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2011
A YEAR
IN REVIEW
page 8 - 23



Community members look to 2012 with optimism

by Emma Palova

Citing better sales and already hitting the bottom of the nagging recession, community members are turning to 2012 with optimism.

City manager Mark



Mark Howe

Howe said he is incredibly optimistic about the future because of the challenges and opportunities to make the world a better place to live, work and play.

The challenges remain financial for the state and the country.

Economically, according to Howe, Lowell is a great place to be due to dedicated people.

"We have organizations that are interwoven into the fabric of the community," he said. "I am encouraged daily by quality individuals who live and work here."

The focus for Lowell should be on creating a future vision for the community and coordinating efforts toward that future.

In response to a dream job, Howe would like to spend time with family and doing random acts of kindness if he could get paid for that.

If he could travel on an unlimited budget, Howe said he would go to the moon and explore space.

For Howe, Michigan is definitely the mitten shaped state.

"Wisconsin is more like a sock, a dirty one," he said.

Even though he'd like to see all college sports do well, when it comes down to a game, he likes maize and blue.

He would suggest to graduating seniors to find balance in life.

"Figure out what you

enjoy to do," he said. "Let true love find you."

Although he believes in peace and love, Howe will also defend when necessary.

"I like to reflect and resolve to improve myself on a regular basis, not just annually.

Kathleen Mooney, owner of Fire and Water Art in downtown Lowell, too, is optimistic.

Mooney views as major challenges, for people finding meaningful employment and buying locally.

Economically, Lowell should focus on filling all the storefronts on Main Street.

Mooney loves what she does, art and teaching art. However, if she had to decide what her ideal job would be, she'd like to be a traveler or a business counselor.

If money wasn't an issue, Mooney would like to visit Butan.

She views Michigan as the mitten state, not Wisconsin. And she does not care for either team: Wolverines or Spartans.

Her advice to a graduating senior is to follow their heart. Mooney considers herself to be a lover rather than a fighter.

"I love more than I fight," she said. "I wish everybody happiness and peace in 2012."

Police chief Barry Getzen said he was always optimistic about the future.

"I am optimistic because there is always someone big or small who rises to the challenge or moment to make the world, or even just a tiny corner of the world like our community, a better place," he said.

Difficult times, according to Getzen, seems to bring out the best in people.

"Difficult times have been the times when America shines," he said. "I think we have great opportunities in the future."

As far as challenges go, locally, government faces tight fiscal times in the upcoming year, although the business sector seems to be doing better.

"But I don't think that has translated to improvements for the employed and unemployed yet," he said. "That will happen over time if we can keep America and the international community on an even keel."

In order to improve Lowell economically, Getzen sees the role of the government in working closely with the surrounding townships to attract planned growth to the area. The infrastructure development has to be closely coordi-

"Go to Europe, Central America and China if you can," he said, "go to New York City or Nebraska or South Dakota. Get off the freeways and travel the old state and US highways. Know your entire country, not just the vacation spots."

He encourages seniors and all people to do something meaningful for someone else at least once a month.

Getzen said he is a well balanced individual, who loves or fights as the situation dictates.

"My resolution is to be kind," he said.

One of the newest businesses on Main Street, Giggles and Gumdrops, has done very well over the last year, encouraging owner Melissa Freeman to be optimistic about the future.

"There has been a huge increase in sales and hopefully it will continue," she said.

For Freeman, a major challenge in the upcoming year will be to keep people shopping locally.

"They will see an impact if they do that," she said.

Freeman feels Lowell needs to focus economically on filling the downtown stores and creating excitement in the community.

"We need to continue chamber events and bringing [in] new businesses to create more jobs," she said.

Her ideal job is what Freeman currently does as a business owner.

"Resale is not what it used to be," she said.

Freeman would like to travel for a year and she considers Michigan the mitten state.

Freeman suggests to graduating seniors to follow their dreams whatever they may be.

"Mistakes are inevita-

ble, but make sure you learn from them," she said.

She considers herself a lover because there is no room in her heart to fight.

"My New Year's reso-



Barry Getzen

lution is to be positive," she said.

Mike Larkin, owner of Larkin's, also is optimistic about the upcoming year.

"It's got to turn around sooner or later," he said. "It can't be as bad as the last three years. We've hit the bottom."

Among major challenges for the Lowell community, Larkin sees the need to replace the volunteers that have died over the last two to three years.

The focus economically should be on marketing Lowell as a great place to live and cutting expenses



Kathleen Mooney

nated, along with upgrades, community development plans and area marketing.

Given a choice of an ideal job, Getzen would like to be a writer, artist, a musician or anything that expresses creativity.

Traveling on an unlimited travel budget, he would choose sailing anywhere.

He roots for Spartans, but watches the Wolverines.

Getzen considers Michigan to be the mitten state, actually two mittens.

"Wisconsin is cheese, they were before California took over the top dairy producing spot," he said.

His advice to graduating seniors is to be adventuresome and to do the things they want and when they can.



Melissa Freeman

during decreasing revenues.

His ideal job would be being retired, while his dream vacation is Australia.

Larkin laughed about the mitten question. He roots for Notre Dame.

His advice to gradu-

Social Security resolutions for the New Year

Happy 2012 from Social Security! With the new year, many people put together lists of goals and resolutions. Allow us to share with you some new year's resolutions that you may find worth keeping.

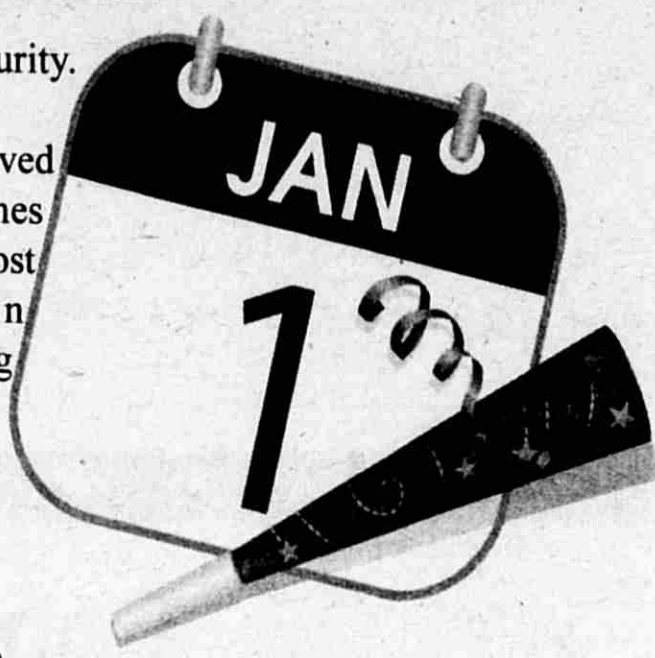
Think about retirement. Whether you're 26 and beginning a career or 62 and thinking about the best time to stop working,

give some thought to what your retirement plan will be. Social Security is the largest source of income for elderly Americans today, but it was never intended to be your only source of income when you retire.

Plan ahead. The best way to begin planning for retirement is by using the free resources provided by Social Security. Start by using our Retirement Estimator at www.socialsecurity.gov/estimator, where you can get a personalized, instant estimate of your future retirement benefits using different retirement ages and scenarios.

Make sure you have all your numbers. While tax season may seem far away, now is the time that many taxpayers start gathering records and documentation for filing tax returns. If you don't have a Social Security number for one of your dependents, apply now to have the Social Security number in time to file your tax return. Learn more at www.socialsecurity.gov/ssnumber.

Help a loved one. Sometimes we get the most satisfaction out of helping someone else. If you have a grandparent, parent, relative, or friend who could benefit from Social Security, share our website and online services with them. You can even help a loved one apply for retirement or Medicare benefits — or for Extra Help with Medicare prescription drug costs — in as little as 10 minutes. Whether you forward a publication or sit down to help someone apply for Social Security,



the place to go is www.socialsecurity.gov.

Vonda VanTil is the public affairs specialist for West Michigan. You can write her c/o Social Security Administration, 3045 Knapp St NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49525 or via email at vonda.vantil@ssa.gov



along main street

WORKS IN PROGRESS ART EXHIBITION

This January LowellArts! will host an art exhibition with a new twist - all art on display is purposely incomplete. The Works in Progress Art Exhibition runs from Jan. 10 to Feb. 5. Gallery hours are Tues.-Fri., 10:00 am to 6:00 pm and Sat., 1:00-4:00 pm. LowellArts! is located at 149 S. Hudson, Lowell. For more information call LowellArts! at 616-897-8545.

COFFEE WITH COUNCIL

Come meet and have a cup of coffee with your city councilmembers on the first Saturday of the month from 8-10:00 am at the Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce office, 113 Riverwalk Plaza.

You can only be young once. But you can always be immature.

- Dave Barry (1947 -)

PROPOSED OPERATING PLAN FOR REVIEW AND COMMENT FULLER SEPTIC SERVICES - SEPTAGE RECEIVING FACILITY

The Proposed Operating Plan for the Stoneybrook Sanitation/Fuller Septic Services - Septage Treatment Receiving Facility to be located on parcel 41-20-03-385-016 at 2051 Bowes Road, Lowell, Michigan is available for review and comment at Fuller Septic Services, 2051 Bowes Road, Lowell, Michigan 49331, during normal business hours. The office can be contacted at 231-331-7533. The purpose of this facility is to receive septage waste for treatment. Please submit any written comments regarding the proposed operation of this receiving facility by January 30, 2012 to the address listed above.

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WE BOUGHT A ZOO (PG)
12:40, 3:30, 6:20, 9:10
MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE GHOST PROTOCOL (PG-13) 1:10, 4:00, 6:50, 9:40
THE GIRL WITH THE DRAGON TATTOO (R) 11:40, 2:55, 6:10, 9:20
ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: CHIPWRECKED (G)
11:00, 1:00, 3:00, 5:05, 7:10, 9:10
SHERLOCK HOLMES: A GAME OF SHADOWS (PG-13)
12:50, 3:45, 6:40, 9:30

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How much can you lose to improve your health? Community Weight Loss Challenge is better than ever!

Weight loss and improved health are some of the most common new year resolutions that people make. This year, Lowell Community Wellness and Snap Fitness are partnering to help community residents keep that resolution.

The program encourages four-person teams to support each other with menu ideas, workout partners and coaching through weak moments to reach their weight loss goal during the 10 weeks of the program.

Last year, 120 individuals on 30 teams lost more than 1,000 pounds during the Lowell Community Wellness Weight Loss Challenge. That weight represented more than four percent of the combined

participants' body weight. Participants also said, in a survey at the end of the program, that they wanted more for their participation. In 2012, they will get it.

The 2012 Weight Loss Challenge kicks off on January 11 and offers workout sessions, menu planning and a Fitness analysis for participants. The goal is to help participants lose fat, improve their health and start the year working together to live more active lives.

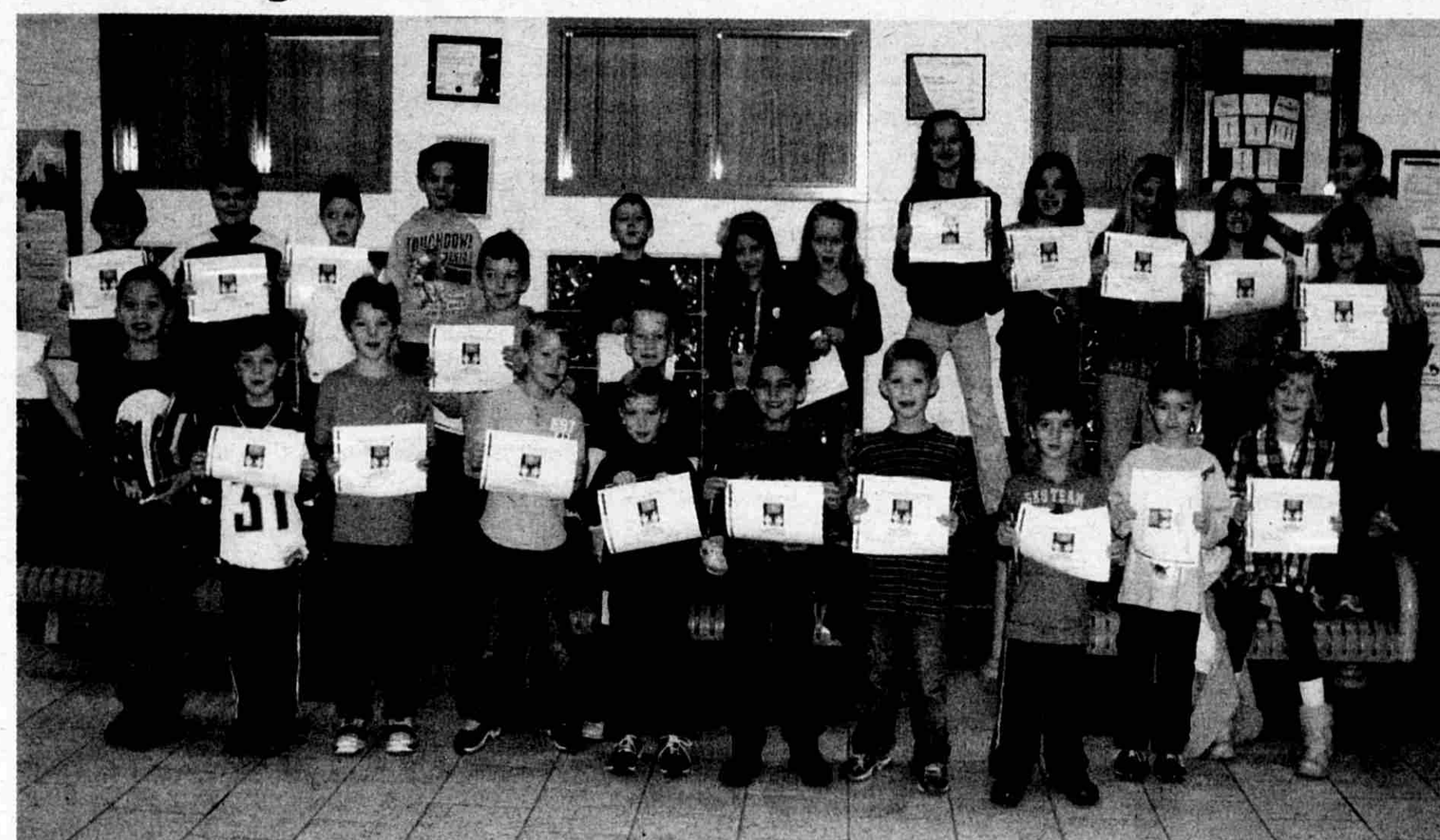
Lowell (next to the movie theater) no later than January 11. The participation fee has increased to \$25 per person or \$95 per team of four people. Teams will be limited to a maximum of four people for fairness in awarding prizes based on total pounds lost.

Snap Fitness of Lowell is helping Lowell Community Wellness to make that possible.

Each participant will receive a 20-visit punch card to use during staffed hours to exercise at Snap Fitness during the Weight Loss Challenge; free Fitness session with a certified personal trainer to determine a baseline fitness level; free online webpage access to healthy recipes, exercise library and meal planning tools; and body composition testing at the start/finish of weight loss challenge.

Participants need to register at Snap Fitness in

Murray Lake kids have character



Pictured are the Murray Lake Elementary Character in Action award winners for November. These students were nominated by staff and/or students for exhibiting the trait of respect during the month of November. Pictured, front row, left to right: Derek Mohr, Patrick DeVoest, William DeVoest, Owen Carpenter, Sam Kaminski, Dethan Hawk, Nicholas Lothian, Caleb Yomtoob, Nolan Jannenga, Zach Kistler, Logan Rose, and Leah Davidson; back row, left to right: Sean Truba, Josh Mommany, Evan Richter, Lincoln Homolka, Drew Farstvedt, Kayla Buckle, Hope Kaminski, Riley Fuller, Grace Barber, Jenna Happie, Izzy Tackmann, Kari Kroll, and Lexi Kapcia. Missing: Braxcynn Baker, TJ Hollern, and Kyra Northup.

college news

Dylan Douglas Olin was placed on the dean's list at Michigan State University for the fall 2011 semester. He is the son of Dean and Suzanne Olin of Lowell.

