

2014
Stories of Perseverance
A Community Fighting Cancer
Begins on page 7



st. pat's fest



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Freedom Riders honor local heroes

by Kathryn Atwood
 contributing reporter

Patriotism rumbled into Lowell last Friday when the Freedom Riders arrived at the Riverwalk to honor some of the community's military heroes.

This inaugural event, created by Kent County Commissioner Tom Antor and presented by Village Motor Sports, made its way through West Michigan over five days from June 25-29 and featured both motorcycles and classic cars in its military saluting procession. The cruisers took "Honor Rides" to several local destinations, including Cedar Springs, Dorr, Sparta and Lowell where they held small ceremonies honoring each respective town's military heroes.

Doug Pickel, chief

executive officer (CEO) of We The People Giving Back, co-organized the honor cruises along with Tony Van Gessel.

"For my role I organized the honor cruises that were held in each city, contacted the GOLD STAR families and Purple Heart veterans to get their permission to honor them. I worked with local law enforcement and chambers of commerce, as well as car clubs, since March of this year. I also went into each community to try to get companies to sponsor the plaques so this gift came not from any group but from the citizens in each community."

In Lowell, the ceremony honored seven

Freedom Riders, continued, page 16



Jeanne Beachnaw, mother of fallen soldier Lucas Beachnaw, accepts the Purple Heart on her son's behalf.

Polo benefit gallops into the Lowell area

by Tim McAllister
 contributing reporter

The bourgeoisie were out in full force for charity polo matches at Meadowbrook Farm, 9914 Vergennes on Saturday, June 28.

The "Polo Event 2014" was a benefit for the Helen DeVos Children's Hospital in Grand Rapids. Sponsorships up to \$5,000 were available, with tables running \$500. Individuals could attend for \$25.

"To come here it was \$25, but to come to a normal fundraiser it can be upwards of \$1,000 a person or \$200 a person, so it's a much lower scale price point event, but

still a unique way to give back," said Ryan Slusarzyk, chair of Leading For Our Kids, a fundraising group

associated with the hospital. "We are out here today with a group that we work with called Leading For

Our Kids," said Kaylee Milanowski, foundation associate with the Helen DeVos Children's Hospital

Foundation. "They do events year-round for the

Polo, continued, page 11



Riverwalk Festival getting back to its roots

by Tim McAllister
 contributing reporter

The 20th annual Riverwalk Festival is coming to downtown Lowell next week.

The festival will start Thursday evening, July 10 and will literally end with a bang on the evening of Saturday, July 12.

"Over the years we've made a lot of changes to the festival, but this year we're kind of going back to our roots," said Liz Baker, executive director of the Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce. "Twenty

years ago one of the things we did was a pig roast, so we're having a pig roast on Thursday night to start the concert out."

Musical headliners at the Showboat will be Kris Hitchcock and Small Town Son on Thursday night and the Bronk Brothers will provide "country rockin' hillbilly and honky tonk" Friday night.

"The other big change for us is, for safety reasons, we are not going to do the big duck race this year," Baker said. "We are still going to

have a duck raffle and to celebrate our 20th anniversary we're also giving away 20 \$20 Shop Lowell gift certificates.

The chamber decided to try making Riverwalk t-shirts.

"We're doing t-shirts this year," Baker said. "People have asked for them in the years past and we just never wanted to get into it, so we'll have a very limited edition t-shirt, 150 and the deal is if you buy 30 duck



tickets you get a t-shirt free while supplies last. If you don't buy it with the tickets it'll be \$15."

All three days of the festival will have food concessions and a cash bar at the Showboat. Among Friday's attractions will be a "float in" at the new kayak launch and a used book sale.

Saturday will have the most stuff to do. Classic cars will line Avery Street,

there will be a parade and a "motorcycle run and rumble" and the festival will finish with a fireworks' display at 10:15 pm.

"We don't dilly dally," Baker said. "I tell those guys, 'You start them at 10:15 sharp' and they do."

Clearly this is just the tip of the Riverwalk Festival iceberg. More information, including a complete schedule of events, is available at riverwalkfestival.org

Annual bluegrass festival held last weekend

by Tim McAllister
contributing reporter

Kent County Fairgrounds was taken over by bluegrass fans last weekend.

JuneGrass, one of two bluegrass festivals the West Michigan Bluegrass Music Association puts on at the fairgrounds every

year, brought six bluegrass bands to Lowell. They also had a bake sale, instrument workshops, an open mic, a potluck supper and a 50/50 drawing. The “real action” was out there in the campground as people in small groups jammed on

banjos, guitars, mandolins and fiddles.

“The people who put this festival together do such a great job,” said the festival’s emcee Steve Albert, host of the “Bluegrass & More” show on Blue Lake public radio. “It seems really well-organized and well-run. They do a good job of getting the word out.”

The festival’s headliners were Chris Jones and the Night Drivers, a Nashville group that counts Hollywood actor Steve Martin among their biggest fans. Jones and the band also took part in a “celebrity jam” in the campground Saturday evening.

“Chris Jones and the Night Drivers, you’re not going to get any better bluegrass than them guys, my goodness,” Albert said. “And there are lots of great Michigan groups here as well. It’s a great festival.”

Another group, one who also played at the festival last year, was Billy Strings and Don Julin. They have improved on the frantic, overwrought performance they gave last year and put on a professional, but not too professional, program of traditional tunes and originals. After they played,

a shirtless, sweaty, tattooed Billy Strings was besieged by self-professed “cougars” in the parking lot as he tried to make a call on his cell phone.

Other bands on the bill were New County Grass, Fauxgrass, Uncle Betty and crowd favorite Steam Powered Bluegrass.

Whenever they were mentioned by the emcee a man in the crowd shouted, “Woo! Yeah!” He made no other audible noises.

There were a couple hundred people there. The crowd ranged from little babies to the elderly and everybody seemed to have a good time.



Billy Strings and Don Julin returned to Lowell for JuneGrass.



Impromptu bluegrass jams in the campground.

lend a hand

volunteering opportunities

festival volunteers needed

It’s that time already, the 2014 Riverwalk Festival is coming faster than you think. We have openings for volunteer service and it’s so easy to sign up to help.

Sign up at www.SignUpGenius.com/go/9040C44A8AE23A64-20141 or if you need a little more convincing, here are 10 reasons to volunteer starting with number 10:

10: It’s good for you.

Volunteering provides physical and mental rewards.

It Reduces stress:

Experts report that when you focus on someone other than yourself, it interrupts usual tension-producing patterns.

Makes you healthier:

Moods and emotions, like optimism, joy and control over one’s fate, strengthen the immune system.

9: It saves resources.

Volunteering provides valuable community services so more money can be spent on local improvements.

The estimated value of a volunteer’s time is \$15.39 per hour.

8: Volunteers gain professional experience.

You can test out a career.

7: It brings people together.

As a volunteer you assist in:

Uniting people from diverse backgrounds to work toward a common goal.

Building camaraderie and teamwork.

6: It promotes personal growth and self-esteem.

Understanding community needs helps foster empathy and self-efficacy.

5: It strengthens your community.

As a volunteer you help:

Support families (daycare and eldercare).

Improve schools (tutoring, literacy).

Support youth (mentoring and after-school programs).

Beautify the community (beach and park cleanups).

4: You learn a lot.

Volunteers learn things like this:

Self: Volunteers discover hidden talents that may change your view on your self-worth.

Government:

Through working with local non-profit agencies, volunteers learn about the functions and operation of our government.

Community:

Volunteers gain knowledge of local resources available to solve community needs.

3: You get a chance to give back.

People like to support community resources that they use themselves or that benefit people they care about.

2: Volunteering encourages civic responsibility.

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St. Patrick's enjoys a well-attended festival

by Kathryn Atwood
contributing reporter

St. Patrick's Church in Parnell held their annual Festival this past weekend.

A well-attended 5K race kicked off the three-day event on Friday. The evening also included a euchre tournament, beer

tent and live music from the Irish band, Conklin Cieli.

On Saturday evening the St. Patrick's Festival activities began with an early mass at 4 pm, followed by both a live and silent auction, Vegas and beer tents and live music from

local rock band Signal Trip.

Father Mark Peacock also took to the sky by helicopter for a unique raffle to benefit the St. Patrick's school tuition assistance program. The helicopter raffle, participants were asked to purchase golf balls which were then dropped by the priest onto a target from the helicopter to determine the lucky winner of \$5,000. The raffle is the newest addition to the annual festival lineup.

Sunday was family day, complete with carnival style kids' games, a custom classic car, truck and antique tractor show, bingo, raffles, a petting zoo, live music from the Diddle Styx, and the Parnell chicken dinner.



Classic cars lined the property of St. Patrick's in Parnell.



Couples enjoyed dancing to the polka stylings of The Diddle Styx who were one of three featured groups of musicians at the three-day festival.

City council meeting addresses charges of possible violations

by Tim McAllister
contributing reporter

At a "special meeting" on Monday, June 30 Lowell's city council finally put to rest the issues surrounding the use of a Light & Power truck and alleged violations of the "Open Meetings" law.

City attorney Dick Wendt gave a PowerPoint presentation to the council and to 14 members of the public who attended the meeting. The presentation outlined the allegations against Light & Power and showed that Light & Power did not break the law.

On eight occasions in January and February a Light & Power employee drove a Light & Power truck to his residence. Wendt said that the employee drove the vehicle to and from his home because there was going to be bad weather on those particular days. City mechanic Ralph Brecken originally presented this information to the Light & Power board at their meeting on March 14.

"In each case the weather forecast was for significant snow accumulation and/or other severe winter event,"

Wendt said. "The purpose was to enable [the employee] to promptly respond to a Light & Power emergency."

Wendt said that "fringe benefit" tax laws did not apply because the vehicle was being used for business purposes, not for personal use.

Another situation that was resolved at the "special meeting" stemmed from how Brecken's presentation was received by the Light & Power board at that March 14 board meeting.

