

## STORIES OF perseverance

pages 7-10



## kayaking journey



page 16

## Energy policy topic of MAE visit and speech

by Tim McAllister  
contributing reporter

Valerie Brader, executive director of the Michigan Agency for Energy, was in Lowell last Wednesday, July 15. After visiting the biodigester, Brader then gave a speech at the Grand Volute Ballrooms, 655 Lincoln Lake.

Brader was appointed executive director of the MAE when it was created by governor Rick Snyder in January 2015. Her previous positions were deputy legal counsel and senior policy adviser to Snyder. She is a Rhodes scholar and has degrees from Harvard, Radcliffe, Oxford and Georgetown. Lowell Light & Power general manager Greg Pierce gave Brader a tour of the biodigester at 625 Chatham in Lowell.

"The tour with Valerie went fine," Pierce said. "We toured the Lowell Energy Center and viewed the combustion turbines, as well as the biodigester facility. She was extremely

interested and impressed with Lowell's facility and that we are a forward-thinking community in the forefront of energy sustainability. She had very positive comments in her talk about our community and our being a leader in the state towards the energy goals and concepts that are critical for the future of Michigan's energy policy."

After the biodigester tour Brader gave a speech about energy policy at the Grand Volute Ballrooms. The speech was attended by various local officials and business owners, including city manager Mark Howe, mayor Jim Hodges and Chimera Design owner Cliff Yankovich, as well as Jim Weeks, executive director of the Michigan Municipal Electric Association. The speech included speculation on the future of energy in Michigan.

Energy, continued, page 3

## Last opportunity to place your bid

Pink Arrow Pride has had a very special bequest up for auction. Renee Grant, who lost her battle with cancer last December, willed her 2008 Yamaha V-Star 650 Custom motorcycle to Pink Arrow.

The bike is on display at Wittench GMC located at 749 W. Main Street in Lowell. There you can place your bid until 2 pm on Saturday, July 25.

Look in next week's Ledger announcing who placed the winning bid.



Bidding on Renee Grant's 2008 Yamaha V-Star 650 Custom motorcycle ends at 2 pm on Saturday, July 25.

## Arrival of first load of wheat at King Milling



The first load of new crop wheat for 2015 arrived at the King Milling Company on July 17. The load was good quality soft red winter wheat with a 59 test weight and a moisture of 16.2 percent. This wheat was grown by Joe Piccard of Ada and delivered by Ken Zahm (pictured right). The wheat was unloaded by King Milling Company employees Josh Bartholomew (left) and Steve Barle (center).

## Interim public works director enjoying his job

by Tim McAllister  
contributing reporter

Ron Woods has been Lowell's interim director of public works for two months. He has committed "six months to a year" to the position. Woods, 64, was Kentwood's public works director for 18 years until he retired from that position last December. Dan DesJarden, Lowell's former public works director, retired in May. The city hired a replacement, but they dropped out.

"I was retired for three months and I got a call from [Lowell city manager] Mark Howe," Woods said. "[Howe] said, 'I have a problem. Our public works director is retiring. We made an offer to an individual from the east side of the state and he turned

us down at the last minute. I need somebody to come in and help, especially with the projects that we have ongoing right now.' I told Mark, 'Gosh, I'm retired. I really like being retired, but I'll make a six month to a year commitment to help you get through this process and bring some experience to the job for a period of time and help you get through the construction season [and] through the infiltration and inflow analysis.' I used to do that for the state and I have been involved in hundreds of lift station designs and operations over the years. He talked about all of the projects that they have going on and all of the people that they're dealing with, people that I've worked with many times over my career. I said, 'That sounds like it could

be fun for a period of time. Sign me up.' It just seemed like a natural fit and, quite frankly I enjoy doing what I'm doing. Coming back in for six months to a year, that's a finite time period."

Woods got his Associate's degree from Grand Rapids Junior College and he has a Bachelor's and a Master's in civil engineering from the University of Michigan.

"Prior to working for the city of Kentwood I was the senior engineer in the surface water quality division of the Department of Natural Resources in Grand Rapids," Woods said. "In 1986 I did the design review and issued the construction permit for

Interim director, continued, page 2

50 CENTS



# Interim director, continued

the Lowell waste water treatment plant.”

Woods was able to jump right into the position and has a lot of plans for his “six months to a year.”

“Lowell is a small town with big city infrastructure,” Woods said. “You’ve got a water system, you’ve got parks, bridges and roads, all the things that you have in a big city, smaller scale. So there’s a huge diversity of requirements for this type of a position and it’s stuff that I’ve dealt with my whole career. It was interesting. To me it was like a challenge to come here and get a different perspective on stuff that

I’d dealt with on a bigger scale. It’s been interesting. I’ve really enjoyed it. It’s different, but it’s also the same thing. You’ve got budget constraints, you’ve got roads that are crumbling, you’ve got infrastructure that needs to be improved, you’ve got the infiltration and inflow study on the sanitary sewer system. The city is undertaking an infiltration and inflow study on the sewer system and we’re looking at expanding the main sewage lift station. That takes all of the sewage from the city and pumps it into the waste water treatment plant. I have a lot of experience in the past

working with those two systems. Every municipality is dealing with those kinds of issues now. I’ve been here two months and I see so many things I want to try and accomplish. I’m still having a good time. I’m excited. I can’t believe it’s been two months already.”

Even though he knows his time in Lowell is limited, Woods has been too busy to start looking for his replacement.

“We haven’t even started [the hiring process] yet,” Woods said. “I talked with Mark and he said, ‘When do you want to start this process?’ I said, ‘Mark, I’ve got too many things

going on. I don’t have the time right now.’ Mark said, ‘It sounds like you’re making a year commitment instead of a six month commitment.’ We’ve got too many things going on. I want to get through the construction season. I think maybe this winter we’ll advertise [the public works director position].”

Woods had many kind things to say about the city of Lowell and about past and current public works employees.

“Dan [DesJarden] did a great job,” Woods said. “He was here for many years, worked his way up the ranks, was well respected by

the guys. I had the pleasure of working with him for about three weeks before he retired. He served the city well for many years. I’m all about communicating with the guys. They know the city better than anybody else, they know where every pothole is, so I rely on their

background and knowledge. It’s a good relationship. This is a great city. It’s been fun, the people have all been extremely welcoming and good to work with. I’m just having a good time and enjoying what I’m doing. Thank you for the opportunity.”



Interim public works director Ron Woods has committed “six months to a year” to Lowell.



## along main street

### SUMMER YOUTH THEATER AT LOWELLARTS!

Shakespeare in the Park, Twelfth Night - for ages 7-18. Aug. 1, Aug. 10-13 and Aug. 17-20 from 6-7:30 pm at Fallasburg Park. To register or for more info visit [www.lowellartsmi.org](http://www.lowellartsmi.org) or call 897-8545.

### CALL FOR PLAYWRIGHTS

LowellArts! players seeking playwrights to submit a 10-minute play to the *Play Bytes* by Playwrights competition. Plays submitted can be drama or comedy and are to fit the theme: *Things That Go Bump In the Night*. The competition is open to any playwright 18 years and older and the deadline is August 10. For more information contact LowellArts! at [info@lowellartsmi.org](mailto:info@lowellartsmi.org) or call 897-8545.