Give a man a fish, and you'll feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, and he'll buy a funny hat. Talk to a hungry man about fish, and you're a consultant.

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LUNCH MENU

ELEMENTARY MENU
Week of
Jan. 2, 2012

MON: No School.

TUES: Tony's pepperoni pizza (Chili w/crackers also offered at Alto, Cherry Creek & Murray Lake), broccoli florets w/low fat ranch dipping sauce, cinnamon applesauce, milk.

WED: Wheat bagel & string cheese w/Animals yogurt or cheese quesadilla w/salsa, (hot ham & cheese on wheat bun offered at Bushnell) baby peas, fresh banana, milk.

THURS: Hotdog on wheat bun (Jr. turkey & cheese sub, also offered at Alto, Cherry Creek & Murray Lake), 2 hashbrown patties, orange smiles, milk.

FRI: French toast sticks or cereal w/Graham crackers, each w/scrambled eggs, pineapple, fresh mini carrots, milk.

THANK YOU

The Alto Lions Club Would Like To Thank The Following Businesses & Individuals For Their Donations To The 2011 Children's Christmas Party

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Kentwood Sales Corp.
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Skyline Electric
Stedfast Construction
Swiss Lane Farms
Pat Thomet
(in memory of Stewart Thomet)
United Bank - Clarksville
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Chris Wenger
Weeland Farms
Zook Farm Equipment

Alto Area Lions Club

EARTH TALK™

Questions & Answers About Our Environment

Dear EarthTalk: *Is it true that gas furnaces cost less to run and burn cleaner than their oil counterparts? If I make the switch, how long should I expect it to take for me to pay back my initial investment? And are there any greener options I should consider?* -- Veronica Austin, Boston, MA

It is true that natural gas has been a more affordable heat source than oil for Americans in recent years. The federal Energy Information Administration (EIA) reports that the average American homeowner will pay only about \$732 to heat their home with gas this winter season (October 1 through March 31) versus a whopping \$2,535 for oil heat. While the price of natural gas has remained relatively stable in the last few years, oil prices have been high and rising

thanks in large part to continued unrest in Middle Eastern oil producing countries. Just two years ago the average winter home oil heating bill was \$1,752.

While oil prices are likely to remain high and volatile in the foreseeable future, most energy analysts agree that pricing for natural gas, much of which is still derived domestically, is not expected to rise or fluctuate substantially in the U.S. any time soon. According to EIA economist and forecaster Neil Gamson, the U.S. already has a glut of natural gas and expects even more domestic production to come online soon as drillers are set to open up the Marcellus Shale in Pennsylvania and New York to more gas development.

Only about eight percent of U.S. homes are on oil heat today. Most are in the Northeastern U.S. and were built back in the day when oil was the cheapest way to keep toasty through the long winters. Many utilities have since put gas lines into neighborhoods that didn't have them in the past, opening the door for homeowners to switch out old inefficient oil furnaces for more efficient gas units.

The federal government's 30 percent tax credit (capped at \$500) for upgrading to a high efficiency furnace expires at the end of 2011 but will likely be extended in one form or another into 2012. In the meantime, some states, municipalities and utilities offer their own incentives and low-interest loans on upgraded, high-efficiency furnaces. Check what's available in your area via a zip code or map-based search online at the website of the Database of State Incentives for Renewables and Efficiency (DSIRE). Regardless of incentives, gas furnaces tend to cost less than their oil counterparts anyway, but installing one from scratch will

incur an extra thousand dollars or two to run a gas line to it from the street. If natural gas continues to be substantially cheaper than oil, the fuel cost savings alone would pay back the up-front equipment and infrastructure investment within five years in most cases.

Environmentally speaking, gas has lower carbon emissions than oil, but hydraulic fracturing ("fracking") — the highly controversial gas extraction method increasingly employed today (drillers inject water, sand and chemicals at high pressure underground to break through rock and access the natural gas) — takes a heavy toll on surrounding ecosystems and regional water quality. Most

environmental advocates would rather see people transition to truly renewable heating sources like geothermal or solar. If you're going to the cost and trouble of switching out an oil furnace for something new, a geothermal heat pump may cost more (\$7,500 and up) than a new gas heating system but will save big bucks and emissions in the long run. For those in reliably sunny areas, a solar heating system will cost even more up front but can deliver similar long term economic and environmental benefits.

CONTACTS: EIA, www.eia.gov; DSIRE, www.dsireusa.org.

Dear EarthTalk: *I know that large fish contain a lot of mercury, but where does it come from? And what are we doing to prevent this contamination?* -- Alison Bronner, Atlanta, GA

Mercury in the fish we like to eat is a big problem in the United States and increasingly around the world. Mercury itself is a naturally occurring element that is present throughout the environment and in plants and animals. But human industrial activity (such as coal-fired electricity generation, smelting and the incineration of waste) ratchets up the amount of airborne mercury which eventually finds its way into lakes, rivers and the ocean, where it is gobbled up by unsuspecting fish and other marine life.

Once this mercury gets into the marine food chain, it "bioaccumulates" in the larger predators. That's why larger fish are generally riskier to eat than smaller ones. Those of us who eat too much mercury-laden fish can suffer from a range of health maladies including reproductive troubles and nervous system disorders. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reports that human fetuses exposed to mercury before birth "may be at an increased risk of poor performance on neurobehavioral tasks, such as those measuring attention, fine motor function, language skills, visual-spatial abilities and verbal memory." Up to 10 percent of American women of childbearing age carry enough mercury in their bloodstreams to put their developing children at increased risk for developmental problems.

As for which fish to avoid, the non-profit Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), which runs the handy Seafood Selector website, reports that people with mercury concerns should steer clear of bluefin tuna, walleye, king mackerel and marlin. Bluefish, shark, swordfish, wild sturgeon, opah and bigeye tuna carry a proportionately large mercury burden as well. Also of concern, but to a slightly lesser extent, are orange roughy, Chilean sea bass, blue crab, lingcod, Spanish mackerel, spotted seatrout, wahoo, grouper, snapper, halibut, tile fish, rock fish and sable fish, as well as blackfin, albacore and yellowfin tuna.

CONTACTS: EPA Mercury and Air Toxics Standards, www.epa.gov/airquality/powerplanttoxics/; EDF Seafood Selector, apps.edf.org/page.cfm?tagID=1521.

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viewpoint

financial focus



Christopher C. Godbold

Time for New Year's financial resolutions

Once again, it's time to make some New Year's resolutions. This year, in addition to hitting the gym, learning that second language and getting better organized, why not also consider a few financial resolutions?

What types of resolutions might you consider? Here are a few suggestions:

- Contribute more to your retirement accounts. The new year means that you are one year closer to retirement. To help yourself build resources for the lifestyle you've envisioned as

- a retiree, try to boost your contributions to your 401(k) or other employer-sponsored retirement plan. You can do this if you get a salary increase and devote at least part of it to your 401(k). At the same time, try to "max out" on your Individual Retirement Account (IRA). For 2012, you can contribute up to \$5,000 to an IRA, or \$6,000 if you're 50 or older.
- Reduce your debts. Look for ways to cut down or consolidate your debts. It may not be easy, but it's worth the effort because the lower your debt load, the

more money you'll have available to invest for the future.

Build an emergency fund. If you don't already have an emergency fund containing between six and 12 months' worth of living expenses, start building one soon. Keep the money in a liquid vehicle — one that's separate from your everyday checking and savings accounts. Without such an emergency fund, you may be forced to dip into your long-term investments to pay for unexpected costs, such as a major car repair, a new furnace or a large medical bill.

Don't overreact to volatility. In 2011, the financial markets have been volatile, with big gains followed by big drops followed by big gains — a true roller-coaster pattern. Try not to let large,

short-term price movements influence your investment decisions. Many of the factors that cause jumps or declines are not that relevant to long-term results — and as an investor, you want to focus on the long term. Concentrate on building a portfolio that's suitable for your individual goals and risk tolerance.

Be aware of different types of risk. For many investors, "investment risk" strictly means the possibility of losing principal when the value of an investment drops. Consequently, to cut back on their risk in the face of a volatile market, they may sell off stocks and load up on certificates of deposit (CDs), bonds and other so-called "safer" investments.

Financial Focus, continued, page 24



fire safety 411

move to the right

submitted by Lt. Paul Roderick

Let's set up a scenario. You go into your child's room in the morning and find your child on the floor not breathing. You immediately dial 911 and explain what is happening. The 911 operator tells you to stay on the line and informs you that the fire department, police and ambulance are on their way. The next few minutes are going to be the longest minutes of your life.

Morning traffic is heavy and the emergency responders are on their way to the fire station. Many of the drivers on the road are not getting out of the way of the responders. This slows down the progress of the responders in getting to your house and lowering the chances of getting to the patient in time to make a difference in the outcome.

Many times I have heard people ask the question, "What took you so long?"

When responding to emergencies, we can only move as fast as the traffic will allow. I assure you we respond as quickly and safely as we can. We are obligated to stop at red lights and stop signs, to be sure cross traffic has stopped before we proceed.

This time of year, as colder weather approaches,

it becomes even more of a problem. Drivers have their windows rolled up, heaters are on, radios playing, and then there are those dreaded cell phones.

Many times drivers do not pull over, as the law dictates, simply because they do not see or hear the approaching emergency vehicle.

The Michigan Secretary of State's document "What Every Driver Must Know" published in May 2011, states that drivers are to "Yield the right-of-way to an emergency vehicle that is approaching from any direction or has stopped, when it is displaying flashing warning lights, sounding a siren or other audible warning, or both."

Vehicle drivers, motorcyclists and bicyclists, when you see red or blue lights and/or hear a siren, please pull over safely as far to the right as soon as possible and stop and allow the approaching emergency vehicle to pass. You may be helping us to save a life or property.

When you see us responding to an emergency call, don't think of us as an inconvenience. Think how you would feel if it was your child or loved one in need of help.

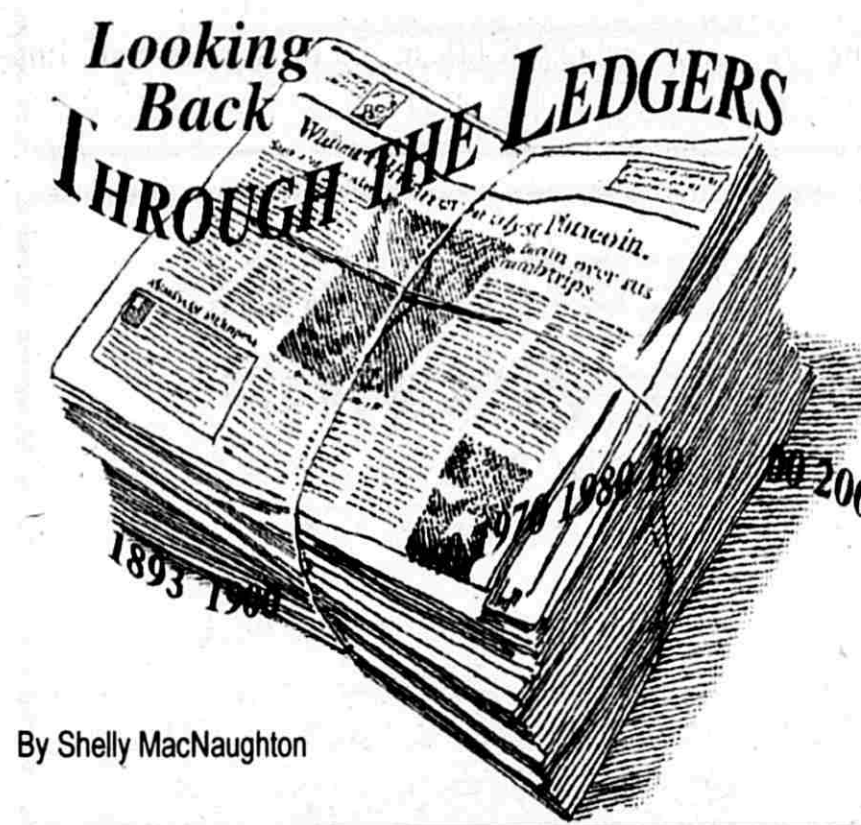
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By Shelly MacNaughton

50 Years Ago The Lowell Ledger December 28, 1961

The first day of the new year is a time for looking ahead, for making plans, for hope and optimism. But it is also a time when most of us look back, with fond memories to days of yesterday.

With each new year, we are conscious that time does not wait and that each new day is soon a part of history.

Looking back through the pages of time, we find that many interesting events have taken place on January 1.

The first practical fire engine was tested Jan. 1, 1852; President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on the first day of the year 1863; the famous Tournament of Roses began Jan. 1, 1889.

The USSR was formed Jan. 1, 1923; U.S. parcel post service was inaugurated January 1, 1913. The United States Declaration was signed Jan. 1, 1942; the U.S. Strategic Air Forces in Europe was formed Jan. 1, 1944 and Japan's Emperor Hirohito disavowed divinity, Jan. 1, 1946.

25 Years Ago The Grand Valley Ledger January 7, 1987

Headline: Macker wins lawsuit

The Gus Macker tournament had another day in court late last month and emerged victorious. Circuit Court Judge Robert Benson ruled that the annual 3-on-3 basketball tournament does not violate city zoning ordinances as charged by the plaintiffs in the case, Larry and Mary Isenhoff. The Isenhoffs initially filed their suit last summer, only weeks prior to the thirteenth annual tournament. Judge Benson ruled in favor of the tournament at that hearing, stating that the suit did not leave tournament planners adequate time to make other arrangements.

The Isenhoffs live next door to the home of Richard and Bonnie McNeal which serves as headquarters for the tournament. The McNeals' son Scott is the founder of the tournament.

100 Years Ago The Lowell Ledger December 28, 1911

A.P. Johnson, for the past five years advertising manager of the Chicago Record-Herald, has bought the Grand Rapids News and will take possession January 1. The editorial policy will continue independent.

George Golds is shipping potatoes to Holland for a dollar a bushel.

Christmas day was spring-like with clear sky, sunshine and bare ground. Mercury stood at 50 in the shade.

75 Years Ago The Lowell Ledger and Alto Solo December 24, 1936

Lowell schools let out this week Thursday noon for the holiday vacation and will reopen on Monday, January 4, 1937.

Sale of diesel motor horsepower in the nation jumped some 60 percent in 1936 as compared with 1935, but Michigan's motor fuel tax collections on this community showed a far greater increase.

