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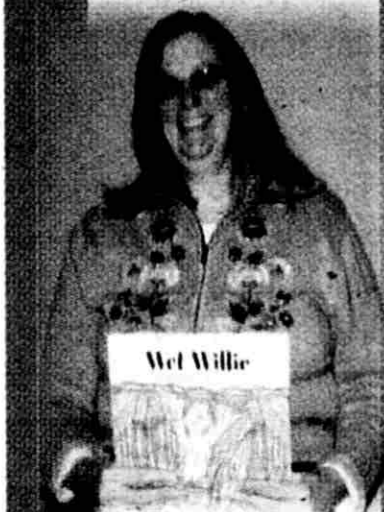


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Hometown Holiday

Santa parade ushers in the Christmas spirit

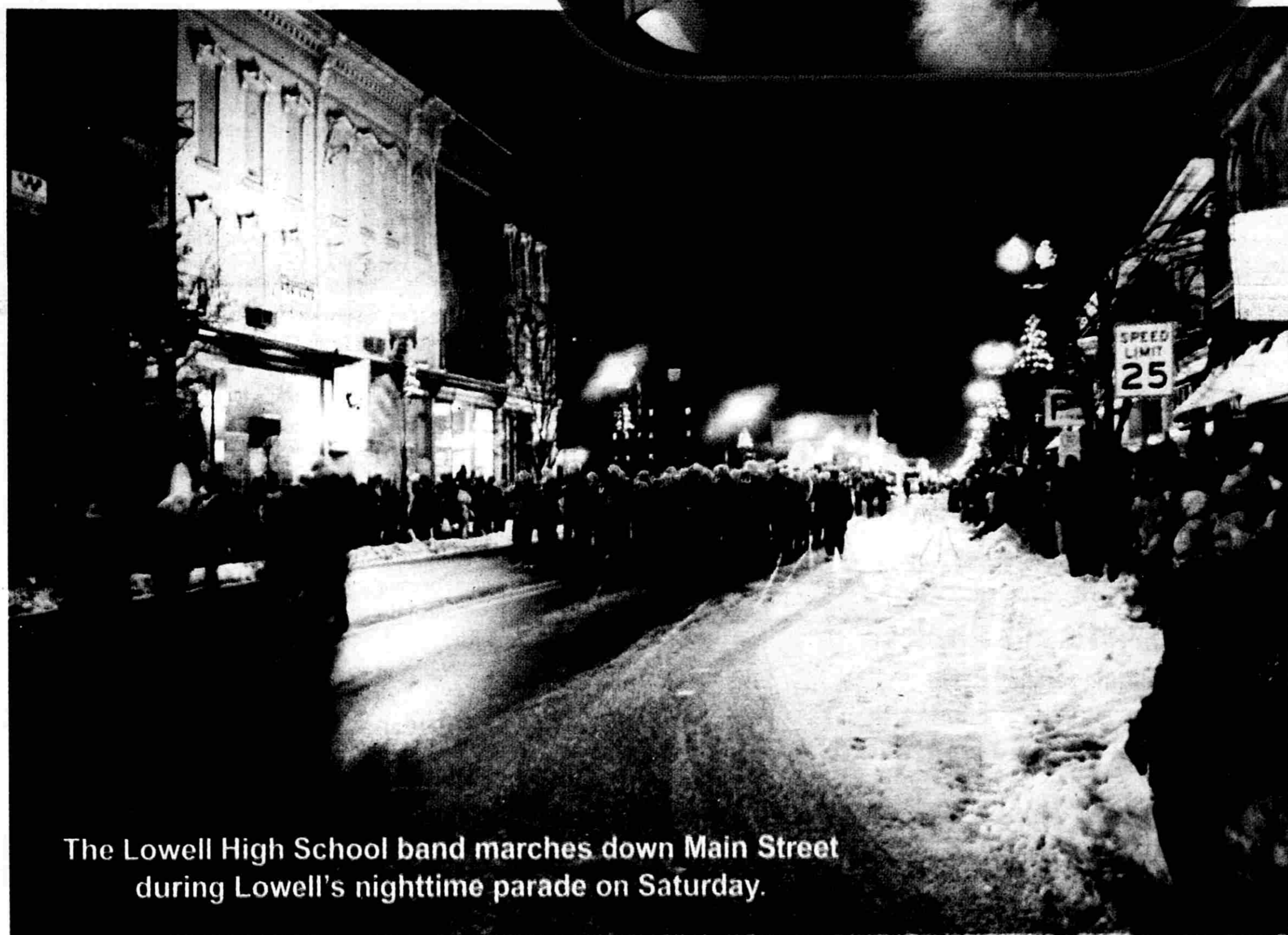
by Emma Palova

With the town decked out for Christmas, Santa Claus and Mrs. Claus ushered in the holiday spirit during the annual nighttime parade. The couple rode into town in their carriage pulled by a galloping

horse as the last ones in the parade. This year's theme was 'A Christmas Story.'

The parade featured high school and middle school bands, as well as the state

Parade, continued, page 9



The Lowell High School band marches down Main Street during Lowell's nighttime parade on Saturday.

DNR fuelwood permits offer a budget-friendly home heating option

Looking for a budget-friendly way to heat your home this winter? A fuelwood permit from the Department of Natural Resources may be the most economical option for those who heat with a woodstove or fireplace.

Available for only \$20, a fuelwood permit allows a family to gather up to five cords of wood from state land per year between April 1 and Dec. 31. With less than one month until the fuelwood season closes, the DNR has seen a surge in permit applications this fall as more people headed into the woods to stock up on wood for the winter.

"The DNR's fuelwood permit system started in the mid-1970s, with numerous requests to cut dead elm trees in the wake of Dutch elm disease," said Bill Sterrett, DNR Forest Resource Management section manager for the Forest, Mineral and Fire Management Division. "The program then greatly accelerated during the recession years of the 1980s."