### CALL FOR ARTISTS: FALLASBURG FALL FESTIVAL

Artists are invited to apply to be part of the second annual LowellArts! member booth at the Fallasburg Fall Festival for the Arts on Sept. 19 and 20. Selected artists will be provided a display area in an outdoor, tented booth with approximately 20 other artists. Deadline is August 15. For more information contact LowellArts! at [info@lowellartsmi.org](mailto:info@lowellartsmi.org) or call 897-8545.

Feel free to send your event information to the Ledger for Along Main St. All submission requests for Along Main St. are subject to space limitations. The Ledger makes no assurances that they will appear in print. To ensure that an event notification will appear in the Ledger, it is best to place a paid advertisement. All efforts will be made to place suitable items in the Along Main St. column but they are printed at the discretion of the publisher. For profit events, church services, yard sales and the like, will not appear in this column.

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# Energy, continued

“There are two possible futures that everyone seems to think are pretty likely,” Brader said. “One in which natural gas is the fuel of the future and one in which renewables are the fuel of the future. [...] In the past, Michigan’s been a very, very coal-heavy state. We get more than half of our power from coal. We’re one of the top ten in the country for getting our power from coal.

For Michigan, our questions are how do we replace all the coal that is closing and what do we replace it with?”

Brader was impressed with Lowell’s biodigester.

“This speech is a little easier to give in other communities that aren’t as advanced as Lowell, to be honest,” Brader said. “I heard today that you reduced energy usage in the schools by 48 percent,

saving you about \$6 million a year. That’s a nice little chunk of change in any school district’s pocket. [...] How do we help replicate that across Michigan? You have a facility that wins on cost [and] that helps with reliability, because you’ve got enough power there to power Lowell if everything else goes wrong. You’ve got the environmental protection of a facility

that’s taking in waste. [...] You have solutions. You have been able to develop solutions that really do make Michigan more adaptable.”

She explained the philosophy behind governor Snyder’s energy policy.

“There are really three pillars to energy policy that the governor looks at,” Brader said. “The first thing he looks at is reliability. Are we going to be able

to have the power that we need when we need it? The second thing he looks at is affordability, making sure that we not only have our residents pay less than the national average for their combined heating and electrical bills, but also making sure that our businesses have the energy they need to be able to be in Michigan and compete. And then [third], the environment, really trying

to make sure that we’re being environmentally protective.”

Brader offered some advice for the power industry in Michigan.

“Waste reduction is the number one thing Michigan needs to be doing,” Brader said. “We [should take] advantage of our lowest-cost resources, our cleanest resources and [make] sure that the lights stay on for the people of Michigan.”

# Council discusses ordinances, street repairs and police budget; Betty Morlock’s final council meeting

by Tim McAllister  
contributing reporter

Lowell city council had a short, sparsely attended meeting at city hall on Monday, July 20.

Two of the three city councilors were absent from the meeting. Councilors Matt Mayer and Sharon Ellison were unable to attend. The reasons for their absences was not noted. Five members of the public also attended the meeting.

Early in the meeting councilor Jeff Altoft made a statement about a large sign he has in his yard that says, “Warning, the Lowell police deemed this yard unsafe.” The police recently gave Altoft two weeks to clean debris from his yard in order to avoid a fine. Altoft believes he was targeted for enforcement of the ordinance because he wants the council to look over the police department’s budget.

“I don’t think the

ordinances are enforced equally in this town and I never have,” Altoft said. “I

think we should be working on more about enforcing

what we have or taking them off the books.”

Two new discussion items were added to the agenda as the meeting started. One of the new agenda items, street repairs, was discussed by the council.

“I think that there’s enough interest [by] some people in the city of Lowell that I think maybe we should look into maybe putting something on the ballot to come up with some ways to finance the streets,” Altoft said. “If you look back, as we built this nice police force we have, we quit fixing the streets in the city of Lowell. [...] It’s time that the citizens of Lowell get their say, so I think we should find out if it’s too late to put it on the ballot this year. If it isn’t, we should get a committee

together right away and hash it out. There [are] a lot of people that would like to be on that committee.”

The council decided that the other new agenda item, the police department’s budget, will be discussed at an upcoming city council workshop.

The meeting was the last one for retiring city clerk Betty Morlock. City manager Mark Howe spoke fondly about Morlock, who then received a standing ovation.

“I will be forever grateful for having the opportunity to work with you, Betty,” Howe said.

“But more so I will be forever grateful for having the opportunity to [...] get to know you and to be your friend.”

There will be a public reception for Morlock at the Main Street Inn on August 6. The next city council meeting will be at city hall at 7 pm on Monday, August 3.



It was retiring city clerk Betty Morlock’s final city council meeting.

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~Gene Perret

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## Youth volunteers assist Alpha Women's Center

by Tim McAllister  
 contributing reporter

Teenage volunteers from a local church spent the day working at Alpha Women's Center, 517 E. Main St., on Wednesday, July 15.

Twenty-four members of Reach Student Ministries, a Christian youth group, did yard work, clerical work, painting and other chores as part of their missionary training. The youth group is affiliated with West Cannon Baptist Church, 5760 Cannonsburg Rd. NE, Belmont.

"We do a whole week of serving. We're volunteering around the community," said Lauren Bernhardt, one of the volunteers. "Today we're helping out the Alpha Women's Center. We're just helping them clean up, making it look nicer. We put together some booklets for the women who come here who need help with their pregnancy. Or if they're a single mom, they can come here and get help."

The kids spent that Wednesday in Lowell. Other stops during their week of volunteering included Habitat for Humanity and Mel Trotter.

"Our youth group, Reach Student Ministries, is on a 'local missions' trip," said Eric Shellner, West Cannon Baptist Church youth pastor. "We're visiting different local ministries and helping out throughout the week, kind of to give the students a taste of ministries they can be involved in on a regular basis. It's kind of just a snapshot to whet their appetites for what could be later."

Christa Wetzel, executive director of Alpha Women's Center was grateful for all the work the kids did.

"They're doing all sorts of projects," Wetzel said. "They've done yard clean up, they've painted parts of the building, inside and out; they've stuffed newsletters, they've made books, training manuals; organized

clothing and donations. They've been here since 9:30 this morning and they're going strong, getting a lot done. We love having everybody come and we like to build a relationship with them. We depend very heavily on volunteer work."

Alpha Women's Center is a pro-life organization where pregnant women and single mothers can receive counseling as well as more tangible assistance like clothes, diapers and food.

"We work with women that are pregnant," Wetzel said. "If they're in a crisis pregnancy that is overwhelming for them, we want to walk along side them, help them. We love life, so we want to help them choose life if they can. If adoption is the best option we'll try and help them with that or just give them a support system."

## financial focus



Christopher C. Godbold

### What happens to my IRA after I'm gone?

Contributing to an IRA can help you build some of the resources you will need to enjoy a comfortable retirement. But what happens to your IRA if you don't use it up in your lifetime?

You can still put the IRA's assets to good use — as long as you've made the right moves and communicated your wishes clearly to your family.

When you opened your IRA, you should have named a beneficiary — someone who will receive the IRA assets when you pass away. You could also name a contingent beneficiary if the first beneficiary dies before you. These beneficiary designations are important because they can supersede the instructions left in your will.