Prosecutor-elect Fred N. Searl, Tuesday, announced the appointment of Gerald M. Henry of Lowell as fourth assistant prosecuting attorney of Kent County. Mr. Henry will take office with the incoming administration on January 1.

business directory

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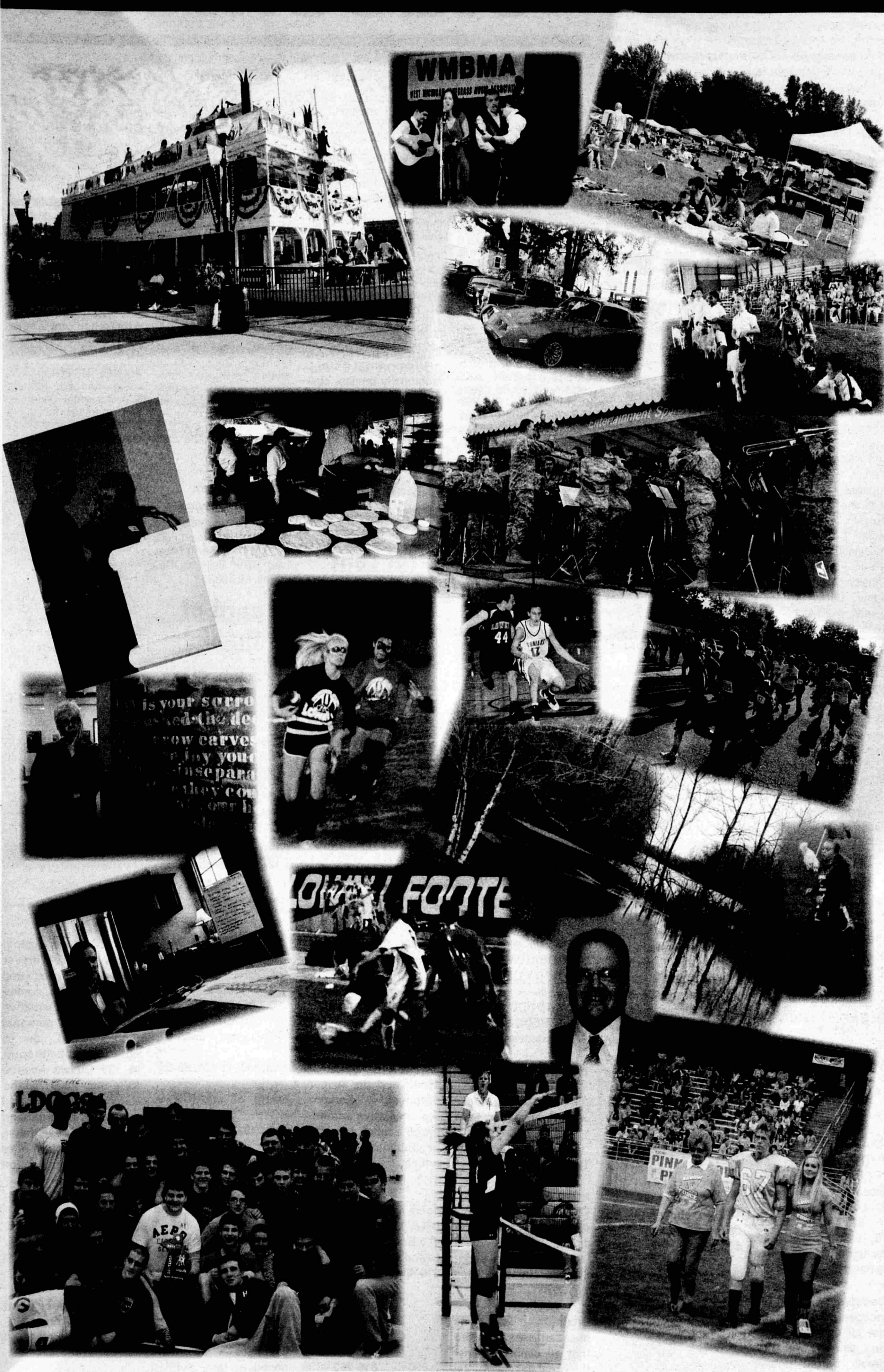
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happy NEW YEAR

2011 A YEAR IN REVIEW



2011 A YEAR IN REVIEW

JANUARY 5

City places moratorium on licensing ordinance for professional snowplowers

The city placed a moratorium on the licensing of professional snowplowers due to discontent and lack of communication until Feb. 15. A meeting will be held on Feb. 7 to make adjustments to the ordinance.

Sluggish economy causes Curves in Lowell to close doors

It wasn't the lack of commitment, determination or results that closed down the successful fitness franchise in Lowell. It was the sluggish economy that finally took its toll on this innovative workout facility for women. The franchise closed its doors on Monday after a great run peaking with its membership in the late 2000s.

JANUARY 12

Community charrette will explore design possibilities for amphitheatre area

A community charrette will be held at the Main Street Inn to explore design options for the old amphitheatre and west bank.

Township planning commission finalizes amendments to satellite dish ordinance

The Lowell Township planning commission finalized amendments to the satellite dish ordinance. The amendments will now go to the township board for approval next month.

Family remembers local businessman as hardworking entrepreneur

Tom Tschannen started his septic business with a broken truck, a shoebox, an answering machine, and a great determination thirty years ago. After a long illness Tschannen, age 64, passed away on January 2, 2011 in Grand Rapids.

JANUARY 19

Vergennes Township to seek legal advice on proposal for broadband wireless Internet project

The Vergennes Township Board will seek legal counsel on an exploratory proposal for high-speed broadband wireless Internet from resident Ryan Peel. "It's an innovative idea that combines a need with a cause," said Peel about the project concept.



Ryan Peel, Vergennes Township resident, gives presentation on broadband wireless network project.

Residents and city leaders participate in design charrette

Design Plus in conjunction with the city of Lowell held a charrette at the Main Street Inn for the upgrade of the Riverwalk by the amphitheatre and the west bank of the Flat River. The session drew in approximately 70 to 80 people, both city leaders and residents from the city and the surrounding townships. It was moderated by landscape architects and owners of Design Plus, Peter Lazdins and Jim Horman.

Hildenbrand takes oath

Senator Dave Hildenbrand, R-Lowell, took part in Wednesday's swearing-in at the state Capitol with Michigan Supreme Court Chief Justice Robert P. Young, Jr. administering the oath of office.



DDA contributes to

North Center Street reconstruction

The Downtown Development Authority (DDA) approved \$36,501 for the reconstruction of North Center Street within the authority district. The total cost of the reconstruction is \$241,000. The project is funded by a mix of monies from Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), local street construction fund, water main contribution, DDA contribution and water fund.

JANUARY 26

Planning commission

approves Farmers' Market relocation

The city planning commission approved Farmers' Market move from the fairgrounds to the parking lot in front of Tractor Supply.



The Farmers' Market will relocate to Tractor Supply's lot.

B.C. Pizza donates

proceeds from contest to FROM

B.C. Pizza held a coloring contest, sponsored by the Lowell Buyers Guide, in December to benefit Flat River Outreach Ministries (FROM).

"There was a need and I thought coloring was kind of cool," said owner James Fegel. "I used to participate in them."

City updates on snowplowing permits, video coverage of meetings

Lowell city officials gave an update on the proposed licensing of snowplowers and video coverage of public meetings. A moratorium was placed on the licensing issue until Feb. 15. "We've come up with a compromise," said police chief James Hinton, "but the snowplow drivers have not come to a compromise."

FEBRUARY 2

Chamber to bestow honors on citizens and businesses

The Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce will give awards to residents and businesses that have demonstrated a true commitment to the greater community during the annual Winter Gathering of the Membership held on Feb. 16. Each year since 1986, the chamber has given out the most coveted honor to the Person of the Year. The Business Appreciation award started in 2004 and the newest award is the Brick award for 2011. Person of the Year for 2011 is Joy Smith, Business Appreciation award goes to All-Weather Seal and the Brick award goes to Attwood and Main Street Inn.

Write down what you feel is the true meaning of Christmas.

I feel that the true meaning of Christmas is to spend time with your family and just appreciate every thing you have. Some people ask for very Expensive things like X-boxes, Wii's, TVs, and other big things like trampolines.



Ally Pawloski, 11
Murray Lake Elementary

319 E. Main, Lowell • 897-7300

Write down what you feel is the true meaning of Christmas.

To me, Christmas is about spending time with your family and giving to others. This year my family saw an ad in the newspaper about granting someone's holiday wish. We found multiple people we would have loved to help but we decided to grant a lady's wish for a new laptop computer.

Abby White, 10
Alto Elementary



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2011 A YEAR IN REVIEW

FEBRUARY 9 Blizzard 2011

People dig out for days after huge snowstorm blankets midwest

The blizzard of 2011, that swept a large portion of the country overnight and lasted until Groundhog Day, left people trapped behind mounds of snow last week. The Midwest states were paralyzed even though there was no loss of power. However, getting around became a major problem for most. Lowell closed down its shops, restaurants and banks on Wednesday. The town was like a ghost town. On Tuesday, Feb. 1, prior to the storm, people were stock-



This roof over a garage at a rental home on Valley Vista Drive collapsed due to heavy snow.

ing up on food and liquids, as well as gas for generators. The city Department of Public Works' (DPW) crews were working around the clock to clear first the center of the streets for emergency vehicles. DPW director Dan DesJarden estimated the city got anywhere from 18 to 20 inches of snow.

Lowell Light & Power to continue successful credit card services

The utility will continue a standard credit card services pilot while absorbing the customer cost. This enables the customers to pay at the office, over the phone or by mail, without having to use a third online party that collected a fee for the service.

FEBRUARY 16

Rail trail group works on plans for fundraising to maximize grant applications

The Grand River and Flat River Valley trail groups discussed fundraising for future trail improvements between Lowell, Ionia and Greenville. Due to a state cut to the \$0.5 million Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) trust fund, fundraising has gained importance as a match to grants. The newly formed trail authority has been experiencing growing pains because the trail project has been moving ahead faster than expected. However, long-term vision for the trail authority is to encompass the entire 125-mile long trail network.

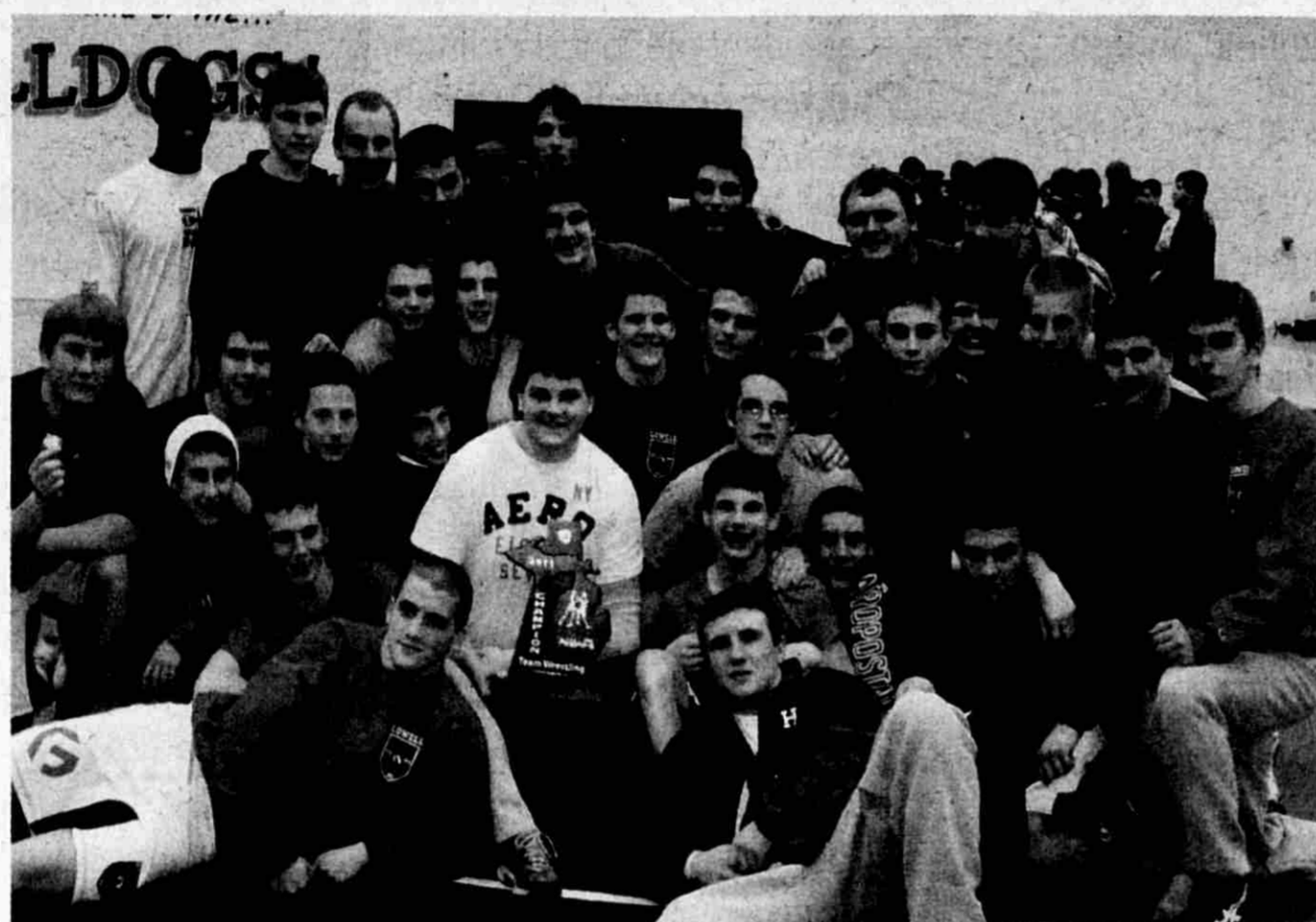
Lowell Township regulates outdoor furnaces

The Lowell Township Planning Commission added regulations for out-

door furnaces to the ordinance after holding a public hearing. The amendment has been in the works since July and the final Feb. 14 version will go to the township board for approval.

Red Arrow wrestlers are district champions

Wednesday evening at Ionia High School, the Lowell wrestling team won the district championship by defeating Ionia, 65-12.



Lowell Red Arrow wrestlers pose with their trophy as district champions.

FEBRUARY 23

Person of the year and community businesses receive accolades from Lowell Chamber of Commerce members

The Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce bestowed honors on area businesses and person of the year at the annual membership dinner held at Grand Volute. The award ceremony was highly emotionally charged due to deaths of well-known people, including Ivan Blough, Jeanne Shores and King Doyle. "It was wonderful," said Baker. "People were emotional, but that's what happens when you have that many people who give back. It's hard not to get emotional. Every single one of them gave 100 percent of their time. 2010 was a rough year." Lowell Ledger and Lowell Buyers Guide publisher Jon Jacobs presented the new Brick awards to Attwood in the industrial category and to Deb and Greg Canfield, owners of Main Street Inn, in the retail category. The Business Appreciation award was presented to All-Weather Seal for their outstanding commitment to the community with their annual 15,000 houseful of windows gift. The highly coveted Person of the Year award went to Joy Smith, a well-known volunteer at the library and the museum.



Joy Smith

2011 A YEAR IN REVIEW

MARCH 2

City to extend life of DDA, purchases school property to continue amphitheatre improvements

The Lowell City Council set a public hearing for April 4 to extend the Lowell Downtown Development Authority (DDA) development and tax increment financing plans to June 2033. The current DDA plan expires in three years and many major downtown improvement projects have just barely begun. The DDA was started in 1993 with two subsequent amendments of plans in 1999 and 2003. Currently, the main projects in the works are improvements in the amphitheatre area and the stabilization of the west bank.

City approves \$14,529 for website upgrade

The Lowell City Council approved a \$14,529 proposal from i2Integration for the upgrade of the city website.

MARCH 9

Bike race will close Main Street on July 4

The city will close Main Street for West Michigan Stage Bicycle Race on July 4 from 9 am to 3 pm. The Lowell City Council approved the closure requested by Brian Bangma from the Grand Rapids Bicycle Company.

Arrow girls' basketball nets district championship

Points were few and far between, but Lowell's varsity girls' basketball team managed to score its third victory of the season over O-K White conference rival Greenville.



Front row, left to right: Danielle Ordway, Stephanie Stevens, Brooke Curtis, Melissa Southwell, Skye Thebo, and Lauren Kurtz; second row, left to right: manager Kait Drudy, Courtney Schmidt, Taylor Flanagan, Amber Martin, Katie Tompkins, Bryleigh Loughlin, and Carissa Paiz.

