smoking is often their coping mechanism; it's how they try to reduce stress. The tax increase only compounds the problem," says Jodie Seese, a nationally certified tobacco addiction and treatment specialist. "I realize non-smokers won't necessarily understand, but when you're dealing with an addiction, as smokers are, it's not something you can just walk away from."

Programs like support groups and classes are two types of proven methods for successful quitting according to the Mayo Clinic- Nicotine Dependence Center, the nation's leading authority on smoking cessation. Seese notes that Lowell's programs continue to have higher enrollment numbers than other communities in West Michigan. "We are so fortunate to have both on-going classes and a support group right here in Lowell. These services are offered at no charge and you don't have to drive to Grand Rapids." Anyone interested can call 616-446-7058.

The third recommendation from the Mayo Clinic on quitting is to use medication to help with withdrawal. Medications can be in the form of a prescription or nicotine replacement therapy (NRT). The State of Michigan announced last week it is offering free NRT such as gum and lozenges as part of its Quitline. These products are available without income or insurance qualifications by calling 1-800-QUIT-NOW.

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), increasing tobacco taxes is a proven strategy to reduce smoking and other tobacco use, particularly among smokers under age 18. The CDC has monitored past tax increases and the impact is significant. This current increase will lead to nearly two million fewer kids starting to smoke, help more than one million adult smokers quit and prevent nearly 900,000 smoking-caused deaths. There are also great financial savings, not only for those who quit, but in long-term health care savings, which is estimated to over \$44.5 billion.

The next free smoking class starts on Tuesday, April 28, 6 p.m. at Lowell Family Medical. To register for the class go to [www.tobaccofreepartners.org](http://www.tobaccofreepartners.org) or call 616-446-7058.

# Happy Birthday

- MARCH 18:**  
Bruce Phillips Jr., Chase Treglia, Jim Hacker, Denise (Brenk) Woolfenden.
- MARCH 21:**  
Terry Raymor, Ardis Barber, Gary Yeiter, Molly Clark.
- MARCH 23:**  
Brian Gabrion, Richard King, Brendan Lally.
- MARCH 19:**  
Jeremy Barber, Elmer Czapek, Terry B. Abel, Kimberly Dixon, Sean Ellison, Alberta Ryder.
- MARCH 24:**  
Joe Vezino Jr., Candy Speerstra, Isobel Edwards, Angela Titcombe, Marian Rutherford.
- MARCH 20:**  
John Roudabush, Cody Moore, Denise Fyan.

# College News

The University of Findlay has announced the Dean's list for spring semester.

Included on the list was Kristin Johnson, a marketing major, from Alto.

In order to be placed on the Dean's list a student must attain a grade point average of 3.5 on a 4.0 scale.

Western Michigan University has released the winter 2008 graduation list.

Included on the list from Lowell are Alyssa B. Coffey, with a Bachelor of Arts degree; Michael J. Forward, with a Master of Science in Accountancy degree; and Julia A. McIntire, with a Master of Arts degree.

# Reflections of faith

by Roger LaWarre  
I like the imagery that comes with Psalm 34 - a Psalm offering praise to God and acknowledging that God's power is available to all people of faith. It is a Psalm that uses such imagery as "praise being in my mouth" or "angels encamping around those who know fear" and the imagery of "tasting" God's goodness. These are graphic and wonderful images of a relationship with God that sustains and carries us through our times of difficulty and change. Since Lent is a time of letting go of all that blocks or separates us from a true relationship with God, this Psalm is truly a source of hope and strength in our journey toward living an Easter

faith. A Story: At the University of Chicago Divinity School annual "Baptist Day" the school invites one of the great minds in Theology to come and speak. On this occasion, the school had invited Paul Tillich to speak. Dr. Tillich had spoken for over two hours, quoting scholars and academic writings, concluding that there is no such thing as a historical resurrection and emphasizing that the religious tradition of the resurrection of Jesus was groundless. After concluding that Jesus never rose from the dead in any literal sense, he asked if there were any questions.

After about 30 seconds, an old, dark skinned preacher with a head of short-cropped, woolly white hair stood up. "Docta Tillich, I got a question," he said as all eyes turned toward this stately gentleman. He reached into his sack lunch and pulled out an apple and began eating it. "Docta Tillich..." (crunch, munch) "My question is a simple question," (crunch, munch) "Now I ain't never read those books you

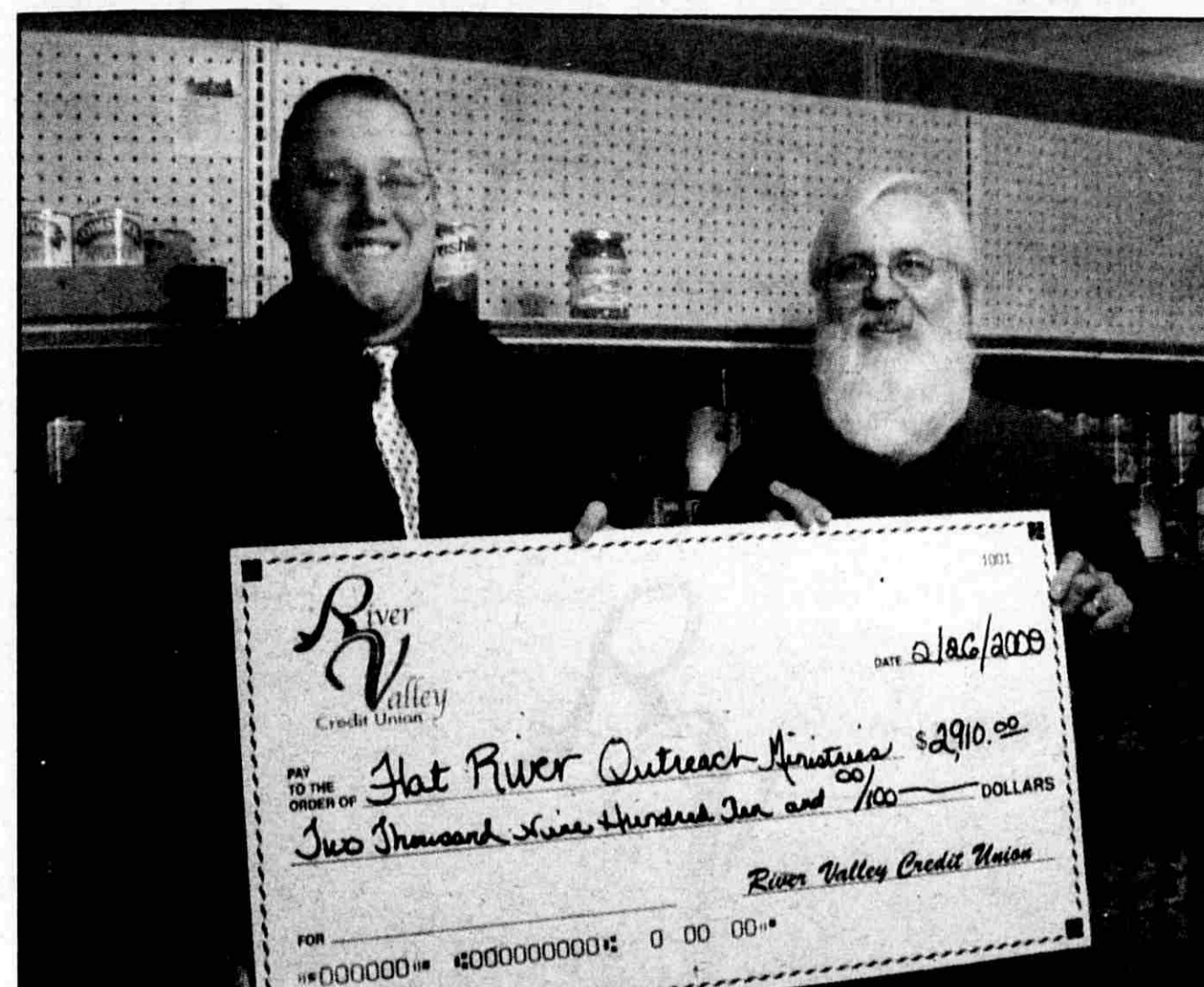
read..." (crunch, munch) "and I can't recite the Scriptures in the original Greek..." (crunch, munch) "I don't know nothin' about Niebuhr and Heidegger..." (crunch, munch - he finished the apple) "All I wanna know is: This apple I just ate--was it bitter or sweet?"

Dr. Tillich paused for a moment and then answered the question in true scholarly fashion: "I cannot possibly answer that question, for I haven't tasted your apple."

The white haired preacher dropped the core of his apple back into the bag, looked at Dr. Tillich and calmly said, "Neither have you tasted my Jesus."

Encourage you to think about this story and, as you continue your Lenten journey, move your religious life beyond knowledge and platitude to trust and relationship. "Taste and see that the Lord is good; happy are those who take refuge in God." Psalm 34:8

# River Valley raises funds for F.R.O.M.



Cutter Phillips from River Valley Credit Union, left, is shown presenting a check to Kraig Haybarker from the Flat River Outreach Ministries. River Valley Credit Union raised \$2,910 from its annual Skip-A-Payment promotion and donated it to Flat River Outreach Ministries.

# Lowell High School Students of the Month

In conjunction with the LHS Academic Boosters, Lowell High School is proud to announce that Taylor Thomson, 12th grade, and Joseph McCorkle, 11th grade, are the LHS February Students of the Month.