With today's economic problems and the rising costs of heating oil and LP gas, Sterrett said the DNR again is seeing much interest on the part of the consumer

looking for ways to save money.

"In many parts of the state, we are seeing nearly twice the number of permits being sold as in recent years," he said.

At only \$20 for five standard cords of wood -- a cord is measured by neatly stacking the wood in a line or row that is eight feet long, four feet wide and four feet high -- the savings for each family represents hundreds of dollars, versus buying the wood from a reseller. In addition to the low cost of the permit, any associated equipment costs to get outfitted for fuelwood

gathering also is relatively low.

"Not much investment is needed in equipment to gather fuelwood," Sterrett said. "A decent chainsaw and a wheelbarrow will make the work more efficient, plus we recommend the use of leather gloves, heavy boots, safety chaps, safety glasses, ear protection and a hard hat. "Fuelwood permits are sold at DNR field offices throughout the Upper Peninsula and northern Lower Peninsula for the gathering of only dead and down wood from state forest land -- no standing dead trees make be cut down.

Each applicant is assigned a specific area of state forest land where they are allowed to gather the wood, which usually is the site of a previous timber sale where excess slash and unused tree tops can easily be accessed. Based on the condition of the site once the timber sale is completed, forest management unit foresters evaluate which closed timber sales are good candidates for fuelwood gathering and which should be closed to cutting.