Early Sunday morning break-in at Dollar General

The Dollar General store located at 413 E. Main Street was broken into at 3:45 am.

Trio of Lowell juniors earn individual state titles

Lowell juniors Gabe Morse, Andrew Morse and Gabe Dean now have individual accolades to match the team state championship they helped win as freshmen. The three all won state championships Saturday at the Division II individual finals.

MARCH 16

Expo 2011 sells out to the last spot

The 2011 Expo will bring into town more vendors than ever. Chamber director Liz Baker had to accommodate eight last entries extending exhibitor space into the hallway. "We're sold out," she said. Baker said Lowell had set

the standard for other expos in Rockford and Ionia. "We were ahead of our time," she said. "There's a lot of awareness between the communities. It's like going to the fair."

MARCH 23

Sunday break-in at Lowell Baptist Church

The First Baptist Church located at 2275 West Main Street was broken into on Sunday, March 13, in the afternoon. The suspect, a 42-year-old male, broke the front glass pane and stole a TV and a DVD player. The damage from property stolen is estimated at \$350 and \$1,000 for the glass door.

City holds public meeting on Riverwalk improvements

In a public meeting, project consultant Dave Austin of Williams & Works presented the proposed \$450,000 Flat River Riverwalk improvements prior to the grant application deadline of April 1. The city's match for the project is \$150,000. That amount has been obtained from the Downtown Development Authority (DDA), Lowell Area Community Fund and the Lowell Cable Television Fund. The proposed improvements include the demolition of the existing amphitheatre, additional walkways, a canoe/kayak launch, new boat/fishing dock and new riverfront open space.

Student artwork featured at various venues around the state

Only exceptional juried art pieces representing the work of Lowell High School art students have made it to various venues around the state.

Student artwork was on display at the Grand Rapids Art Museum from Feb. 22 to March 10. This exhibit, among others, featured the work of Karlie Paulin, Aleesha Den-Braven, DeeAnne Merriman, Ellie Fitzpatrick, Sarah Bockskey and Andrea Herrera.



City extends lease to the Lowell Area Historical Museum

The Lowell City Council extended the lease of the Lowell Area Historical Museum building, located at the corner of Hudson and Main Street, by another 10 years. The museum leases the building from the city for a nominal rent of \$1 per year annually. Over the last 10 years, the museum invested \$150,000 into the building and continues to invest. The museum pays for the operating expenses, while the city pays for the insurance of the building. But, the inside of the building is insured by the museum.

MARCH 30

Expo 2011 sets record breaking attendance

From Tiffany, the nine-week old Syrian bear, parading herself in the hallways of the Lowell High School to the overpowering Zumba dance, the 15th annual Expo lacked nothing in between. The gyms and the café were bursting at the seams as the event showcased area businesses, nonprofits and individuals.



Bill Yoder with Tiffany, the bear.

Your own idea - or your teacher's suggestion

Christmas Has no Re mean Ing then Jus St presents it's also Means JESU'S birthDay on December 25-Sunday 2011.

Donald LaPonsie, 11 St. Patrick's

Write down what you feel is the true meaning of Christmas.

I think it is just being with you family and having fun.

Cameron Finkhouse, 11 Cherry Creek Elementary

BILL WHEELER
Certified Public Accountant
103 Riverside Dr., Lowell • 897-7711

Write down what you feel is the true meaning of Christmas.

The true meaning of Christmas to me is spending time with family and close friends also giving and not just taking for yourself. Most of all thinking about baby born JESUS.

Morgan Cremer, 10 Murray Lake Elementary

Write down what you feel is the true meaning of Christmas.

The true meaning of Christmas is that Jesus was born. I've believed this all my life.

Michaela Duarsma, 10 Alto Elementary

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2550 West Main, Lowell • 616-252-5600

Your own idea - or your teacher's suggestion

An OLY Christmas Christmas is JOLLY. Green is the HOLLY. Without a tree There is no Christmas By Golly.

Joe Huston, 10 St. Patrick's

Write down what you feel is the true meaning of Christmas.

I think the true meaning of Christmas is when you give not when you get.

Tim Baerwalde, 11 Murray Lake Elementary

B.C. PIZZA
1335 W. Main • 897-9776

Your own idea - or your teacher's suggestion

During Christmas break some of my family comes over. I play a bunch of games with them. I also let them use some of my stuff just because they are ALOT MORE KIND to me! Not like my brothers. I also tube and sled with my brothers.

Jonas Thompson, 11 Cherry Creek Elementary

Canfield Plumbing & Heating
411 E. Main, Lowell • 897-0887

Write down what you feel is the true meaning of Christmas.

To spend time with your family it's not all about gifts it's all about having a great time and having every that loves you. That's the true meaning of Christmas.

Breanna Boersma, 10 Murray Lake Elementary

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2011 Elliot Awards

THE STUFFED CRUST AWARD goes to Herman Cain for thinking way too much of himself in many areas.

THE PEPE LE PEW AWARD goes to LL&P for their fabulous but funky recycling.

THE FAMILY VALUES AWARD goes to none other than Newt (the lizard) Gingrich.

THE DOUBLE "N" AWARD goes to Jeanne Vandersloot for spelling her first name correctly.

THE BUSTY BUT BUSTED AWARD goes to our local embezzler.

THE JUST KEEP SMILING AWARD goes to Mitt Romney for obvious reasons.

THE APPLE OF OUR EYE AWARD goes out to all Mac users to honor Steve Jobs.

THE UNSOLVED MYSTERY AWARD goes to the former chief of police.

THE COZY HOME AWARD goes to Scott MacDowell for his window giveaways.

THE TAJ MAHAL AWARD goes to the Lowell Chamber for their new digs.

THE EGGS BENEDICT AWARD goes to our former city manager for moving on to greener pastures.

THE NATIONAL EXPOSURE AWARD goes to the Pink Arrow Pride for their Today Show appearance.

THE SEINFELD SPONGEWORTHY AWARD goes to the Duggars for their stellar reproductive attempts.

THE INCREDIBLE HOKE AWARD goes to Brady Hoke for turning U of M football around.

THE JUICY FRUIT AWARD goes to T.K. for sticking to Lowell like gum on the bottom of your shoe.

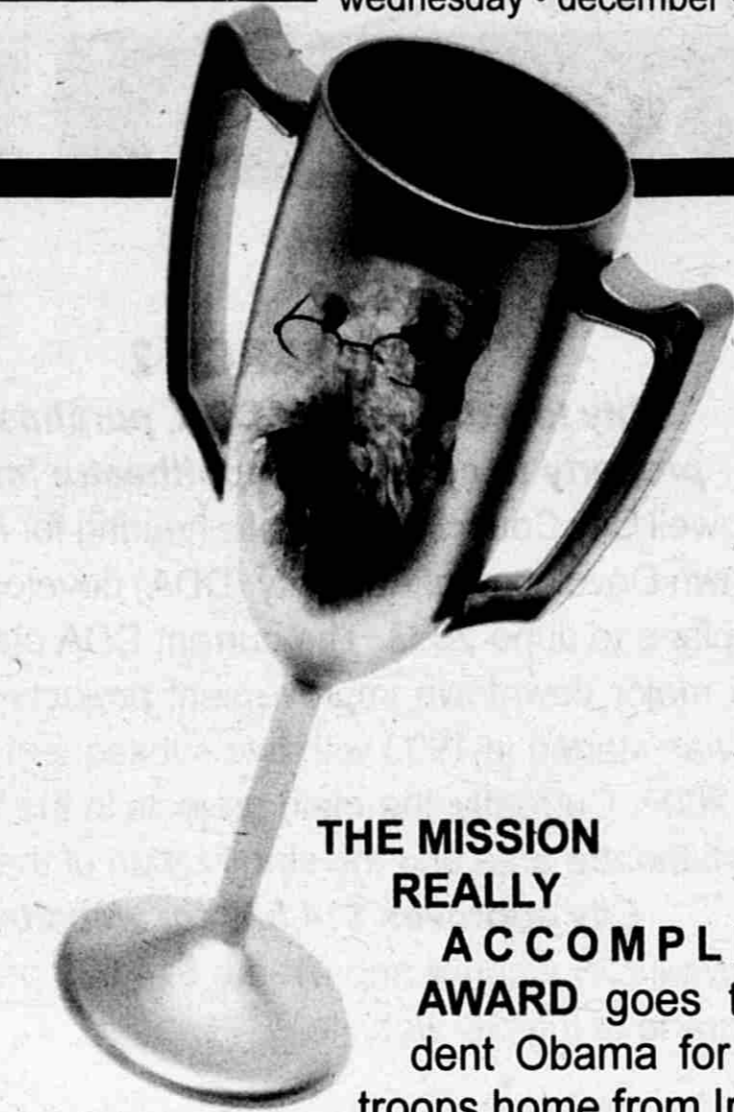
THE HOPSCOTCH AWARD goes to the Lowell City Council for working so diligently on the town's sidewalk issues.

THE NOT JUST ILL BUT DEAD AWARD is given posthumously to Kim Jong Il of Korea.

THE VFW OOPS AMERICAN LEGION AWARD goes to the Thompsons for being understanding.

THE "DID SOMEBODY SAY 40?" AWARD goes to Cathy Acker for her Liquorville costume.

THE DON'T STOP BELIEVING AWARD goes to Mr. Beachum for his Pink Arrow Banners on Main Street.



THE MISSION REALLY ACCOMPLISHED AWARD goes to President Obama for bringing troops home from Iraq and it is coupled with the **EMERIL "BAM" AWARD** for taking out Bin Laden.

THE BROKEN CLOCK AWARD (even they are right twice a day) goes to Mr. Howard for his prolific letter writing.

ROARING AND OUT OF THEIR CAGE AWARD goes to the Detroit Lions for finally showing up at the games.

THE DORA THE EXPLORER AWARD goes to the Hieshetter family for their National Park tours.

THE HOLD THE MUSTARD AWARD goes to Peggy Covert for her work organizing the garlic mustard pulls every year.

2011 A YEAR IN REVIEW

Vergennes Township continues discussion on broadband Internet
The Vergennes Township Board discussed broadband Internet service after the annual meeting. Ryan Peel, owner of Vergennes Broadband LLC, presented a timeline for providing the service if the grant from the Lowell Cable Television Fund is obtained. The deadline for the application is April 15.

North Center Street project postponed for federal funding availability
The \$241,000 North Center Street project has been pushed back to June/July due to federal funding availability. Project engineers Williams & Works informed the public about the delay in an informational public meeting held at the city hall.

DDA approves landscaping project, funding for assistance with MDNR application
The Downtown Development Authority (DDA) approved a \$4,252 landscaping project. According to a report by sexton Don DeJong, the project will replace dying trees in front of the former Antique Mall with raised beds planted with perennials. The DDA also approved \$4,800 for a city hall handicap entrance power box for automated opening and \$3,995 for purchase of a mower.

APRIL 6
Police chief Hinton resigns, new chief of police appointed
Police chief James Hinton has resigned after two years in office to pursue further educational opportunities effective April 15. The council appointed new chief Barry Getzen of Lowell Township. Getzen will start on May 2. In the meantime, Sgt. Steve Bukala will serve as acting police chief.



James Hinton

Tower Farm and barn get \$34,700 facelift
The Tower Farm and barn, which sit on the same property in the Fallsburg Historic Village, will be preserved from destruction with funding from the Lowell Area Community Fund.

APRIL 13
Emotions run high at the school board meeting
Passionate pleas for keeping a beloved principal on staff were heard at Monday night's school board meeting. Districts across the state are facing very tough budget cuts and the heartfelt emotions heard Monday night are just the beginning of this process. As Governor Snyder proposes reallocating funding meant for K-12 schools into colleges and universities school districts are being forced to make drastic cuts. Lowell will need to cut three million from it's budget in the next year.

Texas Hold'em poker at Larkin's Other Place
The first time, the Texas Hold'em poker tournament held at Larkin's Other Place raised \$1,153 for the Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce. Manager Terry Reisnar runs the ongoing event and owner Mike Larkin is seeking other charities that can benefit from the poker tournament this year.

Lowell orchestra director receives recognition
Orchestra director Wendy Tenney has received a multi-aged teacher of the year award for Kent County.



APRIL 20:
Cold front brings April rain and late season snow
The area was blanketed with snow on Monday morning with unseasonably cold temperatures dipping back into the mid 30s. This was preceded by

What do you do during Christmas break when there is no school.
I will watch a movie or play games with my family and play outside with my two cousins Mason and Mercie. We throw snowballs at each other and at my sister CJ. She gets really mad at us but we keep doing it until she chases us.
Kianna Kinyon, 11
Cherry Creek Elementary
What do you do during Christmas break when there is no school.
Over Christmas break I clean the house and help my mom set up the Christmas tree.
Mark Allison
Alto Elementary
James Reagan, D.D.S.
207 W. Main • 897-7179

one 80-degree day with sunshine last week.
Center celebrates Earth Day by removing invasive plant

On a chilly April morning, a group of adults and Boy Scout troop 130 from Greenville headed out into the Wittenbach/Wege preserve off Alden Nash to pull garlic mustard plants. The activity was just one of many events at the Wittenbach/Wege Center (WWC) to celebrate the upcoming Earth Day. Each year, Earth Day is celebrated on April 22.



Dan Chipman, Matt Loper, Nate Behrend and Aaron Loper.

Council tables sidewalk inspection ordinance
The Lowell City Council tabled a proposed sidewalk inspection ordinance after a public hearing on Monday night. Under the proposal, city residents would have to repair sidewalks upon the sale or transfer of property within 60 days. The ordinance would require an inspection and any subsequent repairs.

A hit and run accident damages fence at fairgrounds
A hit and run accident, that occurred between 9 am and 4 pm, left a damaged fence at the fairgrounds. According to acting chief of the Lowell Police Department, Steve Bukala, the vehicle left the roadway and drove through the fencing.

Former cable TV building to house kayak/bicycle rental shop
The former Lowell Cable TV building on the north side of the chamber may house a kayak/bicycle rental shop, pending approvals from the city council.

APRIL 27
Sunny Girls Night Out enjoys steady turnout
Champagne, strawberries and chocolate fountains. And this year there was even dancing in the streets offered by Soft on the Feet Entertainment with owner/instructor Brad Smith. Yes, line dancing on the sidewalk in front of Dovetail and Journeys Time Antiques on Main Street. That is what this year's Girls Night Out (GNO) was all about. The only nice day in a stretch of gloomy cold weather brought women of all ages out to downtown Lowell last week during the spring shopping event.

Council to interview four candidates for manager post
The city council will interview the following four candidates for the manager position. The interviews are open to the public. Each candidate will be interviewed for approximately 55 minutes using the same set of questions.

What are your family's special Christmas or holiday traditions.
Every year on Christmas, my family eats breakfast at 8:00 AM. We have eggs, grapejuice, cookies, and grapefruits. Then, we gather in the living room, and open presents. After presents, we eat Christmas lunch, and celebrate!
Charity Gerig, 10
Cherry Creek Elementary

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Jeep
930 W. Main, Lowell • 897-9281

THANK YOU

A BIG THANK YOU TO THE LOWELL COMMUNITY
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Watch for V in 2012!

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2011 A YEAR IN REVIEW

Spring Into The Past tour invites to explore Civil War

The ninth annual Spring Into The Past tour, organized by the Tri Museum Network, will take place this weekend.

MAY 4

City formalizes job offer to manager, passes sidewalk repair ordinance

The city council formally extended a job offer to city manager candidate Mark Howe and directed city attorney Dick Wendt to negotiate the contract. The contract is expected to be available for review at the budget work session on May 9.