On March 14, after adjourning to a closed session to discuss union negotiations, instead of ending the meeting as they always had in the past, the

board instead returned to an open session without informing any members of the public. The citizens in attendance at the meeting, the videographer hired to document the meeting and the reporter from the Ledger were all long gone. During the second open session the board had a "discussion" about Brecken's information.

"As a result of that discussion, the Light & Power board chairman Greg Canfield indicated he would send an e-mail to the Lowell Ledger reporter who had attended the meeting," Wendt said.

It was alleged by Brecken that having this discussion and coming to this conclusion

out of the public eye was a violation of Michigan's "Open Meetings" law.

In his PowerPoint presentation Wendt said that because the board was not "deliberating toward or rendering a decision on public policy" and because the board did not take a vote on anything, the board was therefore not in violation of the "Open Meetings" law.

One member of the public, Randy Halstead of Lowell, addressed the council.

"I would like to challenge this council to contact the [Internal Revenue Service] IRS and get a determination from them whether this is a taxable benefit," Halstead said.

Brecken seemed satisfied with the results of Wendt's investigation.

"I appreciate the council doing this investigation and taking the time to look at these matters," Brecken

said in an interview after the meeting.

The council voted unanimously to accept Wendt's findings, closing the issues.



Dick Wendt's presentation cleared the air.

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In The Service



Rebecca M. Chamberlain

Air Force Airman 1st Class Rebecca M. Chamberlain graduated from basic military training at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, San Antonio, Texas.

The airman completed an intensive, eight-week program that included training in military discipline and studies, Air Force core values, physical

fitness and basic warfare principles and skills.

Airmen who complete basic training earn four credits toward an associate in applied science degree through the Community College of the Air Force.

Chamberlain earned distinction as an honor graduate.

She is the daughter of Tammy Chamberlain, of Lowell; and Michael and stepdaughter of Teresa Andrews, of Grand Rapids.

The airman is a 2011 graduate of Lowell High School.

college news


Western Michigan University has announced the graduation list for the 2014 spring semester. The following are local graduates, their degrees, majors and honors:

Ada: Jia VanTongeren, Master of Business, business administration: marketing; Jeffrey Scott Harkema,


Bachelor of Science, student integrated curriculum; Matthew T. Book, Bachelor of Science, aviation maintenance technology; Seth Edward Mallon Martin, Bachelor of Science, computer science; Christen Conklin Topolinski, Doctor of Philosophy, educational leadership: K-12 leadership;

Benjamin Scott Lesneski, Bachelor of Business, management; Susan Lynn Gutierrez, Doctor of Philosophy, educational leadership: K-12 leadership; and Brittany Danielle Gervais, Bachelor of Arts, Spanish. Alto: Alexandra Terese Forsythe, Bachelor of Science, dietetics, Magna Cum Laude; Michael A. Kittlaus, Master of Business, business administration: finance; and Jessica Lynne Priem, Master of Arts, educational leadership: K-12 school principal. Lowell: Thomas Michael Mark, Bachelor of Science, aviation science and administration; Nolan Charles Blair, Bachelor of Science, aviation flight science; Bryleigh Blair Loughlin, Bachelor of Arts, organizational communication, summa cum laude; Bryleigh Blair Loughlin, Bachelor of Arts, Spanish, summa cum laude; Alexander William Brock, Bachelor of Science, Psychology: general psychology, summa cum laude; Nicole Shanai Parry, Bachelor of Arts, Mathematics: secondary education; and Bryan Douglas Stratton, Master of Science, engineering management.

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viewpoint

sharing the vision



LAS Superintendent Greg Pratt

Resilient schools build resilient kids Staying on course in times of change

As the summer beckons and students celebrate the passage of the 2013/2014 school year, the staff and Board of Education at Lowell Area Schools are celebrating too. We are very proud of our work together to provide an outstanding school year filled with meaningful academic opportunities and unique experiences that help kids to grow. In partnership with parents, our bus drivers, food service staff, teachers, maintenance staff, administrators and countless other valuable staff members contribute to the quality of overall school life for every child that passes through our doors. Our work in education is deeply rewarding because of the prospect to make a difference, foster a love

of learning, and cultivate character in the lives of kids. Educators and parents face many challenges as we go about the important work of educating children. Public school districts in Michigan have undergone significant legislative reforms that have impacted school budgets, changed the way that teachers are evaluated, and debated the issue of Common Core, appropriate standardized student assessments, and the readiness of districts to implement them. I assure you that, in the midst of continuing legislative change, the Lowell Area Schools will accept the challenge with steadfast resilience. We do so with the same resilience that we build in our students regardless of legislation at

the State level. Lowell Area Schools has and always will focus on preparing kids to be career and college ready. We are committed to developing students to be problem solvers, critical thinkers, good listeners, clear and accurate communicators, and be able to adapt to change. We teach our students how to reflect on learning, to persevere, to be creative, and to be open-minded, ready for real world application in their community. As educators in a resilient organization, we relish in the chance to shape resilient kids who are prepared for a bright future.

With the end of the school year brings the pace of Michigan summer. I hope that Lowell families and district staff are able to savor a summer slowdown and take advantage of time to enjoy all of what West Michigan has to offer. We will be energized and excited to welcome students for a fresh new school year. See you in the fall!

Have a Fantastic Summer and Go Red Arrows!

outdoors



get started

Dave Stegehuis

Archers must shoot a lot of arrows and golfers must hit a lot of golf balls to maintain muscle memory and proper form. Both sports require many hours of practice. Not all bow hunters shoot year around like we should, so with milder weather, it is time to get back to a consistent practice schedule.

First, it would be wise to inspect the bow. Strings and servings take a beating in brush and wet weather. Compounds particularly need to be cleaned up and lubed where necessary.

Tuning the bow for a clean arrow launch can avoid frustration at the target range. Arrows need to be checked for straightness and fletching repaired if damaged.

Some lucky hunters may be able to justify purchasing a new bow. There are a surprising number of manufacturers, each offering several models. Usually a brand will offer a higher priced top end

bow and also a moderate priced unit. A few make bows for smaller archers. Making a choice may be tough because the majority of the new bows will get the job done.

Carbon arrows have taken over the market, but selecting a broadhead will require some research. Fletching innovations have provided more choices also.

Back to establishing a practice regimen. One theory is to start out close to the target and concentrate only on form and the release. Once consistency is established here, then gradually move back to your maximum hunting shot distance. Practice at a longer range is like swinging two bats before hitting. A single bat then seems easy to swing as shooting closer seems easier.

Next, it is time to duplicate hunting scenarios. If you hunt from a blind, shoot from a blind. If elevated stands are your thing, then practice that. Closer to the season opener, it is time for full dress rehearsal. Don the usual clothing and accessories, and shoot under realistic conditions. Three "D" targets add to the realism. All of this preparation may appear to be time consuming and tedious. The truth is that anticipation is part of the allure of the hunt, and archery is just plain fun. Many folks who never intend to hunt enjoy the sport as family recreation while others compete in club and professional events.

It may seem a bit early, but the summer will pass quickly so it is time to get started. Just add archery to your summer fun.

Treating heroin and opioid addiction



Sen. Carl Levin

Across Michigan and our country, parents are struggling with how to help addicted sons and daughters. Husbands and wives worry about spouses caught in the grip of addiction. Rates of opioid abuse, heroin addiction, overdose and death are a concern in schools and hospitals, treatment centers and neighborhoods in every state.

One weapon in the fight against this epidemic is buprenorphine, a medication that helps to block the craving for heroin. Buprenorphine dramatically reduces the physical need for drugs and by doing so helps addicts and their families recover from the tragic damage that addiction can cause. The most commonly prescribed form combines buprenorphine with another substance, naloxone, which makes the medication less susceptible to abuse.

In 2000, I authored the Drug Addiction Treatment Act (DATA 2000) with Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, that made it legal for physicians to prescribe this medication

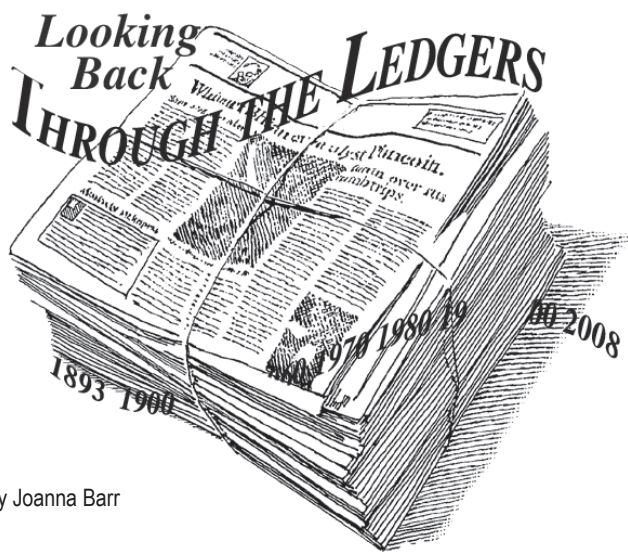
in their offices, and the Food and Drug Administration approved its use in 2002. However, DATA 2000 established that physicians could only treat up to 30 patients at a time.

In 2006, Sen. Hatch and I held a forum to examine the patient limit and subsequently led the enactment of legislation to increase the patient limit from 30 to 100.

As the epidemic of heroin and other opioids has continued to spread to communities across the country, we were interested in looking at what obstacles are still preventing even greater numbers of patients from receiving buprenorphine treatment.

In May, I visited doctors across Michigan who are certified to prescribe buprenorphine. Almost every doctor said they must turn away patients seeking buprenorphine treatment because of the 100-patient limit. One had to turn away two patients the day we

Levin, continued, page 12



By Joanna Barr

125 years ago Lowell Journal July 7, 1889

A tramp stole a clothes line worth 25 cents from an Indian farmer and eighteen men turned out and pursued him for thirty miles.