If you name your spouse as beneficiary of your IRA, he or she has options unavailable to other beneficiaries. Here are two possibilities:

- *Roll over assets into a new or an existing IRA* — Your surviving spouse can roll over your IRA's assets into his or her

IRA or use the money to create a new IRA. And, as long as your spouse is eligible, he or she can then add new contributions to the IRA. This could be a good choice if your spouse won't need the money right away and would like to keep it in a tax-advantaged account for as long as possible. Upon reaching age 70½, though, your spouse will likely need to start taking withdrawals ("required minimum distributions"), unless the inherited IRA was a Roth IRA.

- *Convert the assets to a Roth IRA* — If you are leaving a traditional IRA to your spouse, he or she could roll over the assets into a new or an existing IRA and then convert the assets into a Roth IRA. This move gives your spouse at least two potential advantages. First, if certain requirements are met, no taxes are due on the withdrawals. Second, as mentioned above, no withdrawals are even required — your spouse can leave the money intact for as long as desired. However, taxes will be due on the amount converted to a Roth,

so this conversion may only make sense if your spouse has enough assets available in a nonretirement account to pay the tax bill.

Thus far, we've just talked about your spouse as the beneficiary. But what might happen if you've named someone else — perhaps a child or grandchild — as the primary beneficiary of your IRA? In this case, the beneficiary won't have the option of rolling over the IRA. Instead, he or she can either take the money as a lump sum or take distributions over time. If you pass away before age 70½, and you hadn't started taking the required minimum distributions, your beneficiary must start taking withdrawals by Dec. 31 in the year following the year in which you pass away. These withdrawals can be stretched out over your beneficiary's lifetime, though, spreading out the tax obligations. As an alternative, your beneficiary can delay taking distributions, but he or she would need to withdraw all the money within five years of your death.

When dealing with any aspect of your estate plans, including naming beneficiaries for your IRA, you'll want to consult with your tax and legal professionals. You put a lot of time and effort into building the assets in your IRA — so you'll also want to take care in how you pass these assets along.

# viewpoint

## kidsView



by Sierra Hieshetter

This summer our annual national park trip was to the Grand Canyon. We left on June 12 and stopped at many fun places along the way. One such stop was at the Big Texan Roadhouse. This restaurant is the home of the free 72 oz. steak. The only catch is that you have to eat the entire meal in under an hour (the 72 oz. steak, as well as shrimp, salad, roll and potato)! We drove along old Route 66 and stopped in Williams, AZ. This is the last town on the old Route 66 bypassed by the expressway. It was a fun town to explore and shop. Before we got to the Grand Canyon, we stopped at Petrified Forest National Park and drove along the 27-mile road through the park

stopping at lookout points to enjoy the amazing views. We saw petroglyphs, Indian ruins and, of course, a lot of petrified wood.

When we got to the Grand Canyon we checked in at our campsite and then took the shuttle bus to the rim. I am going to take this minute to praise the shuttle bus service at the park. It is free and there are stops everywhere. Since parking is scarce, you can just walk to the bus stop and take a ride.

The canyon itself is amazing. It is bigger than you could ever imagine. There is a different view at every lookout and always something to do, like hiking, shopping, checking

out the restaurants and people watching. There are some very interesting people that visit the canyon. The Jr. Ranger badge was relatively easy to get as you only had to complete four activities and attend a ranger

the shade! Mom and I were smart and stayed on the rim the day that they hiked down and checked out more sights. We did hike down to meet them the next day as they hiked out, but only made it down about a mile

since and Bert Hayes has been acting nightwatch in his stead.



program. The program we attended was a talk about the California condors. It was very informative, but I was disappointed that we did not get to see an actual condor. Dillon and dad hiked to the bottom of the canyon where it was 125 degrees...109 in

since they started their hike at 2:30 am! I had so much fun in the Grand Canyon. If you want to read a more detailed account of our adventures, please visit my new blog at [www.jr-rangerjournal.com](http://www.jr-rangerjournal.com)

### 75 years ago The Lowell Ledger July 25, 1940

Headline: Many noted stars seen on Showboat program – Promises to outshine all efforts of previous years. When Robert E. Lee IX rounds Cat Tail Point and ties up at the wharf to open the ninth annual Lowell Showboat next Wednesday evening, July 31, a real treat is in store for the audience. The Lowell Showboat committee announces that this year's program will far outshine any of those of previous years. The committee has always been anxious to bring a real star to the Showboat audiences. Their efforts have finally met with success. Eddie Peabody, famous screen and radio star, will appear in person on the Showboat stage. He is called the Banjo King. Mr. Peabody has 48 moving pictures to his credit. He was featured with Captain Henry's Showboat program, also with Rudy Vallee and at the present time is appearing on a nationally known radio Barn Dance program. Millions of persons have heard him on the radio, however, one must witness his act to fully appreciate the fact that he is one of the greatest musical personalities on the American stage today.

Headline: Neighbors pay grand tribute to M. B. McPherson – Proudly support Lowell man for governor of Michigan. Over 200 intimate friends and associates of Melville B. McPherson, together with over 150 guests from outside the community, on Monday evening paid tribute to the sage from Vergennes when he formally tossed his hat into the Republican primary race for governor. The outpouring of friendship was in evidence throughout the evening. Nothing concerning Mr. McPherson's life, ability and service was left unsaid. It was very gratifying to Mr. McPherson's many local friends to hear the tribute paid to him by high county and state officials from other parts of Michigan.

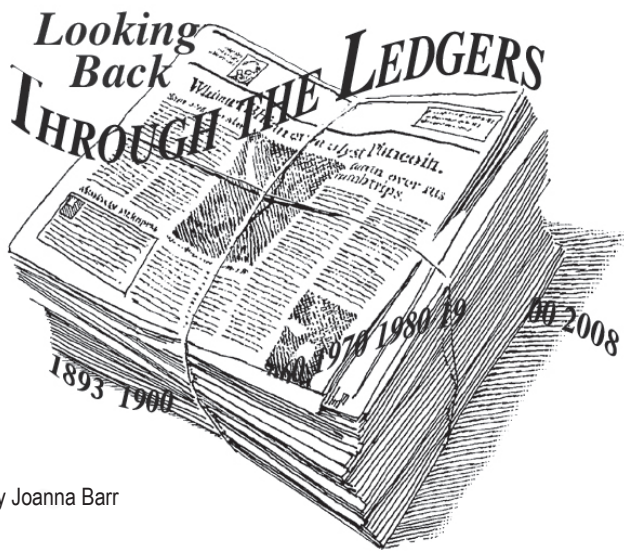
Returning from a private preview in Detroit of three new lines of Hudson cars for 1941, Bibbler Motor Sales, Hudson dealers for Lowell, disclosed today that the new Hudson cars, first of the industry's new model offerings, began rolling off the assembly line, several weeks ago at the company's huge Detroit plant, after many months of preparation, involving important chassis changes and an advanced style design. Public announcement of the new cars will follow in a few weeks, Mr. Bibbler said.

### 50 years ago Lowell Ledger July 22, 1965

Headline: Prowlers reported in northwest section of city. Lowell Police have had several complaints in the last week on prowlers and window peepers in the northwest section of the city. About midnight Sunday, neighbors called the police, when they heard voices outside the I. O. Altenberger home at 964 Riverside Drive. Police arrived just in time to see two youths run from between the houses. A ladder was found against the side of the building. Other families in the area have seen prowlers in their yards, but only a few cases were reported to the authorities.