The sites where fuelwood cutting is allowed also

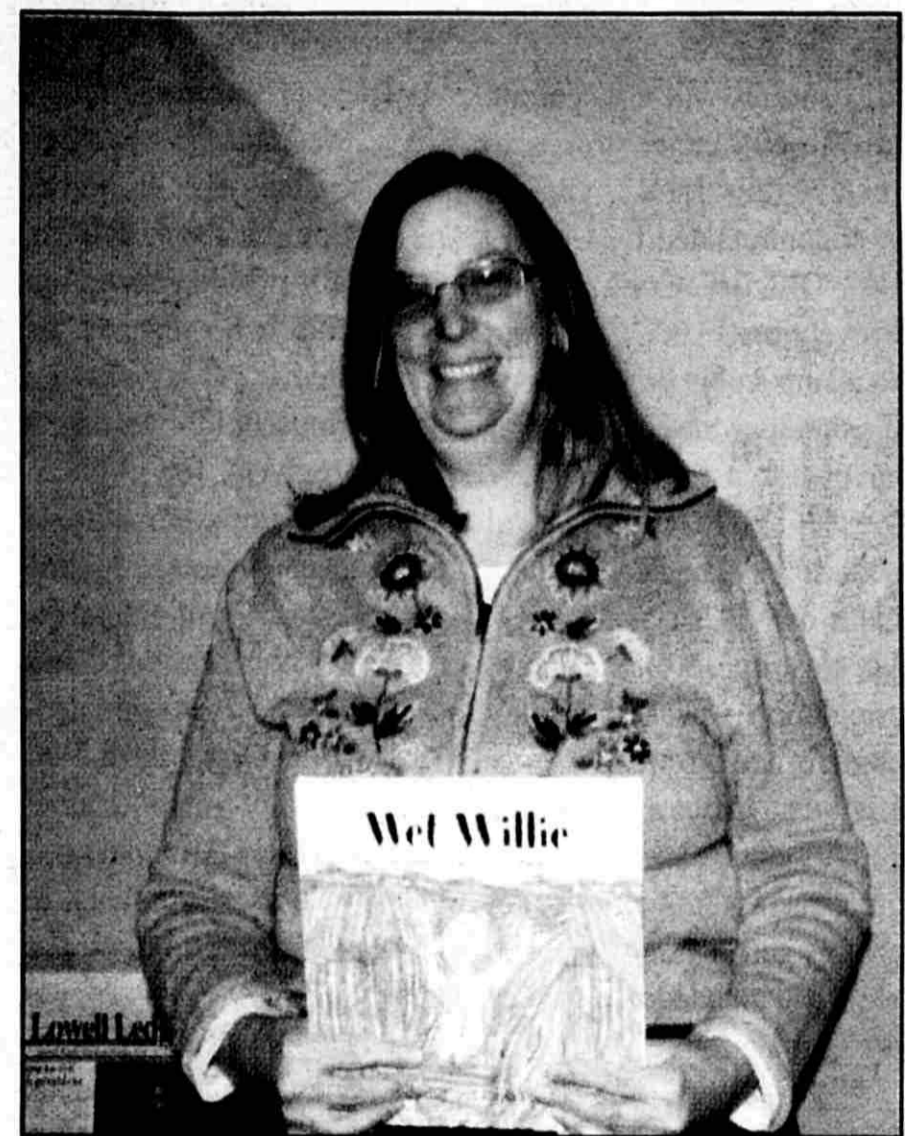
Fuelwood permits, continued, page 2

Rose Mitchell co-authors book with granddaughter

by Emma Palova
Both Rose Mitchell and Kayla Obenchain, 10, enjoy the great Michigan outdoors and spending time together. Their stay last summer at Silver Lake inspired a book, 'Wet Willie.'

Obenchain did the illustrations and helped develop the creature. "We got a book made and the fact that it's done, and if it becomes well-known, that would be great," said Mitchell.

