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the lowell ledger

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Annual nighttime Santa Parade ushers in holiday spirit, chamber names winners

by Emma Palova

A float with a nativity composed from the Peanuts characters was one of the attention getters at the annual Santa Parade last Saturday.

Unlike in previous years, the weather cooperated. In spite of the chill and wind, there was no snowstorm or freezing rain sweeping through the Main Street corridor.

The parade had 54 entries and it went smooth all the way from the opening emergency vehicles to the closing carriage ride into town with Mr. and Mrs. Claus aboard.

The theme "A Christmas Cartoon" lent

itself to a lively colorful stream of floats alternating with bands and mainstays, such as the calliope, the miniature Showboat and the Grinch with his flames.

A fire truck with a giant snowman representing the Lowell Area Fire Department glided down Main Street followed by other trucks.

The Lowell high school and middle school bands played Christmas music.

"We have heard this is our best ever parade," said Liz Baker, Lowell Area Chamber director.

It takes a lot of volunteers to organize the

Santa Parade, continued, page 15



Arrowhead Golf Course float with Peanuts nativity took first place.

only
16
shopping days
till christmas
icy art



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christmas
pancakes



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relay trees



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LHS SPORTS

Winter
Preview

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10 & 11

50
CENTS



Santa holds Liam VanderJagt for a photo pose.

Following Santa during Christmas festivities in Lowell

by Emma Palova

As Mr. and Mrs. Claus make their grand entrance, through the decorated trellis onto the Showboat, for their annual Santa visits and picture session last Saturday, seven-year-old Austin Bartrum runs to hug Santa.

"I love Santa," he said with his face glowing in the winter chill coming from the Flat River.

The Showboat, with its Santa room on the lower deck, is decked out with garland, Christmas trees and lights. Mrs. Claus turns up the heater as the windows fog. It is immediately hot in the small cabin.

Elf Nancy Anderson smiles mischievously by the door.

"I escort them out," she laughed.

A line is forming outside on the frozen deck. There are grandmas and grandpas, moms and dads, and kids of all ages in the line braving the cold.

In the meantime Santa has settled down into his wooden chair. He's a busy man, nowadays. He just came back from the Grand Rapids Arts Museum and Santa has a busy schedule ahead of him, including the pancake supper and the nighttime parade.

The Lowell Santa takes his role very seriously. He grows a real beard.

Santa, continued, page 2

City awards bid for tree clearing at airport

by Emma Palova

The Lowell City Council awarded a tree cutting project at the airport to the lowest bidder, Wonsey Tree Service of Alma, for \$41,848 on Monday night out of a total five bids received.

The project will clear trees near the end of runway 12/30 at the southeast intersection of Lincoln Lake

and Vergennes. The process has been long in the works due to difficulty in obtaining air easements and resistance to the cutting of trees from some residents.

However, now that the air easements have been acquired, the city can move ahead. The airport fund will pay 10 percent into the total

cost of the \$74,000 to clear runway approach and for threshold relocation.

Construction will start once a Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) grant and construction contracts are executed, and a preconstruction meeting must be held. This may take three to four weeks.

The budget for the project, other than the tree clearing, includes consultant design, aero design, consultant inspection, aero inspection, aero administration, and contingencies.

In other business, the city council approved

the sale of Downtown Development Authority (DDA) property, on the south side of Kent Street between South Monroe and South Washington, to Jice Pharmaceuticals for \$15,000. The property is

City meeting, continued, page 3

financial focus



Still time for year-end financial moves

The holiday season is always a busy time of year, so you're probably pretty busy. But it is important to take some time now to evaluate year-end financial moves that may be beneficial in preparing for your financial future.

contribution, the quicker you can get started on your 2011 contribution — and the earlier in the year you fund your IRA, the more time you give your account the opportunity to grow.

Put more money into college savings plans. If you have a 529 college savings plan for yourself or someone else, consider putting more money in before year-end.

Boost your IRA contributions. You have until April 15, 2011, to fully fund your IRA for the 2010 tax year, but the sooner you finish with your 2010

will also be able to save on capital gains taxes, because it will be the charity, not you, that eventually sells those assets.

Sell your "losers." If you own investments that have lost value since you purchased them, you can sell them before 2010 ends and then use the tax loss to offset capital gains you may have earned in other investments.

Be generous. If you've been thinking of making charitable gifts, don't put them off any longer. As long as you make a donation to a qualified charity before the year ends, you can claim a deduction on your 2010 tax return.

Take capital gains. In 2011, the tax rate on long-term capital gains is scheduled to increase to 20 percent for most investors, up from the 15 percent rate it's been the last several years.

Financial Focus, continued, page 6



DECEMBER 2 - DECEMBER 7

- The Supreme Court will consider throwing out a massive lawsuit that claims Walmart pays women less than men and promotes women less frequently. The case could involve 500,000 to 1.5 million women.
WikiLeaks publishes a secret document listing locations the U.S. considers vital to its national security.
Washington - Top senators from both parties indicate Sunday that a deal is likely soon on temporarily extending Bush-era tax cuts for all Americans, along with unemployment benefits that have expired.
New York - Activist investor William Ackman offers to finance a \$16 per share Borders-led takeover bid for rival bookseller Barnes & Noble Inc.

viewpoint

Shopping locally is important — and simple

There's been a great deal of publicity this year about the importance of shopping locally. You only have to look around as you travel throughout West Michigan or Kent County to notice the growing number of empty stores and realize how important it is for all of us to support our community merchants.

According to a recent report released from the Michigan Retailers Association, shoppers are turning online in growing numbers, putting even more pressure on independent businesses and their survival.

Chains and franchises tend to contribute roughly 40 percent — and at times as little as 20 percent of store sales — back to the community. Plus, large chains often are given tax breaks by cities that smaller independent businesses don't get.

The loss of local independent businesses leaves a social and economic void that may not feel real until brick-and-mortar businesses decide to pack up.

A locally owned independent business returns, back to the community, approximately 45 percent of each dollar spent. According to the U.S. Department of Labor,

independent businesses help their communities through a multiplier effect: \$1 spent at a locally owned business will return five times that amount within the community through city taxes, employee wages, and purchases of materials and supplies from other independent businesses in the community. These businesses also turn those dollars back to the community through school funding, social services and contributions to non-profit organizations.

Local independent merchants are the fabric of our community. They are the places where you have a cup of coffee, buy a gift for a friend, enjoy lunch or dinner, buy groceries, pick up tools or supplies from the

local hardware or lumber store. You can get a haircut, have your taxes prepared, have a prescription filled or apply for a loan or a mortgage at a local bank or credit union. These independent businesses provide all the services you use throughout the year, from vehicle repairs, to painting, remodeling, electrical work and plumbing. They will replace your furnace, install an air conditioner, insure your home or help you sell it.

The list goes on — and each time you choose to spend money locally, you add to the strength and vitality of our community. Without these local businesses, much of our community's character would be in jeopardy. They are the people who help support local schools, sports, music programs and much more. They give to churches, nonprofit groups, local community youth programs and more.

Since the economy went into a tailspin,

more consumers and community groups are actively supporting the small businesses of their communities, trying to avoid the closing of shops along Main Street.

A program supported by the U.S. Department of Labor announced its support of the 3/50 Project — a program to save the brick-and-mortar businesses of our nation. The project encourages shoppers to pick three independently owned businesses and spend at least \$50 a month at them. By doing so, local residents can strengthen the impact small businesses have on our community.