Whistle toots: The Showboat endmen, Ron Hoist, Charles Hoffman, Ron Weeks, Gordon Gould, Loren Wohlford and Dick McNeal accompanied by this year's interlocutor, Forrest Buck, and C. H. Runciman attended the Wednesday night performance of the Chesaning Showboat on the Shiawassee River. Wm. S. Doyle, president of Showboat, and Arnold Wittenbach, city mayor, were in attendance at Friday's show.

During their Junior year the girls of the 1916 graduating class of Lowell High School organized a



By Joanna Barr

### 125 years ago Lowell Journal July 23, 1890

The Lowell Journal is like wine – it improves with age. Now 26 years old and the present proprietors are pushing it to the front rank of country newspapers. – Rockford Register.

At a special meeting of the Business Men's Association, held last night, it was resolved that we have a Fair here this fall, and they appointed two committees to get the thing in line, one committee to solicit cash subscriptions and stock, and the other to negotiate for a location. The fair is a sure go and there is an open date, the week of Sept. 29 to Oct. 4th. Premiums will be offered, and liberal ones too, for all sorts of Agricultural products. Don't forget, Lowell, will have a Fair.

H. S. Schreiner enjoyed a new experience, Tuesday morning, when he found the burglars had entered his shop some time during the night and made away with \$30 worth of whips, dusters and fly-nets. Those fellows must have it in for him, as last spring they tried to steal his driving mare and have written him that they would do so yet.

Parents, do you know where your boys are at night? If not you had best look after them. There are several of our boys connected with small vicious transactions, whose parents would be thunderstruck if they knew of it. These things are small enough in their way, but they are leaders and a boy will do worse next time, easier than he did these.

The new Railroad is still in the same old rut. At the meeting, held last Friday evening nothing was done but to appoint a committee, composed of our Common Council, to confer with Mr. Boynton, from time to time, and when he was ready to report finally, to call a meeting of citizens to listen to the report and decide what will be done.

### 100 years ago The Lowell Ledger July 22, 1915

Headline: Made fast time – Races at Recreation Park last Saturday hotly contested. The races at Recreation park July 17 were well attended considering the busy times with the farmers and were claimed to be the best ever held here...It is proposed to have a midweek matinee about August 12.

The fire alarm Monday was due to a gasoline explosion at the Scott hardware. Not much damage done. The firemen were notified before they got started not to make the run, as the fire had been extinguished.

A team belonging to John Howard became frightened while cultivating on his farm west of town Friday and ran down Main street, running into the turning post at the west end and carrying it some distance until they were stopped near the King Milling company office. The horses were badly cut and bruised about the legs and feet.

Bert Densmore of Saranac will have a hearing before Judge Andrews July 28 on a charge of disorderly conduct July 17, the day of the races. He is charged with reckless driving to and from the race track and with refusing to stop at order of officers. Ed. Walker's foot was run over by Densmore's car and badly injured. He has been confined to the house

# health



## oral contraceptives

Oral contraceptives, also called birth control pills, are a safe and reliable option for preventing unwanted pregnancy. Most OCPs contain a combination of two types of hormones: an estrogen and a progestin. Both of these hormones are naturally found in women's bodies. There are many different estrogens and progestins, and different pills have different combinations, but they all work similarly.

The most important requirement for women taking these meds is that they must remember to take them every day at approximately the same time of day. OCPs are not effective when doses are missed frequently. These

meds should not be given to women over the age of 35 who are smokers, because there is an increased risk of developing blood clots, or to women who have high blood pressure, heart disease, migraine with aura, liver problems or a history of blood clots, stroke or cancer.

OCPs are usually prescribed for four weeks at a time, with each pack containing four to seven days of hormone-free pills. Women get their period during these days. OCPs can be started any day of the week and any day of the menstrual cycle. A back up method of contraception should be used for the first month of treatment. If birth

control pills are taken perfectly, the chance of pregnancy is 0.1 percent. However, in the real world, accounting for missed days of use, the chance of pregnancy is about eight percent per year.

Side effects of OCPs vary depending on the pill's hormone levels and types. Some include vaginal spotting and abnormal bleeding (this usually decreases after the first three months), breast tenderness, bloating, and nausea. Studies have shown that OCPs do not cause major weight gain. OCPs may also have some beneficial effects other than birth control. They can help with irregular or heavy periods, painful periods or premenstrual symptoms, polycystic ovarian syndrome, acne, uterine fibroids, and endometriosis. It is very important to know that OCPs do not protect against sexually transmitted diseases.

# college news

Some 3,000 Grand Valley State University students participated in commencement ceremonies on April 25th at Van Andel Arena in Grand Rapids including the 100,000th graduate.

Local students who graduated at the conclusion of the winter 2015 semester in April include, Ada: Anusha Allaparthi, Master of Science; Nickolas D. Armstrong, Bachelor of Science; David A. Beerens, Bachelor of Science; Kelsey K. Dale, Bachelor of Science; Lindsay A. Detzler, Bachelor of Business Administration; David A. Emery, Bachelor of Science; Anthony J. Homolka, Bachelor of Arts; Ryan C. Hoogmoed, Bachelor of Science; Ayesha B. Ilahi, Bachelor of Science; Kathryn G. Kerr, Bachelor of Arts; Robert M. Kintz, Bachelor of Science; Ryan J. Kooi, Bachelor of Science; Linda M. Kotarski, Master of Social Work; Jack T. Lane, Master of Public Administration; Allison G. Lemley, Bachelor of Arts; Genene A. MacDonald,

Bachelor of Social Work; Daniel J. Merck, Bachelor of Science; Elizabeth A. Monterusso, Bachelor of Science; Erika L. Murray, Master of Social Work; Abigail E. Ozarow, Master of Social Work; Kaylie S. Petroelje, Bachelor of Business Administration; Nolan Pilarz, Master of Business Administration; Jacob R. Rinvelt, Bachelor of Business Administration; Shelby M. Scarla, Bachelor of Business Administration; Jacob A. Schaafsma, Bachelor of Arts; Alyssa J. Sullivan, Bachelor of Arts; Katherine R. Tompkins, Bachelor of Science; Samantha T. Vickery, Bachelor of Science; and Emma M. Wolf, Bachelor of Arts; Alto: Chad L. Gorton, Master of Education; William R. Mendez, Bachelor of Science; Ashley M. Metternick, Bachelor of Business Administration; Hannah J. Rankin, Master of Social Work; and Steven B. VanderVeen, Bachelor of Business Administration; Lowell: Kaylea W. Baarman, Bachelor of Science; Kyle L. Barrett, Bachelor of

Business Administration; Benjamin D. Cain, Bachelor of Science; Timothy P. Creighton, Bachelor of Science; Natasha N. Eggleston, Bachelor of Social Work; Heather D. Ferris, Bachelor of Science; Rachael A. Gregory, Bachelor of Arts; Shannon S. Johnston, Bachelor of Science; Tyler S. Matteson, Bachelor of Science; Ashley L. Penninga, Bachelor of Arts; Erin M. Setter, Master of Education; Samuel D. Steed, Bachelor of Business Administration; Amanda J. Sterzick, Master of Social Work; Mary K. VanderLaan, Bachelor of Science; and Kelly L. Walker, Master of Social Work.

Nicole Baker, of Lowell, received her white coat at the Physician Assistant program class of 2016 White Coat Ceremony at Lincoln Memorial University - DeBusk College of Osteopathic Medicine (LMU-DCOM) in Harrogate, Tennessee, on June 27, 2015. Baker is a second-year physician assistant student at LMU-DCOM.