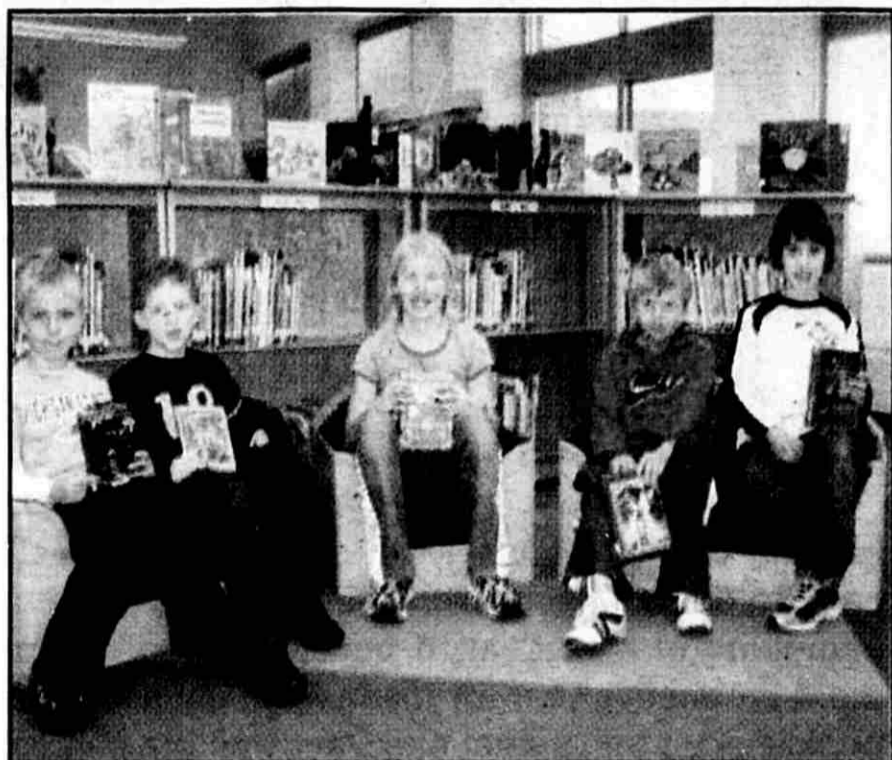
For Mitchell, self-publishing the book is also a way of testing the waters for her upcoming adult book projects, 'In Sickness and in Health,' the life story of her father and 'The Meaning of Life,' her own life story. 'The Meaning of Life' contains insights from hiking and spending time in the mountains. "I want to keep my life simple," she said. Mitchell doesn't even have a computer in order not to waste time on the Internet. That's why she picked Xlibris to do computer work and the marketing. She started writing as an English major at the Aquinas College, since then she has become an LPN at Metro Health. She lives in Lowell; Obenchain lives in northern Michigan. The soft copy sells for \$12.99, hard copy for \$20.50.



Rose Mitchell holds a copy of her book "Wet Willie".

Murray Lake reading award winners

Pictured, at right, are Murray Lake \$10 gift card winners for the month of November. Each time a student earns 10 Accelerated Reader points, his or her name goes into a drawing. The Murray Lake Family Links purchases gift cards from local businesses to use as prizes. Murray Lake students have now accumulated over 8,000 AR points this school year.



This month's winners, pictured left to right, were: Ben Fabiano, Logan DeKok, Alyssa Roest, Cameron Poll, and Christian Davis.

college news

The University of Northwestern Ohio is proud to acknowledge that William B. Zigmont, of Lowell, has made the Dean's List for the October 2009 session in the College of Technologies. Full-time students must receive a grade point average of 3.5 or better to be named to the Dean's List. His parents are Al and Helen Zigmont, of Lowell.

LOWELL AREA COMMUNITY FUND ACCEPTS GRANT PROPOSALS

All Proposals Must Be Submitted Online No Later Than December 18, 2009 To Be Considered. Visit www.grfoundation.org/lowell to submit your application.

The Lowell Area Community Fund, a fund of Grand Rapids Community Foundation, awards grants to tax-exempt, nonprofit charitable organizations that have an impact in the Lowell area. The LACF funds innovative projects or programs that encourage community cooperation.

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Parade, continued

champs. The Grinch made his great entry on a float with flames shooting out of his mouth.

Then there were the mainstays of the parade like the Lowell bus drivers' float and the Lowell Area Historical Museum.