G. J. Johnson, Lowell's new cigar manufacturer, is making as fine grades of cigars as are made anywhere and is having a nice trade.

The largest clip of wool marketed here this season was sold yesterday by Barney McGee to J. C. Train 30+c. It weighed 1604 pounds and was all this year's crop.

100 years ago The Lowell Ledger July 2, 1914

The telephone company were extending the line past Kalward's place last week and onto the homes of Frank Beckwith and Mrs. Ida Beckwith, where phones were established.

While Mrs. Allie Carr was hiving a swarm of bees up in a tree she fell off the ladder and broke her wrist and hurt her back, so she is in bed. Her sister, Mrs. Fred Condon from Otisco is caring for her.

75 years ago The Lowell Ledger July 6, 1939

The flag pole which was erected on Main St. in front of the old post office building during World War days has been taken down and is now being erected on the top of Reservoir hill.

The 4th of July holiday was passed without any serious accident being reported in this vicinity. The death toll throughout the nation will reach approximately 700, nearing one-half of the deaths occurring on the highways.

The large new livestock barn on the 4-H club fair grounds was completed last week according to the schedule.

50 years ago The Lowell Ledger July 2, 1964

Temperatures lingered in the 90s early this week, bringing discomfort to all except the most cold-blooded of Lowell residents. At the King Memorial Pool, 594 swimmers jumped in for a dip on Monday, topping last year's record tally of 592. And the records really fell on Tuesday when 652 swimmers crowded into the waters, seeking a little relief. But despite the heat, no kids that we know were outdoors trying to fry eggs on the sidewalks.

Looking Back, continued, page 11

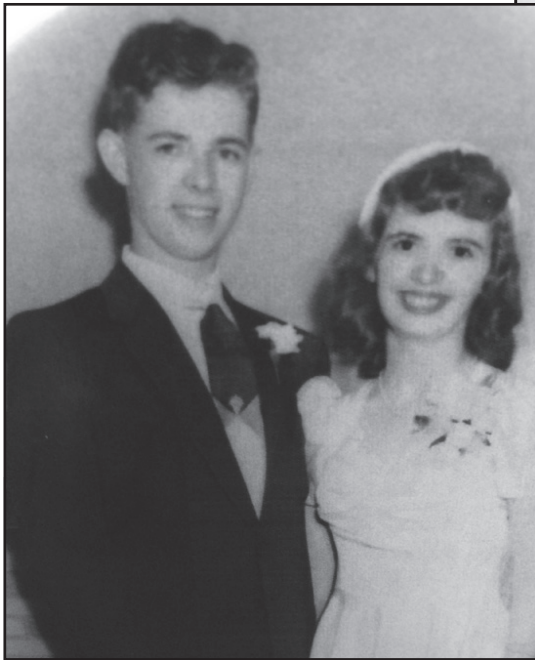
anniversaries

Kaminski



Kevin and Debbie Kaminski were married July 1, 1989, in Lowell. They have two sons, a daughter-in-law and one grandson.

Warner



Chester James (Jim) Warner and Frances (Fran) Marie Warner (Grummet), of Lowell, will celebrate 60 years of wedded bliss on July 3rd, 2014. Jim and Fran will celebrate the occasion with their children: Randy and Bonnie Warner, Ed and Sharon Warner, Elsie Warner, Rick and Chris Warner, grandchildren and great-grandchildren at a family barbecue.

health



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

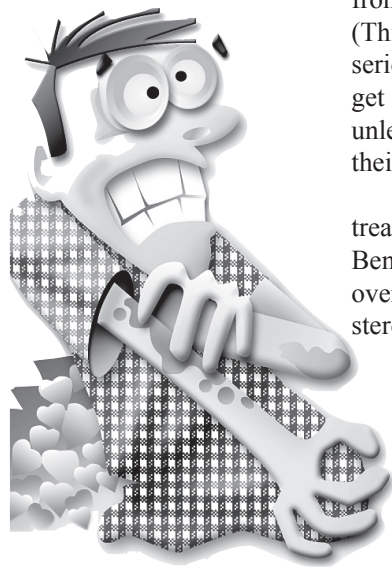
poison ivy

Poison ivy is caused by a reaction to oil found on the leaves, stems and roots on poison ivy, poison oak and sumac.

The rash appears as a swollen red, very itchy, blistering patch of skin. It often times appears linear.

The onset occurs 12-48 hours after exposure and can last two to three weeks. The severity of the rash depends on how much oil you contact and you can transfer the oil to other parts of your body. Exposure to the oil can occur from direct contact, contact with contaminated objects or inhaling smoke from the burning plants. (This can cause a very serious reaction.) You can't get it from another person unless you contact oil on their skin.

Small areas can be treated with calamine lotion, Benadryl, oatmeal baths and over-the-counter topical steroids. More widespread severe reactions are treated with oral prednisone or steroid injections.



happy birthday!

area churches

SNOW UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
3189 Snow Ave. SE, Lowell
Pastor Tony Shumaker
9:45 A.M. Sunday School
10:30 A.M. Fellowship
11:00 A.M. Worship
897-9863
Nursery & Children
Worship Programs Provided

A friend...a family...a mission!



CHRISTIAN LIFE CENTER (Assembly of God)
3050 Alden Nash S.E. • 897-1100 • Staffed Nursery
Robert Holmes, Pastor
SUNDAYS:
Worship: 10 a.m.
WEDNESDAYS:
Family Night (for all ages): 7:00 p.m.
"The Source" Youth: 7:00 p.m.
Loving God ... Loving People!

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF LOWELL
2275 West Main Street • 897-7168
Barrier Free
Internet: <http://www.fbcloowell.org>
Rev. Jon Pickens & Pastor Phil Severn
Sun. Worship Service.....9:30 A.M.
Sunday School, nursery - adult.....11:00 A.M.
AWANA - K-5, during school year.....Wed. 6:15 - 8 P.M.
Youth Ministry - grades 6-12.....Mon. 6:30 - 8:30 P.M.
(Youth Ministry moves to Wed. during summer)

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF LOWELL
621 E. Main Street
897-5936
www.lowellumc.com
Barrier-free entrance
SUNDAY WORSHIP.....9:30
July & August at the Riverwalk
YOUTH GROUPS (JR. & SR. HIGH).....6:00 p.m.
Wednesday After-School Kids' Club until 5:30 p.m.

ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH
402 Amity St. • 897-9820
www.stmary-lowell.com
Weekend Masses: SAT. 5 PM; SUN. 10:30 AM
Saturday confessions: 3-4:30 PM
Prayer & adoration each Wed. 8:00 AM - 8 PM
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GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH
10305 Bluewater Highway (Missouri Synod)
Halfway between Lowell & Saranac on M-21
www.goodshepherdlowell.org
Worship Service.....Sunday -10:30 A.M.
(Nursery available)
Joseph Fremer, Pastor **897-8307**
All facilities are wheelchair accessible

CALVARY CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH OF LOWELL
897-7060
Pastor Rod Galindo
1151 West Main Street, Lowell, MI
Morning Worship.....10:00 A. M.
Sunday School.....11:20 A.M.
Evening Worship.....6:00 P.M.
Nursery available at both services
Barrier-Free



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JULY 2
Bradley Ball, Marilyn Sauber, Brandon Lee, Logan Brenk, Landon Trierweiler, Ryan Lynne Roth, Mary Jo Buechler, Calihan Janowiak.

JULY 5
Dave Burdette, Jacob Hiskey, Randi Ellis, Brennan Page, Devinne Ossewaarde, Bob Canfield, Dee Doyle, Junie Hoag, Kylei Mae Nearing.

JULY 3
Alice Ryder, Jamie Capen, Maxin Ligman, Janet Bieri.

JULY 6
Marty DeYoung, Jason Barber, Amy Stencel, Darrel Hesche, Chris Page, Ed Walling, Jan Bieri.

JULY 4
Barb Austin, Zachary Rhodes, Tara Sherman, Dan DeHaan.

JULY 7
Phil VanLaan, Elizabeth Gerard, Tim Tulppo, Zach Meiste, Wayne Racine, Brice Wingerter.

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JULY 8
Jason White, Tony Stencel, Ryan Vashav, Jessica Tulppo, Marilyn Venneman.

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perseverance *A community fighting cancer*

The Lowell Ledger - your Lowell area news source

Pink Arrow Pride isn't just a big story in Lowell, it's something that has made national headlines. So it shouldn't be surprising that the Lowell Ledger spends a great deal of time reporting on it and has done so since the beginning.

"We got involved when Teresa Beachum came to Jon [Jacobs] with the idea," said Ledger editor Jeanne Boss. "We were all surprised how huge it was and impressed with the outpouring of community support that followed."

The Ledger's coverage focuses on the community aspect of Pink Arrow Pride, coverage that would be impossible at a big city media outlet.

"As a family-owned newspaper, that's what we're about," Ledger publisher Jon Jacobs said. "Highlighting, connecting the community together and telling their story. Sometimes people are negative and they say that newspapers don't have the impact that they did 20 years ago. That may be true in some areas, especially with the major dailies, because they've lost their way of telling the stories of their neighbors and identifying what people do on a day-to-day basis in a community. But with community newspapers, we haven't lost that way. We've never cut reporters, we've never cut our columns. We always try to seek out the positive stories of what's going on, on a weekly basis. So for us, Pink Arrow is right up our alley."

The tricky part is keeping the coverage fresh.

"It keeps us on our toes. We're always thinking outside the box," Jacobs said. "For Jeanne and I, and everybody here who works on this project, it's exciting. But there's also pressure that we have to top the previous year's coverage. We have to make it better than the previous year and we have to always add to what we can introduce or how we can cover it from another angle."

"We think about how we make the coverage different," Jacobs said.



