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# the lowell ledger

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## Christmas festivities gear up to grand finale

by Emma Palova

The snow on the ground and arctic temperatures arrived just in time for Santa to embark on his magic sleigh pulled by his personal reindeer fleet.

Reindeer Vixen and Dancer, from GG Reindeer Farm in Caledonia, landed on the Riverwalk last Friday for all to admire. According to owner Greg Gorniewicz, Vixen is only a baby, three months old, and Dancer is a year-and-a-half.

"They were bottle fed and trained for safety purposes," said Gorniewicz. His daughter, Molly Gorniewicz, was taking care of them. It was the first year of showing for the Gorniewicz family.

So, the Christmas atmosphere definitely prevailed in spite of the

cold as the young and the old queued in front of the Showboat to visit with Santa.

The miniature model of the Showboat was stationed right by the big boat, both decked out for Christmas with lights, garlands and red bows.

Santa will still be available for pictures on Dec. 15, 18 and Dec. 22 from 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Who wouldn't go for a festive ride in a Victorian carriage pulled by dapple-grey Percherons? Another long line formed by the Common Gentry loading area at the end of the Riverwalk for a ride around the block in the luxurious white carriages.

The carriages have been refurbished and reproduced



Connie Elsasser drives the Victorian carriage pulled by Pete.

by an Amish factory in Indiana for common use. Owner Connie Elsasser of Ada started her carriage business in 1990. Since

then, Common Gentry has won several awards for Best of Show and Best Turnout at the 2008 Gladwin County Carriage Festival.

Elsasser takes pride in her Percherons Tess, Pete and Princess, as well as Christmas festivities, continued, page 9



only

shopping days till christmas

christmas at the museum



page 7

a few laughs



page 8

LHS SPORTS



pages 10 & 11

50 CENTS



## Thrift Shop volunteer works to meet needs of community

by Emma Palova

Marilyn Lambson, a former nurse, has been working as the director of the Thrift Shop for the last nine years. Prior to that, she worked there as a store coordinator.

Lambson runs the Thrift Shop much like a business, like a real store, even though it's nonprofit.

"This has to be run like a business," she said.

Lambson has a lot of workers who have taken on a specific department, like the

boutique, children's wear, shoes, housewares, linens, pants and much more.

"I keep all the departments working together," she said.

The major challenge is to decide what people want and when they need it.

"We don't want to give them Christmas stuff in July," she said.

And the crew makes pricing decisions together. So, nothing in the main store is more than \$4, including coats.

"We make prices affordable," she said.

The boutique is a different story. Even during sorting of the incoming goods, it gets top priority for the best product. But, even then the prices remain affordable.

Lambson and the Thrift Shop adhere to the regular store mechanisms of moving merchandise. After two weeks, the staff moves clothes, not to sales racks, but to a free rack.

"We try not to leave anything over two weeks," she said.

Lambson believes that their basic clientele doesn't want to look at the same merchandise over and over again.

There is a sign-up monthly schedule for store workers. Approximately 80 people a month volunteer on Mondays.

One group puts clothes on hangers, another group puts them in the right place. So, in a real store that would equal stockers and floor assistants.

And Christmas is the busiest time of the year at the shop. People mainly buy



For many years, Marilyn Lambson has been a dedicated volunteer at FROM.

Volunteer, continued, page 8

## Connections and trailheads on the docket for Rails to Trails group

by Emma Palova

Taking it easy after months of work and finalizing the purchase of the Midwest railroad corridor from Lowell to Greenville, and even contemplating disbanding, the Rail to Trail group discussed trail connectivity and trailheads.

At the same time, the corridor was being gifted to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), a common practice with converted railroad corridors.

The 25-mile long corridor from Lowell to Greenville was the last to be purchased in the Fred Meijer River Valley Rail Trails network, right after the Grand River Valley Rail Trail from Lowell to Ionia.

This will make Lowell the hub of three distinct trail systems: Lowell Area Recreational Authority (LARA), Flat River Valley Rail Trail and North Country Trail Association (NCTA).

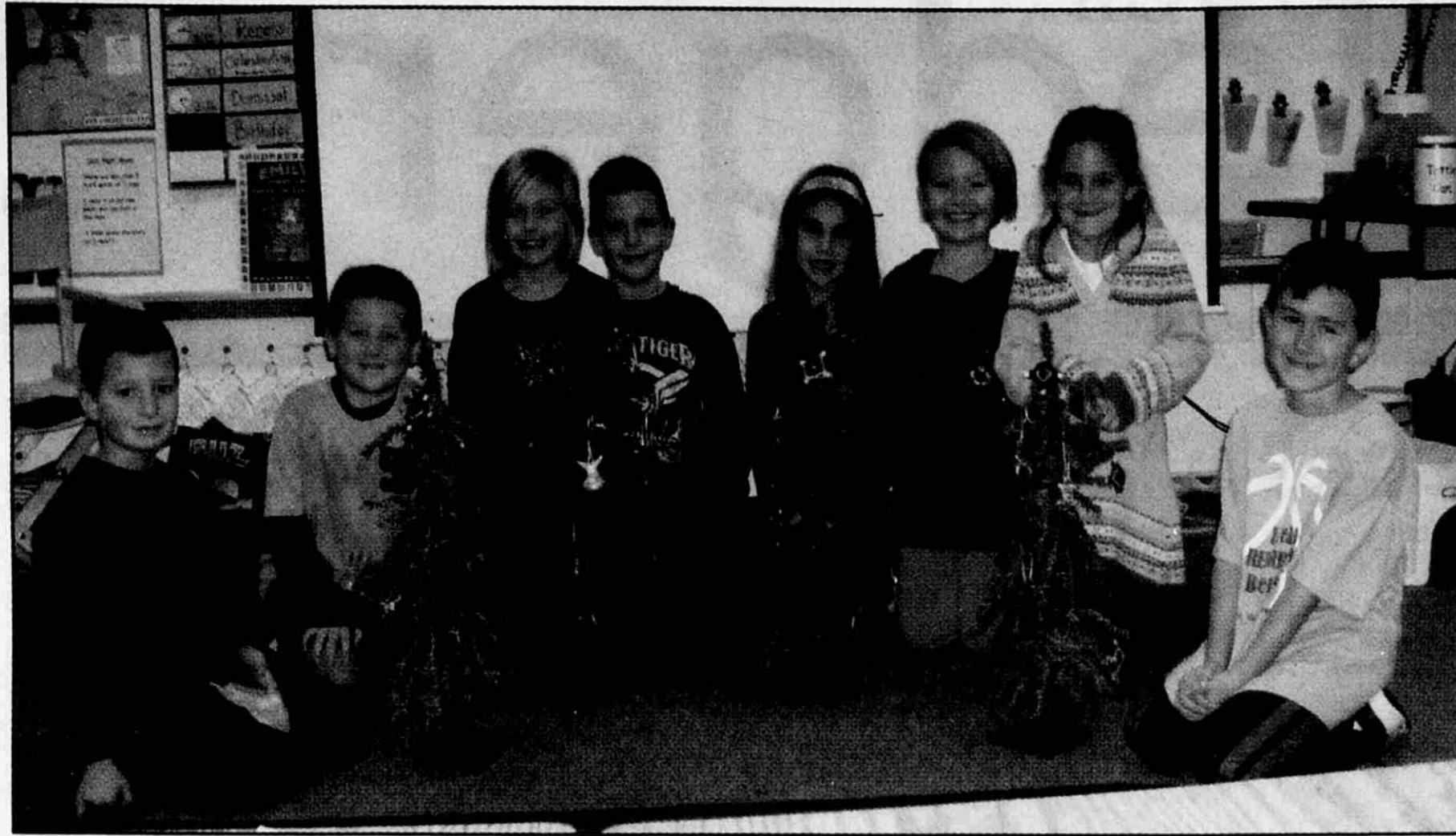
The connectivity between the three trails and trailheads was at the core of last week's discussion at the Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce. An authority that will serve as fiduciary and to manage the river valley network has been formed out of two counties, Ionia and Shiawassee.