With a growing threat offered by Internet sales, U.S. officials are starting to promote the importance of supporting community businesses. Internet sales provide an unfair advantage over brick-and-mortar businesses because they can take an order from a computer in another country, avoid hiring local employees while distributing merchandise from a depot located in a state offering the best tax benefits. Plus, when you buy online, Michigan

loses the taxes on the sale, putting even more pressure on the state's ability to provide good schools, roads and public services. To start with, state and federal legislators should demand that all online sales pay the appropriate sales tax — all levels of government need the additional revenue, plus it would level the playing field for local businesses.

If you expect Lowell to remain strong in the coming years, then it's up to you to support your local, independently owned businesses. Local owners are

essential to the growth and stability of our community. They are the people that donate to local projects, serve on area boards and support community causes. When you spend your money locally, you're investing in the vitality of our community in the years to come. It's simple: pick three, spend \$50 and join a grassroots effort of giving back — locally!

Fred Jacobs, vice president, J-Ad Graphics



ask kathryn

Kathryn Denhouer Ph.D.

For several months now we have discussed the importance of learning how to manage stress. The different articles have included information on what stress does to our bodies and to our attitudes about life. We have learned how to manage stress through relaxation (i.e. progressive muscle relaxation and autogenic relaxation). Today, we will look at "stress survivors."

Most of the time, studies are done on people with diseases who have not learned to deal with stress. Salvatore Maddi in his book, The Hardy Executive: Health Under Stress, studied healthy executives to discover the attributes by which they successfully survived stress. The following traits were found in the hardy executive:

- 1. Interest in their job - when you like what you're doing you can express who you are and this helps you stay stress free.
2. Capacity for playfulness - it has been found that when you have a good time you loosen up and reduce tension.
3. Balance - we spend most of our day at our jobs that require rational, "linear" thinking. However, we need to spend more time using our creative thought process.
4. Curiosity - it is healthy for us to explore new ideas and get excited about life.
5. Expressiveness - being able to express our ideas and feelings to others frees us

from the stress of repressing who we are.
6. Comfort with competitors - we have less stress when we can handle criticism and not let our competitors throw us "off center."
7. Perspective with one's true abilities - an honest appraisal of the self keeps us "grounded" and strong.
8. Being flexible - gives us the ability to switch roles and to adapt well to changes. This ability decreases our stress.
9. Sense of wholeness - you become secure in the face of stress knowing that you can return to your center (spiritual self).
10. Integrity - clear values produce behaviors that feel right in most situations
11. Work, love, and play - working at balancing these three aspects of living, reduces stress. It is important to make sure that you aren't concentrating on one and ignoring the others.

Finally, here is a brief summary of what you can do to make yourself one of the "hardy survivors" of stress. You can exercise, walk, grow a garden, get active in activities that "use up" that stress reaction. You can communicate, talk it out, share your burden and leave it behind you. You can learn to compromise because when you give a little you gain a lot. You can become a philosopher and learn to

Ask Kathryn, continued, page 6

local business directory

Curtis Cleaners & Laundry advertisement featuring '2010 Award of Excellence' and 'December Special 20% OFF Winter Coats & Jackets'.

MIKA MEYERS BECKETT & JONES PLC ATTORNEYS advertisement listing John T. Sperla, Benjamin A. Zainea, Mark A. Kehoe, Neil P. Jansen, Ross A. Leisman, and Neil L. Kimball.

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

Rich's Service Co. In-Home Appliance Repair advertisement listing services like washers, dryers, refrigerators, and dishwashers.

Kirk Collins Snowboat Automotive Supply, Inc. advertisement for 1450 W. Main St., Lowell, MI, (616) 897-9231.

BUY LOCAL advertisement with a tree graphic and the text 'bloom where you're planted'.

FRY DADDY'S 608 West Main Street Lowell, MI 49331 advertisement for fish, shrimp, wings, and daily specials.

BROOKE KREBILL Residential Real Estate Agent advertisement for Keller Williams, 630 Kenmoor SE, Suite 101, Grand Rapids, MI 49546.

Ostrander Windows, Siding & Roofing Inc. advertisement for 9019 W. Belding Rd., Belding, Michigan, (616) 794-0661.



By Shelly MacNaughton

125 Years Ago The Lowell Journal December 11, 1885. G. Kropf is sinking an artesian well. Good prospects for much water. There will be a Christmas party at the Ada Rink Christmas night and a New Years party at the Ada hotel New Years night. All cordially invited.

100 Years Ago The Lowell Ledger December 8, 1910. The annual meeting and rabbit pie supper of Woodman Camp No. 1154, Monday evening, December 5, was a record breaking event in local fraternal history: 180 banqueters enjoying the big spread which followed the election of officers.

75 Years Ago The Lowell Ledger and Alto Solo December 5, 1935. William VanVorst and Gerald Henry are trying to locate the bald eagle aerie along Flat River from which the six-foot, two-year-old eagle, shot by David Garfield last week, was hatched.

50 Years Ago The Lowell Ledger December 8, 1960. The State Savings Bank announced this week that for the convenience of Christmas shoppers they will be open on Friday evenings until Christmas. The Michigan Department of State posted the names of two local area drivers whose licenses have been revoked: Sherman P. Reynolds, 83, 2190 Snow Avenue, Lowell, Nov. 1960 license revoked for failure to appear for re-examination; and Norman W. Stukkie, 7131 Bronson St., Ada, license revoked Nov. 17 for unsafe driving record and failure to report for re-examination.

25 Years Ago The Grand Valley Ledger December 11, 1985. The Lowell Rotary Club was treated to an internationally recognized guest speaker last Wednesday. Famous runner, Greg Meyer, was the guest of Rotarian Dr. James Lang. Meyer won the prestigious Chicago Marathon in 1982 and the famous Boston Marathon in 1983. Meyer holds the third fastest time for an American marathon and currently holds the record for the fastest 10 mile run.

Financial Focus, continued

comes to a close. However, it's generally not a good idea to make investment decisions strictly because of tax consequences. If your appreciated assets are still a

part of your overall financial strategy, you may be better off holding them for the long term, even with a higher capital gains rate.

Considering these moves

before the year ends may help you better prepare to address your financial picture in 2011.

Edward Jones, its employees and financial advisors are not tax advisors and cannot give tax advice. Please consult your qualified tax professional regarding your situation.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor.

business matters

Greenridge Realty announced that Sigi Winsor received Realtor of the month in November.

This award recognizes Winsor for her outstanding success and achievement.