Celebrating Arbor Day in Lowell

A group of citizens gathered at the fairgrounds to plant a maple in honor of Arbor Day. Pictured in the photo are Dana Chase, Matt Horrocks, Diane LaWarre, Roger LaWarre, Dave Pasquale and Scott Fosburg.

Low turnout for school election

The school election attracted only a few voters to the polls. Two candidates were running for the Lowell School Board, incumbent Mark Lessens and write-in candidate Brian Krajewski. Former Lowell schools' superintendent Bert Bleke was among the candidates running for the Grand Rapids Community College Board of Trustees.

Spring Into The Past tour draws good turnout

The annual Spring Into The Past tour fundraiser drew a good turnout in spite of the changing weather last weekend. The Lowell Area Historical Museum, one of the many stops on the tour, put outside a clothesline to attract attention. "It was well attended from all over Michigan," said museum educator Lu-anne Kaeb. "We had a steady stream of people."



Lowell Area Historical Museum

MAY 11

Overwhelming citizen participation causes fire chief to close down education forum

Hundreds of parents, teachers, administrators and community members showed up at the VFW Flat River Post 8303 for a legislative forum on education. Cars lined both sides of Alden Nash surrounding the VFW post. After about 15 minutes of introductions, the fire chief shut down the meeting because of the huge crowd that had gathered inside and out.

City crunches budget numbers in a work session, sets public hearings for May and June

The city officials worked on the 2011-2012 budget which again reflects tight economic times, decrease in revenues and expenditures and a low fund balance. The projected decrease in revenues is estimated at 11.6 percent due to decrease in taxable value and state shared revenues. The highlight of the budget is the general fund which also funds local street im-



Mayor Jim Hodges, mayor pro tem Sharon Ellison, councilmembers Maryalene LaPonsie and Jeff Altoft crunch budget numbers.

provements with one mill or \$90,000. The property taxes levied are \$16.08 per \$1,000 of taxable value. This includes 0.25 mills for operating the Lowell Area Historical Museum. This millage is up for renewal in 2012. "It will be brought before the council and the voters," said city manager Dave Pasquale. No cost of living increases have been calculated into the budget for employees' salaries.

DDA approves 2011-2012 budget, appropriates \$6,000 for summer concerts

The Downtown Development Authority (DDA) approved the 2011-2012 budget. The DDA is funded through Tax Increment Financing Authority (TIFA) totaling \$725,131 for the upcoming budget year including the beginning balance of \$233,384. The expenditures are \$299,025. The ending balance is \$426,106.

2011 Buyers Guide Mother of the Day enjoys special treatment



Mother of the Day Jennifer Branagan.

Bouncing around and cracking jokes with merchants, 2011 Mother of the Day Jennifer Branagan enjoyed every minute of her special day. Branagan was the winner out of 118 entries dropped in boxes at the participating businesses.

Belding visits Lowell during mayor exchange day

Belding city officials visited Lowell for the annual mayor exchange day. The event highlighted the community and public buildings starting in the morning with a welcome by the Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce. Lowell will go to Belding on May 20. The purpose of the event is to showcase communities of similar size.



Belding mayor Roger Wills and Lowell mayor Jim Hodges with Belding city officials: Nancy Wills, mayor pro tem Andrea Belding, councilmembers Jon Bunce and Mike Scheid, city manager Randy DeBruine, police chief Dale Nelson and city clerk Karen Thomas and Lowell city officials: Chris Hodges, Jeff Altoft, Andrew Schrauben, city clerk Betty Morlock, and city manager Dave Pasquale.

Comic Book Day brings out true fans

Heroes and superheroes flocked to the sidewalk in front of Rookies Sportcards Plus for Free Comic Book Day. Lauren Arutoff came as Wonder Woman, Olivia Reedy as Flash, Aurora Weeks as Batgirl, Matt Roth as Wolverine, Josh Blanding as Thor, Annie Blanding as Supergirl and Jack Reedy as Green Lantern.

What do you do during Christmas break when there is no school?

Oh Christmas Break! Oh Christmas Break! I really love break! When I'm on Christmas break I help my mom with daycare and spend time with my family. The time we spend together is limited. Now I love break!

Sarah DeKam, 11 Alto Elementary

City of Lowell
301 E. Main • Ph. 897-8457



2011 A YEAR IN REVIEW

MAY 18

Six candidates file for three open seats on Lowell's City Council

This year, six candidates have filed their petitions for three open city council seats in the Nov. 8 general election. They are incumbents Sharon Ellison, Jeff Altoft and Maryalene LaPonsie; and newcomers, Jim Valentine, Jim Hall and Don Green. The candidates have to gather at least 25 signatures. Ellison, Altoft and LaPonsie are running for their second term.

Lowell City Council approves Howe as new city manager

After a brief discussion on the wording of the contract, the Lowell City Council approved the contract for Mark Alan Howe as the new city manager. David Pasquale will leave this position on June 30 and Howe will begin his duties on July 1. "Congratulations Mark. We are looking forward to a long and wonderful relationship," said mayor James Hodges.



Mark Howe

MAY 25

Pink Arrow Pride shares its enthusiasm and experience with area fundraisers

When the Lowell Red Arrows hit the field this fall for their second home game, it will be with Pink Arrow Pride. Lowell High School invited several other schools hoping to demonstrate what goes into putting on their Pink Arrow game. There were many speakers that showed up for the cause. Key-note speakers were Chris Spielman, former Detroit Lion linebacker; and Paqui Kelly, cancer survivor and wife of Notre Dame head football coach Brian Kelly.

Huge crowd gathers again for education forum

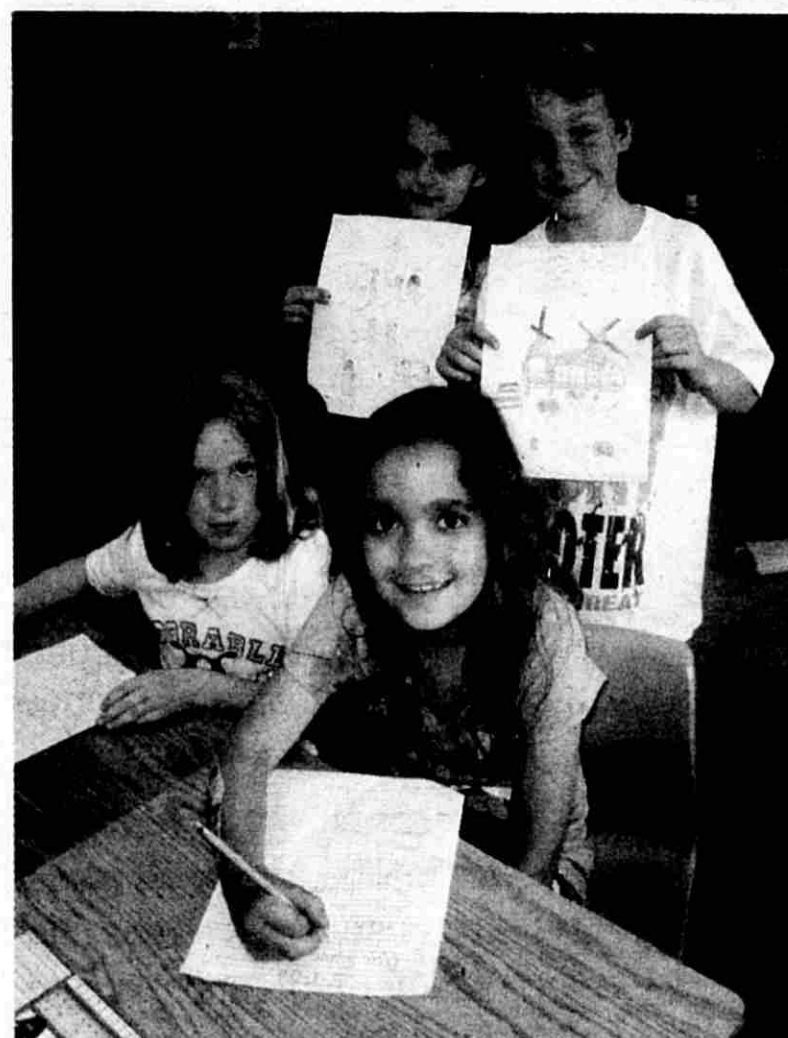
Legislators held an education forum Friday night at the Eberhard Center at GVSU. Hosted by Representative Lisa Posthumus Lyons, this forum had previously been scheduled to be held at the Lowell V.F.W. but was shut down due to overcrowding.

Hoax forces students out of building at LMS Friday morning

Lowell Middle School received a bomb threat early in the morning. Administrators believed the threat to be a hoax. Nevertheless, students were evacuated from the building while law enforcement officials swept and secured the building.

Students pen letters of Love from Lowell

School children thank armed services' members in community card campaign. The chamber of commerce and



Heather Buckley, Olivia Winn, Lauren Todd and Brady Conlon

arts council will see that all missives are mailed in time to reach deployed personnel for the Fourth of July holiday.

Major career switch for automotive sales representative

Q: How did you get started in your line of business? A: I was offered the opportunity to join the staff of the Buyers Guide from Jon Jacobs after developing a working relationship as a client. I stayed in touch with Jon after General Motors gave Good Chevrolet the big shaft. Q: Tell us about the switch in your career? A: It was very eye-opening in how a small town paper is run. Coming from the client side of things, I had no idea how important time was. I do miss the car business, but am thankful for the opportunity to still be able to meet new people.



JUNE 1

Scout Troop 102 dedicates memorial to Ivan Blough

The Boy Scout Troop 102 dedicated a memorial to Ivan K Blough in front of the Boy Scout cabin on North Washington Street. Blough was known as Mr. Showboat and he passed away one year ago while mowing the lawn by the Boy Scout cabin.



City will enforce seasonal ordinances

The city will start enforcing the following seasonal ordinances according to the city code. Parking cannot obstruct sidewalks. There is no parking on city streets between 2 am and 6 am. The violation is a civil infraction. Owners are responsible for sanitary condition of property. They may not accumulate trash, rubbish, yard waste, junk vehicles, boats and equipment is not allowed.

80th birthday party celebrated at LAHM

Lowell Area Historical Museum was the setting for a birthday celebration honoring Carolyn Jane Blough of Lowell. The open house, planned by her children, was held to commemorate her 80th birthday on May 30.



Carolyn Jane Blough

JUNE 8

The class of 2011 boasts high accomplishments

The graduating class of 2011 received their much awaited diplomas under clear skies with hundreds of parents, grandparents and siblings present on the bleachers. Some spectators shaded themselves with umbrellas in the scorching heat of the Sunday afternoon, others used noisemakers to attract attention of the graduates.



Farmers' Market off to a fresh start

With new location west of town off of Fulton Street, the Farmers' Market got off to a great, fresh, new start. Vendors enjoyed the increased exposure and visibility, as well as the lunch crowd.

Write down what you feel is the true meaning of Christmas.

The true meaning of Christmas is not what's under the tree, it's who's around it.

Jaime Schlanderer, 10 Alto Elementary

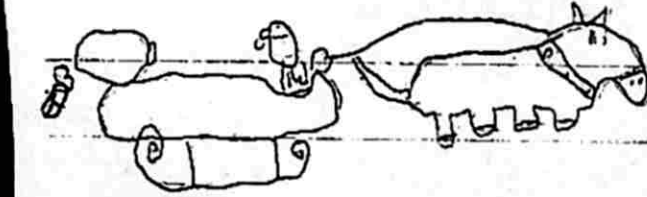
What do you do during Christmas break when there is no school.

When there is no school at Christmas break I go snowboarding, go to my grandparents house, I have friends over and, of course, I celebrate Christmas and New Years.

Nic Blundy, 11 St. Patrick's

What are your family's special Christmas or holiday traditions.

Eat a big feast, make milk and cookies for Santa, write letters, go to the Robert E. Lee, and feed Santa's Reindeer



Matthew Summerfield, 10 Murray Lake Elementary

Happy Holidays from
VERGENNES TOWNSHIP
10381 Bailey Drive • 897-5671



1450 W. Main, Lowell 897-9231 800-798-9973

2011 A YEAR IN REVIEW

Bus drivers provide scholarships for LHS seniors

The Lowell Area Schools (LAS) bus drivers have given out three scholarships this year to qualifying seniors. The criteria for the scholarship program included that the students have to have ridden a school bus within LAS district. They also had to write an essay. "We just wanted to give something to the community," said bus driver Terri Anstett, "and to show our support for the kids."



Art Attack promises a fun-filled night in support of the arts

The annual Art Attack fundraiser will party in support of the arts council and arts in the Lowell area. The event will be held at the Foreman Building at the fairgrounds on June 17.

JUNE 15

King Milling to invest in major expansion

King Milling will invest \$11 million into a major plant expansion to the existing facility in downtown Lowell. The addition will entail three new buildings, each approximately 90 feet tall.

Storyboard of banners will line Main Street

The waves of pink, native to the stands during the Pink Arrow Project game, will take over Main Street this year. Perry Beachum, a chairman on

the Pink Arrow Project board, said they will be selling banners to hang from the street lights. Beachum encouraged businesses and families alike to invest in one of the 126 banners that will adorn the 63 street lamps. Whoever makes the \$199 purchase can then choose a picture to put on the banner as well as what it says.



Perry Beachum

DDA approves \$20,000 for Lowell bucks

The Downtown Development Authority (DDA) approved \$20,000 for Lowell bucks as part of the community wide business marketing plan from June 2011 to May 2012. The downtown business marketing strategy was modeled after last year's bridge bucks during the bridge replacement project. "We want to build on last year's success," said owner of Chimera, Cliff Yankovich.

Trailway and street construction in full swing

Local trail projects, as well as street construction, are moving ahead. The much awaited construction of the Lowell Area Trailway Phase I started last week after 10 years of planning and fundraising. Phase I is slated for Labor Day completion.

Wittenbach dealership expands lot, inventory

The Wittenbach GMC dealership has added Chrysler, Dodge and Jeep to its name, taking ownership of the Grand Chrysler Dodge Jeep dealership in Lowell.

Hot Rod Power Tour rumbles through Lowell

Scattered streams of gussied-up hot rods shattered the morning air in Lowell, roaring through as early as 8:30 am. Their early arrival took people by surprise, but those hot rod fanatics who spectated during the scheduled 10 am to 12 pm missed the full show. Drivers who did follow the route through Lowell said many of their compatriots skipped over it due to the weather, looking to reach Detroit more quickly.



Carol DeVito by her husband's 1967 Ford.

Paddle to Peddle tour brings awareness to new rail trails

The first annual "Paddle to Peddle" tour combined kayaking with a bicycle ride through Smyrna's picturesque countryside and historic covered bridges last Saturday. Approximately 20 people participated in the event designed to bring awareness to the new rail trail system.

JUNE 22

State Police investigate embezzlement of sports booster funds

Upon the request of the Lowell Area Schools Athletic Boosters Club, the Lowell police are investigating suspected embezzlement of approximately \$90,000 from the booster's funds, according to Lowell police chief Barry Getzen. The club requested an audit from school authorities after "realizing cash on-hand was uncharacteristically low since the beginning of the school year," Doris Drain, president of the boosters club, said in an e-mail statement. Superintendent Greg Pratt said he could not confirm or deny an audit through the schools because this is an active investigation.

What do you do during Christmas break when there is no school.

On Christmas break I coach my sisters in the three on three tournament. This year both of my sisters are in it. That is going to be really difficult because they don't listen to the coaches.

What are your family's special Christmas or holiday traditions.

In our family we drive to Jackson, Michigan. We drive two hours there and back plus Santa is there with an early present for my cousins and I. This party has been on my mom's side for generations.

Buyers Guide
345 N. Broadway, Lowell 897-9555

2011 A YEAR IN REVIEW

City manager bids farewell to Lowell

In his final meeting, retiring city manager Dave Pasquale read an optimistic State of the City Address. "As I close the 24th year of service as Lowell city manager, it is still important to identify issues and establish goals," he said.