Saranac has an established trailhead by the railroad depot.

Rails to Trails, continued, page 3

## Students send holiday cheer to our troops



Murray Lake second grade teacher, Nancy Russell, has a son serving in Afghanistan at this time. Scott will not be home for Christmas this year. Russell decided that if Scott and other soldiers in his battalion could not be home, maybe she could help bring Christmas to them.

Russell shared this dilemma with her students, who met Scott earlier in the year before he shipped out for Afghanistan. They all wanted to help. Other second grade classes at MLE also wanted to help. Hundreds of items were collected for Scott and his fellow soldiers. Everything from shaving cream to gum, to Christmas trees with decorations were collected.

The students were very excited to help. "This project has truly touched my heart," shares Russell. "It was a project that taught our students the true meaning of Christmas. I know that Scott and his buddies will really appreciate all of this."

**MLE second graders with Christmas trees and decorations that will be sent to Afghanistan.**

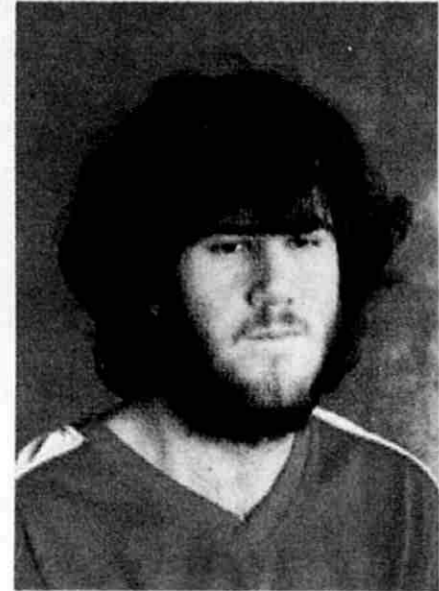
## Lowell High School Students of the Month

In conjunction with the LHS Academic Boosters, Lowell High School has announced that Aaron Hall, 11th grade; Ben Hart, 11th grade; and Kallie Holzhueter, 12th grade, are the Lowell High School November 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. Students are selected based on academic achievement, character and work ethic. There are 1241 students eligible for nomination, so this is quite an accomplishment for Hall, Hart and Holzhueter. The students receive a \$20 movie gift card and a certificate.

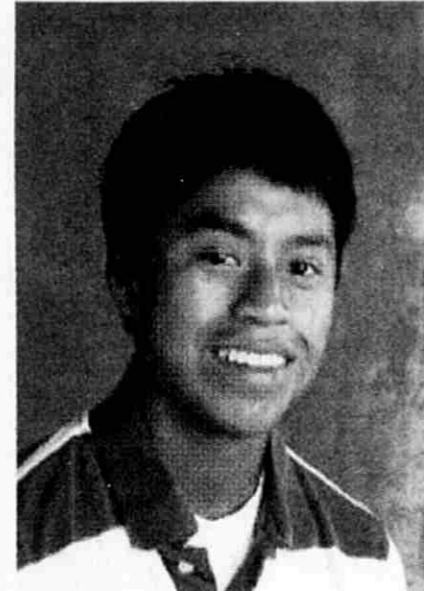
Hall was nominated by the English department and they write, "For someone that is normally quiet in the classroom, Aaron shines

when he is in front of a group of people. Aaron had to do a presentation for his borrow-a-book project in english class and when he stood up, he took control of the room. No one took his/her eyes off him as he moved, talked and convinced them that he knew his book. The student following him stated that he 'really didn't want to follow Aaron's presentation,' and the kids were still talking about it the next day. Aaron is considering a law career and that is a definite possibility for him given his intelligence and power to persuade."

Hart was nominated by the math department and they write, "Ben has been meeting and working after school on math until 4:00 p.m. every night since week three of the first trimester. He works to complete his homework and to have a better understanding of the 'math du jour.' Ben enters the room, begins the lesson