In order to be eligible for this honor a student must be nominated by a department. All the nomination forms for the month are then reviewed and voted on at the monthly Department Chair Meeting, selecting two students to be honored for the month. Students are

selected based on academic achievement, character, and work ethic. There are 1315 students eligible for nomination. The students receive a \$20 movie gift card and a certificate.

Thomson was nominated by the Physical Education department, and they write, "She is a very hard worker, very impressed by her dedication and proud of her personal achievement."

McCorkle was nominated by the Science Department and they state, "When in lab he is engaged with his group

members and contributes more than his share to group responsibilities. I'm glad to see him do well. He

continues to make really good personal decisions involving his academics in biology."



Joseph McCorkle



Taylor Thomson

**POLICE VEHICLE AUCTION**  
**FRIDAY, MARCH 27, 10AM**  
1177 O.E. Bieri Industrial Drive,  
Lowell, 1995 Contour Red,  
VIN:3FALP67L3SM127200, 1982  
Chevy Scottsdale P/U Blue,  
VIN:2GCEK14CXD1189082.  
For info call 616-868-7239

**Happy Sweet Sixteen Whitney!**  
Love, Dad & Mom

**Dogs R Us Grooming**  
By appointment only  
Ph: 616-260-2703  
12125 Alden Nash Meadows, Lowell  
Gloria Burnett,  
Professional Groomer & Proprietor

# AREA CHURCH DIRECTORY

 <b>ALTO UNITED METHODIST CHURCH</b> Kirby and Harrison Alto • 616-691-8011 Worship.....9:30 A.M. Children's Church.....9:30 A.M. <b>OPEN HEARTS - OPEN MINDS - OPEN DOORS</b> Pastor Dean Bailey	<b>DAY BIBLE CHAPEL</b> 9305 Centerline, Saranac 897-6332 Worship.....9:45 A.M. Sunday School.....11:00 A.M. Nursery & Jr. Church Provided Rev. Frank Lattimore, Pastor "A Nondenominational Ministry With A Blended Word Centered Service!"	<b>CALVARY CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH OF LOWELL</b> Rev. Randy Meyers - 897-7060 1151 West Main Street, Lowell, MI Morning Worship.....10:00 A.M. Sunday School.....11:20 A.M. Evening Worship.....6:00 P.M. Nursery available at both services Barrier-Free	 <b>ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH</b> Fr. Eugene Okaji 402 Amity St. • 897-9820 www.stmary-lowell.com Weekend Masses: SAT. 5 PM; SUN. 9:30 AM Weekday Masses: 7:45 AM Holy Day Masses: 9 AM & 7 PM Saturday confessions: 10-10:30 AM Prayer & adoration each Wed. 8:15 AM - 8 PM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION, CHILDREN TO ADULTS • CALL PETE WIGANS 897-7915 SEE LOWELL CABLE CH. 49, EWIN FOR 24 HR. CATHOLIC BROADCASTING	 <b>FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF LOWELL</b> (United Church of Christ) 865 Lincoln Lake Ave. SE • 897-5906 Sunday Worship.....10:00 A.M. Church School.....10:15-11:15 A.M. Thursday Faith Alive!.....7:00 P.M. Rev. Terry Tassar.....Interim Pastor Shannon Hanley.....C.E. Director Barrier-free.....Nursery Provided Come Join Us For Praise & Worship
<b>FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF LOWELL</b> 621 E. Main Street • 897-5936 www.lowellumc.com WORSHIP.....8:30 & 10:15 a.m. Rev. Rick Blunt Barrier-free entrance	 <b>CHRISTIAN LIFE CENTER (Assembly of God)</b> 3050 Alden Nash S.E. • 897-1100 • Staffed Nursery Robert W. Holmes, Lead Pastor John King, Youth Pastor <b>SUNDAYS:</b> 10:00 a.m. - Worship & Evening LIFE home Groups & "The Source" Youth <b>WEDNESDAYS:</b> Family Night: (for all ages) 7:00 p.m. "The Source" Youth: 7:00 p.m. Loving God... Loving People!	<b>ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH</b> Fr. Eugene Okaji 402 Amity St. • 897-9820 www.stmary-lowell.com Weekend Masses: SAT. 5 PM; SUN. 9:30 AM Weekday Masses: 7:45 AM Holy Day Masses: 9 AM & 7 PM Saturday confessions: 10-10:30 AM Prayer & adoration each Wed. 8:15 AM - 8 PM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION, CHILDREN TO ADULTS • CALL PETE WIGANS 897-7915 SEE LOWELL CABLE CH. 49, EWIN FOR 24 HR. CATHOLIC BROADCASTING	 <b>FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF LOWELL</b> (United Church of Christ) 865 Lincoln Lake Ave. SE • 897-5906 Sunday Worship.....10:00 A.M. Church School.....10:15-11:15 A.M. Thursday Faith Alive!.....7:00 P.M. Rev. Terry Tassar.....Interim Pastor Shannon Hanley.....C.E. Director Barrier-free.....Nursery Provided Come Join Us For Praise & Worship	 <b>SNOW UNITED METHODIST CHURCH</b> 3189 Snow Ave. SE, Lowell Rev. Vance Dimmick Jr. 9:45 A.M. ....Worship/Fellowship 11:15 A.M. ....Sunday School 897-9863 or 897-9588 Nursery & Children Worship Programs Provided A friend...a family...a mission!
<b>GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH</b> 10305 Bluewater Highway (Missouri Synod) Halfway between Lowell & Saranac on M-21 www.goodshepherdlowell.org Worship Service.....10:00 A.M. Sunday School.....9:00 A.M. (Nursery available) Joseph Fremmer, Pastor 897-8307 All facilities are wheelchair accessible	<b>FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF LOWELL</b> 2275 West Main Street • 897-7168 Internet: <a href="http://www.fbclowell.org">http://www.fbclowell.org</a> Rev. David O. Sims & Rev. W. Lee Taylor Sun. Worship Service.....9:30 A.M. & 6:00 P.M. Sunday School Hour.....11:00 A.M. AWANA/EXCITE • TEENS. Wed. 6:15 & 6:30 P.M. Contact Church Office For Prayer Meeting Times Nursery Provided • Barrier Free	<b>ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH</b> Fr. Eugene Okaji 402 Amity St. • 897-9820 www.stmary-lowell.com Weekend Masses: SAT. 5 PM; SUN. 9:30 AM Weekday Masses: 7:45 AM Holy Day Masses: 9 AM & 7 PM Saturday confessions: 10-10:30 AM Prayer & adoration each Wed. 8:15 AM - 8 PM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION, CHILDREN TO ADULTS • CALL PETE WIGANS 897-7915 SEE LOWELL CABLE CH. 49, EWIN FOR 24 HR. CATHOLIC BROADCASTING	 <b>FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF LOWELL</b> (United Church of Christ) 865 Lincoln Lake Ave. SE • 897-5906 Sunday Worship.....10:00 A.M. Church School.....10:15-11:15 A.M. Thursday Faith Alive!.....7:00 P.M. Rev. Terry Tassar.....Interim Pastor Shannon Hanley.....C.E. Director Barrier-free.....Nursery Provided Come Join Us For Praise & Worship	 <b>SNOW UNITED METHODIST CHURCH</b> 3189 Snow Ave. SE, Lowell Rev. Vance Dimmick Jr. 9:45 A.M. ....Worship/Fellowship 11:15 A.M. ....Sunday School 897-9863 or 897-9588 Nursery & Children Worship Programs Provided A friend...a family...a mission!

# LOWELL AREA SCHOOLS BOARD BRIEFS

**Board Briefs Regular Meeting of March 9, 2009**

**Reports**

- Parker Liu, Student Representative, provided an update on high school and student council activities.
- Mr. Stempien provided a Unity Historical Project report.
- Mr. White provided an energy report.

**Action Items**

- Accepted the following gifts to the district:
  - TVSS (Transient Voltage Suppressor Systems), Valued at \$3,507.00, Donated by Joe Hancock, Hedrick Associates, to the Lowell Area Schools to be used at Bushnell and Cherry Creek
  - Children's Books and Magazines, Valued at \$188.00, Donated by Jacqui & Tim Dimmick, to be used at Murray Lake Elementary Media Center
  - 28 Computers, Valued at \$1,735.00, Donated by Amway, to the Lowell Area Schools
- Approved Chartwells Food Service Management Agreement
- Authorized Superintendent to Approve and Execute Bids for Phase Three of the Construction Process
- Denied Property Transfer Requests

**Consent Items Approved**

- Minutes for the February 9, 2009 Regular Meeting; February 14, 2009 Board Retreat; February 23, 2009 Special Meetings; February 23, 2009 Closed Session; and February 23, 2009 Work Session.
- The following payment of bills for March 9, 2009:

**Budget Update**

Mr. Zielinski summarized the budget status reports for the month of February. Mr. Zielinski stated that final amendments will be presented in June. Presentations regarding the 2009/2010 budget will be provided to staff at each building. Mr. Zielinski is monitoring the status of the federal stimulus dollars and is hoping that the funds will be provided in a manner that can be used to offset costs of programs.

**Curriculum Update**

Mr. Bearup announced that teachers participated in district professional development on March 6 and specified that elementary teachers worked on power standards,

**Board Discussion**

President Lessens announced that the election is scheduled for May 6, 2009.

**Superintendent's Report**

Superintendent Pratt extended congratulatory remarks to the high school wrestling team who succeeded in receiving the team title at the state tournament. Superintendent Pratt complimented the students and staff for their participation in "Seussical the Musical" for a job well done and urged community members to be the play. Superintendent Pratt announced that a significant amount of time and energy is being spent examining the federal stimulus dollars and identifying the stipulations for use in the budgeting process.