Sigi Winsor

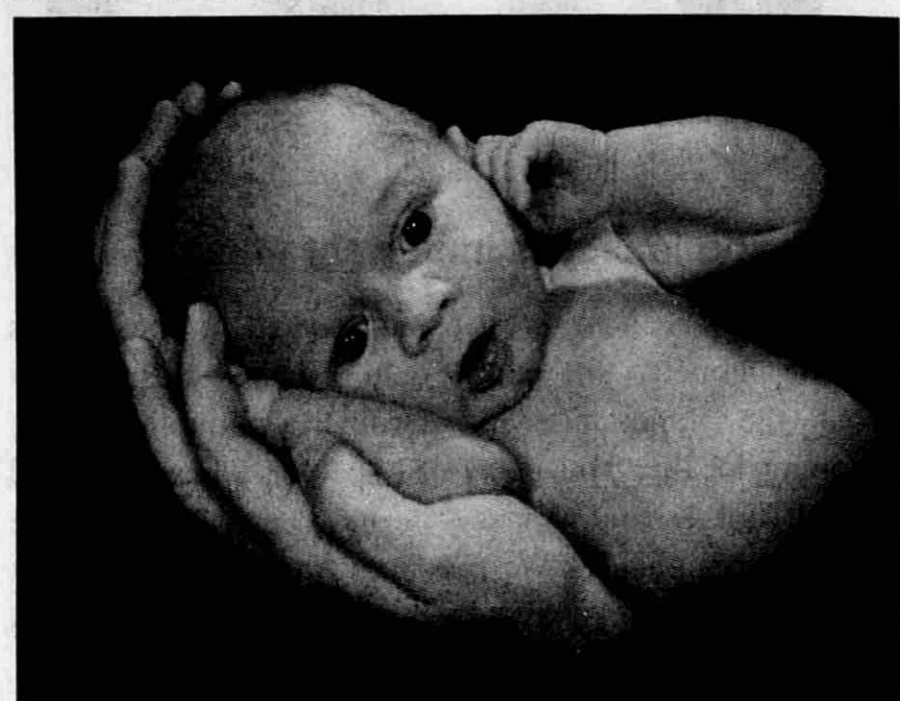
the ledger 897-9261 OFFICE HOURS Monday - Thursday: 8 am - 5 pm Friday: 8 am - 2 pm Closed Sat. & Sun.

area births

Lyon

Dan and Tabitha (May) Lyon are pleased to announce the birth of their son, Nolan James. He was born on October 24, 2010, weighing 7 lbs. 14 oz.

Proud grandparents are Jay and Oranda May of Lowell and Charlie and Denise Lyon of Ithaca.



Nolan James Lyon

happy birthday!

DECEMBER 8 Mike Cummings.

DECEMBER 10 Bill Fluger, Evelyn Heim, Barbara Decker.

DECEMBER 9 Allen Metternick, Sara Triplett, Deb Schuitema, Alison Nugent, Ben Nugent, Noah VanLaan.

DECEMBER 11 Dave Rhodes, Kathryn Zaleski, Amber Waldron, Mike Kline.

DECEMBER 12 Brad Briggs, Joyce Stormzand, Matt Newhouse, Sally Hacker, Charlie Young.

DECEMBER 13 Chrys Thaler, Jeff Bowne, Michelle Fyan.

DECEMBER 14 Chris Kropf, Bryan Robert Roth.

health

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

migraines

Migraines are the "king" of headaches. They typically are unilateral, throbbing, incapacitating headaches. Light and sound worsen the headache. It may become so painful that it causes one to throw up. These headaches often come on without any warning. Other migraines called "migraine with aura" may be preceded by an unusual sensation or smell.

Multiple factors can trigger a migraine such as: • lack of sleep • skipping meals • stress • certain foods • alcohol • menstrual cycles

Usually, a combination of factors trigger a migraine headache.

Treatment consists of ibuprofen/Motrin, a dark, quiet room and rest. Typically the headaches will resolve in hours. Other prescription medicines may be required to cure the headache. If migraines occur more than once per week, a daily medicine may be prescribed to prevent these from occurring.

Chef cooks up pancakes during Christmas festivities

by Emma Palova

It all started out as a normal pancake breakfast back when the Christmas parade was still in the morning. So when the Lowell Area Chamber moved the parade to nighttime four years ago, it was natural to change it to a pancake supper.

Anytime between 4 p.m. and 6 p.m., prior to the parade, anyone can get delicious pancakes, scrambled eggs and meat patties with juice and maple syrup for a freewill donation.

The event is a fundraiser for the premium program at the Kent County Youth Fair, according to coordinator Rory Kidder. The premium funding has recently been cut by the state, so local organizations are trying to raise money to make up for it. The event Saturday raised \$942. It was a little bit down compared to previous years. On average, the pancake supper raises from \$800 to \$1,200.

Chef Dean Olin with co-chef Gary Ridder always makes sure there is plenty for

all. Last week they served 358 people.

"It was down but we still had good money," said Ridder. "The weather was perfect, just beautiful."

Even though the attendance was down, people dug into their pockets and all went well. The fair court was taking money at the door of the King Memorial building all decked out for Christmas.

And there was plenty of help and volunteers. All the ingredients for the supper

were donated by area farmers and residents.

Pinckney Hill donated meat, Russ Yonker donated pancake mix, Nancy Kidder donated all the paper products, Ron Wenger donated maple syrup, and Gary and Judy Kidder donated eggs.

"We had plenty of help," said Kidder.



Chef Dean Olin flips pancakes at the annual pancake supper.

Ice Sculpture contest draws talent

by Emma Palova

The annual Flat River Freeze Ice Sculpture challenge held on the Riverwalk during Christmas festivities last week attracted a lot of talent. Over the years it has been held under the instruction of Bob Schultz of the Grand Rapids Community College.



Derek Warren received honorable mention for his penguin. Pictured in the photo with penguin is Austin Bartrum.

The competition aims at grooming young talent for bigger events. According to chamber director Liz Baker, the judging this year was very close. "The students presented their skills extremely well this year," she said.

Joe Pearson received first place, \$40 in Shop Lowell gift certificates, with his elaborately carved butterfly at right.

Jeff Marr received second place, \$30 in certificates, for his fish.



Dustin and Alexis Ewing pose by the fish sculpture.

Experience The True Meaning of Christmas Live Nativity Saturday, December 11th from 6 p.m. - 8 p.m. Bowne Center United Methodist Church Located 84th St. & Alden Nash Come see the Nativity! Enjoy Hot Chocolate & Cookies! The Bowne Historical Society will also host an OPEN HOUSE at the MUSEUM & 1 ROOM SCHOOL HOUSE

area churches

LOWELL CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE 201 N. Washington Lowell, MI • 897-8800 Pastor Wes Hersherberger

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL (United Church of Christ) 865 Lincoln Lake Ave. SE • 897-5906

ALTO UNITED METHODIST CHURCH Kirby and Harrison Alto • 616-691-8011

GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH 10305 Bluelwater Highway (Missouri Synod) Halfway between Lowell & Saranac on M-21

CHRISTIAN LIFE CENTER (Assembly of God) 3050 Alden Nash S.E. • 897-1100 • Staffed Nursery

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF LOWELL 2275 West Main Street • 897-7168

CALVARY CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH OF LOWELL 897-7060 1151 West Main Street, Lowell, MI

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF LOWELL 621 E. Main Street • 897-5936

ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH Fr. Eugene Okoli 402 Amity St. • 897-9820

SNOW UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 3189 Snow Ave. SE, Lowell Pastor Dr. Mike Conklin

Ask Kathryn, continued accept that which you cannot change. You can get enough rest and sleep. You can give of yourself, share your skills, and think and talk in a positive way. You can take time to relax and play,

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Gift Guide



How to ship oversized oddly, shaped items

Transporting a large or unusually shaped item can be a daunting task. Many people simply give up and hang on to an heirloom armoire or antique dollhouse rather than risk damaging it by shipping it across the country. It is, however, possible to ship just about anything safely.