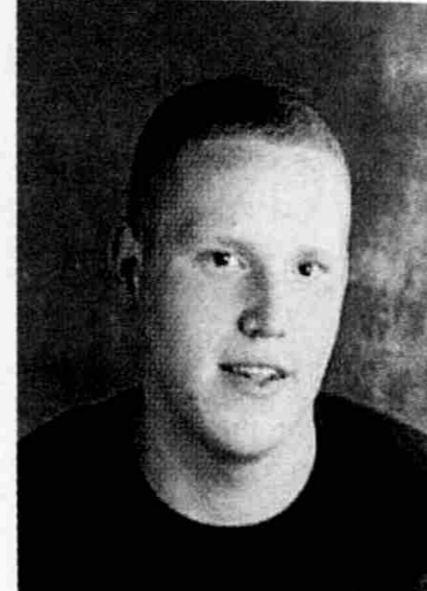
Aaron Hall



Ben Hart



Kallie Holzhueter



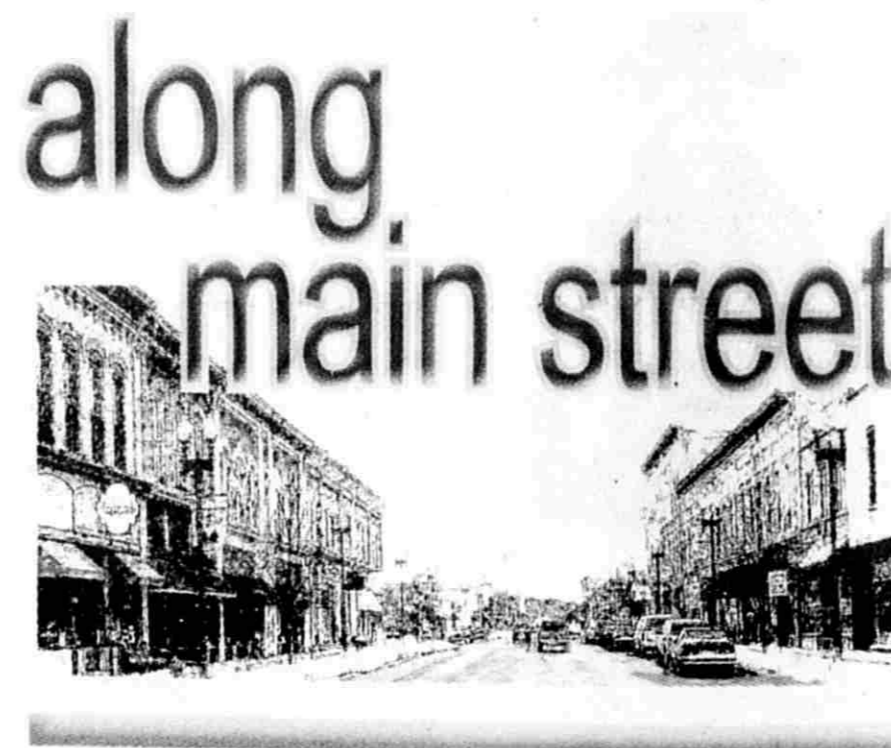
Ryan Nanzer

and then calls the teacher over to help when necessary. Ben is perhaps the most polite young man in the school. Ben says 'thank you' every time he is helped. Then Ben says 'thank you' again when he leaves the classroom at 4:00 p.m. If we had the 'Nicest Student with the Best Manners, Greatest Smile, and Most Envious Attitude in LHS' award, then we would have recommended Ben for that instead."

Holzhueter was nominated by the music department and they write, "Kallie is one of the most respectful and responsible students in choir class. She was elected president of her choir this year and has been doing a fantastic job as a role model and leader in class. Kallie takes her job as choir president very seriously and is respected by all of the other students in choir for her enthusiasm and work ethic."

In addition, Lowell High School would like to recognize Ryan Nanzer, 11th grade. Kent Intermediate School District has named Nanzer as the "October 2010 Student of the Month" at Kent Career Technical Center for Automotive Technology.

This program is made possible by the support of the LHS Academic Boosters who support the high school in many ways. If you are interested in helping support the LHS Academic Boosters you may call Janine Mork at 897-5671.



### FLAT RIVER OUTREACH MINISTRIES

The FROM Food Pantry is in need of boxed mashed potatoes, stuffing, gravy, muffin mix, canned fruit, jello, pie fillings and pie crust mix. Please help if you are able.

### CHRISTMAS ASSISTANCE

There is still time to sign up in the FROM Food Pantry if your family can use assistance with food and/or toys for Christmas.

### SENIOR NEIGHBORS

Cookbooks are for sale for \$12 and all proceeds go to the Lowell Senior Center Building Fund.

Lowell Area Historical Museum tour, Thurs., Dec. 16 at 12:45 p.m. Visit the new exhibit entitled Fabulous Furniture.

Christmas shopping Wednesdays, 12:45 p.m., the bus will leave for Meijer; or Fri., Dec. 17, the bus will leave for Woodland Mall at 12:45 p.m.

## Rails To Trails, continued

"We are ready to go," said Ionia County administrator Mark Howe. "We're working on a draft of bylaws. We are up and running and rolling."

Trail authorities or the state can apply for grants, but not multiple units of government, according to Carolyn Kane of the Rail to Trail Group. The entire 125-mile network will carry the Fred Meijer name as the major contributor of funds for trail maintenance along with other agencies.

Representatives from LARA were also present at the trail meeting and discussed possible connections to Rails to Trails.

"The priority for our next phase is connections," said Al Halbeisen, "and crossing the Grand River and Flat River."

A trail authority can go ahead with endowment fund applications and trust fund applications, but overall the grant funding is shrinking.

DNR does provide seed money as a match for bigger grants.

However, the Flat River Valley Rail Trail needs a master plan that will outline necessary improvements.

"We could be utilizing NCTA as a connector," said Kane. "We'd be glad to share the corridor to get the connection to NCTA to get them wherever they're going."

Howe said the Rails to

Trails fit the use of NCTA.

Foreman Road by Cherry Creek Elementary to the Montcalm County line could be used as a connection between LARA and Rails to Trails, however, portions of it are being used by King Milling.

Ionia is using an old Chinese restaurant on Dexter Street as a trailhead. Saranac also has an established trailhead by the railroad depot and Belding too, has

an existing functional depot with restrooms.

However, each site for a trailhead gets designed individually with utilities and parking. A potential trailhead for both LARA and Rails to Trails could be the intersection between Division and Grand River Drive by the riverbend. But the uses for the trail should be identified first. A master plan would delineate the potential uses of the trail and the design of the trailhead.

The baseline for a trailhead is a gravel parking lot with 14 spaces and restrooms.

The Rail to Trail friends group launched a newsletter at the beginning of December covering the Fred Meijer River Valley Rail Trails and a website is being developed.

The next LARA meeting will be held on Jan. 12; the Rail to Trail meeting will be held on Jan. 13.



**Foreman Road by Cherry Creek Elementary could connect the trail network between LARA and Rails to Trails, and Safe Routes to Schools.**



## At Your Local Library

Kent District Library programs at Englehardt Branch, 200 N. Monroe St. For additional information call 616-784-2007.

### Cultural Awareness - Focus on Southeast Asia

Experience the culture, music, geography, crafts and food of Southeast Asia at this drop-in activity focusing on such countries as India, Malaysia, Korea, Thailand and China. No registration required. For families. Tues., Dec. 21, 2 p.m.

### Experience Egypt

Come play games and make crafts related to all things Egyptian as we dress like a pharaoh, make ourselves mummies, and create a pyramid to celebrate Rick Riordan's Kane Chronicle series first title, *The Red Pyramid*. Registration is required and participation is limited. For ages 6 and up. Tue., Dec. 28, 2 p.m.

### Pajama Storytime

For families who can't come to the library during the day. Pajama Storytime offers an evening of stories and fun. Bring your teddy bear or other snugly friend; pajamas optional. For children ages 6 and under with a caregiver. Wed., Dec. 29, 6:30 p.m.

### KDL Teen Film Festival

Go beyond YouTube! Teens in 6th - 12th grade are invited to meet the challenge of producing a real film for the Kent District Library Teen Film Festival. The top ten entries will be shown on the big screen at Celebration Cinema North. Prizes go to three winners. Additional information and applications can be found at [www.kdl.org/teens](http://www.kdl.org/teens). Sat., Feb. 12, 10:30 a.m. Film submissions due Sat., Jan. 8.

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THAD KRAUS ..... SPORTS/SALES  
TAMMY JANOWIAK ..... CLASSIFIED/ACCOUNTING  
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# Lowell Middle School offers safety classes

Lowell Middle School, in conjunction with the Kent County Sheriff's Department, hosted an Off Road Vehicle Safety Class. The class was held three consecutive days beginning November 30 after school from 2:30-3:30 p.m. Students were

given instruction and the opportunity to earn a safety certificate upon successful completion of the classes and a passing score on the test. In the spring there will be

an opportunity for students to take a Boater's Safety Class. More information for that class will be available closer to the date. There is no charge for either class.

Ted Albrecht from the Kent County Sheriff Department conducted the safety class.