**Discussed core areas, and their work will progress to unwrapping power standards. The secondary teaching staff conducted exceptional work on power standards. Mr. Bearup informed the Board that the goal is to conclude the work on unwrapping power standards in order to work on assessments next fall. Mr. Bearup reported that the Michigan Merit Exam is being administered to students this week and the ACT is being administered to students this week and to students this week and the ACT is being administered on March 10. Mr. Bearup noted that the Department of Education will conduct an on-site review on May 5 & 6 of consolidated grants (Title 1 and Title 2). The Change Leadership Team met and developed goals to research secondary response to intervention programs nationwide and to strengthen math intervention systems at the elementary level.**

**1. GENERAL FUND.....\$1,166,190.97**  
**2. SCHOOL SERVICES FUND**  
A. Food Service Fund.....\$78,266.40  
B. Athletic Fund.....\$934.75  
C. Scholarship Fund.....\$3,479.10  
3. TRUST AND AGENCY FUND.....\$16,935.74  
4. DEBT FUNDS.....\$1,793.82  
5. 2007 CONSTRUCTION FUND.....\$135,316.87  
**TOTAL EXPENDITURES.....\$1,402,917.65**

# HEALTH

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

**PROSTATE CANCER**  
Prostate cancer is the most common cancer and second leading cause of cancer deaths in men. It has been estimated that more than 50 percent of men will develop prostate cancer by the age of 80, although many of these are sub clinical and many never cause any harm.

The prostate gland is about the size of a walnut. It is located just below the bladder and completely surrounds the urethra (the drainage tube that exits the bladder). The prostate produces seminal fluid that helps transport sperm.

There is some controversy regarding screening for prostate cancer because of concerns regarding benefits vs. risks of early detection. Proponents feel that early detection and treatment increases the chance for a cure. Opponents argue that treatment of a very early, slow growing cancer may actually cause more harm than good.

We usually recommend screening all men for prostate cancer at the age of 50 and at age 40 in those with a family history of prostate cancer. The usual screening test is a digital rectal exam (DRE - examining the prostate with a gloved finger) and the prostate specific antigen (PSA) blood test. If either of these tests is abnormal your doctor will recommend a trans-rectal ultrasound picture and biopsy of the prostate gland.

Treatment of prostate cancer varies depending on the stage of the tumor, general health and age of the patient. Options include simply watchful waiting, hormonal therapy, radiation and surgery.

Prostate cancer is different for every individual patient and it is important to discuss testing or treatment recommendations with your doctor depending on your specific situation.

For more information you can contact the American Urological Association at [www.urologyhealth.org](http://www.urologyhealth.org).

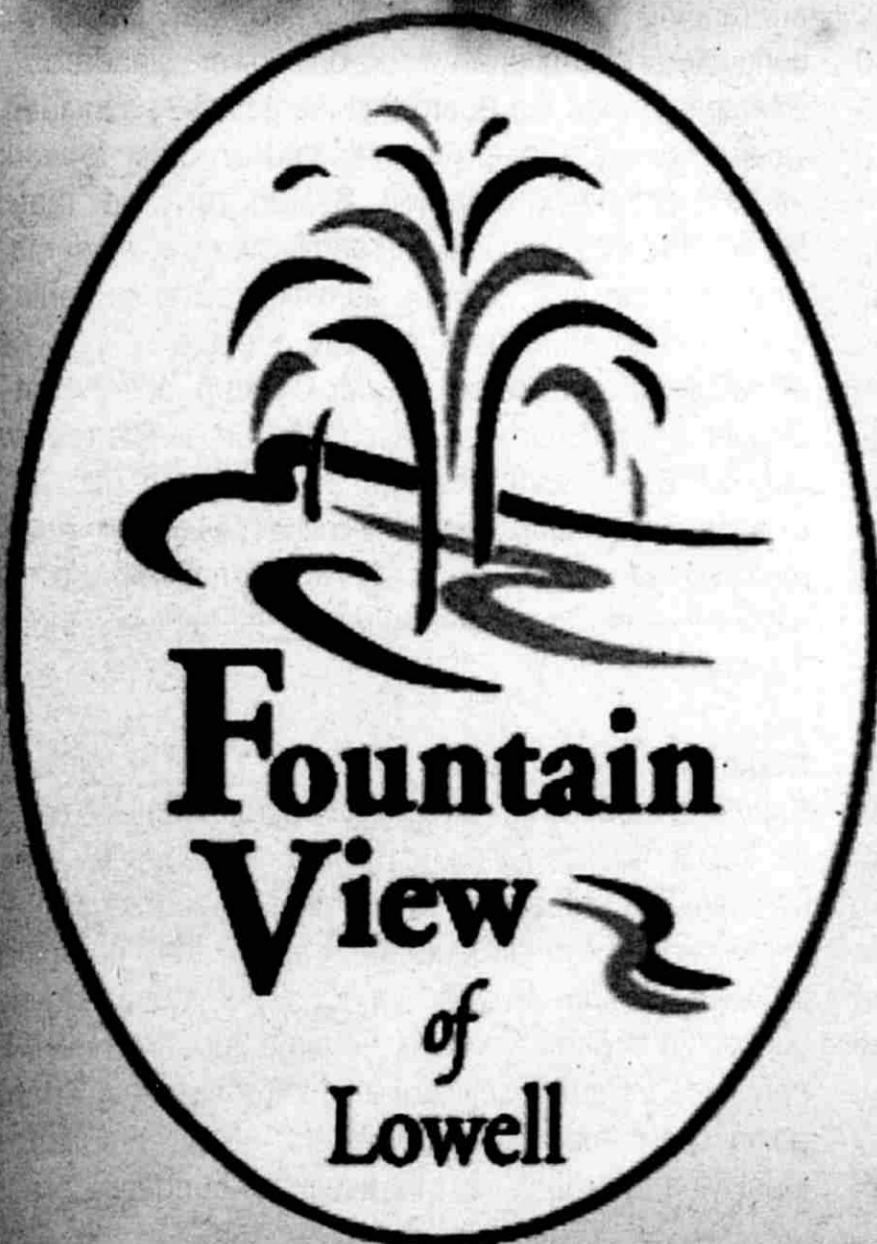


# A Better Place ... The Place of Choice

Fountain View

Peace of mind is the most important for my sister and me. Mom is 95 years young and has been residing at Fountain View of Lowell for 2 years. Mom loves attention and the staff really care for her and all the residents. Knowing her physical, mental and spiritual needs are met we have that peace of mind. Thank you Fountain View.

Sincerely,  
Shirley Baxter and  
Janice Sauber  
daughters of  
Ms. Agnes Kimball



## Fountain View Mission Statement

It is the purpose of Fountain View to honor God by providing high quality senior lifestyle services that promote the value and dignity of every person.

11535 E. Fulton • Lowell, MI 49331  
(616) 897-8413

[www.leisure-living.com](http://www.leisure-living.com)

## LARA moves forward with recreation plan and grant application

By Emma Palova

The Lowell Area Recreation Authority (LARA) adopted a recreation plan and grant application Wednesday at the Lowell Township Hall.

If funding is awarded from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), the construction of phase 1 would start next year. Phase 1, spanning 2.5 miles, will connect Cherry Creek Elementary to Wege Wittenbach Center.

The \$1.5 million project will be funded through a combination of grants, fundraising and private donations. The MDNR grant is up to \$500,000 with local matches. An MDOT grant can be used as a match to MDNR or vice versa.

"The main goal is to develop a non motorized trail system without local tax funds," said engineering consultant Dave Austin with Williams & Works.

The trail, partially paved and partially boardwalk, will run mostly along the road right-of-ways and through a few easements.

The environmentally friendly trail will involve all the existing facilities along its way, and perhaps historical facilities in the future.

"It's a community project primarily for pedestrian use," said Austin. "It will provide a connection between recreational facilities."

LARA is well positioned for the grant, according to Austin, since three different

trail systems all connect at one single point.

"We're in a neat situation," said Austin. "We've flipped a lot of switches."

And Lowell could become a hub of the distinct three trail systems.

"This puts Lowell on the map," said board member Perry Beachum.

The LARA Trailway, Safe Routes 2 School and Lowell Greenville Rail Trail all connect by Cherry Creek Elementary School.

"This is a benefit for grant funds," said Austin.

The LARA five-year plan which runs through 2014 includes the completion of survey and preliminary design, grant application and the development of a maintenance plan.

Some of the trailway concerns include parking lots and crossings. However, busy crossings like between the high school and the Wege Wittenbach Center, will have flashers and striping.

Signage directing to points of interest, topography and nature features will embellish the trail.

Some of these

interesting features along the trail include the Cooper Woodland Preserve, Wege Economicology, existing school facilities, ponds and wetlands.

"It's amazing what you can see in 2.5 miles," said Austin.

Resident Dave Thompson said one of the real assets of the program

is getting the kids off the roadway up Foreman to Alden Nash.

"It's a great program," he said.

Beauchum said one of the many objectives of the project is to provide an alternate route for kids to school.

"We have a competitive project," said Austin.



LARA board has been working on the trailway project since the late 1990s.

## Rails to trails, continued ... From Page 1

agreement that has been extended to April 2010.

"We're going to go ahead and leave intact what we've done so far," said Kane. "We'll acquire the corridor and then we can go forward. We'll try to iron out these issues. We're not trying to shut Greenville out."

According to Annamarie Bauer of Michigan Department of Natural Resources, the acquisition happens in phases.

"You move as it happens," she said. "We may

not have a connection now, but ultimately there may be a better one in the future. You move what's in process. It's a dynamic process."