The parade was preceded by a full slate of activities on the Riverwalk and Santa himself on the Showboat in his room with Mrs. Claus. A line formed in front of the Santa room.

Santa discussed his busy photo shooting schedule from now on through Dec. 23.

"Mrs. Claus keeps me on track," he laughed as he photographed with three kids.

Outside on the Riverwalk, the annual Flat River Ice Sculpture Challenge took



Santa and Mrs. Claus arrive on the scene. Photo by Bruce Doll



4-H float. Photo by Bruce Doll



The LHS band, above, and the 2009 State Champs show school spirit.



The Grinch with his fiery float.



Lowell Area Historical Museum's horse-drawn float.

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Marilyn McClure

Position: Receptionist at Eja Salon
Age: 61
Residence: Lowell
Education: Lowell High School
Experience: Regal Insurance, Family Fare, receptionist
Family: Daughters April and Misty, grandchildren Chase and Ruthie, husband Greg
Hobbies: Shopping, Elvis fan club & Thursday Nite Card Club, volunteers at KIDS Food Basket



"I always try to make the salon a friendly, happy place to come relax and have your hair done."

The salon constantly upgrades with new products, computers and beverage offerings like hot chocolate.

The economy has also impacted the beauty business.

"Clients are stretching their color and cut time from the average six weeks to eight weeks," said McClure.

McClure started the reminder phone calls that cut down on no shows.

"She always goes above and beyond," said Baylis, "making sure the stylists' days are running smoothly. She is always smiling."

In five years, McClure still plans on working at the salon.

She was caught off guard when asked about her hobbies and interests.

"Now, you're going to think I am boring," she laughed.

But, there is never a boring minute with McClure, a well-known Lowellian. She is the secretary of the local Elvis Presley fan club. The six members usually get together on his birthday in January and go see an Elvis impersonator.

She is also a member of the Thursday Nite Card Club, but that's another story.

McClure has been with the salon for two and a half years since it moved from Grand Rapids to Lowell. She once helped out at the salon in Grand Rapids and then her daughter asked her to come back to Lowell.

Some of the early challenges included time management on making appointments because the time to do hairstyles varies from stylist to stylist.

"I had to get to know the stylists and their clients," said McClure.

Sometimes, McClure matched different clients with wrong stylists.

Another challenge for McClure was working with her daughter April as the boss.

"She has a strong personality, but we only work together one day a week on Monday," McClure laughed.

On other days, she works with business partner Jen Baylis.

"That's easier," she said.

Receptionist keeps Eja Salon happy

by Emma Palova

Chatting with clients and stylists in between taking phone calls, bubbly Marilyn McClure is a typical multitasker.

She takes notes to stylists, brews the coffee and tea, takes in orders and refills supplies. McClure is known for her efficiency.

On a busy day before the holidays, it can get pretty hectic at Eja Salon.

But, that is what McClure likes about the beauty salon business, and its clients.

"I like the people," she said.

Her main goal is to keep everybody at the salon happy. That can be a challenge or a motivator at a place where mostly women work.

"I am going to have a good attitude and a smile for our clients," she said. "When

we're running behind, I keep everything filled."

Clients like Pam Slater from Caledonia come to the

beauty shop precisely for the superb service, where the stylists bend backwards to make everything work.

"They go out of their way to accommodate you," said Slater. "They arrange their schedules."



Marilyn McClure enjoys her job at Eja Salon.

It's That
Time Of Year Again!
 Christmas will soon be here!

All Weather Seal is looking for a family in the Lowell area whose house could use a little extra care this year when the cold air starts to settle in.

We would like to give away a houseful of windows to a family in need.

Please submit your nominations with an explanation of why that family deserves this special gift this holiday season.



Deadline for entries is Dec. 15, 2009

Submit entries to:

All Weather Seal Christmas Giveaway

319 E. Main Street

Lowell, MI 49331 or

E-mail kaitlin@awswest.com