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## Preparedness, continued

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## LMS Students of Month

Lowell Middle School November Students of the Month are eighth grade, Katie Holzhueter and Nick Higgins; seventh grade, Mark Rasch; sixth grade, Jarrod Melle and Kenzie McLarty.

These students were nominated by their teachers for their excellent academic, leadership and citizenship qualities. Lowell Middle School Students of the Month receive a certificate and have their photos posted on the main bulletin board in the front entryway.



Pictured, back row: Nick Higgins, Katie Holzhueter, and Jarrod Melle; front row: Mark Rasch and Kenzie McLarty.

# viewpoint

## to the editor

### Answer is not so simple

Dear Editor,  
I'm writing in answer to Fred Jacobs' article in the View Point (Shopping locally is important - and simple). It is a very compelling article why residents should shop within the community. I will agree shopping locally is important, but simple it's not. It's all about competing. You can go back 50 years and look at the downtown area and the types of businesses that occupied it. There was a grocery store, two hardware stores, three drug stores and I can go on and on, but the fact is that most of those businesses do not exist today in the downtown area.

ago and has been falling by the wayside ever since because bigger has become better in the eyes of the consumer. Michigan, along with our nation, has been in a recession producing stagnating wages along with rising cost. This has caused the consumers' purchasing power to shrink. Sadly to say, spending on something people don't need at a price that may not be competitive or spending time doing so is not in the future.

Lowell tried to revitalize the downtown area some years back with a million dollar Riverwalk with little success. It just comes back to the fact that it's all about the individual business and if they have the capability to compete. It sounds simple, but

it's not when it comes to retailing or everyone would be doing it. No, Mr. Jacobs, the answer is anything but

simple, especially when it comes to competing.  
Sincerely,  
Jim Howard  
Lowell

## understanding insurance



Dave Emmette

Think you don't need life insurance? Think again

If you died tomorrow, how would your loved ones fare financially? It's not a pleasant scenario to think about, but not doing so can have serious consequences. The fact is, most Americans need life insurance. If someone depends on you financially, you need life insurance. It's

that simple. Unfortunately, roughly 70 million adult Americans have no coverage at all, and most of those who do have far less coverage than financial experts recommend. Life insurance provides cash to your family after Insurance, continued, page 12

## outdoors

what's next?

Dave Stegehuis

Making plans and checking off tasks on a long list of preparations keeps everyone busy as we anticipate the Christmas holiday. Excitement will continue to build through Christmas day and then New Years celebrations will carry us into the next decade. After that, reality sets in and we find ourselves back to a daily routine.

Beagle owners can look forward to listening to their bellowing hounds as they run rabbits after a fresh snowfall.

Frozen lakes draw hardy souls looking for a skillet full of sizzling panfish filets. Skaters can clear off snow cover for a hockey rink or just enjoy gliding along to the rumble of steel blades on ice.

Sledding downhill on some sort of contraption has been a favorite winter pastime for generations. Downhill skiers find satisfaction in remaining in control of their seemingly perilous decent. Cross-country skiing affords a slower pace but provides lots of exercise and time to observe nature in quiet solitude. Tramping about on a pair of snowshoes will accomplish the same results with added mobility to visit out-of-the-way places.

Deer hunting in designated areas under special conditions will continue to the end of the month. Consult a current deer hunting digest for details. A group of extremely lucky hunters drew elk tags and will be tracking down elk in the Pigeon River Country. Squirrel hunting continues until March 1 for those in search of something to add to the cooking pot or want to share the excitement of the hunt with a youngster.

For those who prefer to explore larger pieces of real estate, Michigan is laced with miles of snowmobile trails. A road-trip to revisit summertime destinations will reveal a much different mood when the landscape is cloaked in snow and ice. Now is the time to make plans to get the most out of living through another Michigan winter.

lived until Aug. 11, 1862, when he enlisted in company B, 25th Michigan Infantry and served his country until the close of the war. He received an honorable discharge and returned home.

Being of a kind and jovial disposition and always ready to help those in need or distress, he leaves a large circle of friends to mourn his loss.

## 75 Years Ago The Lowell Ledger and Alto Solo December 12, 1935

Nine-year-old spruce trees from Sault Ste. Marie were tied to the boulevard lights along Mina St. Monday afternoon under the direction of William Christiansen of the Board of Trade Christmas decorations committee of which Wesley Roth is chairman.



By Shelly MacNaughton

## 125 Years Ago The Lowell Journal December 18, 1885

Chas. H. Owens has been dismissed from the soldiers' home for disobeying orders. Russell Higgins of Ada was arrested by Sheriff Kinney for stealing a buggy from an Ionia man. Goodrich Kopf's artesian well is a success. Its depth is 110 feet and it throws out about 60 barrels of excellent water in 24 hours.

Vanderbilt had some soul, after all. He left a million dollars out of his \$200,000,000 for charity's sake. Which is equivalent to a bequest of \$100 from a man worth \$20,000. The biggest mistake we ever made was in not hiring out as an heir to Mr. Vanderbilt.

## 50 Years Ago The Lowell Ledger December 15, 1960

Mr. and Mrs. Lee Hall of Vergennes St., 2 1/2 miles north of Lowell in Vergennes Township, spotted a bear at their trash barrel early last Saturday morning. This was the first time that a bear has been reported in Vergennes.

## 25 Years Ago The Grand Valley Ledger December 18, 1985

Carl Kloosterman, a senior defensive back on the Central Michigan University football team, was recently honored at the CMU annual football banquet. Kloosterman was named to the first team of the MAC conference "all conference" defensive squad. Kloosterman was also selected as the team's "most valuable player" by his teammates. Besides team and conference honors, Kloosterman also received an "Honorable Mention" on the Associated Press "All-American" team.

Carl is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Berwyn Kloosterman of 13886 Oberly Dr., Lowell. He is a graduate of Lowell High School and was a standout football player during his years here. Congratulations Carl!

## 100 Years Ago The Lowell Ledger December 15, 1910

Orren Ford died at the old homestead in Grattan, December 10, aged 72 years and 8 months. Alton church service conducted by Pastor W. D. Ogg. Burial at Alton cemetery.

Orren Ford was born in Clark County, Indiana, April 10, 1838. At the age of one year he moved with his parents to Grattan Township, Kent County, where he

## Letters To The Editor:

The Lowell Ledger welcomes your Letters to the Editor. Letters are required to bear the author's signature, phone number and address (for verification purposes only, not for publication). Letters will be published at the discretion of the publisher. All letters are subject to editing for length and grammar. Thank you letters, advertising or personal attacks will not be printed.

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# area births

## Richmond

Gianna Katherine Richmond was born December 2, 2010, weighing 8 lbs. 2 oz. and measuring 19 inches. Proud parents are Benjamin and Karen Richmond of Lowell.

Welcoming her home were big brothers, Alex, John-Luc and Sam; big sisters, Olivia, Anna and Elizabeth; and grandparents, John and Pierrette Olinger of Lowell.