The Lowell Ledger

office handles UPS and offers some tips for people with large or unwieldy items to ship:

- * Wrap it. Protect items from scratching or breaking by wrapping them in bubble wrap, tissue or plastic. If you're using one box to ship several items, wrap each item individually. There should be two inches of packaging materials around each item and between the item and the box. If you're



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Santa on the Lowell Showboat,
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2010 Schedule

Wednesdays, Dec. 8th, 15th & 22nd.....5:30pm to 7:00pm
Free Digital Photos by Modern Photographics

Friday Dec. 10th.....5:30pm to 7:30pm
Free Digital Photos by Modern Photographics with Santa Free Horse & Carriage Rides.
\$1 hot dogs & popcorn by LAS crew team at the Riverwalk Plaza & more!

Saturdays, Dec. 11th & 18th.....10:30am to 1:00pm
Free Digital Photos by River Valley Credit Union

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shipping artwork, use non-acidic paper.

- * Pack it. To help absorb shock and vibration during shipping, use foam or rubber as a second layer of packaging. Make sure that items are secure. Most damage occurs when items shake or move in their packaging.

- * Make it secure. Choose a cardboard box that is sturdy. If you choose to package your shipment in anything besides a cardboard box, you may incur extra charges when shipping in this type of container.

- * Get a guarantee. Insure your items when you ship them. Make sure that you have each item's tracking numbers so you can watch their progress.



Gift Guide



Safety first when stringing holiday lights

Perhaps no holiday tradition is more visible than decorative lights. Whether on the house or on the tree in the front picture window, holiday lights help create a festive mood for all.

While aesthetically appealing, holiday lighting displays can also be quite dangerous. Older lights or poorly planned lighting projects can quickly turn tragic. However, this much beloved holiday tradition does not have to cease and desist. Instead, some simple safety precautions are all it takes to ensure this year's lighting display is both stunning and safe.

- Make sure exterior lights are designed for outdoor use. Not all lights can handle the elements, so those old Christmas tree lights might not be able to enjoy a second life as part of a home's exterior lighting decor.

- Plug lights directly into the electrical sockets rather than relying heavily on extension cords. Employ surge protector strips if there are not enough outlets available. Before plugging anything in, consult the fuse box to determine how much each circuit can safely handle.

- Don't use damaged lighting sets, including those with frayed strings, unstable connections, exposed wires, or broken or cracked sockets.

- Make sure all external lights are securely attached. Wind can do significant damage to bulbs, which can lead to

additional safety risks. As a precaution, attach all lights firmly to walls or anything else that will not blow away when a stiff wind arrives.

- Inside the home, be extra careful when using an artificial Christmas tree. Electric lights should never be used on a metallic tree.

- Routinely check all cords' temperatures. If a cord feels too hot, unplug it and find a replacement.

- Don't leave the lights on when no adults are home. If the home is empty or if just kids are home, make sure the lights are off. Avoid using timers that automatically turn the lights on, as it's possible they will turn on when no one is home. Unplug all cords when going away for the holidays just to be safe.

- Make sure all cords are visible. Don't bury



Holiday lighting displays are a beloved tradition but one homeowners must carefully consider and layout to avoid accidents.

cords underneath rugs or floor mats to avoid personal injuries.

- Hanging lights shouldn't be a solo project. Whether hanging lights inside or outside, never do so alone. A stiff wind might come along and blow the ladder away or an unstable ladder might lead to a fall. Accidents happen when hanging lights indoors as well, so make sure to have an adult partner on hand to avoid injury.

- Make sure kids cannot reach lighting displays. Kids often adore holiday lighting displays and their natural curiosity is to reach for lights. Avoid potential accidents by keeping lights well beyond the reach of children.



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(at Plainfield Ave)
988-1020

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Red Arrow SPORTS Winter Preview

- GYMNASTICS

Excitement surrounds youth infused gymnastic team

With seven of the 12 Lowell gymnasts new to the varsity lineup it may sound odd to some to hear the term familiar faces in new places.

That is, however, where Michele DeHaan's program is at. "They're new to the varsity level but they've grown up with me through our youth program," DeHaan explains. "They not only know me, but they are friends with our juniors and seniors."

DeHaan, in her 14th season as the Lowell gymnastics coach, has made the program what she envisioned - like family.

This year, a gymnastic family that competes together, also practiced together this summer.

"Every returning gymnast took lessons this summer. They are all better than when the season ended last year," DeHaan explains.

They are seniors Lauren Trasky and Becky Chamberlain (captains); junior Vonda Kyes; and sophomores Morgan McVey and Jorie Bennett.

Trasky and Chamberlain will highlight their craft on the uneven bars and balance beam respectively.

"Lauren has improved tremendously on the bars and Becky will help us on the beam," DeHaan said. "Jorie, I expect, will be one of our top vaulters."

The Red Arrows will field three all around gymnasts. Bailey Roberts' power lends itself to the floor exercise and the vault.

Kaize Bladley also exudes power and is solid on the beam. Sophomore Morgan McVey returns from a strong freshman season.

The Lowell coach identifies Kenowa Hills as the team to beat in the O-K Rainbow conference. "After that I think it's Rockford and us."

There is one subtle change Red Arrow gymnastic fans will notice, Lowell begins its season in December. The Red Arrows will compete at Rockford on Dec. 18 and against Kenowa Hills on Dec. 29. "In my 14 years this is the first time we've competed before January," DeHaan said.

- SKIING Two of areas' best lead co-op ski team

Two of West Michigan's top skiers will once again don the colors of the Lowell/Kenowa Hills/Comstock Park ski team.

Sophomore Abi Ellis and senior Spencer Gillette will lead a thin roster of skiers. Ellis is one of four skiers on the women's team and Gillette is one of just five on the men's team.

Ellis, a junior olympian who competed in Vail last year, on most weeks will be the areas' top skier.

"Abi is a strong kid with a great attitude and a head to go with the body," said coach Jaime Hagerman. "She is coming off a fabulous freshman year."

Gillette combines experience and good technique.

"Spencer is a top five skier in both the giant slalom and the slalom," Hagerman explains.

Ellis will be joined on the girls' roster by Katy Mork, Kyra Marks and Aubrey Gillette.

"Mork was inexperienced when she started and now is in the upper third of West Michigan skiers," Hagerman said. "She is strongest in the giant slalom. She just needs to work on her technique."

Both Marks and Aubrey Gillette are green with experience and will learn as they go, according to Hagerman.

Helping Gillette fill out the boys' roster will be Gabor Halisz, D.J. Mixan, Kaleb Brown, and Sean Florian.

"Gabor had no experience when he started and over four years has improved into a top 20 skier," Hagerman said. "Florian, Brown and Mixan are all just starting."

Lowell/Kenowa Hills/Comstock Park compete in the Greater Grand Rapids High School Ski Association.

Grand Haven, Rockford, Forest Hills Central and East Grand Rapids are the league top four schools. Hagerman said Lowell's co-op team is probably somewhere between five and eight (middle of the pack).

- COMPETITIVE CHEER Pushing the envelope in hopes of pushing up league standing

Lowell's competitive cheer team can't control how its competition does, but what it does control is how it executes and performs.

With an upper echelon finish in the O-K Black and White conference the goal, the Red Arrows will insert a higher level of skill into its routine.