New reporter at the Ledger

Casey Cheney, a 2011 graduate of Hillsdale College, has joined The Lowell Ledger team to cover the diverse sports in the Lowell Area School district. Cheney praised hometown reporting for its unique perspective and the ability to influence events in the community on a small scale. "No one else offers that kind of information," he said. "Hometown news is pretty fantastic."

Sizzlin' Summer kicks off with patriotic theme

The Sizzlin' Summer concert series kicked-off in perfect weather with the 126 Army Band of the National Guard on the Riverwalk. The band, dressed in full fatigue uniforms and boots, played the anthem as the color guard marched in front of the podium.

New name and logo for organization unveiled during Art Attack

It was a party like no other on the lawn by the Lowell Area Arts Council building, complete with a string band playing Mozart. Jack Lane, council board president and artist Gary Eldridge presented the new name and logo for the arts council at the event. "It is time to move the organization forward and we invite the community to join us as we continue to dream big dreams, just as our founders did over 35 years ago," he said.

Longtime educator retires from Lowell Area Schools

Bushnell Elementary principal Karen Burd will never forget the kidlike box she found in her office on the last day of school. Burd announced her retirement after 33 years with the Lowell Area School district and she received an outpouring from children and families.

JUNE 29

Water Festival comes to Lowell

The Grand River Water Festival attracted environmental activists to the fairgrounds in Lowell. Some camped out, while others brought their blankets and listened to various speakers and music. The West Michigan Environmental Action Council (WMEAC) organized the event on the banks of the Grand River so the public could take the time to celebrate Michigan's inland waterways.

Lowell's Relay for Life meets their 2011 goal

Members of the Lowell community and beyond came out in droves to the annual Relay for Life at the Red Arrow stadium, raising almost \$70,000. Themed Come Play at Relay, the event met its fundraising goal.



Jice Pharmaceuticals to invest \$215,000 into expansion

Jice Pharmaceuticals has caught the recent wave of expansions. Following the suite of King Milling, Attwood and Litehouse additions, the firm has submitted a site plan for an expansion near the southwest corner of Washington and Kent streets. The construction is expected to start in the fall.

Riverwalk Festival fundraiser set for fun

The Lowell Chamber of Commerce duck will wobble all over the three-day Riverwalk Festival set for July 7 through July 9. The annual fundraiser for the Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce will feature a parade at noon on Saturday, the biggest day of the festival, to benefit Flat River Outreach Ministries (FROM).

Green Acres offers quality assisted retirement living

A community within a community, Green Acres has been designed for quality retirement living with the 3R concept in mind. Expected to open by mid July, the assisted living home is located right next to the bowling alley west of town on M21. Retirement Living Management has been in the Lowell area for 30 years and the company continues to grow with new facilities in Mason and Fruitport and several existing facilities in Ionia and Greenville. "Lowell needs a quality assisted living facility," said owner Dough Maas.

Food collection reaches record 21,000 items so far

Both teams reached new milestones, surpassing the collection of 10,000 food items each, in the Flat River Outreach Ministries annual Food Fight campaign.

Grand River Orthodontics fills niche in community

Heather Gietzen did her research prior to opening the Grand River Orthodontics this March. Looking to build a private practice in the greater Grand Rapids area, Gietzen came across the "Lowell, The Next Place to Be" billboard on the freeway. "I thought maybe it is the next place to be," she said.

JULY 6

Longtime Lowell city manager retires

Quiet, patient and inconspicuous, former city manager Dave Pasquale leaves behind a long list of accomplishments. The retirement party for Pasquale, who served as city manager for 24 years, has shown that he was well-liked among citizens and colleagues alike. In the guest book, Bev Hall wrote next to her signature, "Adoring citizen."



Mayor Jim Hodges and Dave Pasquale

July 18 completion date set for furniture distribution center

The Enwork furniture distribution center located in the industrial park is slated for July 18 completion.

Bike tour ready to roll

The 17th annual Covered Bridge Bike Tour will pedal through the area on Sunday, July 10. It starts on the Covered Bridge Road in the Fallsburg pioneer village with registration at the one-room schoolhouse.

Food fight heading to parade showdown

With just a few days remaining in the Flat River Outreach Ministries (FROM) 2011 Food Fight, it appears that the North Lowell and South Lowell teams will settle the score at the "FROM the Heart Food Fight Riverwalk Parade."

Hydroponics garden center opens in Lowell

Lucid Hydroponics home garden center is now open in downtown Lowell. Owner Jonathan Crandall has purchased the former Modern



Jonathan Crandall

Photographics' building located on the bridge over the Flat River. "I hope to have a successful business," he said. "I love the location."

What are your family's special Christmas or holiday traditions.

On Christmas Eve, my family goes to my Grandmas and Grandpas house for dinner and presents. My Uncle, Aunt, and Cousins, come over, too. It's always awesome when I see their face when they open my presents. I always love what I get! What do you do for Christmas?

Tyler Cross, 10
Cherry Creek Elementary



Your own idea - or your teacher's suggestion

My Idea is get all of OF Christmas lights and decorate all of the buildings and trees so Santa can see we love Christmas.

Savanna Boersma, 10
Murray Lake Elementary

LOWELL TOWNSHIP HALL
2910 Alden Nash South • 897-7600

Write down what you feel is the true meaning of Christmas.

Christmas means a lot of things, but to me, it mostly means spending time with friends and family. Getting together and having a big meal is why Christmas is important, to see family members you don't get to see that often, or a time to show that you really care. A time to put up a tree and decorate it. A time to give gifts to one another to show your love. To travel to a family member's house to visit. That's what I feel is the true meaning of Christmas.

Teagan Folk, 10
Cherry Creek Elementary

METRIC MANUFACTURING CO.

MMC 1001 Foreman Lowell 897-5959

2011 A YEAR IN REVIEW

95-year-old Hastings' woman at center of debate on airline security



Lena Reppert

Hastings' native Lena Reppert garnered national fame the hard way, as the most recent victim, sparking controversy over Transportation Security Administration (TSA) policy. TSA detained and disrobed the 95-year-old who was flying from Ft. Walton Beach, Fla. to Hastings. Reppert suffers from leukemia and was returning to Michigan to be with friends and family. Reppert's story has been told across the United States, including on NBC and National Review Online.

JULY 13

Riverwalk Fest 2011 sizzles in extreme heat

The Riverwalk Festival was hotter than ever, as it sizzled in 90-degree temperatures, under a hazy sky last week. It was an eclectic blend of food, musicians, queens, clowns and politicians.



New city manager starts job

Too new to have business cards yet, Mark Howe settled into the city manager's office on July 1 taking the helm after Dave Pasquale. He was sworn in at the last city council meeting by clerk Betty Morlock.

Tragedy and heat hamper Covered Bridge bike tour

With temperatures hovering around 90 degrees, the annual Covered Bridge bike tour held last Sunday saw a drop in registration. And it was marked by a cycling accident on Saturday that killed longtime Fallsburg Historical Society volunteer, Larry Martin. Martin, 69, was killed while crossing, on his bike, a pedestrian walkway in Byron Center on the eve of the tour.

JULY 20

Extreme heat scorches area



Temperatures well into the 90s with high humidity set the air conditioners rolling and sent many to the area water bodies. The beach at Stoney Lakeside Park welcomed visitors to its two gazebos last week. The temperatures are expected to peak Wednesday and Thursday with no reprieve until Sunday or Monday.

Garden Club inducts officers

Betty Deans has been named the Lowell Showboat Garden Club President. Other officers include first vice president Gwen Hughes, second vice president Brenda Angelo, treasurer Carol McGregor and secretary Helen Cox.

Theater digitally remastered

The Goodrich Quality Theater in Lowell, which switched from reels of film to digital within the last month, sold out their first 3-D showing, a midnight premier of Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows, Pt. 2.

Watershed group formed

An organization called the Flat River Watershed Group has been formed to study the condition of the river and to concern itself with the river's welfare. Their meetings are presently being held in Lowell at the Main Street Inn on the third Monday of each month.

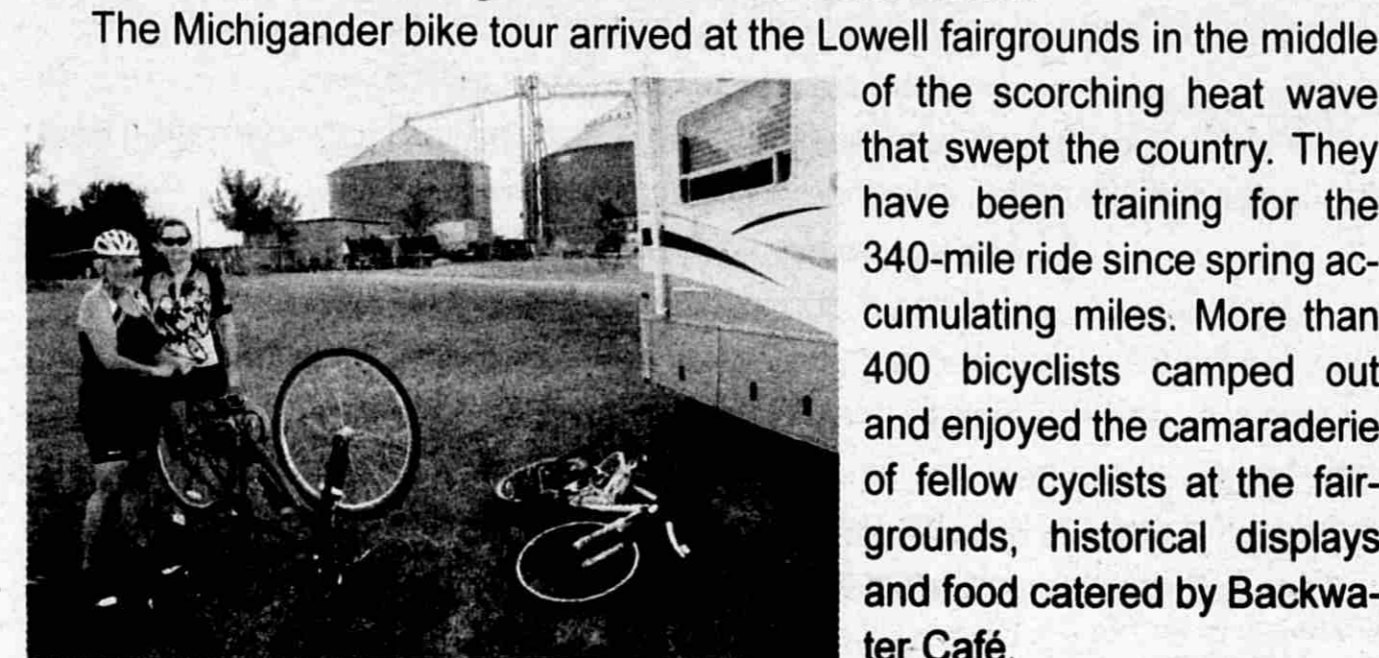
JULY 27

Lowell woman faces charges for embezzling from athletic boosters club

Carrie Fisher, treasurer of the Lowell Area Schools Athletic Boosters Club, was charged today at her arraignment with embezzling \$98,588.70 over a three-year period, as well as forgery and using a computer to commit a crime.

2011 A YEAR IN REVIEW

Michigander bike tour visits Lowell



Holly Husted and Jeanne Lahaie prior to heading out on the Michigander.

Concert sizzles in the extreme heat

The concert on the Riverwalk, lived up to its Sizzlin' summer name. The country band Kris Hitchcock and Small Town Son, with minimum spectators, sizzled in the relentless scorching sun well into the evening hours, as a heat advisory was issued. The combination of high temperatures and humidity felt like it was more than 100 degrees.



New National Park Service trail manager stationed in Lowell



Jeff McCusker

Jeff McCusker, the new trail manager for the North Country National Scenic Trail (NST), spanning the northern USA from North Dakota to New York State, came from Virginia to Lowell to manage the trail development because of the headquarters of the North Country Trail Association (NCTA) right in downtown on Main Street. McCusker will work as a liaison between NCTA and the US government to make the trail development process shorter, around two to three years.

AUGUST 3

Prominent citizen remembered for a lifetime of public service

John Timpson will be remembered for his public service as the Lowell Township supervisor, as a passionate businessman, a fruit grower and a loving grandpa. Timpson, 80, passed away after a long battle with Parkinson's disease. He was well-known and respected as a lifetime leader in the community. "He was a visionary in many different aspects," said daughter Teresa Beachum, the oldest of five children. "He always embraced change. He progressed through changing times in farming." As a third generation fruit grower, Timpson was not afraid to adapt the business to the changing market on the brink of the new millennium. The family owned orchards in the Alto, Lowell Township and Belding area.



John Timpson

Still time to get your banner

The waves of pink, native to the stands during the Pink Arrow game, are showing up on Main Street. Perry Beachum, a chairman on the Pink Arrow Project board, is selling banners to hang from the street lights. The idea, he said, was to, "Get Main Street pinked out more." Beachum encouraged businesses and families alike to invest in one of the 126 banners that will adorn the 63 street lamps. Whoever makes the \$199 purchase can then choose a picture to put on the banner as well as what it says.

Heavy rains cause erosion at Stoney Lakeside Park

Heavy rain last week washed out a portion of the beach at the Stoney Lakeside Park. A loader groomed the eroded portion, as well as the main part of the beach on the northwest side.

AUGUST 10

Blough family announces \$25,000 donation

Mike Blough announced that his family would be donating \$25,000 to the Ivan K Blough Scholarship. The announcement came at the end of the Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce's tenth annual golf scramble at the Deer Run Golf Club. The day recalled memories of Ivan Blough and with memories

came emotions. The family recalled fondly his relationship with baseball and golf. "Ivan looked at golf a little bit, but not a lot, like he looked at baseball," his wife Carolyn Jane Blough said. "When we would go out golfing, his words to me were, 'Now let's see how far I can hit this sucker!'" More than 100 golfers were met with mild weather, a warm sun tucked behind the clouds and a gentle breeze ruffling through the fairway.



Nick Blough, Louis D'Agostino, Mike Blough, Mark Blough, Toni Blough, Melinda D'Agostino, Sophia D'Agostino, and Diana Bittrick.