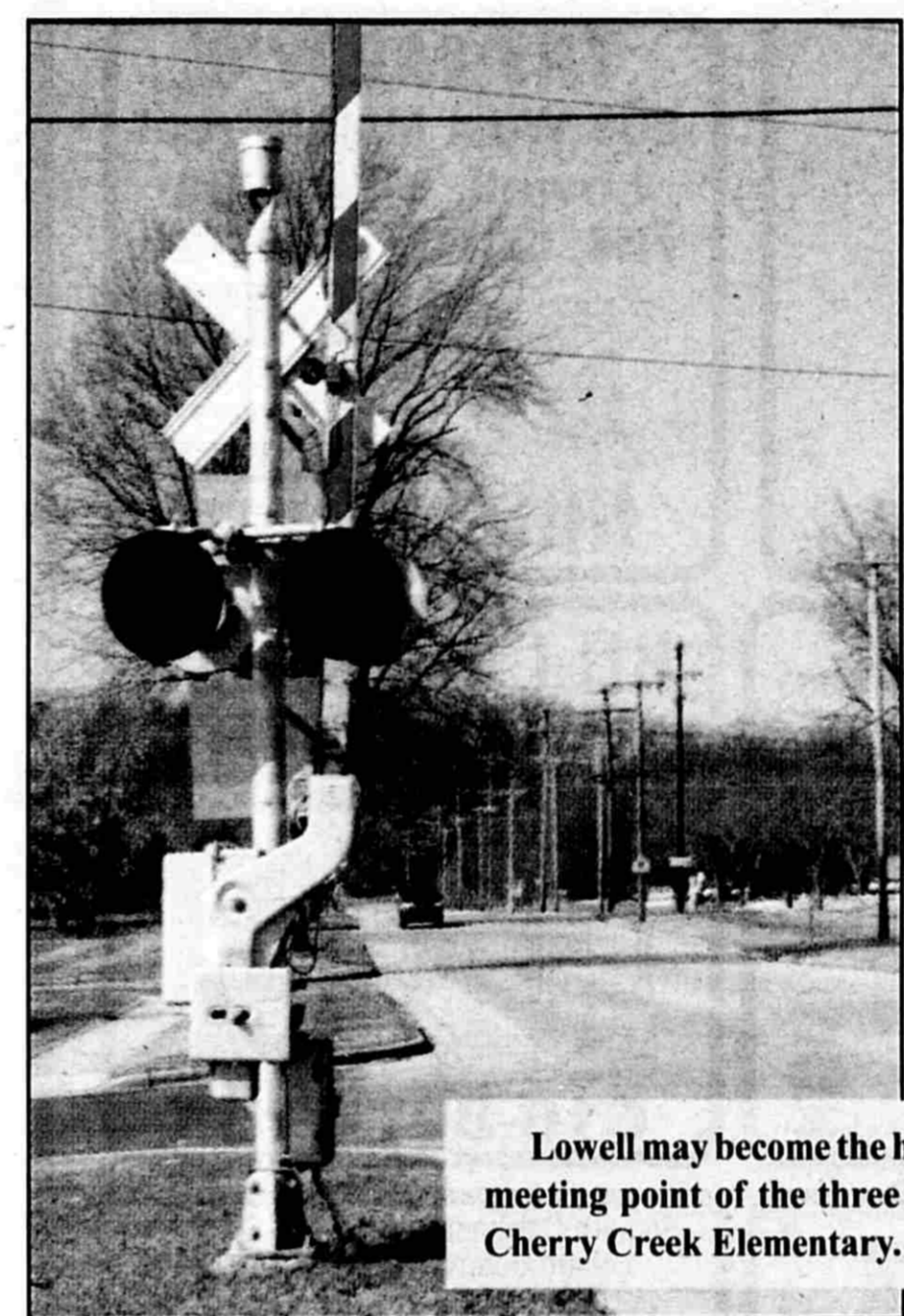
The group also discussed potential names for the project. The Ionia Lowell portion may be called The Grand River

Valley Rail Trail due to a big regional picture. The Lowell to Greenville portion may be called The Flat River Rail Trail. Communities along the trails will possibly get involved in naming the rail trails.

The survey conducted by Williams and Works is

almost complete. Closing on the Lowell to Ionia portion is expected by July. This portion will connect into the Clinton Ionia Shiawassee trail (CIS).

The trail progress will be highlighted at the Lowell Community Expo on March 28.



Lowell may become the hub of trails with its unique meeting point of the three distinct trails systems by Cherry Creek Elementary.

**FLAT RIVER  
OUTREACH  
MINISTRIES**

**INTRODUCING  
THE NEW  
F.R.O.M. LOGO!**

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A FEW NOTABLE EVENTS FROM MARCH 12 - MARCH 18 • 2009

- GM turns back \$2 billion government loan for March.
- 16 people missing after helicopter crash off Newfoundland, one rescued.
- U.S. teens are accused of acting as Mexican cartel hit men in Laredo, TX.
- Former first lady Barbara Bush is released from hospital nine days after having heart surgery.

- In Little Rock, Arkansas, 10 children drank windshield wash fluid. A daycare had mistakenly put the liquid in a refrigerator and served it. The daycare has given up their license.
- Angolan rabies outbreak kills 83 children.
- Sofa surprise: a cat was found inside a used couch that was accidentally donated along with other furniture. The new owners had been searching for days for the source of an odd noise coming from the couch. The animal survived.
- Iraqi shoe-throwing reporter was sentenced to three years in jail.
- 15 are killed in a school shooting in Germany. The 17-year-old gunman was also killed.
- In Alabama, a gunman goes on a rampage and kills 11 people including himself.
- President Obama vows to stop millions from being paid in bonuses to AIG execs.

- NASA launches the space shuttle Discovery with seven astronauts bound for the international space station. Two of the astronauts on board are former teachers.
- U.S. military shoots down an unmanned drone Iranian aircraft inside Iraqi airspace.

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## Lowell area students winners in essay contest

Three students from St. Patrick School in Ada have been named local winners in the 40th annual America & Me Essay Contest, sponsored by Farm Bureau Insurance.

The three students, who earned the first, second and third place awards for their school, are Taylor Gervais, first; John Mark, second; and Aaron Morris, third. All three received award certificates for their achievement. As the school's first place winner, Gervais' name will also be engraved on a plaque for permanent display in the school.

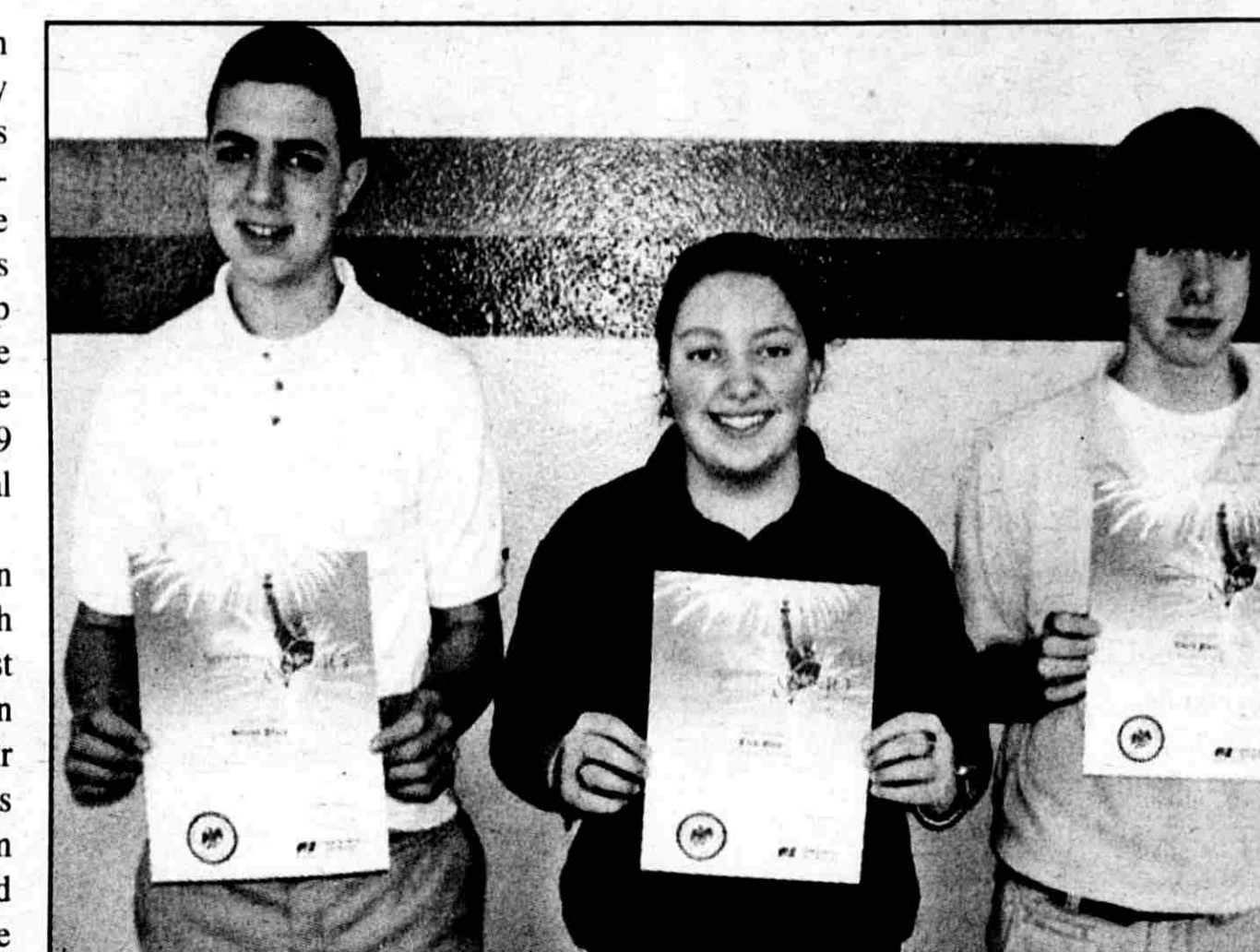
Gervais' first place essay advances to the state level competition, from which the

top ten essays in Michigan will be selected. The top ten statewide winners, who will be announced in April, will each receive a plaque, a \$500 U.S. savings bond and a \$500 cash award. In addition, the top ten essayists will be honored at a banquet in Lansing, meet with Michigan's top governmental leaders and be the featured guests at a Lansing Lugnuts minor league baseball game dedicated in their honor.