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

# health

## Carbon monoxide poisoning

Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless, poisonous gas that's produced by the incomplete combustion of solid, liquid and gaseous fuels. Appliances and engines that run on natural gas, liquefied petroleum (LP gas), oil, kerosene, coal or wood may produce carbon monoxide.

Each year, hundreds of people die from carbon monoxide produced from their household furnaces, ranges, water heaters, and space heaters. Thousands more are treated each year in the emergency room for accidental poisonings. The initial symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning are similar to the flu (but without the fever). They

include headache, fatigue, shortness of breath, nausea and dizziness.

To protect yourself and your family from carbon monoxide gas, install carbon monoxide detectors in your home, RV and/or boat. Have your home heating system, including chimneys and vents, inspected annually. Never burn charcoal or portable fuel burning camping equipment inside a home, garage, vehicle or tent. Never use gas appliances such as ranges, ovens or clothes dryers to heat your home. If you suspect that you may have carbon monoxide poisoning, get outside into the fresh air immediately and then call 911.

# financial focus



Christopher C. Godbold

## Consider establishing a business retirement plan

If you're self-employed or you own a business, you've got a lot to think about: attracting new customers, maintaining cash flow, upgrading equipment and facilities — the list goes on and on. Yet, as busy as you are today, you can't forget about tomorrow — which means you need to have a solid retirement plan in place.

All retirement plans offer some features in common, such as tax-deferred growth of earnings. So how can you pick the plan that's right for you? You'll need to consider your business' annual income, number of employees and other factors. Fortunately,

you have some good plans from which to choose. Here are a few to consider:

• **Owner-only 401(k)** — If you are self-employed with no employees other than your spouse or a partner, the Owner-only 401(k) may be an option for you. Also known as an individual 401(k), an owner-only 401(k) offers you many of the same advantages of a traditional 401(k): a range of investment options, tax-deductible contributions and tax-deferred earnings growth. You may even be able to choose a Roth option for your owner-only 401(k), which allows you to make after-tax contributions that have the opportunity to

grow tax-free. For 2010, you can contribute up to \$16,500 as a deferral, and total contributions cannot exceed \$49,000 or \$54,500 if you're 50 or older. But you must plan ahead to take advantage of this plan for 2010 because it will need to be set up prior to Dec. 31, 2010.

• **SEP IRA** — If you have just a few employees or are self-employed with no employees, you may want to consider a SEP IRA. For the 2010 tax year, you can put in the lesser of \$49,000 or 25 percent of your compensation, which is capped at a maximum of \$245,000. You fund the plan with tax-deductible contributions, and you must cover all eligible employees — at a minimum, those who are at least 21 and have been with your company for three out of the immediately preceding five years. (Employees themselves cannot contribute.) Keep in mind, though, that the percentage of compensation contributed to a SEP IRA

must be the same for you and your employees. If you don't get a plan set up prior to year-end, the SEP IRA is the only plan that you can set up and fund, up until your tax filing deadline, to get a 2010 tax deduction.

• **Solo defined benefit plan** — Generally speaking, this plan, which is similar to a traditional pension plan, may be suitable for you if you have relatively high earnings and can afford to take advantage of the high contribution limits, which are determined by an actuarial calculation. Your contributions are tax deductible.

In choosing a retirement plan, you may want to consult with your tax adviser. But don't wait any longer to get started. The future will be here soon enough — so you'll want to be prepared for it.

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

# In The Service

Kimberly M. Anderson has been promoted to the rank of private first class in the U.S. Army.

Anderson is a small arms/artillery repairer assigned to the 1st Battalion, 19th Field Artillery at Fort Sill, Lawton, Okla.

She is the daughter of Beckie N. Anderson of Kentwood and James A. Anderson of Alto.

The private first class is a 2010 graduate of Thornapple Kellogg High School, Middleville.

# happy birthday!

- DECEMBER 15**  
Karen Latva, Tammy Baird, Roger Brown, Kathryn Duiven, Kristin Ellis, Danielle Brenk, Marea Borg, Kimberly Kline, Kelly Potter, Tom Kehoe.
- DECEMBER 17**  
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- DECEMBER 18**  
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# Museum celebrates Christmas with an open house

by Emma Palova

The Lowell Area Historical Museum celebrated Christmas right at the beautiful headquarters, unlike in previous years at area private homes.

The main dining room, dressed up for the holidays, served a wide array of appetizers including homemade spinach and crab dips, meatballs, cheese ball, crackers and cookies. Tea and punch complemented the goodies. Director Pat Allchin prepared the food.

Carolers Nancy, Bill and Ron Wood and Becky Reagan sang Christmas

songs in the hallway by the newest special exhibit, the Victorian bedroom.

Many guests wandered into the lovely parlor and sat at the round table immersed in discussions. The main purpose of the open house was to showcase the museum in its holiday beauty. The party was well attended by city and township residents.

The exposure of the museum now gains new momentum as the millage will be up for renewal in 2012.



Carolers Nancy, Bill and Ron Wood and Becky Reagan.



A tasty spread awaited the guests in the dining room.

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## Dominican Sister comedian entertains women's club

by Emma Palova

In a record turnout, ladies of the Lowell Women's Club flocked to the Schneider Manor for a monthly dose of entertainment and fellowship time.

Most sported Christmas embroidered and themed attire and overall the atmosphere was jovial. The lunch prepared by the club women consisted of hot potato salad, tossed salad with grapes, cheese and broccoli Amish cole slaw, plus desserts.

The annual cookie exchange generated endless trays of cookies of all sorts. But, the highlight of the luncheon was the featured speaker, Sister Sue Tracy, OP (Order of Preacher), who was introduced by Marj Harding. Tracy presented her HaHa's and HoHo's program for the holly-daze.

She was scheduled to speak last year, but the event got snowed out.

"Now I had a year to prepare for this," she laughed.

Changing costumes and props, Tracy rattled one joke after another, never pausing for a minute.

"I am the only Sister in Spectrum," she said. "People expect you to be funny."

Tracy is a staff chaplain at the Spectrum Health Butterworth Campus in Grand Rapids, where she offers spiritual care to those coping with cancer and their families.

She explained the difference between a nun and a Sister.

"A nun couldn't be here," she said. "They stay in a monastery."

At 70, Tracy is a four time survivor of cancer, twice she had breast cancer, once non-Hodgkin's lymphoma and several skin cancers. The second time, she lost hair after chemotherapy. Waking up from a surgery, Tracy was hoping she would wake up with red hair. She was glad not to see any white lilies or callas in the room.

"At least I knew I wasn't at a funeral home," she said.

Tracy stressed the importance of laughter, as it reduces stress and enhances creativity. She shared the following jokes, puns, ponderisms and one-liners that may be used on bumper stickers.

A gentleman stopped eating natural foods, once he found out that most people die of natural causes.

A guy fell into a glass grinding machine and made a spectacle out of himself.

Start a movement, eat a prune.

The invisible man and invisible woman had children. Their kids aren't much to look at either.

If not for stress, some days I'd have no energy at all.