"Identifying the struggles of the people that have cancer, giving them the opportunity to tell their stories, so hopefully they will impact the life of somebody who may be going through it or know somebody going through it. But it's also trying to keep it fresh in peoples' minds; the importance of

own story, let them tell how they went through it from the beginning when they found out, how they dealt with the whole process. That's powerful information that we can't do in an ad; we can't do it by researching an editorial or an article. It's their story. That makes it have a lasting impact on

been there, I've done that.' That's what the committee does a great job with. They're always coming up with ideas to change things, to add things to give a new punch to it and that's what we try to do with our coverage."

Pink Arrow Pride doesn't pay for doctor and hospital bills. Instead they concentrate on more tangible problems one has to deal with during an illness.

"They don't pay for medical costs, they help people with their everyday expenses," Boss said. "They help them with the everyday issues and things that a lot of charities miss."

"It helps people who are dealing with cancer," Jacobs said. "It helps with paying their bills, taking them to their treatments and so forth, but it's also about making your community strong and making people work together acknowledging the struggles of what your neighbors are going through and trying to make their lives a little bit better."

It's also important to buy that new pink t-shirt every year.

"Some people might say, 'Well, I already have three t-shirts, I don't really need this year's t-shirt,'" Jacobs said, "But by buying that t-shirt you're also helping somebody out."

"People love reading the stories of support and I think it helps the whole community pull together," Boss said.

"That's something that we take seriously at the Lowell Ledger/ Buyers Guide," Jacobs said.

"As a family-owned newspaper, that's what we're about. Highlighting, connecting the community together and telling their story."

~ Jon Jacobs

being involved in it; buying a t-shirt; going to the game."

In July the Ledger will present stories about local businesses and people who have been affected by cancer or who are involved with Pink Arrow.

"We came up with the idea of doing these stories the whole month, with people telling their side of the story," Jacobs said. "Let them write their

the reader and the community. That's the true definition and importance of Pink Arrow."

Jacobs and Boss credit the Beachums with the continuing success of Pink Arrow Pride.

"Working with Teresa and Perry Beachum and their committee is very enjoyable," Jacobs said.

"I can't believe their stamina, the fact that they do it year after year," Boss said, "and it's turned into an all-year kind of a deal too."

The Beachums and the Pink Arrow committee work hard to keep the event new and interesting.

"You might have a great idea that does great things for the community like Pink Arrow does," Jacobs said, "but the problem is keeping the momentum going and keeping it fresh so people don't feel like, 'I've

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perseverance

A community fighting cancer

Throughout July the Lowell Ledger and the Buyers Guide will highlight the stories of area cancer survivors. Each writer will convey, in their own words, their experiences as they walk through the many phases of their personal journey.

~ All photos taken by Dan Johnson of Modern Photographics

Cliff Yankovich

Before we get into the nasty particulars of my trip to Dr. Bott's Weight Loss Camp - I want to acknowledge the power of community. Lowell and the Pink Arrow Project are truly a force to be reckoned with. Frankly I hope no one reading this will ever have to experience the wallop of cancer and the counter-punch of the care and concern of the people that make up the Pink Arrow Nation (PAN). While we were happy to support Pink Arrows with t-shirt purchases and by selling a Pink Arrow bead in our jewelry store, I never dreamed of being the beneficiary of Pink Arrow gift cards or the outpouring of support from the people of Lowell.

Were it not for the support of my wife Julie, our dog Otter, and the PAN, I probably would not be sitting here typing this message. I tried to represent the community support that sustained me by spreading out a sample of the cards on the table when Dan took our picture for this story. (Forgot to include the Punching Bear I received.)



Lesson #1 - Cancer is a cheating SOB and does not play fair.

~ Cliff Yankovich

The diagnosis of cancer was a real kidney punch. How in the heck could a non-smoker be hit with throat cancer? Lesson #1 - Cancer is a cheating SOB and does not play fair.

After almost 18 months of trying to figure out what the heck was going on in my throat, Dr. Lixie at Lowell Family Medical sent me to a specialist. Before we got to that point I tried a bunch of different methods to deal with what I wrongly assumed was some type of allergy that would make me feel like I was choking when I slept on my right side or that would make my voice all but disappear sometimes - especially if I was under some form of emotional stress. We started with a week's worth of antibiotic and then I tried acupuncture, a naturopath, energy work, and even a chiropractor. I must say that I did benefit from each and every one of these alternative methods of healing, but nothing solved the puzzle. Very grateful that Dr. Lixie took the time to listen and to follow her instincts.

When I described my symptoms to

the ENT doc, he was pretty certain he was not going to find anything when he scoped me. After all, I didn't smoke, didn't have any health concerns, took no medication and drank very little. For a 55 year old I was in pretty good shape thanks to a regular walking, eating good food, and exercise 4 to 6 times a week. His story changed once he fed the fiber optic thingamabob through my nose and into my throat. But even after seeing something there, he was not overly concerned. He told me we could leave it alone or remove it during a 45 minute outpatient procedure. I opted to get it gone.

The 45 minutes turned into almost two hours. The mass was much bigger than he thought and they got as much as they could. Then we had the Ultra Fun Waiting Period - is it cancerous or not? My surgery was just before the 4th of July so that delayed the answer from the lab. I had a Monday appointment, but could not stand the suspense and called Friday and made them tell me. POW - right in the kisser! It was really hard to concentrate on changing a watch battery in the store a couple of minutes after that phone call. My head was in a fog and my hands were shaking.

One of the absolute worst things about finding out you have cancer is

having to tell your family and friends. That first week or so, I sent emails that basically said "Hey - it is cancer. Don't know all the particulars - please don't call with questions because I have no answers. Will update you when I know the story."

The story was good. The location and type of cancer I had meant that it was beatable. During our first meeting with Dr. Bott, she used the word "cure" three times. (I double checked that with Julie when we got out.) They do NOT toss that word around lightly.

Did I mention all the wonderful notes, calls, emails, text messages, and cards that sustained me?

~ Cliff Yankovich

NOTE: Always take at least one other person with you - the more ears to hear what is being said, the better the chance that SOME of it will be remembered.

The Plan was daily radiation for 7 weeks combined with 3 chemo sessions at the beginning, middle and end of the radiation. I was fitted for a plastic helmet that formed to my head and the top of my shoulders that would attach me to the radiation table in exactly the same spot all 35 times. Yup, it is about as fun as it sounds.

Highlights include: fainting once;

two visits to the ER - one included the World's Shortest Ambulance Ride and one concerned a buildup of pus where the feeding tube went in; one two night hospital stay; loss of 45 pounds; a several week stretch where I ate or drank nothing - I was kept alive by a feeding tube; and telling Julie I was going to QUIT treatment at least twice.

Did I mention all the wonderful notes, calls, emails, text messages, and cards that sustained me?

On the plus side we made it. My PET scan at the end of 2013 was

clear. On the dark side - lost my sense of taste. The lingering side effects include depression, memory loss and blah blah blah.

To wrap it up - Cancer sucks canal water. It is a cheating, back biting, and thief of a killer disease. Avoid it at all costs.

I am going to close with a quote from Dr. Heather Gietzen. She moved her family here from the East side of the state to open her Orthodontic office. "We love Lowell," she told me. "This community looks for ways they can help each other."

Yup. Don't I know it.

perseverance

A community fighting cancer

Denise Dubisky

My cancer journey began in April 2011 when I found a lump in my breast that I had never noticed before. I contacted my doctor and after a mammogram and an ultrasound, a core needle biopsy confirmed it was cancer on May 5, 2011. At age 47, I was diagnosed with Invasive Ductal Carcinoma, the most common type of breast cancer.

The diagnosis was shocking to me and to my husband Bob, as I was always healthy. To me, cancer was always a disease that happened to someone else, yet now I was facing it. I felt like I was in a fog and it was really difficult to focus on anything except the fact that I had cancer. So many questions came to mind with this diagnosis – How bad is it? Has it spread? What is the prognosis for this type of cancer? What kind of surgery do I need? Will I need chemo?

is the lymph node that the cancer would most likely spread to. The initial test showed no cancer in the lymph nodes, but the final pathology came back showing one lymph node with cancer. I also found out that there was quite a bit of cancer in the ducts, which hadn't been detected by my mammogram. This proved my decision for a mastectomy was the right one.

My surgeon also had ordered another test that would help show if chemotherapy was needed for further treatment. Results came back showing that I could make the decision to have chemo or not, but based on the fact that I had a positive lymph node, I knew that chemotherapy would be the next step in my cancer treatment.

So now that chemo was inevitable, I was worried about losing my

One of the first things that crossed my mind after the diagnosis was how do we tell our kids, how do we tell our family and friends?

~ Denise Dubisky

Am I going to die? What about my family? I needed to find out as much as I could about my type of cancer, to try to find the answers to these questions. This was very helpful to me – I felt like this knowledge was power and that helped me feel like I had some control over what was happening.

One of the first things that crossed my mind after the diagnosis was how do we tell our kids, how do we tell our family and friends? I could barely say it out loud let alone try to verbalize it to my kids while staying strong at the same time. About a week after I was diagnosed, when I felt like we were armed with enough information that we would be able to calm their fears, we sat down and told our children; Allysen, who was 15 at the time, and Robbie; who was 12. It was probably one of the most difficult things we have ever done.

After a whirlwind of doctor appointments, my surgeon and I had decided on a lumpectomy. However, when I went for a breast MRI, the test showed other questionable areas in that same breast and I was told I would need additional tests and biopsies. This information only devastated me further and after a consult with my plastic surgeon, I made the decision to have a right breast mastectomy with immediate reconstruction.

My surgery was scheduled for early June. During surgery, the sentinel node was removed, which

hair, accepting, but still worried. Thankfully, my very good friend, and her daughter, accompanied Allysen and I to a great wig store in Lansing. We made it a girl's afternoon, and I found just the right wig. Their support that day meant so much and made me that much stronger.

I started chemo in early August. A week after my first chemo, we went on a family vacation with my parents, siblings and their families – and once again the support was amazing – my dad, brothers and brother-in-law all shaved their heads in support. So incredible! During chemo, I was really very fortunate – it didn't make me sick. Other than being tired, I felt good throughout the treatment.

