

luminary hike



page 8

lms idol



page 7



lms sports



page 11

50 CENTS



“A Night of Christmas Cheer” ignites the holiday spirit in Lowell

by Tim McAllister
contributing reporter

The Riverwalk and Showboat were all lit up for “A Night of Christmas Cheer” on Friday, Dec. 11. There were carriage rides, fresh roasted chestnuts, hot dogs, cookies, hot cocoa, live music and, of course, visits with Santa Claus on the Showboat.

“It’s going absolutely terrific,” said Lowell mayor Jim Hodges, who was busy directing people from the Santa room to the

cookie room. “The lines are moving very quickly. Lots of great people are enjoying one of the unique things we do on the Showboat. It’s a very good thing for our community.”

It was an unseasonably warm December evening, with temperatures in the 50s. Some said they thought the weather brought more people downtown, while others said the warm weather had no effect on attendance.

“We have all kinds of frosted cookies, we have clementines and apples and the kids are happy,” said Chris Hodges, who handed out gallons of hot chocolate and piles of treats in the cookie room on the Showboat. “We have been here on nights when it was really cold, but I haven’t seen any difference in how long the line is.”

“People started lining up to see Santa about an hour early,” said Liz Baker, executive director of the Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce. “The weather probably had something to do with it.”

“We’re very busy,” said Mrs. Claus. “I think the weather has brought a lot of people out. Everybody

Christmas cheer,
continued, page 8



Seven-year-old Lara talking to Santa Claus.

MHSAA advances concussion care efforts, announces preliminary data

The Michigan High School Athletic Association this school year requested for the first time that member schools report possible concussions by their student-athletes during both practice and competition. Preliminary data from the fall season shows two percent of more than 100,000 high school athletes experienced concussions and 27 percent of high schools responding reported that none of their athletes experienced concussions while participating in MHSAA sports.

The MHSAA received data from 744 – or 99 percent – of its member high schools at the end of the fall season. The average number of concussions reported by member high schools through Dec. 4, 2015, was 3.2 concussions per school. Fifty-two percent of reporting schools stated they had two or fewer concussions by athletes this fall.

Football, the fall season’s most-played sport with 39 percent of all fall participants, revealed 79 percent of all concussions reported for the season. Boys soccer, with nearly 14 percent of fall sport participants, revealed 11

percent of all concussions reported.

Data collected by the MHSAA remains preliminary, in part, because results noted include pending reports that have not been verified. After completion of these follow-up reports, the final number of concussions that actually occurred this past season may be lower than the preliminary numbers being reported at this time. The data analyzed to date is for high schools only, although middle schools also have the opportunity to report possible concussions. A full breakdown of the data including concussions by gender, sport, team level (varsity through junior high) and setting (practice or event) will be reported after the conclusion of the spring 2016 season.

The reporting of possible concussions is part of a three-pronged advance by the MHSAA in concussion care during the 2015-16 school year, all of which are producing data related to the frequency and severity of head injuries. The MHSAA this

Concussion care,
continued, page 10

Consumers Energy upgrading gaslines across the state



Gas lines were replaced by Consumers Energy on Bowes Rd. last week.

by Tim McAllister
contributing reporter

Work by Consumers Energy to replace gas lines on Bowes Rd. has been completed.

“We’re replacing 2,000 feet of cast iron gas line with six inch diameter plastic gas line, a better material,” said Roger C. Morgenstern, senior public information director for Consumers Energy. “[It] serves 15 different gas customers on Bowes.”

Morgenstern said that Consumers Energy is replacing dangerous, outdated gas lines all over the state.

“It’s part of the upgrading we’re doing to our gas lines across the state of Michigan,” Morgenstern said.

He also said there should not be any service outages as a result of their efforts.

“We don’t expect to have any interruption in gas service when we make the transition to the new pipe,” Morgenstern said.

Minimum wage increases in January for Michigan employees

Effective January 1, 2016, Michigan workers will see an increase in the minimum wage rate from \$8.15 to \$8.50. This new change to state law marks the second of a gradual 25 percent increase of the minimum wage resulting in \$9.25 per hour by 2018. New online resources are available at www.michigan.gov/wagehour to help workers and employers understand the facts as the new rate takes effect.

