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# the lowell ledger

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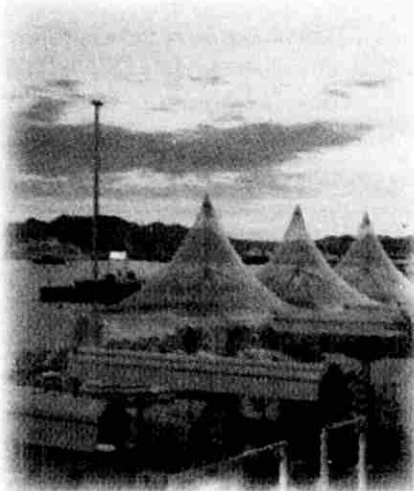
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## Sizzlin' Summer rocks the Riverwalk

Summer is here with Thursday night's Sizzlin' Summer concert series taking to the stage on the Riverwalk by the Showboat. Hundreds of concert goers flock to the banks of the Flat River to relax in a lawn chair while listening to music.

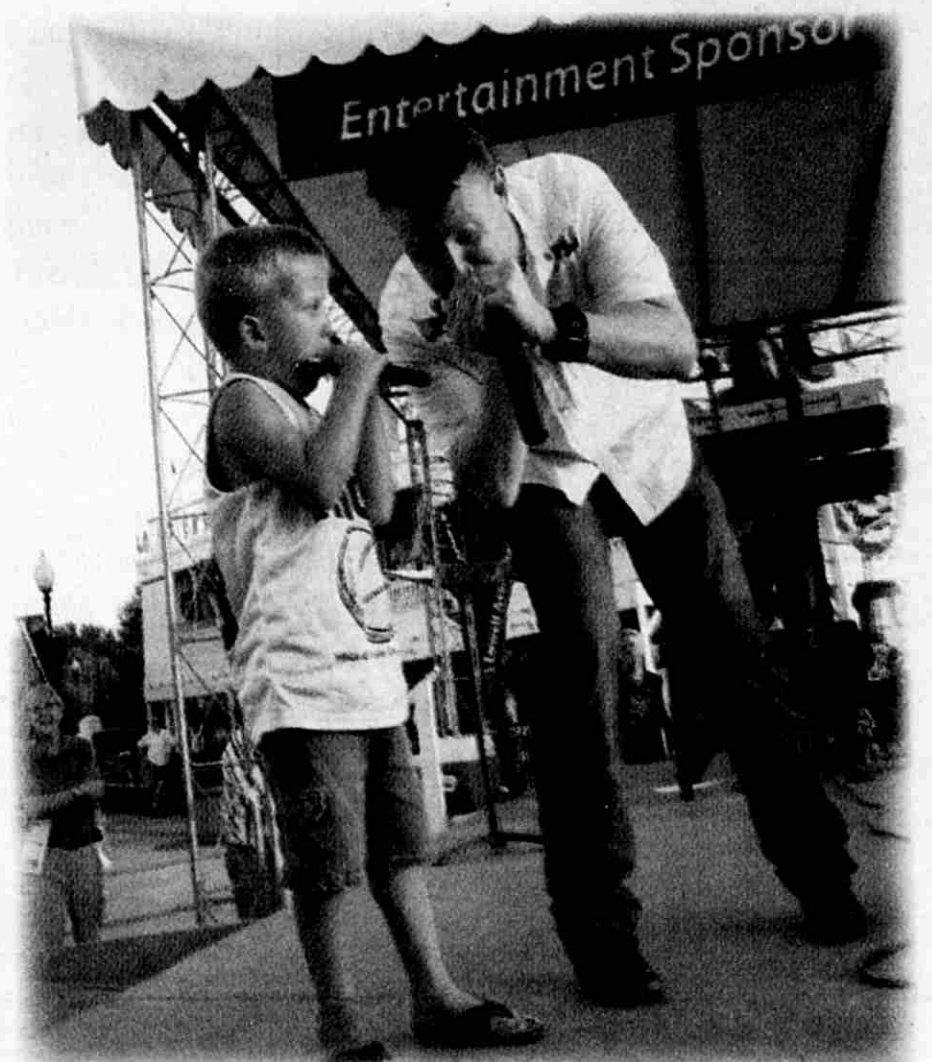
The first concert of the season featured the Bronk Brothers Band, a Rockin' Hillbilly Extravaganza that promises to take you on a musical journey. The band, led by brother duo of Heath and Brian Bronk uses a mixture of classic country,

new country, classic rock and modern rock to create its own original sound. Bronk Brothers have become one of Michigan's best known and well received country acts with their wide range of musical influences. The next concert is tomorrow

evening at 7 p.m. Kathy Lamar and the Bob VanStee Trio will take to the stage.