*Planning A Wedding?*

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**Courage is the most important of all the virtues because without courage, you can't practice any other virtue consistently.**  
— *Maya Angelou*

# happy birthday!

- JULY 22**  
Kelly Marie Roth, Laurie Fonger, Eric Shear, Noreen Myers, T.J. Butler.
- JULY 23**  
Dave Fosburg, Nathan Swift, Heather Pretzel, Robert Jahnke.
- JULY 24**  
Nathan Bush, Mike Lally.
- JULY 26**  
Elaine Gregersen, Eric Baird, Josh Geldersma, Ellen Dilly.
- JULY 27**  
Kyle Hendrick, Mike Shalander, Ed Roth Sr.,

Jason Spencer, Paige Wilson.

**JULY 28**  
Tom Speerstra, Rachel Shanne Smith, Bobby Wright, Tiffany Hunt, Alexander Barr.

\*\*\*  
**A diplomat is a man who always remembers a woman's birthday but never remembers her age.**  
- *Robert Frost*

# area churches

**SNOW UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**  
3189 Snow Ave. SE, Lowell  
Pastor Tony Blomquist  
9:45 A.M. Sunday School  
10:30 A.M. Fellowship  
11:00 A.M. Worship  
897-7869  
Nursery & Children  
Worship Programs Provided  
A friend...a family...a mission!

**GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
10305 Bluewater Highway (Missouri Synod)  
Halfway between Lowell & Saranac on M-27  
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

**ST. MARY CATHOLIC CHURCH**  
402 Amity St. • 897-9820  
www.stmarylowell.com  
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Saturday confessions: 3-4:30 PM  
Prayer & adoration each Wed. 8:00 AM - 8 PM  
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**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UCC**  
865 Lincoln Lake SE  
616.897.5906  
Sunday Worship 10:00 A.M.  
Pastor J. Richard Sherlock  
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**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF LOWELL**  
2275 West Main Street • 897-7168  
Barrier Free  
Internet: <http://www.fcilowell.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. 8:15 - 8 P.M.  
Youth Ministry - grades 6-12 Mon. 8:30 - 9:30 P.M.  
(Youth Ministry moves to Weill during summer)

**FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF LOWELL**  
621 E. Main Street  
897-5936  
www.lowellumc.com  
Barrier-free entrance  
SUNDAY WORSHIP.....9:30  
Sunday School.....9:30  
YOUTH GROUPS (JR. & SR. HIGH).....6:00 PM  
Worship on the Riverwalk begins July 12  
Pastor Brad Brillhart

**Family is why we do it all.**

Deborah White, Agent  
11827 Fallon St E  
Lowell, MI 49331  
Doc: 616-897-8227  
dwhite@statefarm.com

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# perseverance

## A community fighting cancer

Throughout July the Lowell Ledger and the Buyers Guide will once again highlight the stories of area cancer survivors and those who are dealing with grief. 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 Modern Photographics of Lowell

### Kim Schwacha

**It is my name in the Miracle and I am the biggest guy in the world. For always been happy (with the exception of the health care in the state thing when I was eight-year-old, but I digress and love to work).**

**It is more than a story of optimism, faith, endurance and work. It is more a story of hope, love, support, determination, appreciation and the ability to keep an eye on the pain, devastation of the fact that I was from an advanced phase unresectable disease, when it came down to me and you will find your own meaning and fulfillment in the fight against cancer and every other disease. It is a small town where the Pink Arrow Pride was born and has inspired not only Lowell but communities throughout the state and even across the nation. It is that spirit that makes me happy. It is the love of the town from its most devoted, experienced village in our fight against cancer.**

**That it was ME...I was born and living in Lowell, Michigan and wanted to my job back. This is how the conversation went with the CEO operator who actually helped to secure in my local and was ready to give me the money of the things.**

**Dr. Lynn - "What do you want?"**



**My wife and I are both cancer survivors and we are proud to be part of the fight against cancer. We are grateful for the support and love from our community.**

**Kim - "What is your story?"**

**Dr. Lynn - "It is a story of hope and faith."**

**Kim - "What is your story?"**

**Dr. Lynn - "It is a story of hope and faith."**

**Kim - "I do."**

**Kim - "I do."**

**They have with me and I will be there.**

**Dr. Lynn - "What is your story?"**



Enwork is proud to support the Pink Arrow Pride effort for a variety of reasons. We love Lowell and the biggest reason is the people. The team at Enwork is impressed and appreciative of the leaders and volunteers in our community who bring the energy to make this miracle happen. Helping people in need on their cancer journey with financial assistance, awarding scholarships for our youth and providing opportunities for support groups through Gilda's club is an incredible initiative.

Additionally, like everyone in our community Enwork has been significantly impacted by cancer. Parents, brothers, sisters, friends, suppliers, Enwork sales people around the country and more that are tied to the Enwork family have been affected. We have been on all sides of this fight - we have lost loved ones and have had wonderful survival successes. We have others from our family fighting right now through their journey. We are happy to honor them with our participation in Pink Arrow Pride.

When we talk about Lowell outside of our community and tell people that the Pink Arrow Pride provides financial assistance for people getting radiation and chemo, who can't work and thus can't pay their rent, it is a powerful story. What we have in Lowell is special and it is critical that we keep the momentum growing. Enwork is pleased to once again be a primary sponsor of Pink Arrow Pride and also pleased to announce that we will be expanding our financial support by fully sponsoring the girls volleyball game before the football game.

Great job leaders. Great job volunteers. And most importantly, bless all on their journey.

Dave and Kelli Powell  
Owners, Enwork







# perseverance

## A community fighting cancer

### Judy Stretton-Ward

My breast cancer journey began in December 13, 2014, with a routine mammogram. I was diagnosed with stage 1 breast cancer. I had a lumpectomy and radiation. I had a mastectomy in January 2015. I had a lumpectomy and radiation. I had a mastectomy in January 2015. I had a lumpectomy and radiation. I had a mastectomy in January 2015.

When the mastectomy was done, I had a lumpectomy and radiation. I had a mastectomy in January 2015. I had a lumpectomy and radiation. I had a mastectomy in January 2015.

Over the next few weeks, I had a lumpectomy and radiation. I had a mastectomy in January 2015. I had a lumpectomy and radiation. I had a mastectomy in January 2015.

My oncologist suggested my mastectomy. I had a lumpectomy and radiation. I had a mastectomy in January 2015. I had a lumpectomy and radiation. I had a mastectomy in January 2015.

My mastectomy was done. I had a lumpectomy and radiation. I had a mastectomy in January 2015. I had a lumpectomy and radiation. I had a mastectomy in January 2015.

**Along with being a member I am also a volunteer. As a volunteer I am available to anyone who wishes to talk about their own cancer journey. I consider myself to being a very good listener.**

After my mastectomy, I had a lumpectomy and radiation. I had a mastectomy in January 2015. I had a lumpectomy and radiation. I had a mastectomy in January 2015.

The only time I had with the radiation treatment was the long drive into Grand Rapids every day. The drive was long.



the end of the treatment. I had a lumpectomy and radiation. I had a mastectomy in January 2015. I had a lumpectomy and radiation. I had a mastectomy in January 2015.

The day I had my mastectomy, I had a lumpectomy and radiation. I had a mastectomy in January 2015. I had a lumpectomy and radiation. I had a mastectomy in January 2015.