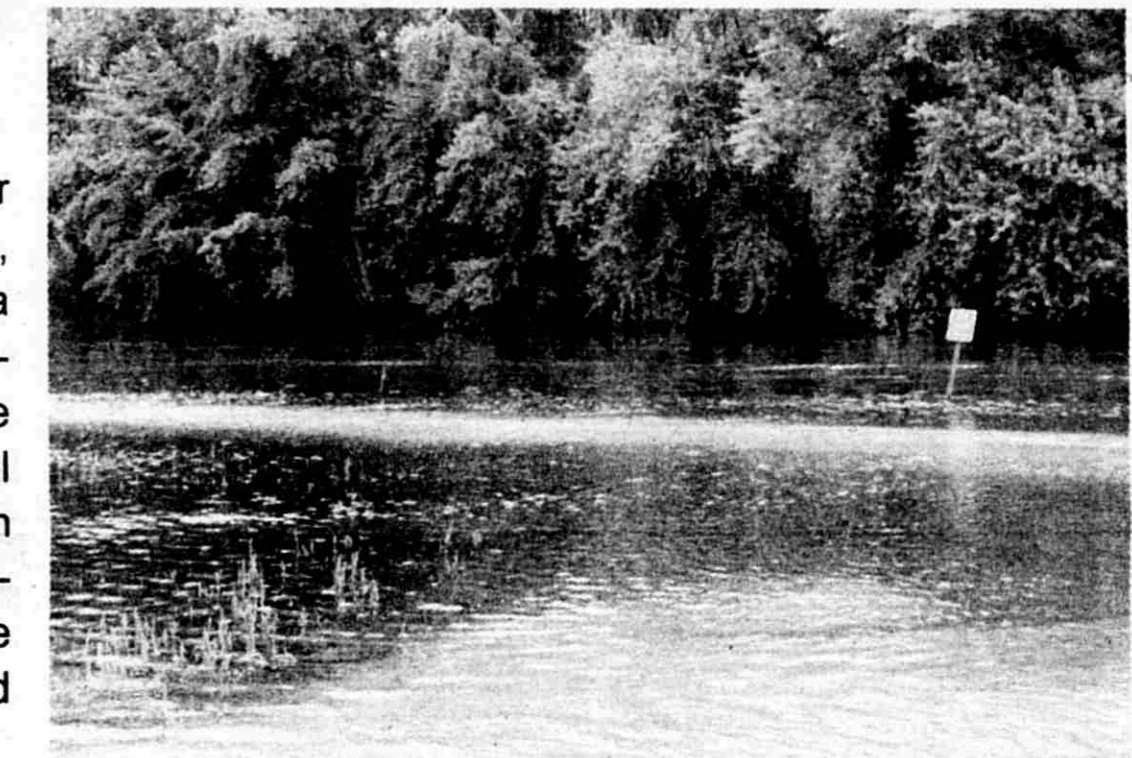
Township discusses digital signs

The Lowell Township Planning Commission discussed several ordinances in the works at the Monday night meeting. One of the proposed ordinances will regulate digital signs in the township located along the I-96 highway corridor. According to the regulations, the brightness of the signs cannot exceed 0.2 illumination based on the recommendations of the Outdoor Advertising Association. The proposed digital sign ordinance will be up for a public hearing in October.

Fair opens strong

The 77th annual Kent County Youth Fair opened tough, with the ever unpredictable weather on its heels, adhering to the theme, "Built Fair Tough."

Heavy rains dump several inches



Brief but heavy rains dumped several inches of water in the area causing the Grand River to swell out of its banks, near the fairgrounds, just prior to the opening of the

Kent County Youth Fair on Sunday. Monday night rain muddied the tracks and pathways at the fairgrounds, but the forecasts call for sunny to partly sunny weather for the rest of the fair week.

AUGUST 17

Project GO under way

The Frederik Meijer rail to trail \$12.5 million project will connect communities from Greenville to Owosso. The trail will be paved around cities, the rest will be crushed limestone.

Fair 2011 closes with strong numbers

It was a perfect fair that happened in between the raindrops. From the opening day to close, the event attracted hundreds of fairgoers trying to catch the last of summer. "We had a beautiful week of perfect weather and the fairgoers came out by the thousands. The crowds built up earlier than in other years and folks stayed around later," said secretary Bruce Doll.

What are your family's special Christmas or holiday traditions?

Finally its 7:30am the house is filled with the scent of sticky buns. The single whiff of the enticing rolls make me dash to the source. There stands Mom with a pan full of gooey goodness. One more year they live on!

Ivan Reynolds, 10
Alto Elementary

Write down what you feel is the true meaning of Christmas.

The true meaning of Christmas is spending time with friends and family and don't be greedy.

Bryce Morgan, 11
Murray Lake Elementary

Beachum Flooring Perry Beachum.

897-7768 • cell 616-460-3943

What are your family's special Christmas or holiday traditions.

My family does this thing called white elephant gifts. Here are the rules. If you are a kid you bring a kid toy. If you are an adult and you can steal someone else's gift but that item can only be stolen twice. But I didn't bring a kid toy I brought a huge fork and spoon with tiki carvings on it. When my name got called I went to go get a present I opened it and it was a Carhart hat with six Big Slim jims. My aunt ended up with the big fork and spoon.

Alexander Stiles, 10
Cherry Creek Elementary

JONES FARM MEATS, LLC
7965 Potters Road, Saranac
642-9212 • 642-9466

Write down what you feel is the true meaning of Christmas.

Ring, ring, ring. The bell rang when a ladie was asking for donations. For me the true meaning of Christmas is about taking time with family & just caring for others. The presents don't even matter. A present for me is having a family. Christmas is also a time to think about how fortunate I am. Some people don't have families. Christmas is the time for caring, like donating clothes to a donation center. Around Christmas time just smile or say "Merry Christmas" to someone you see. When I see someone with the Christmas spirit it makes me feel loved in my heart.

Carly Hoekstra, 11
Cherry Creek Elementary

Firstbank



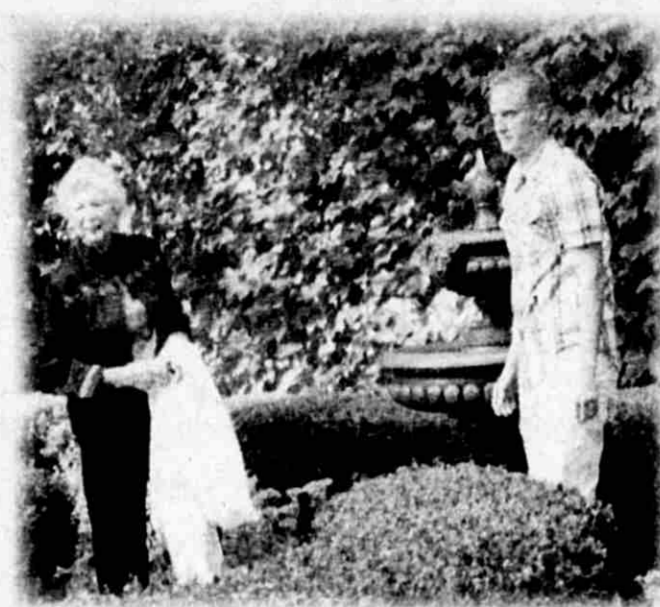
2601 W. Main, Lowell
897-6171

2011 A YEAR IN REVIEW

AUGUST 24

Museum celebrates a decade of exhibits

Dubbed as one of the best small-town museums in America, the Lowell Area Historical Museum celebrated its tenth anniversary. Set in the beautiful Victorian garden, the visitors enjoyed presentation by board president Jim Doyle, museum director Pat Allchin and first director Judy Straub. "We are celebrating a 10-year milestone," said Doyle.



Jane and Nick Blough unveiled the new garden fountain.

Arrows look ahead to matchup with Rockford

The Lowell Red Arrow football team plays the Rockford Rams this Thursday at 7 pm in its first game of the season.

Trailway phase I nears completion

The Lowell Area Trailway is nearing its mid September completion. The paved nonmotorized trail starts on Foreman Road in the city and extends for two miles to Lowell High School and the Wittenbach/Wege Nature Center. A trail dedication is planned prior to the Harvest Hustle Run/Walk on Oct. 8 at Cherry Creek Elementary.

T-shirts fly off the shelves at second annual community day

The second annual Pink Arrow Community Day, where the new Pink Arrow t-shirts were unveiled, sold 1,316 shirts and were only part of the success of the day. All Weather Seal then matched the donations, giving an additional \$2,000 to the cause. In addition to the t-shirt sales, 101 people donated blood and 68 signed up to be organ donors. The Lacks Cancer Center was also there scheduling mammograms.

Local runner offers a challenge to help out local food pantry

Local photographer Brandon Mulnix will attempt to run 50 miles with his mouth wired shut. And for every mile he completes he will donate one nonperishable food item to Flat River Outreach Ministries (FROM).



AUGUST 31

Lowell trounces Rockford in season opener

The much anticipated Lowell-Rockford game, met with some 8,000 fans and coverage by all nearby media outlets, ended in a commanding Lowell Red Arrow victory, 28-7.

Green Acres of Lowell opens

Green Acres' resident Lois McCandless cut the ribbon with big scissors for the official opening of the assisted living retirement home last Friday.



All-Weather Seal crew, George Banfill, Mickey Thompson, Tony Perkins, Al Norton and Eric Bergmans, installed windows at FROM.

SEPTEMBER 7

NBC Today Show to cover Pink Arrow Pride

The fourth annual Pink Arrow game has the same cause with a new twist-NBC's Today Show will be there. Superintendent Greg Pratt said, "We are incredibly thrilled to have received word from the producer of the NBC Today

Show that they plan to cover Pink Arrow IV, bringing national attention to this powerful student-led service learning project."

Equipment stolen from fair office

The Kent County Youth Fair is offering a cash reward for information leading to the return of stolen technology equipment worth \$750.

Market peaks with autumn bounty

Hope Stepek and Noah Blough of Heidi's Farmstand were weighing produce at the Farmers' Market last week. The market is in full swing with all the vegetables and fruits at its best. Gary Blough of Heidi's said the sales have been comparable to last year. The new location in front of Tractor Supply has worked out well for both the vendors and the customers.

Lowell takes on Reeths Puffer in fourth annual Pink Arrow game

The 2-0 Lowell Red Arrow football team looks to extend their winning streak in the conference match-up against Reeths Puffer this Thursday. Kick off at the fourth annual Pink Arrow game is at 7 pm - sure to be met with thousands of "pinked-out" fans.

Local band wraps up concert series

It was a rocky Sizzlin' Summer concert season. A season that started patriotic with the 64th Army Band and ended with local talent well known around West Michigan. The Adams Family band with lead vocalist Cindy Adams Kropf closed the 2011 Sizzlin' Summer concert series last Thursday on the Riverwalk stage.

SEPTEMBER 14

Where were you on 9/11 a decade ago?

On the tenth anniversary of the attacks on the World Trade Center, local leaders responded overwhelmingly to the obvious question: "Where were you on 9/11 a decade ago?" None of them had difficulty remembering that day. City clerk Betty Morlock was at a rotary meeting held at the chamber of commerce. Department of Public Works director Dan DesJarden said, he too, will always remember that day, as he watched along with others the news at the police department. "It brought us together as a country and as a community," he said. City manager Mark Howe said he remembers that day as clear as if it was yesterday. Howe was sitting in a finance committee meeting of the Ionia County Board of Commissioners. Police chief Barry Getzen was working for the Grand Rapids State Police at the time. He was just dropping off a boat at an auction place on West River Drive. Lowell Light and Power general manager Greg Pierce was, at the time, Brownfield administrator for the city of Frankfort. He was on his way to work from Traverse City. Fire chief Frank Martin was working in the lab at the Waste Water Treatment plant when he heard about the first plane hitting the tower.

LL&P to make renewable energy with bio-digestion facility

Lowell Light and Power (LL&P) may have a bio-digestion facility to produce renewable energy by 2013. The utility has partnered with a German company, Spart, to utilize organic waste from food companies such as Lite-house, area farms and stables.

District looks for input from community

At its regular meeting Monday night, Lowell Area Schools' board member Pat Nugent, offered an update of the goals from the past year and looked ahead to the next year. Some of the goals for the upcoming year include ensuring procedure guidelines and best practices for nonprofit organizations within the district. Another is for the board to take another look at facilities for safety, including student and automobile traffic patterns.

SEPTEMBER 21

Fallsburg Festival draws record crowds

As late September sun warmed up a perfect fall weekend, thousands flocked to the Fallsburg Fall Festival for the Arts.

Lowell looks to the future in projects and budget

The Lowell City Council adopted new manager Mark Howe's goals in a teamwork atmosphere last Monday. "These are the goals that have been established through discussion with you," said Howe. "I have worked with the leadership team and the department heads. These are the goals for the entire staff. We've incorporated benchmarks." One of the benchmarks is to update a plan that will address the city sanitary system issues, such as water infiltration and upgrades. Looking to the future in the budgeting process, Howe presented a budget worksheet with a projected deficit, fund balance, revenues and expenditures. "The key is the fund balance, that is where you start to build the budget," said Howe.

Remembering Ruth Collar

The community of Lowell has experienced a great loss in the death of Ruth Collar. Collar died on Saturday, September 17, after a long and courageous battle with cancer. She lived her life caring for those people in this community who experienced need.



2011 A YEAR IN REVIEW

Statewide photo show intrigues with variety

The first statewide 2011 Michigan Photo Exhibition is now on display at the Lowell Arts! King Gallery. Guest juror Dennis Grantz selected the final 62 photos from a pool of 172 entries from around the state.

SEPTEMBER 28

Strawberries through October

Sightings of pickers hunkering in the fields and carrying cases of crimson red strawberries to the barn, while peaches are still being harvested, are truly unusual for September in Michigan. Growers of everbearing strawberries, Ben and Aaron Kaeb, co-owners of Heidi's Farm Stand attested to that. And they hope to offer strawberries until Halloween. "I've never had peaches and strawberries at the same time," Aaron said. Well, peaches were late and the everbearing strawberries went dormant during the mid summer heat wave. Come fall, the strawberries ripened and produced an incredibly sweet crop. "The heat aborted the buds but we had a phenomenal fall crop," said Aaron.



Aaron Kaeb holds a case of everbearing strawberries.

Local woman remembered for her energy and spirit

A ball of energy and great spirit. A kind soul. A true team player. A person who you can count on. That is how friends and family characterized Chris West, who passed away on Monday. She was the general manager at the Flat River Grill since its opening in downtown Lowell close to a decade ago. "She could run circles around most of us. Never complained, she just made things happen," said chamber director Liz Baker. "Chris was an amazing person," said Baker. "She will be greatly missed."



Chris West

Harvest Celebration at the fairgrounds

Apple chuckin', scarecrow hoedown, chili cooking and bocce for the arts. Those are the main staples of this year's Harvest Celebration set for Oct. 8 both in downtown Lowell and at the Kent County Youth Fairgrounds.

Artist builds panels for ArtPrize Jukebox on local farm

The much anticipated Art Prize opens today and Lowell has its own physical part in it. Due to the magnitude of the art pieces, artist Royce Deans from Traverse City used a local farm in Vergennes Township to build his large wooden panels that will be used for a collaborative painting to music project.

Annual Alto Harvest Festival enjoys great turnout

The annual Alto Harvest Festival enjoyed a great turnout and weather last Saturday. The highlight of the festival was the official parade through downtown Alto past the car show.

Planning commission approves site plan for Jice Pharmaceuticals

The Lowell planning commission approved a site plan for Jice Pharmaceuticals proposed expansion with the condition of removing trailers, used for storage, upon completion on Monday night.

OCTOBER 5

Women's center changes location

The Alpha Women's Center has relocated to the former Ball's Floral building on east Main. The completely remodeled building has more space and better visibility, according to director Deb Karasiewicz



Deb Karasiewicz

Gordon Gould, voice for the arts, passes away at 69

Gordon Gould, who passed away Saturday, was known as the face of the Showboat or Mr. Interlocutor around Lowell. Gould was involved in every aspect of the community, but most notably he was connected as master of ceremonies with the Sizzlin' Summer concerts. Museum director Pat Allchin said Gould was a voice that everyone knew. He was involved in planning the 75th anniversary of the Showboat. "Anytime there was an activity pertaining to the Showboat, he was there," said Allchin.

OCTOBER 5

City places flower boxes along Main Street

The Department of Public Works (DPW) put in new flower boxes on the south side of Main Street because the existing trees did not grow amidst all the concrete, sidewalks and shade. The contractors were Michigan Landscape and Concrete Construction with owners Jake and Josh Grim. Each bed cost approximately \$1,000. Sexton Don DeJong said he will plant shady perenni-

als. "I will be experimenting with something different," he said. DPW director Dan DesJarden said even though the money had been appropriated from the Downtown Development Authority for some time, the department just now got around to doing it.

Harvest Celebration 2011 wraps up busy season



The 2011 Harvest Celebration opened with the Lowell Area Trailway dedication in front of Cherry Creek Elementary just prior to the Harvest Hustle Run. It was a special day for Lowell Area Trailway Authority members and other participants who have been working on the project for the last 10 years without using any taxpayers' money. The Lowell merchants had Harvest sales and open houses to

jump start Christmas shopping just before Girls' Night Out set for Oct. 20.