The concerts preceded, by the Farmer's Market at the fairgrounds, will run through Aug. 26. The

admission to the concerts and parking is free. The concerts are sponsored by the Lowell Area Arts Council and the Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce.



## Meijer president speaks about ways to improve Michigan economy

by Emma Palova

President of Meijer, Inc., Mark Murray, shared his ideas how to improve Michigan economy with the Lowell Rotarians and their guests last week.

Murray was president of Grand Valley State University from 2001 to 2006. Prior to that Murray spent 20 years working for the state government and in education.

Murray served as state treasurer, state budget director, director of the department of management and budget, and as acting director for the Family Independence Agency. He also served as vice-president for finance and administration at Michigan State University.

Speaking in front of the full city council chamber, Murray touched on issues of global economy and the fact that Michigan is not well prepared to compete in it.

"Michigan has struggled," he said. "We're all engaged in a global system."

According to statistics, Michigan is number 38 in high school scores in the nation.

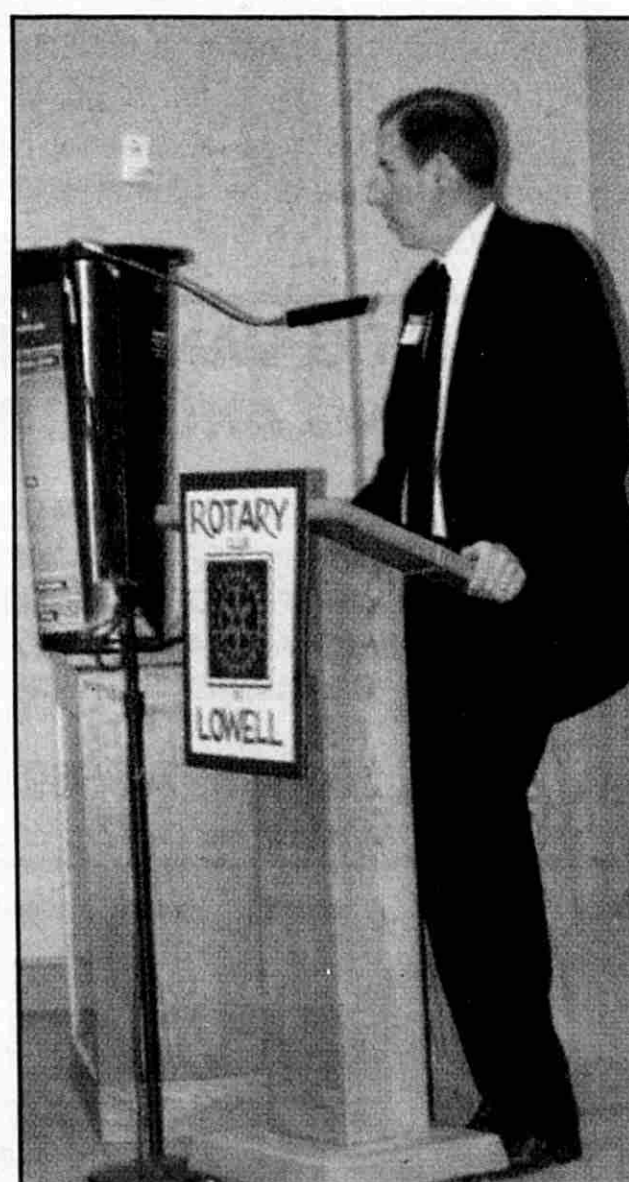
"We need to enhance skills, entrepreneur skills," he said. "There is quite an urgency, we're at a pivotal point. How do we move forward?"