"We're going to push the envelope of skill difficulty," said Lowell's seventh year coach Kari Dawson.

That approach is possible, in part, because Lowell will field its strongest round two routine in many years.

"We will have a higher skill level and a higher number of girls performing back handsprings," Dawson said.

Competitive cheer competitions are broken down into three rounds, leadership (presence and flat cheer), 10 counts/5 skills, and tumbling and stunting.

From what Dawson has seen in practice, the coach is pleasantly surprised by how the girls have stepped up their round two routine.

"We will measure our success by our placement in Saturday tours, bettering our scores from meet to meet, and the ability to control what we do," Dawson explained.

Defending league champion, Kenowa Hills, is pegged as the favorite by Dawson with a challenge from Grand Rapids Christian.

"Kenowa has a new coach, that may have an effect," Dawson said.

Lowell finished fourth last year, Dawson and her squad are pushing to better that in 2010-11.

"It all comes down to what you bring with your score sheet," she said.

The Red Arrows will be led by the senior trio of Kate and Anna Scudder and Ericka Claypool.

"The girls blend well together and bring a cohesiveness," Dawson said. "They have stayed together for four years and have provided us with a physical and mental strength needed to perform stunts."

- BOWLING Experienced youth have Lowell boys rolling for league title

A young but seasoned Red Arrow boys' bowling team returns for the 2010-11 season.

"We're young but more experienced. The boys put in practice time over the summer," said Lowell boys' bowling coach Rocky Eickhoff.

There's still room for improvement and Eickhoff says that will be necessary if Lowell is to overthrow defending O-K White champion, Northview.

Returning from a year ago is the Red Arrows' top five bowlers: Dillon Buck, Logan Phenix, Jordan Denning, Jake Hornbrook and Alec Bobko.

"They all average in the mid to upper 170s," Eickhoff said. "They just need to stay focused and do a better job of picking up spares."

Brandon Segal will serve as a sixth man for the Red Arrows.

Others who will look to add depth to the roster are Carl Mitchell, Sean Ritsema, Josh Rocco and Jake Merklinger.

"We have a good little group of bowlers here," Eickhoff said.

Lowell/Caledonia graduated 10 players from last year's squad and returns just two starters. Junior Braden McGillicuddy is back as a forward/defenseman and Justin Lehman as a defenseman.

Beurer adds that one of the clubs two goalies from a year ago returns. "Nathan Propst has been solid for us early," Beurer says.

Contributions from a

Girls' bowling, continued, page 11

Red Arrow SPORTS Winter Preview

- WRESTLING

Strong returning core leads Lowell grapplers into 2010-11

Dotted throughout the program over the last decade are three state titles, 10 district titles and seven conference championships.

While those numbers are glamorous and provide optimism for the future, it's wrestling for six minutes, not giving up bonus points, staying disciplined and wrestling smart in tough situations which are elements for success in 2010-11.

"I appreciate those who do the hard stuff. You can see the kids with that predisposition, the fighters," said Lowell wrestling coach Dave Dean.

Lowell finished 29-5 a year ago with a 27-25 Division I regional final loss to Rockford. Dean believes he has a deeper, stronger club this year.

"We have a number of wrestlers who saw varsity action last year. We also have four wrestlers returning who placed at state," Dean explained. "That gives us a good core group to build from."

In reality it's more of a foundation than a building block.

Gabe Morse (140), Andrew Morse (145), Dan Fleet (152) and Gabe Dean (189) all brought home hardware from the individual state tournament last year. And there is Zach Jeffries who did not place but was a state qualifier at 119 pounds.

Those who will bring a credible amount of varsity action to the mat include Jake Mitchell (130), Jake Stehley (160), Jake Lynema (HWT), Tyler Mitchell (171), Wade Schlosser (171), Nick McKay (215), Calvin Meyer (125) and Martin Brubaker (112).

Mixed in with the proven and tested will be the young and inexperienced: Derek Krajewski and Barley Jack (103 pounds), Andrew Metternick and Scott VanOosten (112), Ryan Walters (119), Canon Dean 140, and Garet Stehley (189-215).

Every town has a different culture and football has a huge influence. Just ask Dean and Lowell basketball coach Jeff McDonald.

"We have eight wrestlers out who play football. They will need a break to recover both physically and mentally from a long season," Dean explains. "We will be patient with it."

December will be a month for building the skills and conditioning foundation.

"In January we will turn that foundation into gold," Dean says.

Changing school enrollments will drop Lowell back down to Division 2 after spending one year in Division 1. That will bring back some added zest to its conference rivalry with Greenville.

"The O-K White will be a two-horse race between Greenville and us," Dean explained.

Overall the Lowell coach has the defending Division 2 state champs still atop the mountain.

"St. Johns is number one till proven otherwise. Then it's us, Greenville, Lakeshore, Allegan and Tecumseh.

In its first action on the mat at Detroit Catholic Central, Lowell, without eight starters, got battered. The Red Arrows lost to Catholic Central (#1 in Division 1) 66-12 and Oxford (#2 in Division 1) 54-16.

- BASKETBALL New coach searching for aggressive, confident approach

The confident, aggressive play Lowell first-year basketball coach Kevin Brechting remembers seeing from the visitor's bench last year was missing in action through the season's first two games.

"It's been surprising because I am coaching a talented group of individuals," Brechting said. "We are doing some new things at both ends and I think the girls are struggling to get the hang of it."

In its opening two games against Kentwood and Cedar Springs, Lowell has struggled out of the gate.

The Red Arrows fell behind 17-2 in the first quarter against the Falcons and 16-6 against the Redhawks.

Lowell battled back to within one to start the fourth quarter against Cedar Springs.

"In both of those games we did not start off as aggressively as our opponent," Brechting explained.

The Red Arrows have also struggled to net their shots from the line. Lowell netted just 8-of-22 shots from the stripe against Kentwood and 9-of-21 against Cedar Springs.

Returning for the 2010-11 season are six players who enjoyed time as starters last year. They are Bryleigh Loughlin, Taylor Flanagan, Katie Tompkins, Courtney Schmidt, Brooke Curtis and Sam Visscher.

"Right now the girls are struggling with processing what to do during game situations," Brechting said. "It's a new system and new coaches. It takes time to build confidence and trust. Once the girls get from slow and timid to confident and aggressive they will play with anyone."

Grand Rapids Christian will once again be favored for league honors. East Grand Rapids is expected to challenge.

"I think both of those clubs are probably heads above the rest of the league," Brechting said.

Lowell, 0-2, plays Byron Center this week.

"The Bulldogs may be the best basketball team we will play all year," Brechting concludes.

A good time to break out the confident and aggressive approach.

Thin roster to present early season challenges

Challenging is usually a word reserved for describing the O-K White basketball slate.

This year, Lowell boys' basketball coach Jeff McDonald broke it out early to describe the practices leading up to Friday's season-opener against Grandville.

Why is that?

Absent for the Red Arrows opener will be starting point guards Jacob Meyer and Justin Castro along with starting forward Elliott Drain.

The injuries will force Lowell to suit up just eight players against the Bulldogs.

Our identity will change as we become healthy and eligible to play," said McDonald. "We will metamorphosis into a different team as we begin to get bodies back."

Until then the Red Arrows will have to change things up schematically.

The guard positions will be filled by senior Sam Steed and junior Blake Lyman.