My reconstruction was completed in December and I finally felt like me again. By March, I had put my wig away. In April 2012, I went for a mammogram on my left breast. I couldn't believe it - there were questionable spots and I needed an ultrasound and ultimately a biopsy. I could not believe that one year later, I was potentially going to go through the exact same thing again. Thankfully, it turned out to be nothing, but that and my girlfriend's diagnosis a couple months earlier helped me make the decision to have a prophylactic mastectomy of my left breast. I didn't want to ever go through that worry again. Surgery was scheduled for September, and reconstruction was completed in January 2013.



When I was initially diagnosed, I wasn't aware of a family history, outside of a paternal aunt who had breast cancer 20 years earlier. It is so important to make sure you know your family history! Once I was diagnosed I discovered that while there is no history of breast cancer on my mother's side of the family, on my father's side, the history is extensive. Talking to my doctors I found out that had this history been known I would have been watched closer. Because of this history, I chose to be tested for BRCA1 and BRCA2, genes that are known to cause breast cancer. I tested negative, thankfully, for both genes. This test however, is only 94% certain. The BART test actually covers the last 6% of the BRCA testing - I had this test in December 2013 and this test also came back negative.

It is also so important to make sure that you do regular breast self-exams in addition to mammograms. I admit that when I found the lump in my breast I was not doing an exam – my hand just happened to brush it just the right way for me to notice it. So while I wonder if I would have found

it sooner had I been doing regular exams, I thank God that I felt it that day.

Everything was going along very well, and then, in October 2013, when I went to a routine visit with my breast surgeon, she felt something in my neck, on my thyroid. She sent me for an ultrasound, which resulted in yet another biopsy. In November 2013 I was diagnosed with thyroid cancer – Papillary Carcinoma.

I could not believe it. My husband and I were shocked, and initially worried, that the breast cancer had spread to my thyroid. I quickly found out that breast cancer does not spread to the thyroid, that this was indeed a totally separate cancer.

I had surgery to remove my thyroid in late November 2013. Surgery went well, but when the final pathology report came back, it showed that cancer had spread to four out of five lymph nodes. Doctors assured me that lymph node involvement with this type of cancer is different than others. My cancer was highly treatable and almost 100% curable.

perseverance

The spirit of Pink Arrow Pride

Casey Cahoon

When I was four my parents got a divorce and I moved to Oregon with my mom and stepdad. I lived in Oregon up until about four years ago when my life drastically changed forever.

On the Fourth of July in 2010 my little brother, stepdad, and I came home from fireworks to my mom hanging from the banister. She had committed suicide. My mom was such a loving and caring person, she was a special education teacher at the high school, she was even voted in the top three favorite teachers in the school. No one saw it coming.

Very shortly after her death I moved across the country from Silverton, Oregon, to Lowell, Michigan to live with my real dad. I had to start my entire life over, new friends, new school, new home. I was forced to leave everything I grew up with behind me, my little brother, my pets, my friends, everything.

Starting school at Lowell was a little rough at first, but it eventually got better. I never would have been able to get through the hard times without the awesome support from my teachers, family, friends, and Gilda's Club.

I heard about Gilda's Club through my school counselor, Mrs. Parsons. She told me that Gilda's Club puts on grief group meetings at school and goes to schools for kids around the same age group who have experienced loss and grief. At first,



I never would have been able to get through the hard times without the awesome support from my teachers, family, friends, and Gilda's Club.

~ Casey Cahoon

I was a little nervous about going to them, so I didn't go my freshman year.

By the time I hit my sophomore year, I thought I would give them a try.

And looking back, I wish I would have gone my freshman year because my grief was so fresh and the meetings would have really helped me.

It was really nice knowing that there

were kids in the school that were going through the same type of thing as me, dealing with loss. It really helped that I had somewhere I could go and talk openly about my grief to people that were there for me.

Gilda's Club really helped me learn how to cope with the loss of my mom. I couldn't be more thankful for their endless support.

Denise's story, continued

That was great news! The other great news was that this cancer is not treated with chemotherapy, but with radioactive iodine.

With radioactive iodine treatment, I had to go on a special low iodine diet in the weeks prior to treatment. I went to the hospital to take the radioactive iodine pills and then went home. These pills destroy any remaining cancer cells by destroying any remaining thyroid cells. The hardest part of this treatment is the seclusion due to the radiation I was emitting – I had to stay away from people for six days, keeping at least a seven-foot distance.

With everything I have been through, I am so happy to have it all behind me.

Most years I had attended the Pink Arrow game, but never did an event have more meaning to me, as

it did that year of my breast cancer diagnosis. One afternoon a few weeks before the game, good friends of ours asked if they could stop by. When they did, their oldest son asked if he could represent me at the Pink Arrow varsity soccer game. I was so honored that he thought of me! Walking on that field with all the other survivors meant so much and was so incredibly powerful! In September 2013, that wonderful experience was repeated when my own son represented me at that same varsity soccer game.

My husband Bob has been wonderful and so supportive through all of this and has been my main cheerleader. He really helped keep me focused and always had the attitude "we can do this." My cancer diagnosis made me a much stronger person and made my family stronger.

Amazingly, when I talk to my kids about that summer I had breast cancer, they say it was their favorite summer, because I was home with them. It gave us such an opportunity to become closer.

The support I had from friends and family when I was diagnosed and had surgery was amazing! Cards and well wishes came in daily for weeks and were so appreciated. My husband and kids were always there helping and making sure I didn't overdo, and that I had whatever I needed. Friends and neighbors helped with dinners and carpooling my kids to different events and were there for me whenever I needed anything or just to talk.

We moved to Lowell in the summer of 2004 from the east side of the state. I have never seen a community that comes together to help the way

they do here, especially every year during Pink Arrow. We have so many wonderful friends who have been so supportive. I am so thankful for that – their friendship and support meant so much to us as I went through my surgeries and treatments. I especially want to thank Pink Arrow Pride for the support provided to us through both cancers.

My prognosis is good, for both cancers, and I feel great. People often tell me they are amazed by my strength. I say, you don't know what you are capable of until you are faced with it. Receiving a cancer diagnosis is very scary. Realizing there is support – family, friends, Pink Arrow and the Lowell community - made all the difference for me – I am so thankful for that.

Sizzlin' Summer Concerts rocks the Riverwalk



Rock, blues and funk filled the air at the sunny third installment of the Lowell Showboat Sizzlin' Summer Concerts. The horn driven eight-piece band Skankadank performed in front of a packed Riverwalk on Thursday impressing with their soulful vocals and excellent musicianship on well-known retro R&B tracks. Next Thursday, the series welcomes the Grand Rapids Jazz Orchestra featuring Edye Evans Hyde.

Ledger Entries, continued

25 years ago The Lowell Ledger July 5, 1989

The Vergennes Cooperative Club is 75 years old this year. Started in 1914 by a dozen young women in Vergennes Township who felt the need for a social group in the days when a few miles from town was a long way. The VCC numbers 38 this year and still meets for good works as well as friendship. The group got the Vergennes Township Hall and the Fallasburg Fall Festival started, as well as many other worthwhile projects.

Local man to appear on "Fame & Fortune" lottery show. Ron Andrzejewski of Lowell is one of six contestants chosen to star on Michigan Lottery's "Fame & Fortune" game show this Saturday night, July 8. One of the six contestants will win the top prize of \$50,000, but all will end up as winners. All contestants receive full "star" treatment including an overnight stay at the Omni International Hotel, VIP Limousine Service for travels around Detroit and a special luncheon at the Whitney Restaurant. They also enjoy a photo session and professionally applied television makeup prior to being greeted by the show's live audience.

Polo, continued

Helen DeVos Children's Hospital. Today it's the polo event."

About 200 members of West Michigan's aristocracy attended the event, which Milanowski said would raise about \$15,000 for the hospital.

The polo game pitted a "red team" against a "blue team." A young patient of the hospital, Matthew Robinson, threw the ball onto the field when the game began. Polo was reminiscent of football, except with men waving sticks while riding gigantic animals back and forth and the ball was significantly smaller and made of plastic.

"It's been a really fun day with the tent and drinks and barn tours," Milanowski said. "We also have this [wooden] horse that people can take pictures on and we have drinks and food donated by Amway."

It was a champagne

and Bud Light crowd with picnics consisting of olives and expensive-looking cheeses. People were dressed in their preppy best; women in designer dresses, heels and elaborate hats, while men stuck to pink, light blue and white outfits. Conversations overheard on the sidelines revolved around vacations to tropical locations, real estate and Master's Degrees.

"We, as a board, try to throw unique, fun events that get new donors attracted to the West Michigan area and to the Helen DeVos Children's Hospital," Slusarzyk said. "It's a global leader and a leader within the nation. We do it to get the word out about what the hospital is doing and raise money and hopefully help their efforts down there."

Among the other diversions were a "best hat" contest and a "best picnic" contest.



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CITY OF LOWELL PUBLIC NOTICE

The July Board of Review will meet as follows:

**Monday, July 21, 2014
at 11:00 am**

ACT 14 OF 1985, being Section 211.53(b) of the General Property Tax Laws, provides for corrections of clerical errors or mutual mistakes of fact relative to the correct assessment figures, and the corrections of Principal Residence Exemptions, these shall be verified by the local assessing officer and approved by the board of review at a meeting held for that purpose, to be held on any day of the week of the 3rd Monday in July.

On July 21, 2014, a meeting will be called for this purpose at 11:00 am in the City Hall, 301 East Main Street, Lowell, MI 49331, to conduct business as provided for in Section 211.53(b), Michigan Compiled Laws.



City of Lowell Clerk
Betty Morlock

CITY OF LOWELL PUBLIC NOTICE

In accordance with Section 4.9 of the City Charter, when a Council vacancy occurs in mid-term, the City Council shall appoint a person until the Monday following the next regular City Election. The City is seeking letters of interest for this Council position. City residents who are registered to vote in the City and are interested in serving on the City council should submit a letter of interest to the City Clerk, Lowell City Hall, 301 East Main Street, Lowell, MI 49331 by 12 noon on Friday, July 25, 2014.