Murray spoke about the concentration of skills in China and Singapore, where the majority of population has degrees in science and high-tech fields.

"Wealth creation is rooted in those disciplines," he said.

Any change during this transitional economy will come in small incremental steps and will not be revolutionary, according to Murray.

"We need to raise stems of excellence," Murray said. "There is a great history



Meijer, Inc. president Mark Murray.

of entrepreneurship in Michigan."

A new generation of entrepreneurs that steps up will be esteemed for taking the risk in a changing market, according to Murray.

Rotary speaker, continued, page 3

## Rails to trails group expects agreement with railroad next month

by Emma Palova

A purchase and sales agreement of the Lowell to Greenville railroad corridor with Mid Michigan Railroad may be on the horizon. The much anticipated agreement is expected in July.

A rails to trails group has been meeting over the last three years for the purpose of acquiring two railroad corridors that will be converted into trails. The corridor from Lowell to Ionia has been successfully acquired and even boasts a name, the Fred Meijer Grand River Valley Trail.

On the other hand, the group continues to struggle with the acquisition of the elusive Lowell to Greenville corridor. The acquisition has been plagued with a variety of problems ranging from naming issues, a lawsuit, and problems with the Michigan Department of Transportation grant application.

"It has been delayed," said Carolyn Kane, chairwoman of West Michigan Trails and Greenways Coalition. "It's just not coming together. It is not clear what MDOT may accept."

The involved parties have to resolve issues,

such as reimbursement at fair market value and changing the wording that the corridor cannot be used for recreation.

"We have to get that out," said Kane. "We didn't address the details."

However, Kane is hoping that the current difficulties will make for a better process for the next acquisition.

"It will make it easier for someone else," she said.

On the positive side, the formation of the inter-local governmental authority between Ionia, Shiawassee and Clinton counties is moving right along. Kane expects the authority to organize in July. The authority will serve as a fiduciary for the funds used for the maintenance of the trail.

"We're moving ahead with the authority," she said.

Kane has compiled a list of 100 trail supporters and volunteers including the Belding Area Friends group.

The next meeting will be held Sept. 9 at 1 p.m. at the Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce.