Over the next few weeks, I had a lumpectomy and radiation. I had a mastectomy in January 2015. I had a lumpectomy and radiation. I had a mastectomy in January 2015.

After my mastectomy, I had a lumpectomy and radiation. I had a mastectomy in January 2015. I had a lumpectomy and radiation. I had a mastectomy in January 2015.

This experience was great because of the support I had to receive some of the things over time my right breast. It is still a journey.

to receive support by the removal of my breast. I had a lumpectomy and radiation. I had a mastectomy in January 2015. I had a lumpectomy and radiation. I had a mastectomy in January 2015.

I am now 11 months post mastectomy. I had a lumpectomy and radiation. I had a mastectomy in January 2015. I had a lumpectomy and radiation. I had a mastectomy in January 2015.

I became a member of Gilda's Club Lowell. I had a lumpectomy and radiation. I had a mastectomy in January 2015. I had a lumpectomy and radiation. I had a mastectomy in January 2015.

Gilda's Club Lowell offers a Breast Cancer Support Group and an Adult Cancer Support Group.

Support Group. I had a lumpectomy and radiation. I had a mastectomy in January 2015. I had a lumpectomy and radiation. I had a mastectomy in January 2015.

While Gilda's mission is to provide the emotional support to women, while Gilda's mission is to provide the emotional support to women.

Along with being a member I am also a volunteer. I had a lumpectomy and radiation. I had a mastectomy in January 2015. I had a lumpectomy and radiation. I had a mastectomy in January 2015.



Lowell Program

In This Together...  
Learn. Share. Laugh.

# Swiss alphorn group to hold concert at Showboat on July 25

by Tim McAllister  
contributing reporter

There will be a rare, special concert by a Swiss alphorn group at the Showboat on Saturday, July 25 at 7 pm. The free concert will be the culmination of the Midwest Alphorn Retreat, which is being held in Lowell this year for the first time because of Lowell's long history of Swiss immigration.

Sue Hanline is the concert's organizer. She is also the clarinet player with the band Ein Prosit, who play traditional German music.

"Most people recognize alphorns as the long horns that you see in the Ricola cough drop commercials," Hanline said. "The alphorn players in our group attend an event called the Midwest Alphorn Retreat. This is the first time it's been held here in Lowell."

The concert on Saturday will feature Alphorngruppe Alpentraum, a group of people who play alphorns.

"Alphorngruppe Alpentraum have played all over the country," Hanline said. "They're quite good. They've played in Canada; they've played Disneyland during Oktoberfest; they were in the big Anheuser-Busch Oktoberfest parade down in St. Louis. They are the largest alphorn group in North America, if not the world, in one organization. You'll see big choirs of them in Europe, but that may be two guys from each village. This is all from one band

and these guys and gals just love it.

The alphorn group will perform in full costumes.

"It will be a very colorful, visual performance," Hanline said. "They'll be in full trachten, which is the German word for 'folk dress.' The men will be wearing lederhosen, the women will be wearing dirndls. Some of them have different costumes from different regions. Some of them will be wearing their Swiss milking costumes while they play, which is strikingly different than the lederhosen."

The Midwest Alphorn Retreat is an intense five-day program where people immerse themselves in learning the alphorn. The retreat is being held at the Franciscan Life Process Center, 11650 Downes St. NE, from July 22 through July 26. The instructor at the retreat is Dr. Peggy DeMers. She has been the associate professor of horn at Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, Texas, since 1991. DeMers studied at the Cincinnati Conservatory and the University of Wisconsin and has played with the Minnesota Opera Orchestra and the Lake Charles, La. Symphony and since 2004 she has been involved with the Assisi Performing Arts festival in Assisi, Italy. She has been teaching alphorn at the Midwest Alphorn Retreat since the first retreat in 2009. This is the first time the retreat is being held in

Lowell. It used to be held at Hidden Hollows Retreat Center in Lagro, Ind. DeMers will be among the performers at the alphorn concert.

"I'm looking forward to being in Michigan next week for the seventh annual Midwest Alphorn Retreat," DeMers said. "I will perform a solo work for the alphorn, which will demonstrate all the capabilities of the instrument. I will be conducting [and] leading the group as they perform works for as many as six different parts. The typical vocal group only has four parts."

The concert is a rare opportunity to see and hear an alphorn up close.

"The alphorn is not a common instrument in the United States," DeMers said. "There are no alphorn makers in the United States, most of the instruments used in the concert have been made in Switzerland."

Lowell's history of Swiss immigration is what brought the Midwest Alphorn Retreat and the concert to Lowell.

"Lowell has many families that are Swiss and have continued through the years to pass down the culture and traditions from their native Switzerland," DeMers said. "There are many successful Swiss businesses."

Swiss immigration to the area started in the early

1800s when Swiss families began settling in the Alton area.

"The first Swiss settler was Samuel Moye," said Luanne Kaeb, director of education and programming at the Lowell Area Historical Museum. "[Moye] arrived in 1838 and settled along the Flat River north of Lowell [and] south of Fallasburgh Park. He sold his land for the first dam across the Flat River and he bought a farm on Vergennes where Lowell High School is now. The second family was the Blasers. Their farm is still there. The Wingeiers came in 1879. The Ruessers, the Bieris, the Roths, the Kropfs and the Geigers came in the 1880s. The Wittenbachs, the Fahrnis, the Oesches and the Krebs came in the 1890s. The last Swiss families immigrated here in 1916. The majority of the Swiss came to the United States in the 1880s. Something like 82,000 Swiss came at that time because there was a depression in Europe. There was opportunity here. Land was available here."

Early Swiss immigrants were farmers and furniture makers.

"Most of them farmed to begin with and they made butter and cheese," Kaeb said. "In the hills and valleys of Switzerland they had cows: Simmentals and Brown Swiss. The Brown Swiss did better in the highlands but they didn't give as much milk so here [in Lowell] they switched to Holsteins. Some of them were craftsmen in the old country and fine furniture was made from oak, ash and cherry trees."

A lot of local farms and businesses are still owned by the descendants of those original residents.

"There have been things like farms, orchards, markets, gravel companies and tractor and car dealerships [in Lowell] because of the Swiss," Kaeb said.

"We've had two mayors who were descended from Swiss immigrants: Arnold Wittenbach and Michael Blough," Hanline said. "[The Swiss have]

done a lot throughout the community. There's a big range of businesses and lots of people. I can't even list all of them, there are so many of them. The biggest one that's known locally whose descendants are Swiss was Ivan Blough, known as 'Mr. Showboat.' As part of the concert we're going to have a special musical piece dedicated to Ivan Blough."

After the concert, the public is invited to an alphorn 'petting zoo,' where participants will be able to try to play an alphorn.

"At the end of the concert anybody who wants to go to the petting zoo can get in line and they can try to blow into an alphorn," Hanline said.

The alphorn concert is on the Showboat stage at 7 pm on Saturday, July 25.

"The concert is free to the community, there is no admission charge," Hanline said. "It's an exciting event for the community. People will come from all over the Midwest."

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TerryAbel@mycq.com

# obituaries

## COONS

A memorial service for David F. Coons, of Lowell, who died April 3, 2015, at age 92, will be held on Saturday, August 1, 11:00 am, at First United Methodist Church of Lowell, 621 E. Main St. Visitation 10:00-11:00 am in the fellowship hall of the church. A light lunch will follow the service. Memorial contributions may be made to FROM (Flat River Outreach Ministries), 11535 Fulton St. S.E., Lowell, MI; or to the North Country Trail Association, 229 E. Main St., Lowell, MI.