A team of finalist judges that includes a top Michigan Government official and the sponsoring teachers of last year's top two statewide winners, will determine the ranking of the top ten statewide winners this year.

Several thousand eighth grade students from nearly 500 Michigan schools participated in the 2008-2009 America & Me Essay Contest, which was conducted with the help of Farm Bureau Insurance agents across the state. The topic of the 2008-2009 contest was "My Personal Michigan Hero."

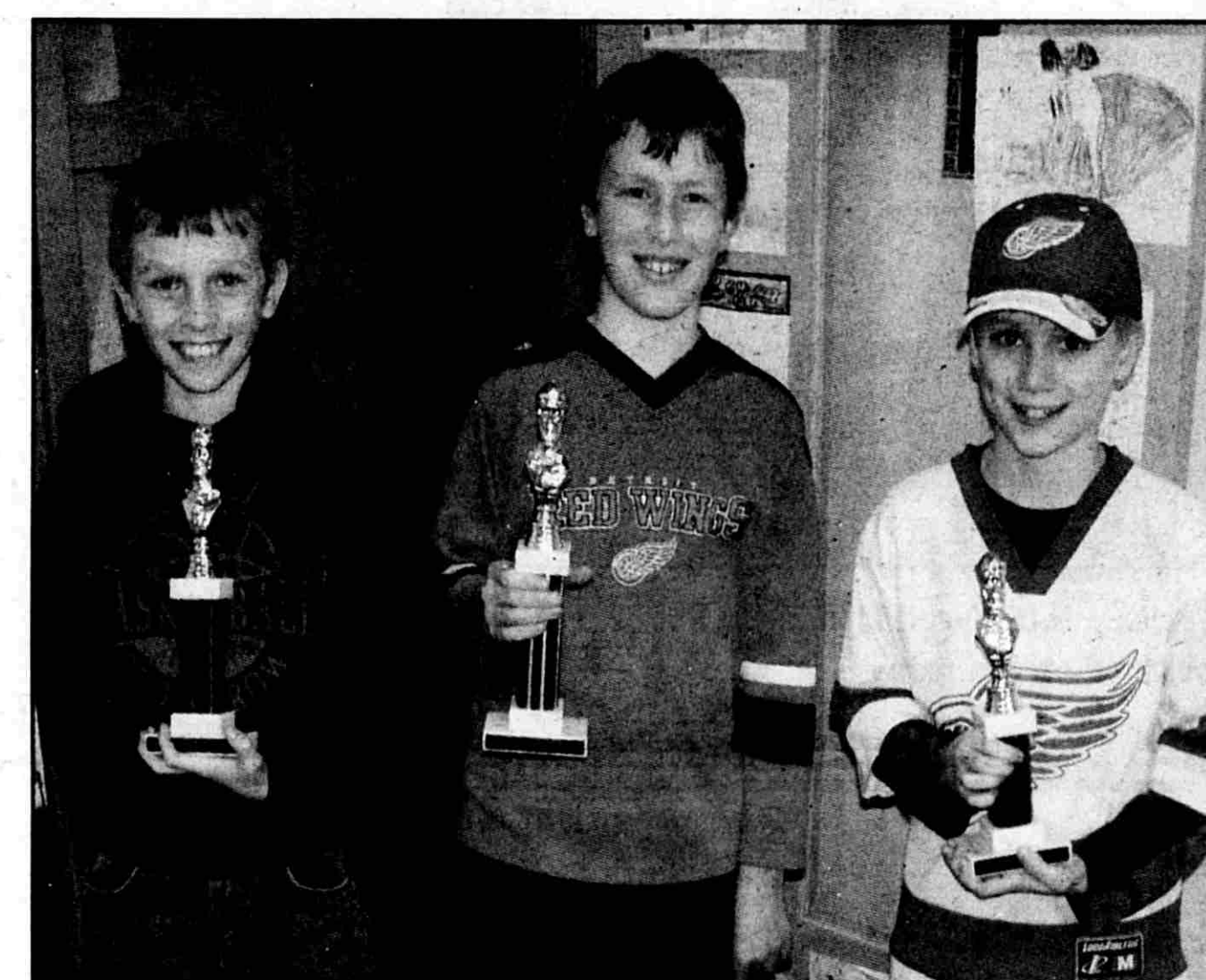
Started in 1968 and open to all Michigan eighth grade students, the contest encourages Michigan youngsters to explore their roles in America's future. As sponsor of the contest, Farm Bureau Insurance has earned 11 national awards from the Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge.



John Mark, Taylor Gervais and Aaron Morris were among the winners in the 2009 America & Me Essay Contest.

## Roest takes top honors in Murray Lake Chess Tournament

Over forty Murray Lake third through fifth graders entered Murray Lake's 5th annual Chess Tournament in January. Trevor Roest was the last student standing. Roest (middle) edged out Kyle Mankel in the championship match to earn a first place finish. Mankel took home the second place trophy, while Eric Gable (far right) finished third.



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## College News



Aric Newsted received his Instrument and Commercial pilot's license from Lansing Community College. He is the son of Deborah Newsted, of Lowell.

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## ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS

### BID PROPOSAL

Sealed bids, in triplicate, for the Lowell Area Schools Phase 3 Renovations, will be received at Lowell Area Schools Administration Building, 300 High Street, Lowell, Michigan on Thursday, March 26 2009 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 on in Lowell Area Schools Administration Building 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 Area Schools Administration Building in the Conference Room, 300 High Street, Lowell, MI, on Wednesday, March 17 2009 at 3:00 P.M. Appointments can be made for other site visits as needed. 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 15 days after bid opening. A non-refundable charge of \$25.00 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.



# Red Arrow SPORTS

## Lowell's Teft has good day at state

by Thad Kraus

Lowell's Kelsey Teft competing on the vault and in the floor exercise Saturday in the state gymnastics meet at Rockford recorded a 9.3, leaving her .05 points shy of medaling.

The eighth place mark was 9.35 by Kate Scheske of Sturgis.

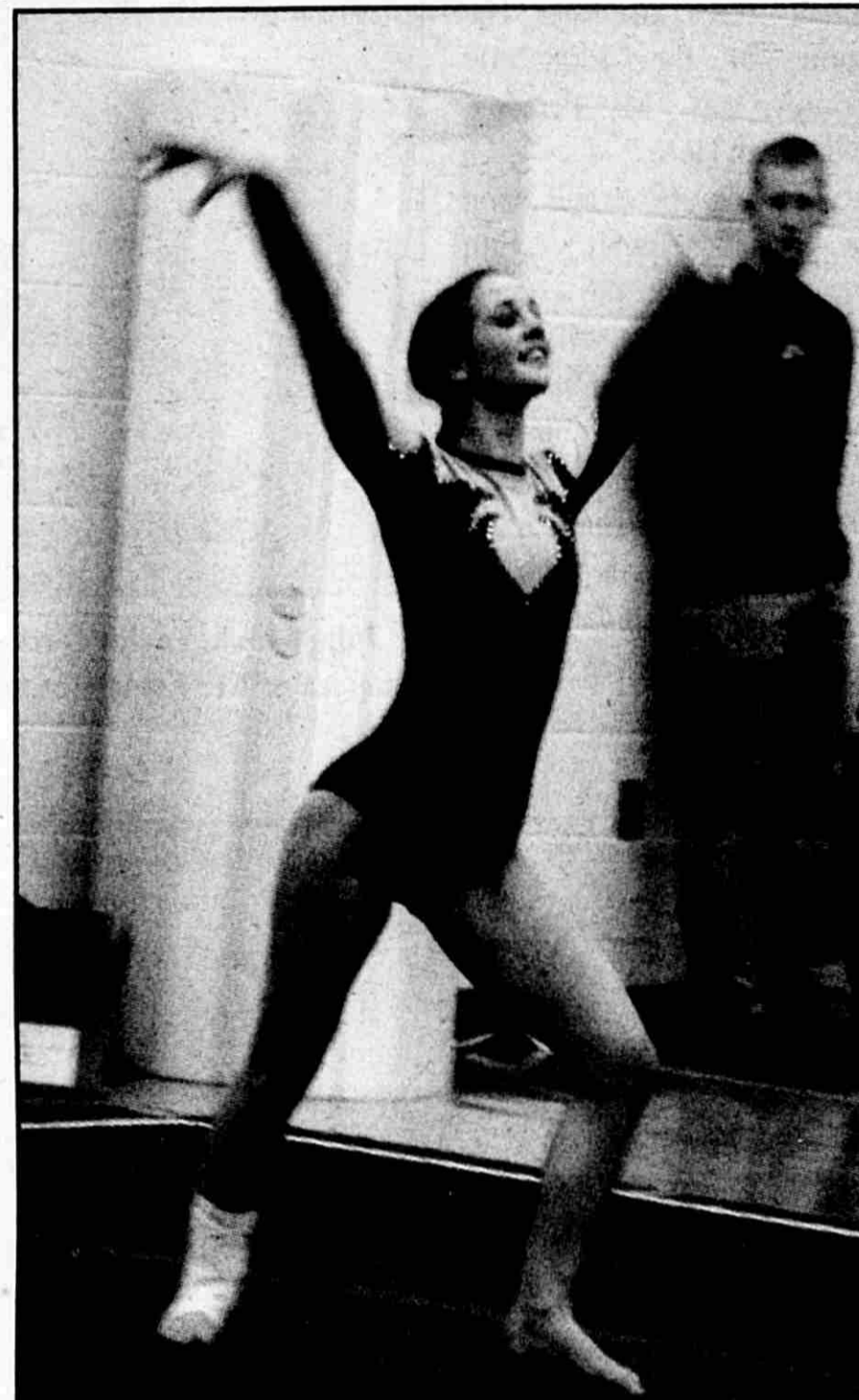
"Kelsey had a fabulous routine. She finished 11th at the state competition. She was outstanding and she should do great things next year," Lowell gymnastics coach Skye Fisher said.