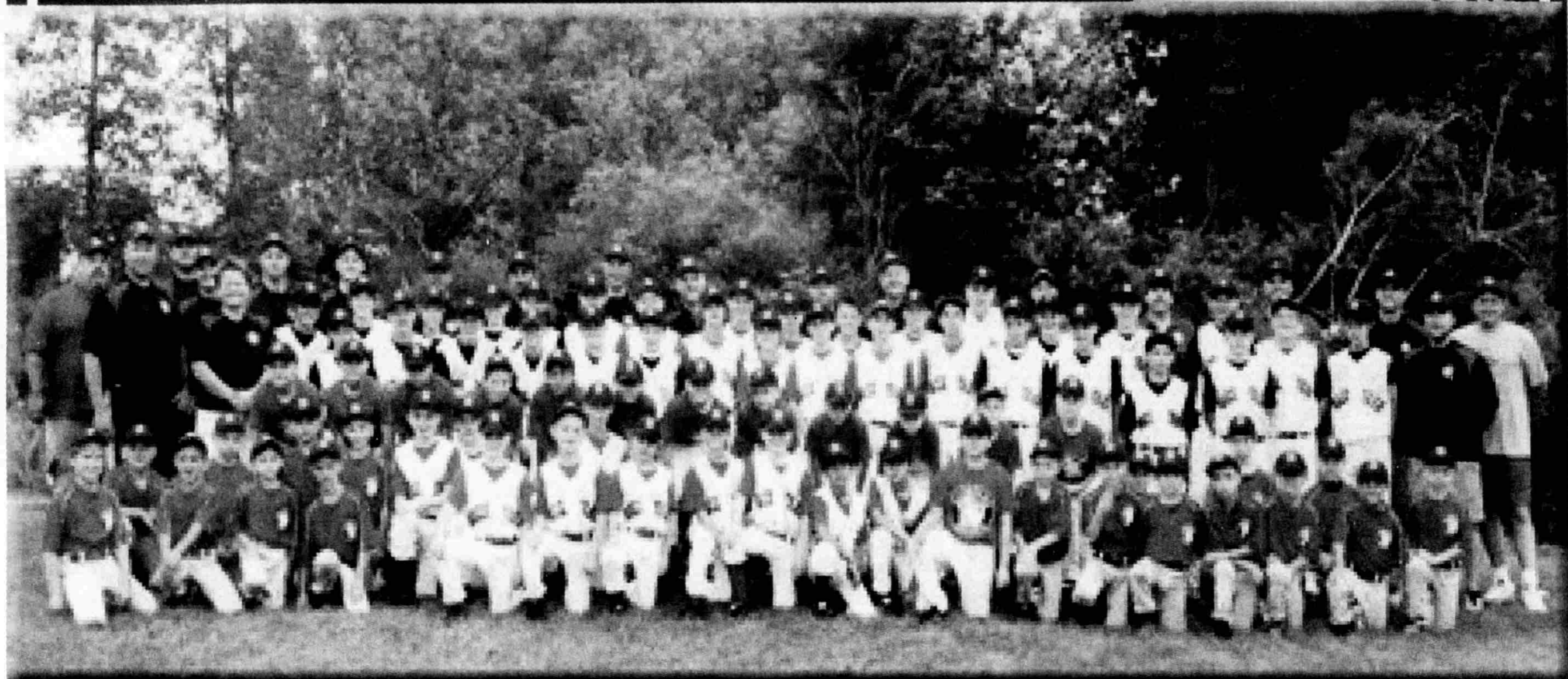








# 2010 SCHOOLS OUT Backyard Blast



A fantastic weekend concluded June 13th in the 2nd annual Schools Out Backyard Blast. Hosted in Lowell at Creekside Park, Rec Park and the Cherry Creek. The 44 team event was headed by the Backyard Dreams Travel Baseball Teams.

Many players, many memories were made this past weekend, not only on the field but also meeting other players, participating in the Home Run Derby, Speed pitch, field help, concessions help and much, much more. More than 70 parents and friends donated time to help with the huge event here in Lowell.

Thank you to everyone that helped. A very special thanks to many that were up at the crack of dawn, and didn't leave the parks until after dark for the 3 straight days and all the prep and planning that was done months and months prior to the event. It all came together for a very memorable weekend, thank you so much!

On the diamond, all the teams had great success including our 11U team taking the Championship over the Niles Shockers in a nail-bitter 1-0. The Backyard Dreams 13U team also went undefeated winning the 13U championship in a back and forth slugfest 15-11 over the Portage Rampage. Our 12U team played outstanding ball, finishing 2nd to a very strong Grand Rapids Elite Team. Our 8U Backyard Dreams Red Sox also took 2nd place, making it to the championship before coming up short vs. Diamonds. The 8U Black Sox, our 9U and 10U teams also played great, and exciting BYD baseball. All teams played outstanding ball this past weekend and continue to make giant strides in the development of our kids, organization and the BYD family.

There were so many great plays made, come from behind victories, tight ball games, laughs, excitement, cheers and even tears of hard fought games. Trophies and shirts earned for 1st and 2nd place. Kids giving it their all, coaches, parents, grand parents, and friends all standing proud. So many people having so much fun, so many compliments, from our own community to those that traveled from across the state from many of the 44 different organizations that were present with an approximate 2500-3000 additional people in Lowell this weekend. Many of our sponsors were very busy as well including B.C. Pizza and Spring Training!

Everyone should be very proud of our accomplishments! In a short period of time the Backyard Dreams teams are quickly becoming a staple in the travel baseball community throughout the state, not only for great baseball, but also great people. BYD will host the 3rd annual Schools Out Backyard Blast next summer, the weekend right after school is out in 2011.

The Backyard Dreams season is just past the halfway point for most of our teams, with 2 or three tournaments left to travel to, along with local games yet to be played before the season concludes by the end of July.

Backyard Dreams will start again with tryouts for the 2011 season that will be held in early August 2010. Come see a game, come out and see what all the fun is all about!

Check out our website [www.yourbackyarddreams.net](http://www.yourbackyarddreams.net) for all details.