Betty R. Morlock
City Clerk

LOWELL CHARTER TOWNSHIP

NOTICE FOR TESTING OF ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT FOR THE AUGUST 5, 2014 PRIMARY ELECTION

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Public Accuracy Test for the August 5, 2014 Primary Election will be conducted Thursday, July 10, 2014 at 9:30 a.m. at the Lowell Township Hall, 2910 Alden Nash S.E., Lowell, MI 49331.

Linda S. Regan, Clerk
Lowell Charter Township



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business matters



McPherson marks milestone year with agency

Mac McPherson, CLU, of Lowell, was named Agent of the Year at MassMutual MidMichigan, a general agency of Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company (MassMutual). The award recognizes McPherson's more than 39 years of service to families and small businesses as they seek to protect their loved ones and their livelihoods.

McPherson not only works with his original clients, but those of their

children and grandchildren. "It is the best job in the world," he said. "Being able to help clients for generations is satisfying work personally and professionally."

Co-General Agent Mike Emery called McPherson, "one of the agency's most knowledgeable and most visible insurance professionals." Emery said, "our community is fortunate to have him."

As a Chartered Life Underwriter, McPherson is a member of several

community groups including the Lowell Rotary, West Michigan Estate Planning Council, Vergennes United Methodist Church, and the Grand Rapids Community College Board of Trustees.

A graduate of Michigan State University, McPherson is proud to say that his wife, Pinky, and their children also graduated from MSU. Son Jeffrey McPherson started at MassMutual MidMichigan three years ago, and is busy learning and growing the business with his father.

The McPhersons live in Lowell, in the same home as five generations of their family before them.

Church welcomes new pastor

Lowell First United Methodist has announced the appointment of a new pastor. Rev. Bradley Brillhart will begin serving the congregation on July 1. Outgoing pastor, Rev. Rick Blunt, has been with the church since 2008. He has been appointed to Okemos

Community Church. According to United Methodist tradition, pastors are periodically reassigned.

Brillhart comes to Lowell from Heritage UMC in Howard City. He brings with him his wife Julia and their four children. Brillhart is a graduate of Kendall

College of Art & Design and Asbury Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky.

Worship services in July and August are at 9:30 on the Riverwalk in downtown Lowell. All are invited to bring a lawn chair and enjoy this unique worship experience.

VERGENNES TOWNSHIP ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS PUBLIC NOTICE

There will be a meeting of the Vergennes Township Zoning Board of Appeals on Monday July 14, 2014 at 7:00 p.m. at the Vergennes Township Hall located at 10381 Bailey Dr. at the corner of Parnell (Lowell) to hear the following business:

Applicant William Schreur has applied for a variance from the Natural Rivers District 201.307 (F) regarding setbacks for structures. The property has an old remnant stone dam foundation at the edge of the Flat River that has been repaired and a level concrete slab top for stability was added. A small ramp with gate provides level access to the concrete slab top. The concrete area is used as a sitting/river viewing area with added railings and a trellis to grow vines up on the back side and top. The State Natural River regulations require a setback variance for this type of structure. The property is located at 786 Flat River Dr., Lowell.

Applicant Glenn, Lois and Timothy Wittenbach have applied for a variance from the Rural Agriculture District 201.304 (E) and (F) regarding setbacks and lot area regarding their farm land. The farm house is proposed to be divided from the farm land for estate purposes. The land with the farm house will be less than the required acreage in the RA District and the distances between the barns on the farmed land and the new lot line of the farm house will be less than required because they are existing buildings. The purpose for the land division is to keep the farm fields land separate from the house and yard area land. The property is located at 13077 Three Mile Rd., Lowell.

The members may review any other business that may come before them as permitted by the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act and Vergennes Township Zoning Ordinance.

The complete applications can be reviewed at the Vergennes Township Hall from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Mondays and Wednesdays and from 9 a.m. to noon on Thursdays. Public comment will be heard at the meeting. Written comments received by mail, in person or in the mail slot located at the office entrance will also be considered if received at the Township office prior to 7:00 p.m. on the day of the meeting. Comments may also be emailed to: zoning@vergennestwp.org

Levin, continued

met. Another said that if all his 100 patients suddenly disappeared, he could replace all 100 within a month.

Doctors said other factors limit the drug's availability: Medicaid in Michigan and many other states and many private insurance programs limit treatment to a year. As one doctor put it, "The insurance company would never tell me I have to be off insulin in 12 months." Doctors describe the irony that there is no limit to how long a physician can prescribe the pain killers to which patients become addicted, while they can only prescribe a drug to help break that addiction for

a year. Also, some said their patients struggle with the cost of the drug.

In June, Sen. Hatch and I held another forum with several medical professionals to learn more about buprenorphine's successes and to seek ideas on how to identify and remove impediments to its use.

Two Michigan doctors testified and both spoke about the success of buprenorphine treatment, the difficulties of patient limits, and the need to expand the number of doctors certified to treat buprenorphine.

One doctor told a powerful story of his

own experience with buprenorphine treatment. After building a successful career as a vascular surgeon, he required multiple back surgeries and during treatment for those surgeries, he developed an addiction to prescription opioids. He described the painful losses he suffered as a result of the addiction and how buprenorphine treatment enabled him to break his addiction and rebuild his life.

As he testified, "I couldn't work anymore. I lost my home. And it has allowed me to come back and have a very active medical practice taking care of people with chronic pain and opiate addiction and has returned me to, I think, a functioning member of society." He is now certified to treat patients with buprenorphine and has assisted many Michiganders in fighting addiction.

Another witness at the forum, a young mother in her 20s, said, "Today, I've been in treatment over four years. I have a good life. I have a stable life." She continued, "I'm in school. I've actually done really well in school. I'm surprisingly smart. . . . I have a future, and my child has a future."

As another witness who has been battling drug addiction for 40 years said, "If it can work on me, it can work on a lot of other people."

At the Senate forum, we heard remarkable stories of success with buprenorphine treatment, of lives saved and families rebuilt from the ravages of addiction. But we also heard stories of frustration at the fact that many patients want this treatment but can't get it.

We need to remove those hurdles. The forum was an important step in finding a way to get more patients the treatment they need.

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

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ANIMAL HOSPITAL OF
LOWELL

office hours:
Mon.-Thurs. 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Closed Fri., July 4th
closed Sat. & Sun.

classifieds

for sale

BED & MATTRESS SET - queen, Sealy, \$95 includes frame. Hammond Wholesale, 320 W. Main St., Carson City, 989-584-1600. See us on Facebook. Delivery available.^{TFN}

WOODSTOVE FOR SALE - \$150. Call 616-642-9315.

KENMORE REFRIGERATOR & STOVE SET - (2006), cost \$900, sell \$199 for pair. Hammond Wholesale, 320 W. Main St., Carson City, 989-584-1600. See us on Facebook.^{TFN}

2011 SILVERADO 1500 - four-wheel drive, ext. cab LT, All Star edition, show room condition, fiberglass cover, Arizona winters, nonsmoking, Vortec 5.3L V8, six-speed automatic, 35,000 miles - \$27,500 or best offer. 616-897-6790.

200 APPLIANCES - Washers, dryers, refrigerators & stoves. Guaranteed. From \$69. Hammond Wholesale, 320 W. Main St., Carson City, 989-584-1600. See us on Facebook. Delivery available.^{TFN}

TWIN BED - Mattress, box spring & frame, (Sealy), \$85 complete. Hammond Wholesale, 320 W. Main St., Carson City, 989-584-1600. See us on Facebook.^{TFN}

QUEEN PILLOWTOP MATTRESS SET - (new), \$248/set. Thick & plush. Hammond Wholesale, 320 W. Main St., Carson City, 989-584-1600. See us on Facebook.^{TFN}

FREE AD! - Place & pay for a classified ad in the Buyers Guide & Lowell Ledger for 3 weeks & receive the 4th week FREE! You must mention the special in order to receive this offer. Valid only with new classified ads, and must be paid for when ad is placed. Call 897-9555.

A BED - A brand new queen pillowtop mattress set in plastic, w/warranty, sacrifice, \$135. Call 989-584-6818.^{TFN}

CENTRAL BOILER CLASSIC OUTDOOR WOOD FURNACE - Provides safe, clean heat. 25 year warranty. Call SOS your "Stocking Dealer" Dutton, MI 616-554-8669 or 616-915-5061.

card of thanks

A SPECIAL THANKS to Alto Fire Rescue for helping mother. The Am. Legion 528 of Alto for the wonderful meal served after the funeral. Also thanks to Pastor Richard Sherlock and Roger LaWarre for their shared memories, and to Roth-Gerst, friends and family, thank you all so much.

Family of
Barbara Shaffer

help wanted

INSERTING CREW MEMBER NEEDED - Part-Time Thursday & Friday, hours are flexible, but Friday night from 6 p.m. to 10-11 p.m. is required. Duties include: stuffing inserts into the Buyers Guide and making local deliveries. You will be standing for long periods of time, lifting 25 lbs. frequently & operating a hi-lo. Must be at least 18 years old with a clean, valid Michigan drivers license. Stop by the Buyers Guide office to fill out an application. 105 N. Broadway, Lowell. ABSOLUTELY NO PHONE CALLS WILL BE ACCEPTED!

NOW TAKING APPLICATIONS FOR NEWSPAPER CARRIERS - Looking for carriers to deliver the Buyers Guide every weekend. Driving route currently available. Please apply in person at the Buyers Guide, 105 N. Broadway, Lowell. No Phone Calls will be accepted about this position.

ANIMAL CAREGIVER - Looking for an ambitious, physically fit person to care for many small dogs in a large, impeccably clean facility. 1st or 2nd shift, would require 1 weekend shift per week. Alto area. E-mail resume/inquiries to: animalcaregivers@outlook.com or 616-868-7382.