"They will be asked to step in and bridge the gap until we get healthy," McDonald explained. "We will change things up schematically so its not their sole responsibility."

Lowell's front line will be filled by senior center Griffin Brink and forwards Dan Wernet and Alec Roerig.

"Griffin gives us a physical presence inside while Roerig runs the floor well and his long, lanky build allows him to change shots," McDonald said. "Wernet gives us energy and played great in a recent scrimmage."

The Red Arrow coach says the club will run a more fluid offense in hopes of developing player instincts.

"Defensively we will pressure because of our foot speed and quickness," McDonald said. "I like this club's chemistry. They play hard and are unselfish."

The O-K White is led by Grand Rapids Christian. McDonald says the Eagles are loaded and loaded for years to come.

Northview returns two of the league's top players in Darren Kaputka and Kevin Rich.

East Grand Rapids has a plethora of athletes and Greenville is blessed with size.

"The league could be challenging. Our boys will have to play hard and play for something bigger than themselves," McDonald concludes.

Girls' bowling, continued

five bowlers returning, we appear to be strong," said Lowell bowling coach Eva Geldersma.

Lowell finished second in league play to Northview last year. However, the Red Arrows finished ahead of the Wildcats at the regional.

Anchoring this year's squad are seniors Jessie Alberts and Sammi Geldersma; and juniors Shelby Mitchell and Amber Geldersma.

"They all averaged between 150-170 last year," Geldersma noted.

The Lowell coach anticipates Melissa Mosher filling the fifth spot.

Vying for that fifth spot along with Mosher are Paige Rozell, Mia Carvajal, Annlyse Bencker, Casie Burr and Jodi Carvill.

"We need to play as a team, have fun and be competitive at the same time," Geldersma explained.

On the alleys, Geldersma notes the importance of picking up spares and improving its play in Baker games.

"We did okay picking up spares last year, but there is room for improvement," the Lowell coach explains.

Someone had to say it!



Thad Kraus

Did you have a minute to gloss over the pairings for the BCS bowl games?

There doesn't seem to be a whole lot of WOW.

You have Oregon and Auburn for the national championship.

As a sidebar, does anyone believe that Cam Newton didn't know about the payment scheme his father concocted for his son's football services?

Now that the NCAA has given its approval for Newton to play out the season, it's highly unlikely that he will have the Heisman Trophy taken back from him when there is further damning evidence.

Back to the BCS bowls.

What does Oklahoma and Connecticut in the Fiesta Bowl do for you? Is that must see college football?

Okay, then what about Virginia Tech and Stanford in the Orange Bowl? Does a team (Hokies) who lost 21-16 to James Madison deserve to play in the BCS? I don't care if they did win the football challenged ACC.

At last there is the Rose Bowl between Wisconsin and TCU.

The Badgers' bowl record is 3-4 over their last seven bowl appearances.

The solution, at the very least, is to do away with automatic bids for conference winners who are not worthy. A one-loss Boise State club is far better than Connecticut or Virginia Tech.

Look for the College Bowl Challenge coming in next week's Ledger.

Grandpa's Christmas Adventure part II

by Dave Thompson

[We left off last week with a terrible snowstorm bearing down on Lowell and many travelers stranded out on the expressway and surrounding back roads. But three of the flatbed trucks near the Lowell exit were Army-type trucks from the Indiana National Guard.]

Some of those motorists stuck in the snow on the expressway began to notice some activity among the soldiers around one of the flatbed trailers. Three of the soldiers were pulling the canvas cover off the last vehicle chained to the flatbed as another man moved inside and moments later had it fired up. A large plume of black diesel smoke belched angrily from its engine's exhaust. Those vehicles had been there over an hour and one might assume that they had been seeking direction from headquarters, getting clearance to take some action. A few minutes later the other vehicle roared to life as the first one slowly began to back off the trailer.

A sergeant standing behind the trailer, using his arms like a traffic cop, directed the eight-wheeled vehicle as it backed off the flatbed. Suddenly the trailer shook and lurched as this tank-like contraption rocked backward and touched the ground, slowly moving free of the semi trailer. By now, people were out of their cars and standing to watch this strange performance. Slowly, this motorized vehicle, called a Stryker, moved up to the north side of the road, spitting up grass and snow from beneath its heavy tread wheels, before stopping on the shoulder; the other vehicle moved to the south side of the expressway. All of this was happening less than a mile east of Exit 52 which was the closest off ramp on the I-96.

Over a loud speaker on this tank-like vehicle, a man with a different hat and uniform holding a microphone began to speak, "Now listen up, people! This expressway is closed

and will be for at least a few days until heavy equipment can clear the road and moved the stalled vehicles. We are going to use our APCs, aaahh, that stands for Armored Personnel Carriers. We call it a Stryker, folks. Which will take you to a place of shelter and later into a town, which on our satellite earth-map system tells us is Lowell. Please stay in your cars until we pull up alongside of you. No sense in standing out here in this freezing cold wind and blowing snow. We will get to all of you. I'm Lt. Doberman and thank you for your cooperation!" With that, both vehicles began moving, stopping at each car to pick up passengers. One of the crew members helped people get their belongings into the large rear door of the APC before it moved on to the next car. Once an APC had loaded about eight or ten people, it moved up the shoulder to Exit 52.

Heidi's Farm Market, which was due to close for the season on Christmas Eve, became the first haven for travelers. Later it would be decided where these folks would be put up for the night. Once a Stryker had unloaded, it quickly returned to the expressway to retrieve more stranded families. The storm had earlier chased away any regular customers Heidi's might have had and Aaron and Pat, who were both working that morning, stood together peering out into the blowing snow trying to determine what was making such a terrible racket, when the first APC, emerging from a virtual wall

of snow, rumbled up to their south entrance. One by one the passengers filed out of the back door and into the warmth of Heidi's, unsure how long they might be "customers." The second APC dropped its human cargo off at the Mobil station where a few other travelers had stopped earlier, uncertain about the roads and driving conditions.

By now, Greg Pratt, the schools' superintendent, had been called and three or four school buses were commandeered to shuttle stranded passengers on into Lowell, four miles north of I-96. As the roads from the expressway became clogged, Danny DesJarden, Lowell's DPW director, kept a plow moving back and forth between the expressway and town in this emergency situation and private plowing companies, like Zack Beachum's, helped the DPW to keep some key streets and parking lots cleared so travelers could get to their assigned places of refuge before nightfall.

With Grandma finally home safely, Grandpa unloaded shopping items from the car and then pulled on his old boots, his hat with "ear flappers" and his heavy coat and trudged down to the river to fill the other feeders for his animal friends who didn't hibernate during the winter. As he was filling the last feeder, he heard a sound louder than the wind howling across the river, that "whooshing sound" of big wings. There is nothing else like it in nature. Tipping his head back and sheltering his eyes from the storm,

Grandpa spotted Edgar as he glided down to a sturdy perch just above Grandpa. Once landed, he stretched up and vigorously flapped his wings, shaking off all of the wet snow and ice that had accumulated, finally folding them back neatly into place. Suddenly, there was a second "whooshing sound" as Oscar the Owl flew up and landed next to Edgar. He too, stretched and flapped his powerful wings. He eventually folded them and did a double take at Edgar who was glaring at him. "Whhhhaaaat?" Oscar asked innocently. "Hey!!!" shouted Edgar, like a little kid complaining to Grandpa. "He does that all the time, Grandpa, and then he pretends he doesn't realize what he's doing," Edgar whined. "Come on boys, we have work to do. Enough of that!" replied Grandpa. Oscar reported that there were a number of cars stranded on back roads, especially where it was hilly. Grandpa thought for a minute, his left hand massaging his chin as he thought. "I have an idea. Why don't you two make a sweep outside of town, scouting the back roads and reporting back to me who is stranded. At that point we can direct some rescue crews to help bring them in." And, so the plan was hatched, Oscar covering the west side of Lowell and Edgar, the east side.