## KAZEMIER

Theodorus "Ted" Kazemier, Age 53, of Lowell, MI, passed away July 14, 2015. Ted is preceded in death by his father, George Kazemier, and twin nieces Alisabeth and Merideth Kelly. He is survived by his mother, Connie (Wouters) Kazemier, son, Justin Kazemier, grandson, Blake Kazemier, sisters, Oranda May (Jay), Cathy Rodgers and Sheila Kelly (Doug) and many nieces and nephews. He was also blessed with many lifelong friends who shared his joy for life, laughter and love for Jeeps, motorcycles and anything with an engine. A memorial service was held at St. Patrick's Church of Parnell in Ada.



# Looking back, continued

group which they called The Smilers. Each year since, a reunion has been held. On June 27, The Smilers held their 50th reunion at the home of Mrs. Mabel Scott in Lowell.

Alto firemen purchase jeep. The Alto Fire Department recently purchased a jeep equipped with hose, water tank and pump. The purchase was made possible by the use of \$500 of the money the firemen received from their pancake supper last fall. This new equipment is especially adapted to fighting grass fires and will be a very efficient addition to the firemen in that capacity.

## 25 years ago The Lowell Ledger July 25, 1990

Headline: Roth drops off first local load of wheat. As is emblematic with the first local bin of wheat dropped off at King Milling, Lowell farmer, Jerry Roth received a hearty handshake and a congratulatory pat on the back from King Milling Vice President, Jim Doyle for 1990's first local bin of wheat. Roth dropped off his 750 bushels of red wheat at approximately 4 p.m. on Wednesday, July 18. Roth was joined by farm helper, Eric Seaburg.

Headline: Downtown traffic project should start on July 29. Commencement of the anticipated downtown traffic and parking project may soon be realized by City officials and Lowell residents. According to Lowell City Manager Dave Pasquale the re-marking of the streets and parking areas should commence on July 29 and should be completed by mid-August. The north side of Main Street from Jackson to Hudson Street will be re-marked on Sunday, July 29th from 6 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Residents are asked not to park in the streets during this time. The project will include revised parking on Main Street along with the installation of turning stalls in order to help the flow of traffic during peak times in the afternoon. New and increased parking will also be outlined on Riverside and Broadway. Both Riverside and Broadway will be one way streets. Broadway will be one way going south and Riverside will be one way going north.

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## WHITE

Warren (Pete) White, age 93 of Lowell, passed away July 19, 2015. He was preceded in death by his wife Alberta (Al) White; parents Maurice and Marie White; brothers David White, Wally White and Maurice White Sr.; and one sister Ruth Brunacci. He is survived by his children Connie (Ed) Roth of Lowell and Don (Janice) White of Belding; brother Ron White; brother-in-law Frank Brunacci and sisters Helen Hemenway, Doris Main, Peggy Miston Santoro, Joyce Martin, Judy Cooper and Joan Key; 11 grandchildren, 19 great-grandchildren and 4 great-great-grandchildren. A funeral service will be held Saturday, July 25 at 1:00 p.m. at Roth-Gerst Chapel, 305 N. Hudson, Lowell MI. Interment Oakwood Cemetery. The family will meet with friends and relatives from 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. at the funeral home. Memorial donations may be made to Spectrum Health Hospice, 750 Fuller Ave. NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503.



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# LOWELL CHARTER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Lowell Charter Township Planning Commission will hold a Public Hearing to consider the following requests from Mass Development:

1. A request to amend the Special Land Use Permit for the existing assisted living facility known as Green Acres Senior Living Center in the C, General Commercial Zoning District in order to construct a second phase facility;
2. A request for a Special Land Use Permit to construct a new building, the Green Acres Senior Living Center Phase 2, within the Grand River 100 year flood plain.

**LOCATION & ADDRESS:** The property is located at 11550 East Fulton Street which is the site of the former Lowell Lanes bowling alley on the south side of East Fulton Street abutting the existing Green Acres Senior Living Center.

The hearing will be held as follows:

**WHEN:** MONDAY, AUGUST 10, 2015  
**TIME:** 7:00 P.M.  
**WHERE:** LOWELL CHARTER TOWNSHIP HALL  
2910 ALDEN NASH AVENUE SE  
LOWELL, MI 49331

Information on the proposed request is available for review at the Lowell Charter Township Offices, 2910 Alden Nash Avenue, SE, Lowell, MI 49331 during normal office hours on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday or by calling 897-7600.

Tim Clements, Secretary  
Lowell Charter Township Planning Commission

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**GRATTAN TOWNSHIP**  
Regular Meeting 7:00 p.m.  
Synopsis of Minutes  
July 13, 2015  
Motions Approved:

1. Appointing Ken Brandes as Grattan's new Deputy Fire Chief effective August 1st, 2015
2. Appoint Drake Miteer as a new Grattan Fire Fighter
3. Tax Rate for 2015-OPERATING .7186, FIRE OPERATIONS .9356, FIRE EQUIPMENT .4677

Our next Township Meeting will be August 10, 2015 At 7:00 p.m.  
The approved minutes may be reviewed on our website at www.grattantownship.org

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# Eclectic indie music of DidyMo at Showboat

by Tim McAllister  
contributing reporter

DidyMo were the stars of last Thursday's Sizzlin' Summer concert at the Showboat. It was a bit cloudy, but little rain fell on the crowd, who enjoyed the eclectic "indie" music.

The group used to be named "The Lynn Thompson Band" after songwriter Lynn Thompson.

"The band that I have put together today is called DidyMo," Thompson said. "We are going to start off with a folk and Latin arrangement. And then we're going to go into some pop music, a little country. When I do solo I'm going to do a bluegrass song and from there we're going to jump into [the song] 'Fly

Me to the Moon' and go into a funky jazz rock for the second set."

Thompson said his music defies genres.

Mary Johnston drives from Caledonia every week for the Sizzlin' Summer concerts.



Songwriter Lynn Thompson brought his eclectic music to Lowell last Thursday.



It was cloudy at the Showboat during last Thursday's Sizzlin' Summer concert.

"What I try not to do is put the band in a box," Thompson said. "Radio stations find it hard to categorize me. I'm not blues, I'm not jazz, I'm not rock; I mix it all together. It's just hard to put a label on it."

The crowd at the Showboat seemed to enjoy the band's music. There was also booze on the Showboat, a caricature artist, hot dogs and burgers on the grill and a book sale at the Englehardt library.

"This is the fourth concert we've come to this year," Johnston said. "We've really enjoyed the music. We love that it's free. Lowell is a great little town. My daughter and son-in-law live just up the street, so then I get to see my granddaughter too."

Next Thursday brings the Ragbirds to the Showboat. They're a folk rock band from Ann Arbor who have played all over the United States.