Teft's score on the vault was 8.9 falling short of the

9.35 (Nicole Wood, Holt) which would have earned her a medal.

"Kelsey's vault was also great," Fisher said. "Not throwing a sukahara is what prevented her from placing. That is something I believe she will add next year. Overall, Kelsey had a good day."

Richelle Kimble, who also qualified for the state meet on the balance beam and vault, pulled out of the competition so she could participate in the NIKE Indoor Track & Field Championship in Boston.



Kelsey Teft placed 11th in the floor exercise at Rockford on Saturday



## OKAY - Someone Has To Say It ...

by Thad Kraus

By the time many of you read this week's column we'll be within 24 hours of tip time for the NCAA tourney.

By now you are aware that there is a \$35 gift certificate to Larkin's for that someone who beats my tournament pick sheet.

You are also aware that my bowl picks did not work out that well for me. In fact my debut was a debacle.

I will try to do better...if for no other reason than to add a little bit of suspense.

### EAST PICKS:

**First Round:** My winners are Pittsburgh, Tennessee, Florida State, Xavier, VCU, Villanova, Texas and Duke.

**Second Round:** Pittsburgh, Xavier, Villanova and Texas.

**Third Round:** Pittsburgh and Villanova.

**Regional Winner:** Pittsburgh.

### SOUTH PICKS:

**First Round:** North Carolina, Butler, Western Kentucky, Gonzaga, Temple, Syracuse, Clemson and Oklahoma.

**Second Round:** North Carolina, Western Kentucky, Syracuse and Oklahoma.

**Third Round:** North Carolina and Oklahoma.

**Regional Winner:** North Carolina.

### MIDWEST PICKS:

**First Round:** Louisville, Sienna, Arizona, Wake Forest, West Virginia, Kansas, Boston College and Michigan State.

**Second Round:** Louisville, Wake Forest, West Virginia and Boston College.

**Third Round:** Louisville and West Virginia.

**Regional Winner:** Louisville.

### WEST PICKS:

**First Round:** Connecticut, Texas A&M, Purdue, Mississippi State, Marquette, Missouri, California and Memphis.

**Second Round:** Connecticut, Purdue, Marquette and Memphis.

**Third Round:** Purdue and Memphis

**Regional Winner:** Memphis.

**Final Four Picks:** Louisville vs Memphis

**Thad's Pick:** Memphis Pittsburgh vs North Carolina

**Thad's Pick:** Pittsburgh

**Championship Game:** Memphis vs Pittsburgh

**Thad's Pick:** Pittsburgh

Copies of Thad's NCAA bracket can be picked up at the Ledger office. Good Luck!

\*\*\*\*\*

Tired of the sports talk show out of Chicago that I had been listening to, I switched over and decided to give Jim Rome a second chance. I have never been a big fan. However, while listening, he started his streak of interviewing guys named Rex with a connection to

Someone had to, cont'd., pg. 14

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# Red Arrow SPORTS

## Seven Lowell wrestlers place; Jackson Morse wins second straight title

by Thad Kraus

There's a difference between being expected to win a second state championship and chasing your first state title.

Just ask Red Arrow Jackson Morse.

"There is a lot more pressure when everyone is expecting you to win as opposed to chasing a state title," Lowell's Jackson Morse conveyed after securing his second consecutive individual state championship.

Morse, wrestling at 152 pounds, earned a 7-1 decision in his title match against Mt. Pleasant's Zach Carr.

In addition to chasing an individual championship, Morse along with his teammates, dealt with the pressure of the state team tournament.

"I think wrestling in both does wear on you," Morse explained.

Lowell coach Dave Dean agreed.

"With our situation and the emphasis we had to put on the team regional, I think that did make things different for us and a little more difficult."

Morse's skill, competitiveness and experience enabled the junior to maneuver through it all.

"The first one, though, was definitely more satisfying," Morse said.

Tim Gingerich, wrestling at 160 pounds, came up short in the finals.

The senior lost a 6-0 decision to Sparta's Adam Miller.

"Tim's been a great wrestler for us," Dean said. "He gave his all and wrestled smart."

Ryan Olep, 171, battled back from a disappointing loss in the semifinals to Andrew Lovins of St. Claire Shores, to defeat Tim Newman, Stevensville-Lakeshore, 4-1 and finish third overall in his weight class.

"Ryan showed great character to come back and take third after that tough loss in the semi-finals," Dean said.

Finishing third in the 135 pound weight class was Andrew Morse, who recorded a 6-1 decision against Nicholas Wellman of New Boston-Huron.

Dan Fleet (130) lost his consolation match to Gaylord's Danny Sharrad 5-1. The sophomore had beaten Sharrad earlier in the tourney by a count of 2-1.

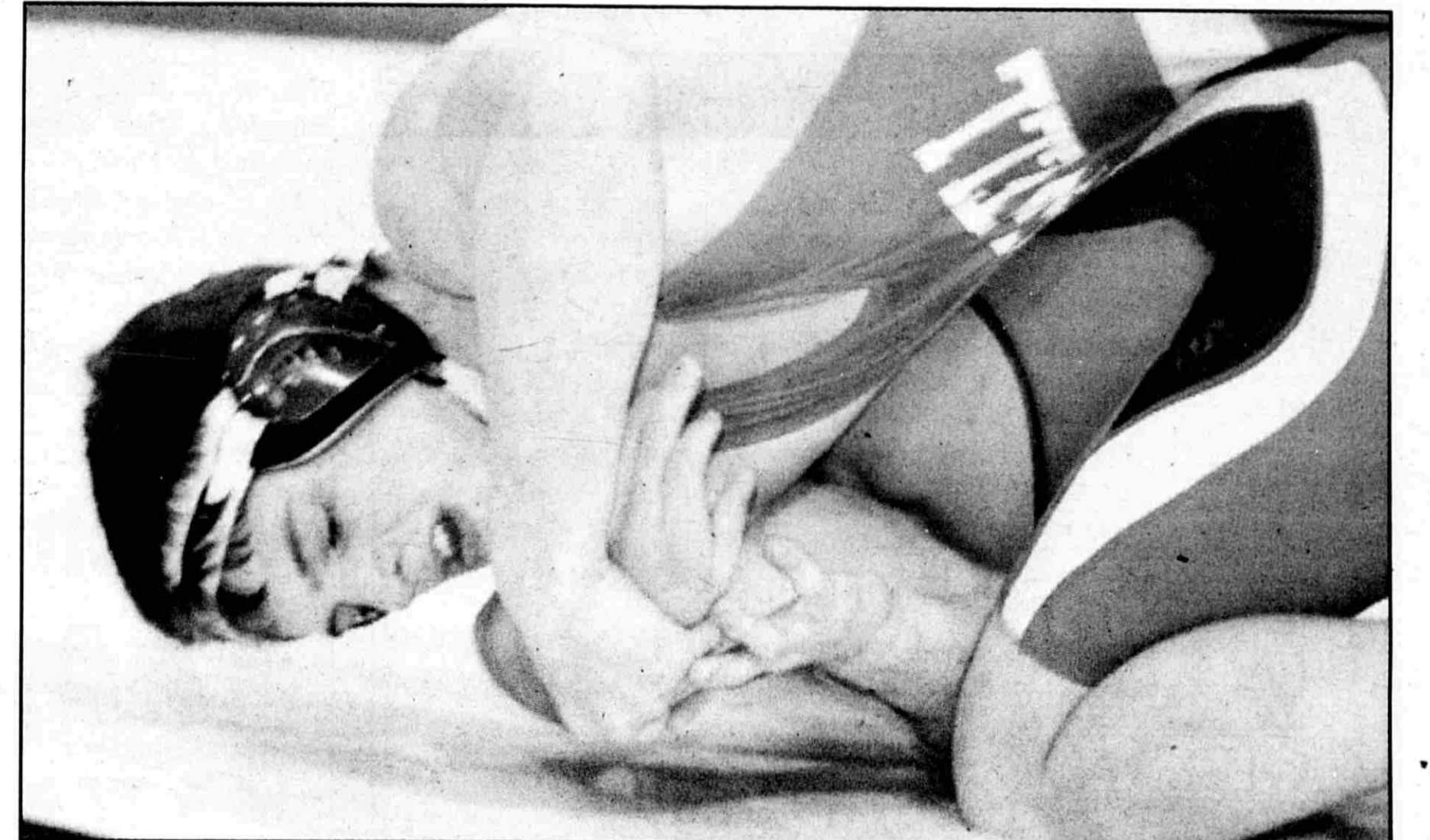
"Andrew (Morse) got taken down with less than 11 seconds and than lost in overtime in his semi-final match but came back

to take third," Dean said. "Dan (Fleet) had a great tournament. He's been one of our hardest workers and

he is always improving." Ryan Dean, 140, lost a 3-1 decision to Connor Brancheau of Fenton while

Connor Kruse (285) earned a 3-1 (O.T.) decision against Flint Beechler's Elbert Butler.