NOW HIRING - and training for career positions with West Michigan's leading real estate company. Call Rick Seese, Greenridge Realty, Inc. for a confidential interview. 616-437-2576 or 616-974-4250.^{TFN}

GENERAL MANAGER - OIL CHANGE. Performance Plus Quick Lube in Lowell is hiring for store manager. Start up to \$35K plus bonuses & many benefits. We are seeking individuals who enjoy public interaction & leading a small team to accomplish goals. Job includes: customer service, hands-on auto work, staff supervision & overseeing daily operations. Basic automotive knowledge & excellent customer service skills are required. Some management experience is preferred. Apply by email to: performanceplus@outlook.com

AFTER SCHOOL CHILD CARE - Two young teens need after school helper and companionship. They attend different schools (Saranac & Lowell), are involved in sports and academic activities. Helper will tote kids in our van, feed them, help with homework and keep kids on schedule. Last helper was with us for 4 years. Please call Jolene at 616-443-3976.

LOWELL YOUTH LACROSSE COACH NEEDED - Seeking boys youth coach for spring 2015 season. Would need to start to be involved this winter. Call 987-9341.

help wanted

NOW HIRING - part time experienced maintenance person to maintain grounds and facility. 616-293-5653 k9academyinternational.com

COMMERCIAL CLEANING POSITIONS - Part-time evening cleaning positions available immediately in the East Fulton & Forest Hills area. One job Tuesday (2 hours) & Friday (6 hours), other job Tuesday (1 hour), Thursday (2 hours) & Friday (1 hour). Reliable transportation and valid drivers license required. We offer competitive wages. Applications are accepted Monday through Thursday 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Metropolitan Building Maintenance, 868 Barnum SW, Grand Rapids, MI 49509.

sales

MOVING SALE - July 4, 5 & 6, 946 Lincoln Lake. Corner of Lincoln Lake & Hunt.

4TH OF JULY GARAGE SALE - Dorm size refrigerator, clothes, household items, cameras, as much stuff as I can cram into my garage! Don't miss this one! Friday & Saturday, July 4-5, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. 1201 Sibley St., Lowell (behind Calvary Church).

WHAT WE NO LONGER USE, YOU MAY NEED - Yard sale, Thurs. & Fri., July 3 & 4, 9 a.m. - 6 p.m. Rowboat, boat motor, troller, vintage 50's dining table, microwave, light compound bow, books & more! 10346 Bluewater Hwy., Lowell.

for rent

WE DO BUSINESS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE FEDERAL FAIR HOUSING LAW - Equal Housing Opportunity. It is illegal to discriminate against any person because of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status or national origin. In the sale or rental of housing or residential lots; in the advertising the sale or rental of housing, in the financing of housing, in the provision of real estate brokerage services and in the appraisal of housing. Anyone who feels he or she has been discriminated against may file a complaint of housing discrimination: 1-800-669-9777 (toll free) 1-800-927-9275 (TTY).

PRICELESS STORAGE - Indoor/outdoor. New Units on Alden Nash, 1 mile South of I96. Call for specials 558-2900.^{TFN}

MURRY LAKE COTTAGE RENTAL - July 5-12 week is still open, \$750. 616-583-0110 or 616-581-7812.

HALL FOR RENT - Lowell Veteran's Center, 3100 Alden Nash. Newly remodeled, smoke-free, private, great location & great rate! www.VFW8303.org. FREE All Vets Coffee Hour at the center the 3rd Thursday of each month. Bring a friend. Call John at 299-0486 or 897-8303.^{TFN}

LEDGER OFFICE 105 N. Broadway, Lowell. Now accepting Federal Express packages. Daily pickup at 3 p.m.

services

ELECTRICIAN - retired electrician doing small jobs. Reasonable rates, discounts for seniors. Call 616-401-6547

TAXES, PAYROLL, QUICKBOOKS, & ACCOUNTING SERVICE - by certified Quickbooks advisor. Call Kathy 897-0686.^{TFN}

JIM'S POWER WASHING - Dirt, spores, mildew washed away. Call today, 616-915-1745.

BUSINESS CARDS - Before you order your cards from somewhere else - check our rates! Call Lowell Litho, 897-9261.

HANDY REPAIR SERVICE - All kinds of service work: locks rekeyed, deadbolts installed, screen & window repair. Call Bob Ford, 299-3198.^{TFN}

CASH PAID - walnut trees. Call Bob Sayers, 616-527-4142, Ionia.

LAMINATING SERVICE AVAILABLE - Next day service. Drop off & pieces will be available by 9 a.m. the next day. Lowell Litho, 105 N. Broadway, Lowell.

NEED A DUMPSTER? - 14 to 20 yards available. Garage, attic, household cleanup, roofing, trash, junk etc. Dependable service & affordable prices. Call for free estimates. Contact Doug 616-295-6640.^{TFN}

services

SHIP YOUR UPS PACKAGES WITH US & SAVE!! - Call us for a price comparison. We will need: weight, zip code & dimensions of the box. No Hazardous materials or firearms accepted at this location. Daily UPS pickup at 3 p.m. Lowell Ledger, 105 N. Broadway, 897-9261.

WALNUT HILL LAWN SERVICE - Rototilling for gardens, flowerbeds & lawns. Lawn mowing, fertilizing, tree & shrub trimming. Licensed, reasonable rates & free estimate. Call Aaron at 616-328-9558.

RELATIONSHIP-PRE-MARITAL SEMINAR - Building a solid foundation, July 22 from 6-8 p.m. in Lowell. Must reserve a spot. <http://www.lifetransitiontherapy.biz/> or 616-238-2116.

wanted

I WANT TO BUY - Refrigerator, stove, washer, dryer & furniture in good shape. Have cash. 989-584-6818.^{TFN}

misc.

LHS ALL ALUMNI GATHERING - Sat, July 12, 9 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. at Keiser's Kitchen for brunch. \$15 per person. Mail your check to: Lowell Education Foundation, 300 High Street, Lowell, MI 49331. Please note "Alumni Gathering" on memo. For info, e-mail: tcadfish@gmail.com

Coming Events

PLEASE NOTE - Coming Events are for non-profit organizations. If you are charging admission for an event - it is considered an advertisement. Coming events are ran on a space available basis & ARE NOT GUARANTEED TO RUN. If you would like to make sure your event is placed in the paper, please call our office & place it as a classified ad. We will not run ANY Garage or Rummage Sales as a coming event. All Coming Events or changes to coming events should be submitted by fax: 897-4809, email: classifieds@lowellbuyersguide.com, by mail: PO Box 128, Lowell, MI 49331 or in person: 105 N. Broadway, Lowell.

KNITTING - Tuesdays 6-7:15 p.m. Cathie Richter will be here to offer an instructional knitting class. Bring your projects & come & knit together. Gilda's Club, Lowell Clubhouse, 314 S. Hudson, Lowell, 897-8600.

MOMS IN TOUCH INTERNATIONAL - Thursdays, 9 a.m. - 10 a.m. at Friendship Country Chapel, 10200 Grand River Ave. Moms & grandmas come pray for our kids & schools. Contact Missy at 308-7920 or missykooistra@gmail.com with any questions.

FREE ALL VETS COFFEE HOUR - Third Thurs. of each month. Bring a friend. Lowell Veteran's Center, 3100 Alden Nash, Lowell. Call 868-7426 or 897-8303 for more information.

MOTHERS WHO HAVE OR HAVE HAD - sons/daughters serving in the military. We are meeting on the 3rd Wednesday of every month. For more info call Sally 616-761-2042.

LOWELL AREA PRAYER & HEALING ROOMS - located in the FROM building, 11535 Fulton Street, most Monday evenings, 6-8 p.m. Christian Scripture based. No cost or fees, no appointment necessary, confidentiality respected.

KENT COUNTY NARFE GROUP - for retired & current federal employees meet the 2nd Thursday at Trinity Lutheran Church, 2700 E. Fulton, 1/2 mile west of E. Beltline. Potluck at 12:30 p.m. & meeting begins at 1:30 p.m. Call Ed Moore for time, 616-784-6716.

ALTO LIONS CLUB - Meets 1st & 3rd Thursday at 7 p.m. at Keiser's Kitchen.

PARK PARTY - July 31, 10:30 a.m. at Scheid Park in Saranac. Sponsored by Saranac Public Library, 61 Bridge St., Saranac. 616-642-9146.

COFFEE WITH THE COUNCIL - Come meet & have a cup of coffee with your city councilmembers. First Saturday of each month at the Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce office, 113 Riverwalk Plaza, Lowell. 8 a.m. - 10 a.m.

CIVIL AIR PATROL - Meets the second & fourth Tues. of the month, 6 p.m., Benz Aviation Building at Ionia Airport, teen/adult programs available, Call Shawna, 616-430-1348 or visit online <http://mi222.miwg-cap.org>

SECOND MONDAY OF EVERY MONTH - Community Crisis Fund meeting at 7 p.m. at Poppa C's in Clarksville.

FREE SENIOR COFFEE - Every fourth Friday, 8-9 a.m., sponsored by Laurels of Kent, Lowell McDonalds, 1300 W. Main St.

VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION FOR FROM - 1st. Wednesday of the month, 6 p.m. and 3rd Thursday of the month at 1 p.m. FROM, 11535 Fulton St. E. Call for more information 897-8260.

FOOD PANTRY - First Friday of month at Lakeside Community Church, 6201 Whitneyville Rd. Free frozen, perishable food. Registration 1 p.m., distribution 4 p.m. Bring own containers. 868-6402.

ALTO AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY - meets the second Monday of the month at 7 p.m. at the Alto American Legion Post.

V.F.W. POST #8303 - meets the first Monday at 7 p.m. at 3116 Alden Nash S.E.