Sporting a red hat, Tracy made fun of men who formed groups similar to the Red Hat Society group. "They

named themselves Recycled Roosters or Romeos," she laughed.

Then, Tracy unleashed an entire slate of Norwegian jokes known as Lena and Oli.

Well, once Lena went swimming in a breast stroke competition. She was the last one, and whined, "But they were using their arms," she said.

There are several ages of life, according to Tracy, they are spills, drills, bills, ills, pills and wills. And then there are different stages of life: grow up, fill out, hold in and heck with it.

Here are Santa Claus phases of life: first you believe in Santa Claus; then you don't believe in Santa Claus; then you are Santa Claus; and finally you look like Santa Claus.

A telepathic answering device takes a call with the following response: "I'll think about calling you back."

"If you laugh, endorphins are helping you," laughed Tracy.

Laughter takes on a new meaning in anticipation of the first LaughFest coming to Grand Rapids in March to celebrate Gilda's Club 10th anniversary.

Tracy is a contributing author in "Chicken Soup for the Surviving Soul" and "Praying through Cancer: Set Your Heart Free from Fear."



Sister Sue Tracy wears many hats during her presentation. Above she is introduced by Marj Harding.

## Christmas festivities, continued

as in her Percheron mules Ted and Fred, and there are many others. Tess is a former hitch horse from a world championship. Elsasser saved Pete from a meat auction, and he has lived happily ever after.

"I bid against the meat buyers," she said. "He has a wonderful heart; he doesn't realize his size."

Twelve-year-old Pete loves pulling the carriage and just simply showing off in front of the crowds. He weighs 2,500 pounds, but flirts with himself like a ballet dancer.

"He talks to himself," said Elsasser. "He has great personality. He thinks he's so sexy."

Elsasser wants to start a facebook for Pete because he is so loved.

Her fleet of vehicles includes a reproduction of an 1880 town coach with brass lanterns and iron warmers, two carriages, two wagons, a sleigh and a cart.

Common Gentry will be offering sleigh rides on the farm in Ada.

For more information go to [www.commonentry.com](http://www.commonentry.com).

On Saturday, just a few miles north of town, the Fallsburg Historical Society held its own Christmas celebration to help raise funds for historic preservation at the Fallsburg Pioneer village.

After a hearty meal at the one-room school house, an enormous bonfire

warmed up the night. The event raised \$600 with approximately 75 people in attendance. Even a band, Hawks and Owls, played to the crowd.

"I'm very pleased with the turnout considering the rain that finally turned to snow at the end of our party," said chairman Ken Tamke. "Hats off to Craig Wood who worked miracles to get the bonfire started in the wet conditions."

At 10 p.m. the fire was burnt to ash.

"When I went out to the fire Sunday, it was like it never happened," Tamke said.



## Volunteer, continued

Christmas decorations and various knickknacks.

But, the store keeps regular inventory plus the Christmas stuff. And the so-called Christmas stuff keeps coming in all year-round.

So, two girls sort it all year long. The hottest sellers all throughout the year are blue jeans and snow boots.

"We have a hard time keeping boots in for children," Lambson said.

For people who are facing hard times, the Thrift Shop gives out vouchers for boots. Also recently, there has been a big need for beds. The staff put a bug bomb in the room, just to make sure, because of the bedbug scare.

And the shop also deals with a lot of recalls brought in by people. It's hard to tell what's a recall and what's not.

"People have to be responsible," Lambson said. "It's just hard to know."

At first, Lambson thought they would run out of stuff and should put

things aside. But, to her surprise, the shop never runs out of stuff.

It's a constant exchange of goods in and out. Sherri Jahnke comes in seven days a week, twice a day, to take care of the intake.

Some things the shop cannot use, so the Salvation Army comes and picks up the stuff and takes it away.

The store coordinator is now Diane Kleczynski. Sue VanderMolen takes care of the pricing of housewares. Donna Gerard runs the children's department. Marge Rehl is in charge of marketing, making signs, placing ads and news items.

Most of the volunteers are retired.

"We needed something to do," said Lambson, "and feel to be needed."

The environment of the store is very social. The volunteers make friends amongst each other and bring their friends, who in turn become volunteers.

"We all have something in common," said Lambson.

The friends may knit together or go out and eat together.

"I am thankful that I can do this," said Lambson. "that I have the health and the time. I think I am doing something worthwhile, not just sitting around and doing things you don't need to do.

Lambson, who works six days a week, four hours a day, does have her own separate hobbies like sewing and going to bible studies.

The volunteers themselves shop at the store. Once they all showed up at the Lutheran Church candlelight service, all dressed up.

As everyone wondered where they got their clothes, they revealed the secret.

"At the Thrift Shop, where else," laughed Lambson.

Lambson was a nurse and she worked at the same facility she works at now for 10 years. Having six daughters and living on a budget, she was a thrift shopper herself.

The money raised from the sales goes toward emergency services to help people pay their bills, insurance, doctor bills and eyeglasses.

The Thrift Shop, in the future, plans to enlarge the main store to make it one sales floor instead of separate rooms. Attendance in separate rooms and in the main store can sometimes be a problem, even though

donated cameras are installed. Other plans include moving the drop off area closer to the sales area.

And is there competition between the nearby Goodwill and the Thrift Shop?

Absolutely not. "We compliment each other," she said. "If you are a thrift shopper you have two places to go."

Initially, Lambson took the job for two years. Now, she plans to stay.

"I am still," she said. "It seems to be working. When it works, we don't change it."

She stressed the mission and the goal of the Thrift Shop.

"We're doing our best to meet the needs of the community," she said. "It takes a lot of people to do this. I feel like we have a lot of missions."

The number one mission is helping people get rid of stuff and in return provide the merchandise for others to come and buy.

Number two is giving people a worthwhile job to do.

"It's work, but I don't mind doing it. I like doing everything," Lambson said. "I would do it all over again."



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Marilyn Lambson sorts through winter clothing.



Pictured, clockwise from top: Cindy Tamke and Lisa Sostecke at the Christmas at Fallsburg annual fundraiser; Molly Gorniewicz with reindeer Vixen from GG Reindeer Farm in Caledonia; waiting for Santa in a line at the Showboat; and the majestic bonfire ends a festive evening in the heart of the Fallsburg Pioneer village.

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# Red Arrow SPORTS

- BASKETBALL

## Red Arrows show improvement

Lowell trailed 20-16 at halftime before the Bulldogs pulled in the second half. Byron Center outscored Lowell 25-12 over the final 16 minutes.

"Tonight I think the girls peaked around the corner," Brechting said. "We changed something and I think the girls were more confident at both ends of the floor."

Lauren Kurtz and Taylor Flanagan led all Red Arrows in scoring with six points each.

The Lowell coach was pleased with the low number of turnovers his club committed against the Bulldog press.

"I told the girls if we want to improve and hit our goals, then the games coming up (Union and Creston) are games we should win," Brechting concluded.