Museum asks residents for millage renewal

The Lowell Area Historical Museum has been a steady asset to the community over the last decade since the operational millage was installed to support its programming. The museum is now asking for the 0.25 mill renewal in the Nov. 8 general election, which translates to \$21 a year per household. The millage brings approximately \$20,000 a year to the museum.

Lowell Area Historical Museum welcomes Graham descendants

The Lowell Area Historical Museum welcomed thirteen descendants of Robert W. Graham on Sunday, Oct. 2. Graham built the museum as his home in 1873.



OCTOBER 19

Crowd fills Lowell City Hall for town meeting with Justin Amash

An enthusiastic crowd packed the Lowell City Hall Monday night, as Rep. Justin Amash for the 3rd District of Michigan discussed issues facing the United States. There was standing room only, and District Director Jordan Bush had to ask the crowd to squish church style, so more people could get in.

Former Lowell officer remembered

As the greater Grand Rapids area mourns the loss of life of officer Trevis Slot, 41, last Thursday in a freeway chase, former Lowell police chief Jim Valentine remembers Slot's dedicated service to the Lowell community.

City approves the execution of airport grant

The city council approved the execution of a \$56,000 grant, to remove the trees at the Lowell City Airport surrounding the runways, on Monday night.

OCTOBER 26

Diverse slate of candidates vying for city council seats

Although six candidates filed for three open seats, five remain in a race that lost its heat. One newcomer, Don Green, dropped out of the race because he is moving out of town due to unforeseen circumstances. Another, Jim Valentine, former Lowell police chief, could not be reached at the time of publication. The rest is a mix of incumbents, including mayor pro tem Sharon Ellison, councilmembers, Jeff Altoft, Maryalene LaPonsie and a newcomer, Jim Hall.

Ghost Story night at Wittenbach/Wege Center tests writers' skills

The annual Ghost Stories night took place this year at the Wege/Wittenbach Center last Friday. The Thebes Players dressed up in their full attire to enhance the scary night



atmosphere with glowing pumpkins. "We had a great crowd at Ghost Stories last Saturday at the Wittenbach Center," said Lowell Arts director Lorain Smalligan. "We filled every chair."

2011 A YEAR IN REVIEW



Witches & princesses enjoy GNO

Girls' Night Out had good participation in spite of cold and rainy weather last Thursday. The theme Witches and Princesses brought forth some great costumes, including enormous witches' hats reminiscent of sombreros. The participating stores decked out for the event with scary decorations.

NOVEMBER 2

Escanaba in da Moonlight opens

Just in time for the opening of the firearm hunting season, comes the dinner theatre production "Escanaba in da Moonlight," a sequel to last year's "Escanaba in Love," which opens this Saturday.

Let there be cost-effective light

Jay Rickert worked with Greg Roush replacing light bulbs around town with Eco-friendly bulbs. The bulbs are "night sky compliant," meaning they have a cap on top preventing light pollution. On their second day of bulb changing, they've changed 34 of the 136 bulbs and expect to finish in approximately a week.

Shop students lend a hand to help elementary bikers

In the eight years Murray Lake Elementary has been open, students rarely rode their bikes to school. Consequently, a bike rack was never needed. This fall several different students



began coming to school on bikes. Murray Lake principal Brent Noskey decided to contact Tony Ellis, an industrial arts teacher at Lowell High School. Within three weeks, Noskey received an email from Ellis asking when did he want to pick up his new bike rack. The cost to Murray Lake, said Ellis, "A box of doughnuts."



Nick Burton, Josh Zalis, Nick Weaver and Kevin DeKraker.

Local dog breeders featured on Animal Planet's Dogs 101

A local couple was featured on Animal Planet Dogs 101 show last week with their French rabbit hound breed the PBGV.



Animal Planet tries to get puppies on film.

NOVEMBER 9

Election draws steady turnout in the city

A crowded ballot for city council seats and the Lowell area historical renewal millage brought voters out to the polls.



Veggie Van coming to town

The YMCA of Greater Grand Rapids has broken new ground with its new Farm 2U Veggie Van. The veritable portable farmer's market brings locally-raised, affordable produce to some of our city's most vulnerable neighborhoods.

Pantry bare

In September, Flat River Outreach Ministries (FROM) set a record, serving over 300 families in the food pantry. Families coming to FROM this week will face a very different picture - bare shelves. The need continues to increase and the food reserves at Flat River Outreach Ministries have dwindled.

NOVEMBER 16

Election brings two newcomers on board

The city election brings two newcomers, Jim Valentine and Jim Hall, on board and confirms incumbent Sharon Ellison in her seat on the council.

DDA approves funds for Christmas festivities

A great Lowell tradition, the annual Christmas festivities, will continue with funds secured from the Downtown Development Authority (DDA). The DDA approved \$5,775 for Christmas season 2011, with festivities kicking off on Dec. 3 and running up until Christmas, at its monthly meeting on Thursday.

School board bids farewell to Lessens

At the Lowell Area School Board meeting Monday night the board bid farewell to cherished board member Mark Lessens. Lessens has moved out of the district and left his seat vacant on the board. The position has been posted in the Lowell Ledger and the board plans to interview two candidates this week.

American Legion holds annual Veterans Day dinner

The Lowell American Legion hosted their annual Veterans Day dinner Monday night. Commander Dave Thompson kept the mood light with cue cards to guide the reactions of the audience during the night's events.

Cookies delivered to Veterans

Colonel Sam Yeiter from Lowell, a resident of the Grand Rapids Veteran's Home, is shown receiving his bag of homemade cookies. The cookies were baked by women from the Lowell Women's Club last Saturday. One hundred thirty-five dozen cookies were provided for over 500 veterans by 23 Lowell women for this third annual Cookies Drive for Veterans. The Lowell American Legion Post and the Veteran's Home in Grand Rapids were very appreciative.



Sam Yeiter

NOVEMBER 23

Holiday season kicks-off with Christmas through Lowell

Antiques, knits, jewelry, ornaments and wreaths were among the many unique gifts available for purchase during the annual Christmas through Lowell home tour. The tour celebrated its 20th anniversary last weekend and it officially kicked off the holiday shopping season in the Lowell area.

City manager to set ZBA public hearings administratively

The city council adopted a motion that will allow city manager Mark Howe to set public hearings for Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) variance requests in order to expedite the process within publishing guidelines. In the past the ZBA set the dates and the times for public hearings.

Last-second, overtime score sends Lowell to Ford Field for state championship

A second-half shootout set up the Lowell Red Arrow victory in a thrilling overtime with Gabe Dean completing a 13-yard touchdown pass to Blake Lyman on the second play of their overtime drive. With that, the Red Arrows inch past Walled Lake Western and on to their third consecutive state championship game.



NOVEMBER 30

Santa Claus is coming to town

The highlight of the events is the nighttime Santa parade starting at 6:00 pm sharp with the theme "Toyland from the Decades." The festivities open with the Rogue River Artisans holiday show at Lowell High School. The Flat River Freeze Ice Sculpture demo starts at noon on the Riverwalk Plaza. Santa visits the Showboat for pictures from 2:30 pm to 4 pm.

Lowell schools help fill the pantry at FROM

Lowell Area Schools have been busy stocking the pantry shelves at Flat River Outreach Ministries (FROM). Last week, director of transportation for Lowell Schools Carol Hamilton and bus driver Cathy Wisner delivered a truckload of food to FROM to help restock the bare shelves.

Woman drives car into Flat River

A woman put her 1988 Oldsmobile into the Flat River early Sunday morning. Then she called the Kent County Sheriff's Department without identifying herself. The Kent County diving team pulled the car out of the water Tuesday morning. Six divers hooked and pulled the car out.



Carol Hamilton and Cathy Wisner deliver donations to FROM.

2011 A YEAR IN REVIEW

Enwork design furniture comes to Lowell



Dave Powell cuts the ribbon in front of new Enwork building.

Enwork design furniture held a grand opening on Oct. 20 to celebrate the completion of the construction of a 28,000 square-foot steel building located on Christopher Drive. Currently, there are 30 employees and six new jobs that have been created with the new building. "The company is growing, we've grown by 70 percent this year," said president Dave Powell. Recently, the company completed the biggest order ever, 3,500 tables for the US Army worth \$900,000. "We really wanted to be here," said Powell. "We're hiring people from Lowell."

Witt's Inn and Café to open north of Lowell

Marvelously redecorated, the 1880s homestead built originally for Bernard and Elizabeth McGee has been brought back to its old glory. Tim and Kathy Wittenbach purchased the property on Alden Nash in May and always wanted to preserve it. The Witt's Inn will officially open on Dec. 1 and the Café as soon as the couple gets the license. "We want to do local stuff first for the community," Kathy said.



Tim and Kathy Wittenbach

Red Arrows defeated at state

Red Arrow fans donned the black garb of mourning for the second time in a row as their Lowell football team suffered another defeat. Though it's worth celebrating how few losses they had, few losses can hurt like the state championship game. The Red Arrows lost to Birmingham Brother Rice 24-14 at Ford Field last Friday.

DECEMBER 7

Favorite toys featured in Lowell's annual nighttime Santa parade

The annual nighttime Santa parade "Toyland" officially kicked off the holiday season with nice mild weather last Saturday. Hundreds of people lined up historic downtown on Main Street and watched the parade pass by.



Good Shepherd Lutheran Church received first place honors at the parade this year.

City continues discussion of sidewalk replacement

The city discussed the ongoing issue of sidewalk repair as city manager Mark Howe presented his plan to fix up bad sidewalks. The city staff conducted a survey and an analysis of the condition of the existing sidewalks. The survey has shown that 1.19 miles are in need of repair.

DECEMBER 14

The Wittenbach/Wege Center hosts 12th annual luminary hike

The Wittenbach/Wege Center held their twelfth annual luminary hike on Saturday. The hike, established originally as a volunteer appreciation event, is open to the community as a time to enjoy the snowy landscape of Michigan. More than 250 candles lit the path.



Historical museum celebrates in style at annual Christmas party

The Lowell Area Historical Museum celebrated its annual Christmas party in style at the house of David and Tina Cadwallader last week. The historical mansion was decked out for Christmas with luminaries in the driveway. The museum has

just signed a new lease with the city of Lowell for another 10 years. The renewal of the operating millage for the museum was overwhelmingly approved by the voters in the November general election.

Lowell Light & Power fields more questions on groundbreaking plant

Only five Lowell citizens came to further inquire about Lowell Light & Power's Bio-Digestion Project, but their questions were far from few. Lowell Light & Power plans to break ground on the energy plant, the only of its kind in the United States, in the spring of 2012. The company held a town hall meeting prior to this at which citizens could voice their concerns.

Christmas in Fallsburg

The Fallsburg Historical Society celebrated its fifth annual holiday party at the one room schoolhouse on Saturday. A local band, Hawks and Owls, provided the holiday music in the heart of the historic village of Fallsburg.

Lillian Briggs celebrated her 101st birthday in November

On November 18, 2011, residents of Laurels of Kent, family and friends gathered to celebrate Lillian Briggs turning 101. Always fashionable and looking her best, she now enjoys visiting with her family and the staff and her friends at Laurels, sharing her memories with wisdom and humor. She enjoys watching TV in her room and states, "I like to watch golf sometimes, but only the male golfers."



Lillian Briggs

DECEMBER 21

Memories of beloved fair manager echo throughout the Lowell community

Ron Wenger had a special kind of a laugh. He laughed with his entire body. If you got lucky, you could find him sitting in the little picnic area at the fairgrounds between the food booths. Creating a respite area from the hustle and the bustle of the fair was his idea. At all other times, Wenger was working on the grounds he loved the most. Wenger, 65, Kent County Youth Fair manager, passed away last week on Wednesday.



Ron Wenger

Sharing the warmth of the season

The VFW and the American Legion just finished their annual coat drive. Over 100 coats were collected at Curtis Cleaners for the men and women at the Veteran's Home in Grand Rapids. "We thank everyone who assisted in this year's coat drive," said VFW vice-commander Herb Rice.



Herm Westrate and Herb Rice

Variance granted for King Milling

The city council granted two variances to King Milling for the construction of new buildings on Monday. The variances were required to accommodate the construction of a millfeed storage and load structure due to the irregularly shaped parcel. Also, the setbacks were not in compliance. The zoning board of appeals tested all the criteria for the variances and unanimously granted the request since no hardship was created by the company itself.



City bids farewell to outgoing councilmembers

The city, Monday night, said goodbye to outgoing councilmembers Maryalene LaPonsie and Jeff Altoft. In January they will be replaced by newcomers, Jim Hall and Jim Valentine, who were elected to the council in the November general election. Altoft will serve on the board of review and LaPonsie wants to stay involved in the city politics.

Flat River Outreach Ministries breaks ground on new donation room

Flat River Outreach Ministries broke ground on December 16, 2011, for an addition to their building at 11535 Fulton Street East. "The new donation room will provide a secure drop off location for the community and facilitate easier processing of donated items," said Tamela Spicer, executive director at FROM.



Roger LaWarre, Tamela Spicer, Ann Dimmick, Marilyn Lambson and Greg Halonen.

2012 optimism, continued

ating seniors is to stay in school as long as possible.

Larkin doesn't consider himself a fighter anymore.

"I never make resolutions," he said. "I try to be a better person every day."

Kacey Cornwell, director of marketing at the Lowell Area Arts Council, said she remains quietly optimistic.

"I have hopes that we've seen the worst of the

recession and turned the corner," she said.

Challenges in 2012 will include keeping expectations in check and reassessing values.

"We all need to reassess our value system," she said. "How much do we really need to be content?"

She believes the recession should serve as a wake up call.

"We wanted it all now, instead of being willing to wait," she said.

Her dream job would be a travel writer, while she would like to travel to Asia to visit Japan, Indonesia, Thailand and India. She roots for Wolverines.

The mitten state of course, is Michigan," she said.

"Wisconsin has no mitten shape at all."

Her advice to graduating seniors is to listen to their hearts before setting out on their future path.

"If it's not what you feel in your heart, you will only go through the motions instead of pouring your soul into the effort," she said.

Cornwell considers herself both a lover and a fighter.

"I will fight for those I love, once I decide they are worth fighting for," she said. "I don't make resolutions. I am better at setting goals."

Mayor Jim Hodges also is optimistic about 2012 due to positive news about a trust grant from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources for Riverbank improvements.



Kacey Cornwell

Continued challenges remain a balanced budget and state finances.

Lowell, according to Hodges, needs to focus on downtown business success, filling vacancies and

continuing the vision for the greater Lowell community.

"We need to develop positive pattern for the future," he said.

His dream job would be in the nonprofit sector, while he would like to travel to England and Thailand. He leans toward Spartans.

Hodges too, laughed at the mitten question between Michigan and Wisconsin.

"Of course Michigan," he said.

His advice to graduating seniors is to expect the unexpected and be ready for it.



Jim Hodges

"Best of success," he said.

Hodges responded without hesitation, that he considers himself a lover, not a fighter.

"I know better than to make a New Year's resolution," he said.



Mike Larkin

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Financial Focus, continued

But each investment actually carries its own type of risk. For example, if you own CDs that pay a two percent return, and the inflation rate is three percent, you will lose purchasing power over time. And if you wanted to sell your bonds before they had matured, you'd have to sell them at a discount if the market interest rate had risen above the "coupon" rate of your bond because no one would pay you full price for them. Just be aware that no investment is "risk-free,"

and try to build a diversified portfolio that can lessen the impact of one specific type of risk.

By following these suggestions, you can go a long way toward making 2012 a good year in which to make progress toward your important financial goals. So plan ahead — and make the right moves.

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