**JULY 15 - JULY 21**

- Turkey – A suicide bombing ripped through a youth group meeting on the Turkish border town killing 30 people and wounding 100 others
- South Carolina – In Columbia supporters of KKK and the Black Panthers clashed outside the Capital. Five arrests were made and several need medical treatment.
- Pro surfer Mick Fanning escapes a shark attack in South Africa. The attack happened live on TV during an event. He was able to fight off the great white shark.
- U.S., Cuba restores full diplomatic ties after five decades. Both countries open embassies in Washington and Cuba.
- 51-year-old in Myrtle Beach, S.C., racked up \$26 seafood buffet bill and refused to pay. When asked by the police she stated 'Jesus' would pay the bill.
- Kingsport, Tennessee – 45-year-old woman was arrested for passing counterfeit money. When questioned by the police she stated President Obama made it legal. When police searched her home she had between 30-50k.
- A new notice by the CDC warns people not to kiss their pet chickens. The CDC explains it puts owners at risk of salmonella outbreak.

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# Brian Oldenburg

**Position:** Public relations director, Forest Hills Club

**Residence:** Munger, Michigan

**Education:** Master electrician, Michigan State University

**Experience:** Works as an electrician

**Hobbies:** Nudism

**Children:** "We do have three children between us."



## Behind The Scenes

by Tim McAllister  
contributing reporter

Forest Hills Club is a clothing optional campground at 9355 Riverside Dr. in Saranac. It's our local nudist colony and it's been there since 1956.

The state-licensed campground is on a steep, winding hill deep in the woods. It's one of 250 members of the American Association for Nude

"You feel so much freer without clothes," Deb Oldenburg said. "You'll never find more accepting people than nudists."

"You have a clothing world, we have a non-clothing world," Brian Oldenburg said. "[There is] less laundry [and] no tan lines. [Otherwise] it's no different at all. We have kids, grandkids. It's a very family-oriented lifestyle.

youngest member was nine months old and the oldest just turned 81. He said the average age of a member is about 50 years old and people from all over the world have visited the club.

"We have a few single male members, we have a couple single female members and the rest are couples," Brian Oldenburg said. "We accept visitors daily. We get visitors from all across the country, all across the world, actually. We've had people from England here, people from Australia."

They do all the activities people normally do at campgrounds, the only difference is they do them naked.

"Last night we had karaoke night and we also had line dancing classes yesterday afternoon," Brian Oldenburg said. "We have two volleyball courts; we have a sand one and we have a grass one. We have shuffleboard, we have horseshoes, we have a dog run, we have a playground for kids, we have Thanksgiving and Christmas potlucks, we decorate the clubhouse for Christmas."

The Oldenbergs say there is nothing sexual about their nudism.

"The outside perception is if you're a nudist and you're a guy, you're a pervert," Brian Oldenburg said. "It's not about sex at all."

"We're not swingers. It's nothing like that," Deb Oldenburg said.

"Most people don't come to a facility like this to wear clothes, they come to

be nude," Brian Oldenburg said. "Once you come into the lifestyle you pretty much stay with it. There's reluctance sometimes at first, but it's a matter of minutes before you feel so out of place [wearing clothes]. When you're nude there's nothing really to judge you by. There are people from all walks of life, lawyers, nurses, electricians, plumbers, 7-11 clerks. There are no financial demographics here, we are all the same. It doesn't matter if you're filthy rich or filthy poor. It doesn't make any difference to us."

The campground isn't open to the public all year, but members have special access year-round.

"We are a six month

facility," Brian Oldenburg said. "We're open to the general public from May until the end of October. For a single [person] or a couple it's \$35 a day to come and visit. I've stood here in the snow with boots on, on a 30 degree day when the sun is out. Your body adjusts. We have kept our hot tub open all winter long. People come up and use the hot tub in the wintertime. You can only do that if you're a member, though."

After 59 years the Forest Hills Club clothing-optional campground has become one of the most visited businesses in Saranac.

"We are a member of the Ionia Chamber of Commerce," Brian Oldenburg said. "We pump a lot of money into the village

of Saranac. A certain amount [of tourism] goes towards Lowell. We're a member of the West Michigan Tourist Association."

Why not spend your next weekend lying around in the woods naked? After the initial shock of seeing people naked wears off, all the nudity becomes mundane.

"Come visit us. We don't bite," Brian Oldenburg said.

If you decide to bare all, make sure to bring some bug spray and citronella candles. The nudists don't bite, but the mosquitoes definitely do.



The club is located at 9355 Riverside Dr. in Saranac.

Recreation and is one of four facilities for nudists in Michigan. Forest Hills Club boasts 65 campsites on 43 acres. There is a pool, a hot tub, a large clubhouse with a television, a volleyball court and people wandering around without any clothes on.

Brian Oldenburg is Forest Hills Club's public relations director. He is a 59-year-old electrician from Munger, Mich, a little town near Bay City. Brian and Deb Oldenburg got married at the campground four years ago. He's been a nudist for 20 years and he helped get Deb into the lifestyle.

"I guess I just don't like wearing a lot of clothes," Brian Oldenburg said. "You're born this way. You come out nude, why should you change? [I like] the idea of being able to be out in the open without clothes, being closer to nature. The purpose here is to practice nudism, basically. You can live the lifestyle without clothes."

Your empty-nesters, when the kids are gone, coming into nudism is quite popular. The only place you absolutely have to be nude at this facility is in the pool or in the hot tub. Swimming without clothes on, the feeling of the water all over your skin, you don't have that suit weighing you down, filling up with water and pulling you down."

The club has 55 couples among its membership. Brian Oldenburg said the



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# Lowell retiree kayaks 740 mile trail in 25 days

by Tim McAllister  
contributing reporter

A retiree from Lowell kayaked the country's longest water trail recently.

Mack Truax took 25 days to paddle the 740 mile Northern Forest Canoe Trail through New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine and a little part of Canada.

"After retiring in March 2014 from a career in sales [BlueWater Technologies] I gained 30 pounds in 12 months," Truax said. "Last February, to help drop the added weight and fulfill my desire for an adventure, I decided I wanted to do a kayak trip. I did an online search for 'distance kayaking' and the Northern Forest Canoe Trail popped up."

Once he picked out where he wanted to take his canoe, Truax started to train.

"I got the guidebooks and maps and got serious

about training," Truax said. "Last April I trained more than 500 miles on local rivers and roads."

portage on logging roads in an effort to bypass three miles of upriver rapids. After 20 miles of wandering

that headed into a blind canyon with 50 foot cliffs on both sides. I found myself perched on a rock

moments were the quiet moments spent enjoying nature from the perspective of the river.

of evergreen was so strong that I found myself just taking one deep breath after another. I'll never forget that."

"The high point of my trip was in Maine's Allagash Wilderness Waterway," Truax said. "It was early evening. I had just passed a moose grazing on the shoreline when an eagle left its high perch and tailed me overhead. The fresh smell

Truax said that he would like to canoe the Northern Forest Canoe Trail again sometime.

"Absolutely, I'm just waiting for the right time to break the news to my wife," Truax said.



Mack Truax in his 17 ft. sea kayak.

The Northern Forest Canoe Trail starts in Old Forge, N.Y. and ends in Fort Kent, Maine. Truax started canoeing the trail on May 20. It wasn't an easy trip.

"At one point in Maine I made a bad decision," Truax said. "[I decided] to

these roads I decided to take a feeder stream to get back on track. The stream immediately became very fast water with rapids and I ditched out on an eddy.

The current was so strong it slowly started to pull me over class II rapids

without my spray skirt on and unprepared to take on what was around the corner if I slipped off my perch. Somehow I was able to back my boat off the rock and climb onto a dry surface. I was scared, really scared."

Truax said his favorite



At the Northern Forest Canoe Trail's registration kiosk in Richford, Vermont.

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