In Lowell, "the hospitality forces" had already sprung into action and Liz Baker was lining up places for the stranded guests to stay. Well,

everybody knows how it is in Lowell, once the first couple of calls were made, well, the news spread through the town like wild fire. As one person called another, soon phones across town were abuzz, indicating that volunteers were answering the call. Rather than Liz Baker closing the Chamber of Commerce office because of the storm, she was remaining open because of the storm! The churches were the first to respond, First Baptist, Calvary Christian Reformed Church, Church of the Nazarene, First Congregational, First Methodist, Impact, and St. Mary's Catholic Church all were lined up to help. Most of the outlying and smaller churches chimed in also, wanting to know where they could help as well. As one caller who volunteered space commented, "Well, we won't have any of our family coming home for Christmas, they all live too far away to travel here, but, it appears we will have a family with us afterall, even if it's a borrowed one." Their three extra bedrooms were quickly filled.

As is customary, a few nights before Christmas, Santa always made his last minute "Check Up Flights" to see how all children were behaving. This was the night, two days before Christmas. He put Rudolph and the others in their working harnesses, attached to the big old sleigh, ready to visit the Lowell area. He could see the mess on I-96 and decided to stop first at Grandpa's and get the latest word on what was happening. As his sleigh glided to a stop near the river, Grandpa stood upright and waved to Santa. "How are you doing, Santa?" he called out. "No questions about a White Christmas this year, huh?" Santa laughed, brushing snow from his beard. The "whooshing" overhead announced the return of Oscar from his surveying of stranded cars west of Lowell.

Oscar was troubled! "Grandpa, we have a real serious problem! There is a car down a dead end road and a huge old maple has fallen over the road, a casualty of the wind, totally blocking any vehicles from even getting close to it and there are small children in that car. When I flew over it, it was nearly buried in the deep snow and it's really getting cold." Maybe, just maybe, Santa had arrived at just the right time.

To be continued next week.



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Yes an artificial one of course 39%

No not putting up a tree or decorating 17%

Decorating but not putting up a tree • 22%

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Santa Parade, continued

parade on an annual basis, making sure the parade route is safe, to final naming of the winners.

"Great parades don't happen without many hands, so many thanks to our volunteers who endure the cold every year to make this happen," said Baker.

And the winners were giddy.

Josh Bruwer, general manager of Arrowhead Golf Course, entered the

winning float with Peanuts characters. His wife Kristen made the papier-maché characters for the nativity scene. She also got clothes for the neighborhood kids who were on the float. Last year, Arrowhead Golf Course took second.

"We do it for the fun," said Bruwer.

Although they wanted to win, they didn't expect to win after seeing all the wonderful floats, according to Bruwer.

"We will be back next year," he said. "We have a tough act to follow."

Volunteers put more than 100 man hours into the three to four feet tall papier-maché heads and the nativity was placed on a trailer used at the golf course.

"It paid off to be recognized and that the business is associated with the golf course," Bruwer said.

Equally happy were the Lowell bus drivers with

their second place. Their float represented a complete scene from Frosty the Snowman.

Greenridge Realty took

the third place with Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer, Island of the Misfit Toys.

The first prize was \$150, second was \$100, third was

\$75, and the honorable mention went to Tom Burri of Caledonia who received \$50 in Shop Lowell gift certificates.



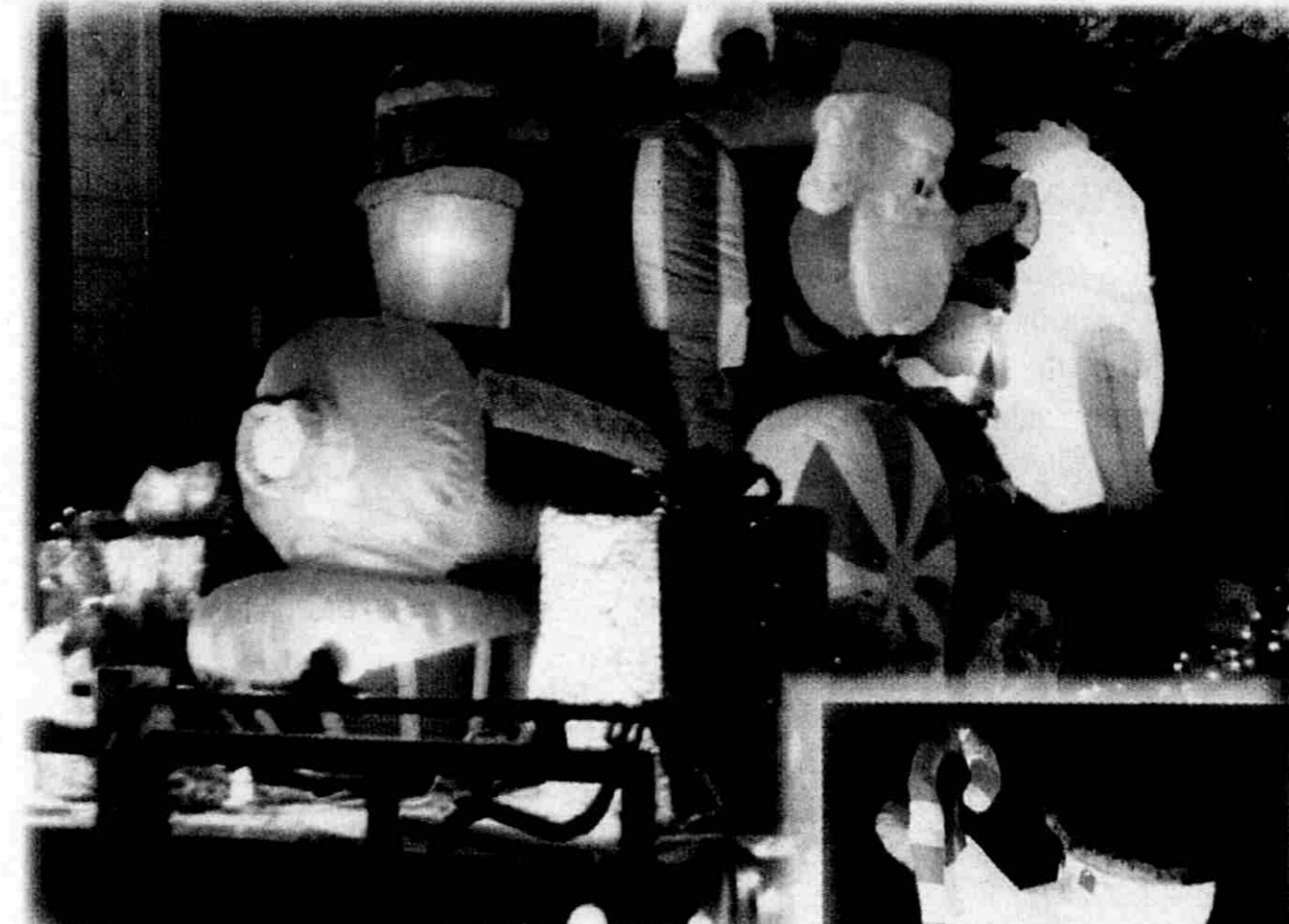
Greenridge Realty came in third with their Island of Misfit Toys float.