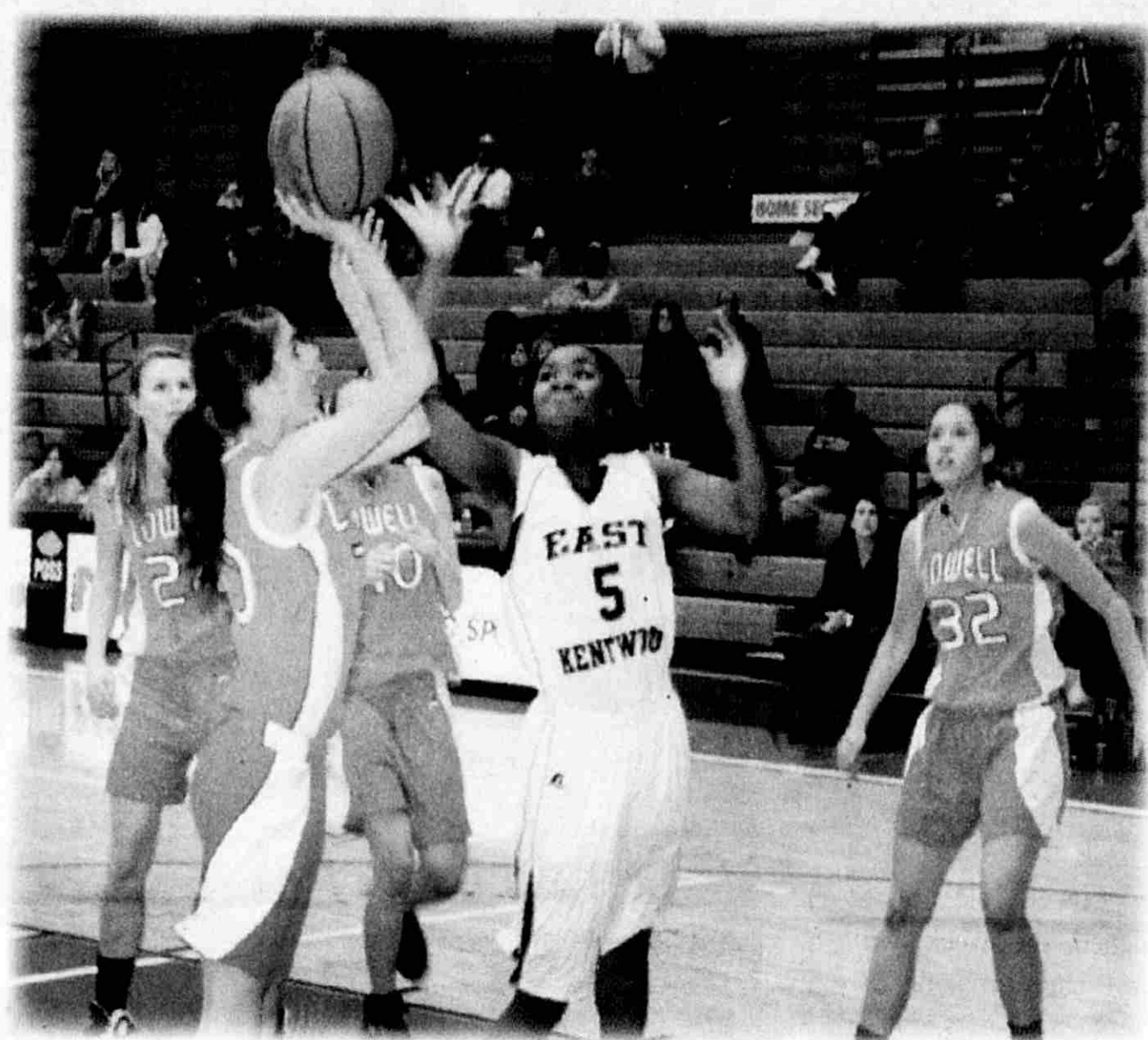
It's a look the Lowell girls' basketball team had not given in its opening two games, but comfortable and confident was on display in its 45-28 loss to Byron Center.

"The girls played hard and executed our game plan in the first half against a good, physical basketball team," said Lowell girls' basketball coach Kevin Brechting. "All five of Byron Center's starters have signed to play in college."

The Red Arrows, who struggled out of the gate against Kentwood and Cedar Springs, started fast against the Bulldogs.

Lowell built a 10-5 first-quarter lead.

"You don't go from inconsistent to consistent overnight, but we played a great first half," Brechting said. "Now we need to spread that over a full 32 minutes."



Amber Martin pulls up for a short jumper in Lowell girls' basketball early season action.

Stephanie Stevens works inside the paint for a short jumper off the glass.

## Grandville upends Lowell 49-38

Ascrappy, hardworking effort wasn't enough to overcome scoring and rebounding inefficiencies in Lowell's season-opening 49-38 loss to Grandville.

"The boys were valiant and unselfish in their effort," said Lowell basketball coach Jeff McDonald. After trailing 11-0, the Red Arrows rallied to within four (11-7) after the opening eight minutes.

Lowell then struggled on the offensive end in the second quarter as its deficit ballooned to 14 (29-15 at halftime) as Grandville outscored the Red Arrows 18-8.

"We played very unselfishly, but missed a bunch of shots. We couldn't overcome that," McDonald explained.

The Red Arrows outscored the Bulldogs 23-20 in the second half, including a 17-13 fourth-

quarter advantage, which saw them pull to within eight late in the game.

"The game was a tale of two halves. We did a nice job of grinding it out and manufacturing points in the first half, but made mental mistakes in the second half," said Grandville coach Kyle VanderWall. "Lowell's Caleb Cook led Grandville with 14 points and Steve Haan added 11.

Lowell was led in scoring by Blake Lyman's 11 points. Alec Roerig tallied 10 and Jason Malling added six.

"We had some young kids play well tonight and that's encouraging," McDonald said.

"The girls need improvement in their baker game performance. They struggled there," said Lowell girls' bowling coach Eva Geldersma.

Lowell finished fourth in its own tourney over the weekend. Wayland claimed top honors followed by Grandville, Kelloggsville and then Lowell (3013).

"We were in front of Wayland until the last couple bakers game. They pulled it together in those last few games and we struggled," Geldersma explained.

The Lowell coach thought her club threw the



Red Arrow coach Jeff McDonald diagrams some second half strategy in Lowell's 49-38 loss to Grandville.

Lowell's Jacob Meyer elevates for a rebound against Grandville.

# Red Arrow SPORTS

- WRESTLING

## Lowell grapplers battle back to defeat Mustangs

That doesn't seem possible based on the size (280 lbs.) of Lynema.

"People don't know what's on his inside. There's a lot more than meets the eye," Dean explains. "Jake has a tremendous upside. He keeps getting better and has shown great maturity and growth."

Lynema put Spells on his back within the opening 90 seconds of the first period

St. Rita's Shakir Spells didn't know what he was getting into with the match on the line and his Mustangs leading 29-28.

That's no slight on Spells. Lowell heavyweight Jake Lynema does that to people.

Lowell wrestling coach Dave Dean knows.

"There is more than what meets the eye with Jake," Dean notes.

to give the Red Arrows a 34-29 win.