Gabe Morse, 125 pounds, qualified for the state tournament but did not place.



Jackson Morse's 7-1 decision over Mt. Pleasant's Zach Carr earned him an individual state championship at 152 pounds.

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**DRAFT SYNOPSIS OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE LOWELL CITY COUNCIL MONDAY, MARCH 16, 2009**

Motion to approve the agenda as submitted.

Motion to approve the Regular Minutes of the March 2, 2009 meeting as corrected and the accounts payables were approved.

District 5 Kent County Commissioner Sandra Frost Parrish addressed the Council and presented an update on County activities.

Motion to award contract for the 2009 street sweep to Street Sweep, Inc. of Holland for \$13,800 plus trucking and disposal fees.

Motion to approve the Light and Power 2009-2010 annual budget and Capital Projects as presented.

Motion to approve the resolution supporting the Lowell Area Recreation Authority Recreation Plan and Grant applications.

Motion to award contract to Rickert Electric to re-circuit loads to the correct breaker panels in the Cable TV building in the amount of \$490.00.

Motion to adjourn at 8:33 p.m. The next regularly scheduled meeting will be Monday, April 6, 2009.

Complete minutes will be available after approved on April 6, 2009 on the City's web page at www.ci.lowell.mi.us or at City Hall.

Betty R. Morlock  
City Clerk

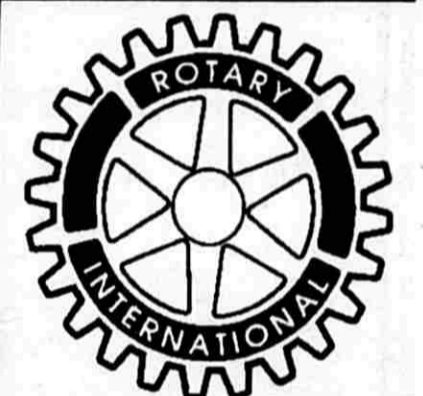
**ROTARY CLUB OF LOWELL COMMUNITY FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIPS**

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Eligibility guidelines and scholarship application can be found under the Foundation tab at: [www.lowellrotary.org](http://www.lowellrotary.org)

Applications can also be obtained at the Lowell High School Guidance Office.





# Sound Off

The Ledger  
"Almost"  
Anything  
Goes Column



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The Lowell Ledger welcomes all "Sound Off" comments, but would like to remind readers of the nature of the column. "Sound Off" is meant to be a community notice board, a means for comments that can be regarded as helpful, congratulatory, thankful and informational. We will not print any comments that are offensive or libelous. Direct aimed at individuals, political figures and businesses will not be printed. For direct opinions on a subject (including, but not limited to, politics, businesses, city government and Ledger criticisms), please send a letter "To the Editor". All letters must be signed (first and last names). All comments are submitted by the public and do not necessarily represent the views of the Ledger.

My kids have the best bus driver in Lowell... Jan Herb! She is so kind and respectful to the kids and truly cares about them. Her "Rider of the Week" award inspires the kids to be good and obey the rules. Thanks Mrs. Herb for keeping my kids safe!  
-Karen

Many voices have said it's time for a new choice in eateries in Lowell. Several have tried and failed. So here's your chance Lowell area residents. What would you like to

see in a restaurant menu, atmosphere, etc.? No, I'm not talking about a fast food type place, or Big Boy either, so please don't waste your time with that. Send your ideas to Lowell.Eats@yahoo.com. Let's come up with a place that y'all will enjoy coming back to.  
-Charles Miller

Incredible Ledger write up, Toby Jones! Truly incredible!!!  
Yes, the bear on Bowes Road is

single, but he comes with baggage—he has two cubs.  
Kudos to Kim Nyson and all involved in the LHS production of "Seussical". It was just amazing. What a great way to spend a Friday night in Lowell. Thanks!  
The LHS "Seussical the Musical" was spectacular! What amazingly talented youth we have in this community! Great job to all involved! It was worth seeing several times.

## Someone had to, continued ... From Page 12

the sporting world. His goal was to see how many consecutive days he could interview someone named Rex. He ran his streak to 20 consecutive days before ending it. Rex 19 was Rex Kendle. Who is he? He is a walk-on wrestler at Michigan State University. Kendle will be competing in the nationals in St. Louis this week. He wrestles at 165 pounds.

"I'm anxious. I'm going to leave it all out there," Kendle said by phone. Why should anyone reading this care? The connection is that next school year Kendle will be an intern at Lowell High School, working with Tim Antel. Through Michigan State University he also has ties with Lowell wrestling coach Dave Dean. I've held back one very important piece of

information about Kendle and about why I was so attracted to this story. Kendle wrestled at and graduated from... Edwardsburg High School. That's right, he's an Eddie!!!! As is your esteemed local sports writer. I know, now you want the 30 seconds back it took you to read this!

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## March MADNESS

64 TEAMS ... 32 PICKS ...  
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Join in the MADNESS of it all and make your college basketball tournament selections along with Ledger sports reporter Thad Kraus. BEAT HIM and have your name entered into a drawing at a chance to win a \$35 dinner certificate to LARKIN'S RESTAURANT. It's simple and costs nothing to enter. After Sunday's NCAA Tournament Selection Show, fill your bracket out all the way through and mail or drop it off at the Ledger office before noon on Thursday, March 19. Then, follow along, and compare how you're doing with that Ledger guy. Thad's picks will be published in the paper and his running total will be in each week's edition. First-round selections will be worth a point apiece; second-round selections will be worth two points; third-round, four points; fourth-round, eight points; and the championship game is worth 16 points.

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**FOR RENT**  
HALL FOR RENT - with kitchen, seats 150. Call 897-6050.

**FOR RENT**  
HALL FOR RENT - Lowell Veteran's Center, 3100 Alden Nash. Newly remodeled, smoke-free, private, great location & great rate! Call John at 299-0486 or 897-8303.

**SALES**  
4H TACK SALE - Mar. 21, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Saranac High School. New & used, over 30 suppliers. For booth info call 616-868-6042.

**EVENTS**  
PLEASE NOTE - Coming Events are for non-profit organizations. They are ran on a space available basis & are not guaranteed to run. If you would like to make sure your event is placed in the paper, please call our office & place it as a classified ad.

**EVENTS**  
COMMUNITY GARDEN EXCHANGE - Sat., April 25, 9-11 a.m. First Baptist Church, 6015 Bancroft Ave., Alto. Share plants you have, take home others. Flowers, grasses, fruit bushes, shrubs, bulbs, hereby, ground cover & house plants. Door prizes, refreshments & garden help. Rain or shine. No charge.

**EVENTS**  
MEMORY FOAM & LATEX MATTRESSES - 8 different models. All new. Starting at \$399. Why pay \$699 at the big name stores?? RCD Wholesale, 616-682-4767 or 293-5188.

**LOST**  
LOST - Toy Pomeranian, "Zoey" 3/12/09. Blonde w/ black muzzle. Near Bailey & Parnell. Call 897-7710 anytime.

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HELP WANTED

CUSTOMER SERVICE - Set-up display, general help. \$600/week to start (no sales required) Company expansion, paid weekly. Call 616-243-1250. Local company must add to its work force. All jobs/positions are entry level with some opportunity to advance. No layoffs projected, due to expansion. Call for one-on-one interview. No 3rd shift.

SALES

BAKE POTATO FUND-RAISER - Sat., March 21, noon - 2 p.m. 50/50 raffle. at Lowell Senior Center. For more information call Marcia Roth, 897-5949.

EVENTS

FREE VEGETARIAN COOK & EAT CLASSES - Sun., March 22, 4-6 p.m.; Sun., April 19, 4-6 p.m. Riverside Fellowship, 10300 Vergennes. Call 897-7930 to register.

LOWELL AREA HISTORICAL MUSEUM - open Tuesday, Saturday & Sunday: 1-4 p.m.; Thursday: 1-8 p.m. Families: \$10; individual \$3; ages 5-17 \$1.50; members free. 897-7688.

FLAT RIVER OUTREACH MINISTRIES THRIFT STORE - is open Wed. - Fri., 10 - 6 p.m.; Sat., 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. at 11535 Fulton St. E. Thrift Shop, 897-8260. Food Pantry 897-8260. Emergency Services, 897-8260.

**SERVICES**  
HANDY REPAIR SERVICE - All kinds of service work: locks rekeyed, deadbolts installed, plumbing, electrical, screen & window repair. Call Bob Ford, 299-3198.

**SERVICES**  
TREE WORK NEEDED - CHEAP! Removals, storm damage & chipping. Licensed & insured. Call Dan for estimate at 616-970-3832.

**NEED A DUMPSTER?** - Dudley's Dumpsters priced to get rid of your trash & save you cash! Garage, attic, household clean-up, roofing, trash, junk etc. 14 to 20 yards available. Call for free estimates. Contact Doug 616-295-6640.