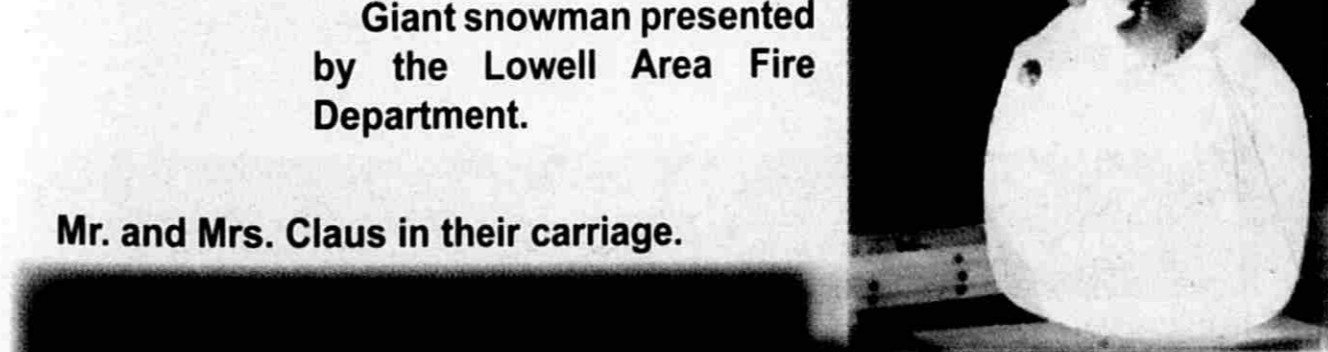
The Lowell bus drivers took second place with Frosty the Snowman.



The color guard and Lowell's eighth-grade band students.



River Valley Credit Union float with balloons.



Giant snowman presented by the Lowell Area Fire Department.



Mr. and Mrs. Claus in their carriage.

FLAT RIVER OUTREACH MINISTRIES CHRISTMAS BOX DONATIONS

Flat River Outreach Ministries will be collecting new, unwrapped toys and gifts through December 16, 2010

TOY BOXES OR BARRELS

will be in place at the following locations beginning Friday, Nov. 19:

Brenda's Hair Design, Curves, Dollar General, Fifth Third Bank, Grand River Veterinary Hospital, Rite Aid, Showboat Automotive, Springrove Variety, Walgreens, Ada/Lowell 5 Theater and B.C. Pizza

ANGEL TREES

will be in place at the following locations:

Firstbank, Ella's Coffee Shop, Huntington Bank, Huntington Bank (branch) and Englehardt Public Library

FOODS, TOYS & MONETARY DONATIONS

can be dropped off at the FROM Food Pantry, 11535 Fulton St. E. on Wednesday and Thursday, Dec. 15 and 16, between 10 am and 4 pm. Food and toys will be distributed on Saturday, Dec. 18 from 9 am to 2 pm.

If we can be of assistance to your family with food and/or toys, please come to the Food Pantry to sign up.

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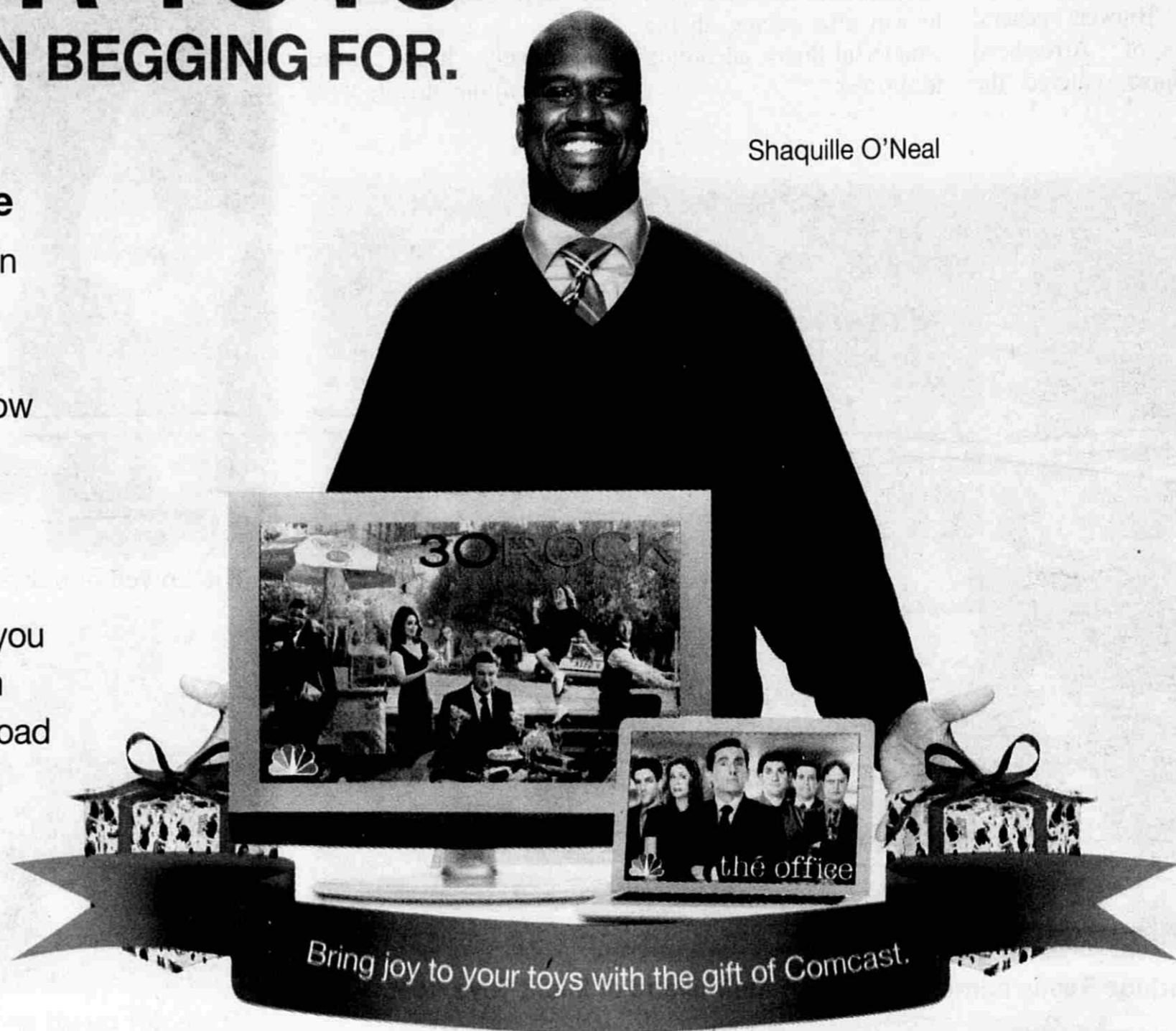
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