"That's a nice win for us against a much improved wrestling team. They are ranked fourth or fifth in Illinois," Dean said.

Lynema's heroics were set up with victories by Jake Stehley (171), Gabe Dean (189) and Garrett Stehley (215).

There was some bad news that came out of Friday

- HOCKEY

## Icers' early lead killed by penalties in loss to Knights

Penalties snuffed out a fast start in Lowell/Caledonia's 6-3 league loss to Kenowa Hills.

"We came out quick and scored early," said Lowell/Caledonia hockey coach Tim Beurer.

Leading 3-0, Lowell/Caledonia fell victim to their own penalties as they played much of the first and second periods working on its penalty killing.

The Knights used their man (sometimes two men) advantage to skate their way back into the contest.

Kenowa Hills scored two goals over the final three minutes of the first period to cut its deficit to one at 3-2.

Lowell/Caledonia's first period goals came off the sticks of Jake Rossmann (2) and Braden McGillicuddy.

Karsen Arnold and McGillicuddy recorded assists on goal two while Cam Steger and Tyler Bitterman were given assists on the third goal.

Lowell/Caledonia led 3-2 until Kenowa Hills scored 24 seconds into the second period to tie the game.

The Knights took the lead (4-3) at the 4:47 mark of the second period.

Kenowa Hills added

two third-period goals to complete the scoring.

"Penalties do not help to create a great flow," Beurer explained. "We need to play three complete periods to be successful."

Lowell/Caledonia plays in the Waterford/Kettering Holiday Tournament this weekend.

Lowell/Caledonia (2-4) opened the week with a 10-0 shutout against an overmatched Grand Rapids city squad.

"The boys worked well on and executed what we do in practice," Beurer said. "It's important that in games

like this that your play is an extension of practice."

Netting goals for Lowell/Caledonia were Bitterman (2), Collin Echelbarger (2), and Brandon Jamieson, Andrew Light, Karsen Arnold, Dennis Echelbarger, Zack Hoffman and Alec Grinage all tallied a goal apiece.

- BOWLING

## Lowell 4th at own invitational

Saturday's Lowell Invitational was the Red Arrows' first match of the year with its second not coming until Jan. 5.

The wait between the two will give Lowell an opportunity to wrestle away some of its struggles.

"The girls need improvement in their baker game performance. They struggled there," said Lowell girls' bowling coach Eva Geldersma.

ball well in its first outing of the year.

"I was happy with what I saw. The girls caught a lot of bad breaks with five-seven splits and with leaving the five pin," Geldersma said.

Jessie Alberts rolled a club high 189. She followed that up with a 160 and a 147. Sammi Geldersma penciled in a 161 to go along with a 148 and a 131.

Amber Geldersma recorded a 166 along with a 150 and 121. Shelby Mitchell rolled games of 113, 158 and 149. Melissa Mosher tallied games of 124 and 139.

The Red Arrows' baker game scores were 163-158-139-125-133-154.

Here are the Bowls and the participants. My selections are in bold.

Entries must be received by Dec. 18 either by mail or drop them off at The Ledger office. You also have the option of e-mailing your selections to [reporter@lowellbuyersguide.com](mailto:reporter@lowellbuyersguide.com)

Kraft Fight Hunger Nevada  
Boston College  
BBVA Compass  
Pittsburgh  
Kentucky  
Cotton Bowl  
Texas A&M  
LSU  
Go.Daddy.com  
Miami Ohio  
Tenn. State  
Gator Bowl  
Michigan  
Mississippi State  
TicketCity Bowl  
Northwestern  
Texas Tech  
Outback Bowl  
Penn State  
Florida  
Capital One Bowl  
Alabama  
Michigan State

*Congratulations*  
to  
*Rachell Van Veelen*

Rachell has graduated from nursing school and is now a Registered Nurse! While maintaining great grades and continuously making the Dean's List, Rachell was a busy wife and Mom!

*We love you and  
we are all so proud of you!*

*The Van Veelens, The Timmers, The Guiles*

night's fight. Gabe Morse, wrestling at 140, fractured his forearm and will be out two to three weeks.

He joins Dan Fleet on the injury list. Fleet is out with a high ankle sprain.

Fleet finished third in the state last year and Dean placed seventh.

"With those two out, it's time for others to step up," Dean explained.

The Red Arrows, coming off the exciting win, traveled to Davison on Saturday. Lowell finished third behind Tecumseh and Davison.

The Red Arrows lost in the semifinals to Tecumseh on the eight tiebreaker (total first points scored, 16-10) in a match that finished tied 28-28.

"We have a mixture of a lot of young kids that will get better with a number of good, older, mature wrestlers," Dean said. "The team you see in February will be much different than the one that's wrestling now."

Lowell defeated Lapeer West and Dearborn Fordson before losing to Tecumseh. The Red Arrows then defeated Midland for third.

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**Florida State**  
**South Carolina**  
Sun Bowl  
**Note Dame**  
Miami Fla.  
Liberty Bowl  
Central Florida  
**Georgia**  
Meinke Car Care  
**Clemson**  
South Florida  
Holiday Bowl  
Washington  
**Nebraska**  
Armed Forces Bowl  
**SMU**  
Army  
Music City  
North Carolina  
**Tennessee**  
Pinstripes Bowl  
Syracuse  
**Kansas State**  
Military Bowl  
**Maryland**  
East Carolina  
Alamo Bowl  
Arizona  
**Oklahoma State**  
Texas Bowl  
**Illinois**  
Baylor  
Insight Bowl  
Iowa  
**Missouri**  
Champs Sports  
N.C. State  
**West Virginia**  
Independence Bowl  
Air Force  
**Georgia Tech**  
Little Caesars Bowl  
Toledo

like this that your play is an extension of practice."

Netting goals for Lowell/Caledonia were Bitterman (2), Collin Echelbarger (2), and Brandon Jamieson, Andrew Light, Karsen Arnold, Dennis Echelbarger, Zack Hoffman and Alec Grinage all tallied a goal apiece.

*Someone had to say it!*

Thad Kraus

FIU  
Sheraton Hawaii i Bowl  
Hawaii  
Tulsa  
Poinsettia Bowl  
San Diego State  
Navy  
Maaco Bowl  
Utah  
**Boise State**  
Beef O'Brady's Bowl  
Louisville  
**Southern Miss.**  
New Orleans Bowl  
**Troy**  
Ohio U.  
Humanitarian Bowl  
N. Illinois  
**Fresno State**  
New Mexico Bowl  
**BYU**  
UTEP  
Fiesta Bowl  
**Oklahoma**  
Connecticut  
Rose Bowl  
**Wisconsin**  
TCU  
Orange Bowl  
Virginia Tech  
**Stanford**  
Sugar Bowl  
**Arkansas**  
Ohio State  
BCS National  
Auburn  
**Oregon**

Participants who choose more games correctly than I do will have their names dropped in a hat. A winner will then be selected.

Good Luck!

FYI - Monday night marked the first time in nine years that a Monday night football game has been played in Detroit. The punch line is - the Lions weren't one of the teams playing!









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