**SPRING IS COMING...**  
Need help catching up on cleaning up - let us do it for you. Residential & office cleaning. Experienced, reliable, reasonable rates. Call Kathy 616-260-2673 or Kris 616-642-0395.

**WOODSTOVE, PELLET STOVE** - Gas installed. Licensed & insured. 20 years experience. 292-6304. M.E.O. Fireplaces Ltd.

**PIANO INSTRUCTION** - Improve your child's motor skills & cognitive abilities with music. Popular, experienced (both performing & teaching) MMTA member has spring and summer openings. Yearly recitals, music theory, classical & jazz. Vergennes Township area. 616-897-9485 or visit: www.reverbnation.com/deborahkaypianist/vocalist for more information.

**BUSINESS CARDS** - For as little as \$28 for 250. (white card, black ink). Call Lowell Litho, 897-9261.

LUNCH MENU

ELEMENTARY MENU  
Week of March 23, 2009

MON: Chicken patty on bun (sloppy joe on bun also offered at Alto, Cherry Creek & Murray Lake), peas, pineapple, milk.

TUES: Fish nuggets w/ cornbread (beef & cheese nachos also offered at Alto, Cherry Creek & Murray Lake), fresh vegetables/ fruits carrots, celery, cauliflower, strawberries & blackberries, milk.

WED: Pepperoni pizza (burrito w/sauce also offered at Alto, Cherry Creek & Murray Lake), antipasto salad, pears, milk.

THURS: Pancakes w/ syrup or cereal w/graham crackers & scrambled eggs, fresh fruit, warm apple slices, milk.

FRI: Macaroni & cheese (turkey & cheese sub also offered at Alto, Cherry Creek & Murray Lake), vegetable soup, assorted fruit, iced cinnamon roll, milk.

**HOUSE CLEANING SERVICES** - reasonable price, references available & house sitting, experience/variety of animals. 616-477-4201 or 616-322-6813.

**LOCKS REKEYED AT YOUR BUSINESS OR HOME** - \$50 for up to 4 locks (\$5 each additional lock) Do you know who has your keys? Call Bob Ford, 299-3198 or 897-7176.

**ART GALLERY and CUSTOM FRAMING - Fire and Water Art! 219 W. Main St., Lowell. Open Wed. thru Sat. 890-1879.**



## Ukrainian egg decorating at LAHM

The Lowell Area Historical Museum hosted a Ukrainian Egg decorating class last week. It was taught by Linda Busman who has a Ukrainian heritage background and has been teaching the craft for many years. All enjoyed learning the historical background as well as the techniques. Lunch followed in the Museum's Victorian dining room.

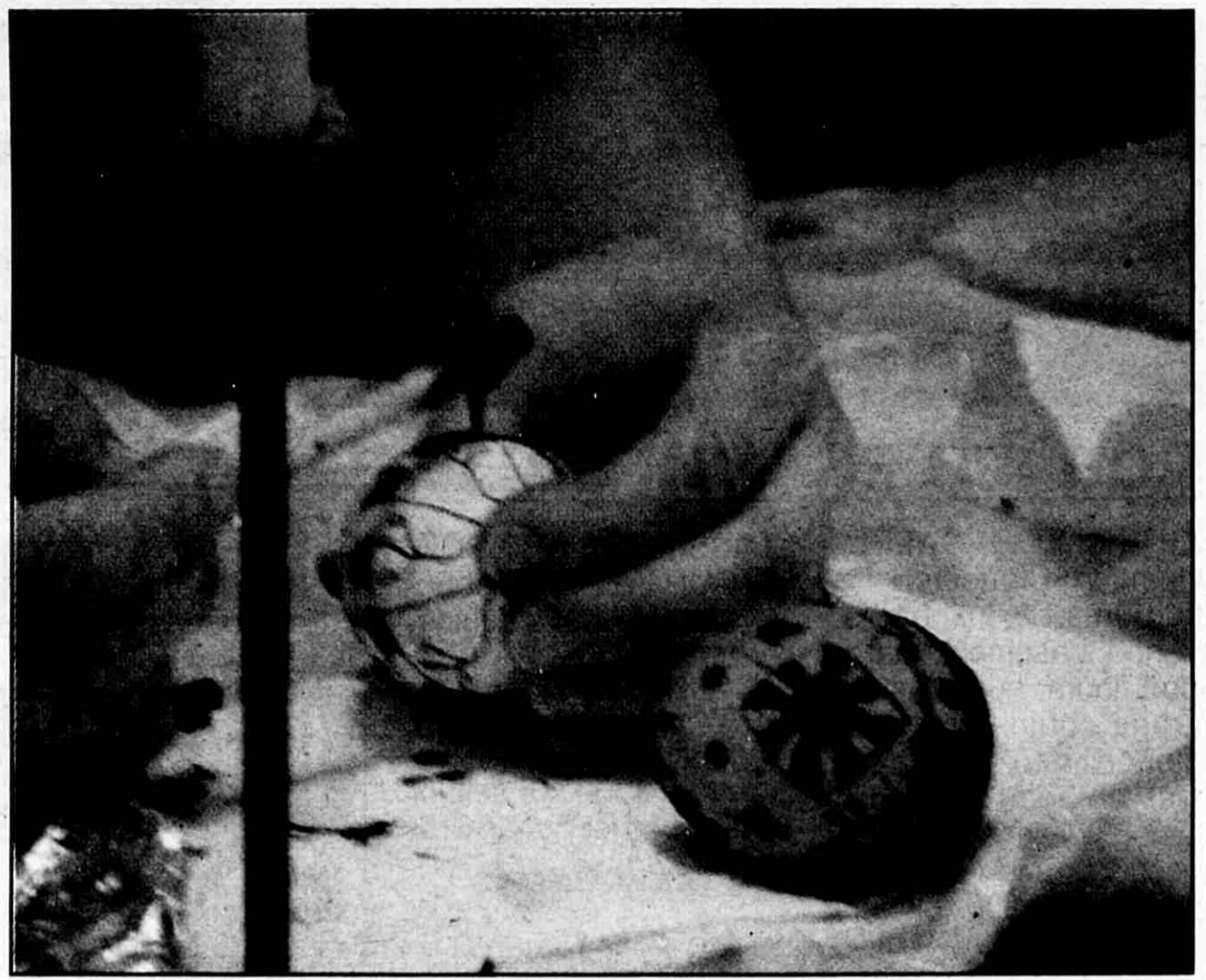
Ukrainian pysanky eggs have a rich history,

dating back over 2000 years. Women decorated the eggs in the spring, distributing them to family and friends. The pysanky eggs were usually decorated whole and raw.

The word pysanky comes from the word meaning "to write." Wax is written on to the egg with a pen like tool named a kistka. The kistka holds wax in a funnel, which is held over a candle flame to melt the wax. The wax

is then applied to the egg and dipped into a dye bath. All of the areas where the wax was applied resist the dye. The two step process is repeated for a series of colors, usually ending in a dark red, purple, or black. The wax is then melted away to reveal a beautiful and detailed design.

**Julia Vriesonga, of Alto, draws on her egg with a Kistka leaving a trail of bees wax.**



### Reforms for the Department of Defense

With Senator Carl Levin

American taxpayers deserve to have their money well-spent. But last year the Government Accountability Office reported that the Department of Defense's 95 largest acquisition programs are an average of two years behind schedule and have exceeded their original budgets by an average of 30 percent. Our military personnel deserve to have dependable timetables for weapons systems upgrades, and with the federal budget under immense strain as a result of the economic crisis, we simply cannot afford this kind of inefficiency.

That's why I recently introduced, along with Senator John McCain, the Weapons Systems Acquisition Reform Act of 2009. This legislation will require the Department of Defense to take the steps needed to put defense acquisition programs on a sound footing from the outset.

Acquisition problems have plagued some of our armed services most promising weapons systems, including the Air Force tanker, the Osprey, and the Joint Strike Fighter. It is clear that these problems are not the exception; rather, they are the result of systemic flaws in Department of Defense acquisition procedures.

The department too often relies on unreasonable cost and schedule estimates that cannot be met. It establishes unrealistic performance expectations that increase costs and cause further delays. It has insisted on the use of immature technologies in cases where it is unknown if they can be achieved. And it has time and again required costly changes to program requirements and production quantities once a project is already well underway.

The Levin-McCain bill will address these challenges. The provisions include establishing a new, independent director of cost assessment to ensure that senior Pentagon managers have unbiased data to analyze project costs and cost projections. The legislation also includes strengthening assessments of technologies that are under development through the use of prototypes and in most cases competitive prototypes. This will help determine if new technologies work before significant additional funds are directed towards development and production of weapons systems of which they are a part. Additionally, this bill will require the

Department of Defense to conduct preliminary design reviews in advance of approving new acquisition programs. Our bill has provisions to stop programs early in their development if they start going over budget.

If these changes are successfully implemented, they will help our acquisition programs avoid future cost overruns, schedule delays, and performance problems.

In early March, we held a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing to address our legislation. We heard from a number of former Pentagon officials with extensive experience in weapons systems acquisition and many constructive proposals for how to improve procedures. They were generally very supportive of the Levin-McCain bill.

Following our hearing, President Obama endorsed our bipartisan bill as part of his fiscal responsibility agenda. His support will help move the legislation through Congress. Additionally, the President signed a memorandum to begin to reform government contracting across the entire government, in part by increasing use of competitive procurement procedures.

These are significant steps forward in the battle against cost overruns. In the coming months, we will work to get our bill passed so that weapons systems needed for our military are completed on schedule and on budget.

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