LOWELL SHOWBOAT GARDEN CLUB - meets the 3rd Monday in the Church of the Nazarene Fellowship Hall, 211 N. Washington St. at 6:30 p.m.

QUA-KE-ZIK SPORTSMANS CLUB - meets second and third Tuesdays at 8 p.m. at 8731 West Riverside Dr. Go to www.qua-ke-zik.org for info.

LOWELL LIONS CLUB - meets third Tuesday at noon at Lowell City Hall.

LOWELL AMATEUR RADIO CLUB - meets the 2nd Saturday at Flat River Outreach Ministries, 11535 E. Fulton, 9 a.m. social gathering; 10 a.m. meeting. LARC sponsors 145.27 MHz area radio repeater system.

FLAT RIVER OUTREACH MINISTRIES THRIFT STORE SUMMER HOURS - Wed. 10-8 p.m.; Thurs. & Fri. 10-6 p.m.; Sat., 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. at 11535 Fulton St. E. Thrift Shop, 897-8260; Food Pantry, 897-8260; Emergency Services, 897-8260.

**THEME:
NATURAL
DISASTERS**

ACROSS

- 1. *Hurricane-prone U.S. city
- 6. Olympic chant
- 9. British singer-songwriter
- 13. Gibson garnish
- 14. Hair goo
- 15. Subject of the musical, "Evita"
- 16. Declare invalid
- 17. Flower necklace
- 18. Latin American plain
- 19. *One killed over 200,000 people in 2004
- 21. Crying like a sheep
- 23. How many "if by sea?"
- 24. Chinese dynasty (1368-1644)
- 25. In the capacity of
- 28. Chesterfield, e.g.
- 30. Designated limit
- 35. "Do ___ others..."
- 37. Schindler kept one
- 39. Art class support
- 40. Pains
- 41. Torcher's misdeed
- 43. Japanese soup
- 44. Bear down under
- 46. Dublin land
- 47. 100 centavos
- 48. To imbue with soul
- 50. "___ Las Vegas" starring Elvis
- 52. Bloodshot
- 53. Horticultural implement
- 55. Get it wrong
- 57. *Warm current
- 60. *Dry spell
- 64. "Bye" to Banderas
- 65. Pastrami holder
- 67. "Umble" Heep
- 68. "That is," Latin
- 69. Reef fish
- 70. Artillery burst
- 71. Unit of force

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- 72. Hole puncher
- 73. Senior

DOWN

- 1. Castle feature
- 2. Travelers' stops
- 3. Hokkaido native
- 4. "*"_____ St. Helens," erupted in 1980

- 5. They come with marriage
- 6. Wrinkly fruit
- 7. "___ no evil..."
- 8. Way out
- 9. Kosher eatery
- 10. *1972 deadly blizzard killed thousands here
- 11. Goes with ding
- 12. Lennon's lady
- 15. *Black Death
- 20. Dough
- 22. Mandela's org.
- 24. Like a hippopotamus
- 25. *Measured by seismograph
- 26. Soviet entity
- 27. Rand McNally book
- 29. *It can get wild
- 31. Pack down
- 32. Basket material
- 33. Band on coat of arms
- 34. *It can happen in a flash
- 36. 1952 Winter Olympics host
- 38. Reality TV star
- 42. "_____ Say Never"
- 45. ENT, e.g.
- 49. Local network
- 51. Kindle
- 54. Land of "Gangnam Style"
- 56. Like country life
- 57. Whirlpool
- 58. Property right
- 59. Facial protrusion
- 60. "The Farmer in the _____"
- 61. Embellish
- 62. Possess or hold
- 63. *God of thunder
- 64. *This usually quickly follows disasters
- 66. Coniferous tree

Puzzle solutions on page 12

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on Allstate company

*National average annual savings based on data from customers who reported savings by switching to Esurance between 12/1/11 and 4/30/12. © 2012 Esurance Insurance Services, Inc. All rights reserved. CA License #0G87829

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lend a hand

volunteering opportunities

tutors needed

The Literacy Center of West Michigan has scheduled an information session on Monday, July 7, 2014, for prospective volunteer tutors. This session is held at 6:30 pm and lasts one hour. It allows persons interested in becoming volunteer tutors to find out more about the center and its literacy programs. At the end of the session, there will be an opportunity to sign up for tutor training.

The Literacy Center of W. Michigan is a nonprofit, United Way agency devoted to reducing illiteracy in the community. Based on 1990 census figures, at

least 19,000 adults in Kent County cannot read at a functional level. At least 6,000 adults cannot speak or understand English well. By training people to be tutors, the center can offer one-on-one reading help to adults asking for assistance in reading or English as a Second Language (ESL). You do not need to speak another language to tutor ESL.

The information session will be held at the Literacy Center of West Michigan, located at 1120 Monroe Ave., NW, Suite 240, Grand Rapids, MI. Please call 459-5151 (ext. 10) to register.

business matters



Greenridge Realty announced that Amy Reedy received Sales Associate of the Month in June.

This award recognizes Reedy for her outstanding success and achievements.



Amy Reedy

LAST WEEK'S ONLINE POLL RESULTS

What do you think our country should do about Iraq?

- Send Troops..... 0%
- Air Strikes 25%
- Stay Out Completely ... 75%
- No Opinion 0%

TO VOTE IN THIS WEEK'S ONLINE POLL

go to

WWW.

thelowellledger.com

105 N. Broadway
Lowell, MI
616.897.9261



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SOUTH	7,162	3,414	2,258		12,834

11535 Fulton St. East
897-8260

www.fromlowell.com

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Drop off your non-perishable foods at locations indicated in **red** & check out all the **Food Fight specials online at www.fromlowell.org**

TEAM MANAGERS

ALLEN EDWIN HOMES • **B.C. PIZZA** • **CANFIELD PLUMBING & HEATING** • ENWORK •
KING MILLING CO. • **LOWELL LEDGER/BUYERS GUIDE/LOWELL LITHO** •
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RIVER VALLEY CREDIT UNION • TIMPSON TRANSPORT INC.

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GREENRIDGE REALTY, INC. • HOOPER PRINTING • METRIC MANUFACTURING CO •
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THANK YOU TO ALL OF THOSE INDIVIDUALS WHO SUPPORT FOOD FIGHT!!!

Thomas Bezinque ♥ Linda Brooks ♥ Steve Carlson ♥ Karen Corbett ♥ Michael Curtis ♥ Don & Barb DenBoer
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Joyce VanDyke ♥ William & Diane Wieland ♥ Cliff Yankovich

Freedom Riders, continued

local veterans, two of which received the organizations' Purple Heart. The first of the award recipients was 84 year old Korean War veteran John Erickson.

Erickson, an Alto native, deployed for Korea in the summer of 1950. He, along with several other members of his regiment, were captured by Chinese soldiers after the unit had already suffered heavy casualties. Erickson spent the next 33 months as a prisoner of war enduring starvation and harsh conditions that led to the death of many of his peers.

"Every morning the guard would put his head

into the 8-foot by 16-foot hut that housed 12 men and ask, 'How many dead?' Oftentimes, they would lie and say none. There was only a certain food ration for each man and to act as though all were still alive meant more food for the others," it reads in the memoir of the war written by Erickson.

After the war ended Erickson returned home to heal and then began a 36 year career with the Kent County Road Commission. He has been married to his wife Lucille for more than forty years and they currently reside in Lowell.

Pickel spoke with great

pride as he talked about Erickson's contribution to us all, "John Erickson is a true American War Survivor. The nightmare he went through, we civilians will never know, but, he lives it each and everyday. John is a great soldier and wants more than ever to tell his story."

The family of fallen soldier and 2004 Lowell High School graduate Lucas Beachnaw was the second honoree to receive the Purple Heart from Pickel on stage.

Beachnaw, a sergeant in the 173rd Airborne Infantry, proudly served two tours in



Korean War Veteran John Erickson receives his Purple Heart plaque during a ceremony held along the Riverwalk.



Gold Star families join together on stage to honor their fallen loved ones during the flag presentation.



The family of fallen American hero Joseph Prentler on stage during the flag presentation.



The Freedom Ride processional makes it way down Main Street.

Afghanistan before losing his life in small arms fire in 2006. He was just 23 years old. His mother Jeanne was emotional as she accepted the handmade plaque.

"Lucas Beachnaw, well he is an American hero, I know his mother very well; I have spent a lot of time out at her home fixing plumbing and patching a roof for her. She is grateful for what we did in presenting her a plaque and we will be helping her sell t-shirts for the scholarship in Lucas's name that she awards each year to a deserving student," said Pickel on behalf of the family following the ceremony.

A short on stage visit from president of the Pink Rack Project and Freedom Ride partner Bobbie Gahan followed the Purple Heart presentation. Gahan thanked those in attendance and then surprised Pickel on stage with kind words and a gift. "What you have done with We The People Giving Back inspires me to continue my mission with Pink Rack Project. We may have two very different organizations but one very common goal," Gahan said to Pickel whose surprise and appreciation were evident to those in attendance.

Five Gold Star families, those that lost their loved ones in battle, took to the

stage next. The families and their soldiers were recognized and gifted a flag that the organization is working hard to approve in all fifty states which specifically represents the sacrifice made by these American heroes.

The five soldiers honored were Joseph Prentler, Nicholas Roush, David Julian, Justin Ellsworth and Chad Vollmer, who all served in either Afghanistan or Iraq during their time in service.

Pickel, who says that not serving his country is his life's biggest regret, said he is humbled by his role and stressed the importance of honoring and caring for each and every soldier.

"There is a huge problem with our veterans getting their VA benefits and this country has a "short term memory loss" when it comes to our fallen and those who served. I believe that can be overcome with simple kindness and education."

The Freedom Cruise also hosted a number of other special events, raffles and activities during the week-long celebration. Revenue generated will directly benefit the Finish the Mission Veteran Relief Fund which exclusively assists West Michigan veterans.

Take a selfie having fun over the 4th of July, send it in AND WIN \$25*!

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