On May 27, 2014, the Workforce Opportunity Wage Act, Public Act 138 of 2014 (Act 138) took immediate effect, replacing the Michigan Minimum Wage and Overtime Act (Act 154). Act 138 is enforced by

the Wage and Hour Program within the Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MIOSHA).

Act 138 applies to employers in Michigan that have two or more employees age 16 and older. A copy of Act 138, along with the required poster may be downloaded from the Wage and Hour Program website.

DATES OF MINIMUM WAGE RATE INCREASES

The current minimum wage is \$8.15. The rate increases as follows:

- January 1, 2016 - \$8.50
- January 1, 2017 - \$8.90

- January 1, 2018 - \$9.25

YOUTH TRAINING WAGE

Act 138 allows an employer to pay a newly hired employee age 16 to 19 \$4.25 per hour for the first 90 days of employment.

85 PERCENT MINIMUM WAGE

Act 138 also allows an employer in Michigan to pay 85 percent of the minimum wage to employees aged 16 and 17; however, note that the current Federal Minimum Wage rate is \$7.25 per hour. Employers that are covered by both State and Federal Minimum Wage law should pay the higher applicable rate. Information on Federal Minimum Wage can be obtained by calling the

United States Department of Labor at 866-487-9243.

TIPPED EMPLOYEES

Act 138 allows employers to take a tip credit on minimum wage under certain conditions for those employees who customarily and regularly receive tips.

The following conditions apply to taking a tip credit on the state minimum wage rate:

- The employee is in a position which customarily and regularly receives gratuities from a guest, patron, or customer for services rendered to that guest, patron, or customer.
- If the gratuities plus the minimum hourly wage rate do not equal or exceed the minimum hourly wage otherwise established,

the employer pays any shortfall to the employee.

• The gratuities are proven gratuities as indicated by the employee's declaration for Federal Insurance Contribution Act.

• The employee was informed by the employer of the provisions of Act 138.

• If a credit is taken for gratuities received

by an employee, then the employment records for each pay period shall contain the credit that was taken along with a written statement of the amount of gratuities received by the employee. The statement shall be signed by the employee and dated before the date the paycheck was received.

LowellArts! nominated for newsmaker award

LowellArts! has been nominated in the arts and entertainment category as one of three finalists to be named 2015 Newsmaker of the Year by the Grand Rapids Business Journal. The two other nominees are the Frederick Meijer

Gardens and Sculpture Park and ArtPrize. A top selection from each of the 16 categories will be recognized with an industry Newsmaker award and the Newsmaker of the Year will be selected from those.



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FROM VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION
Volunteer orientation at Flat River Outreach Ministries (FROM) will be Thurs., Dec. 17 at 1 pm. Please call 897-8260 for additional information.

LOWELL CHARTER TOWNSHIP
HOLIDAY HOURS

2015 Holiday hours for Lowell Charter Township:

Monday, December 21 - 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Tuesday, December 22 - Closed
Thursday, December 24 - Closed

Monday, December 28 - 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Tuesday, December 29 - 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Thursday, December 31 - Closed

ON EXHIBIT
ArtPrize: Second Glance on exhibit through Feb. 20 at the LowellArts! King Gallery, 149 S. Hudson St. A great opportunity to get a second look at artwork from ArtPrize 2015 by local artists, living within 20 miles of Lowell. Gallery hours: Tues-Fri 10am-6pm and Sat 1-4pm. www.lowellartsmi.org

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.

the lowell ledger

(USPS 453-834)

Published weekly for \$25 a year for zipcodes beginning with 483 or 495; \$38 a year any other zip code.

Deadline for display advertising is Friday at Noon
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email: ledger@lowellbuyersguide.com
Second Class Postage Paid at Lowell, MI

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Old fashioned Christmas events help to celebrate the season

by Tim McAllister
contributing reporter

They celebrated an old fashioned country Christmas at separate holiday events in Fallasburg Village and Bowne Township on Saturday, Dec. 12.

Bowne Center, at the corner of Alden Nash and 84th St., had a live Nativity scene and an open house at their historic schoolhouse and museum.

“We coordinate with the church and their live Nativity and do this event every year,” said Sally Johnson, Bowne Township Historical Society president.

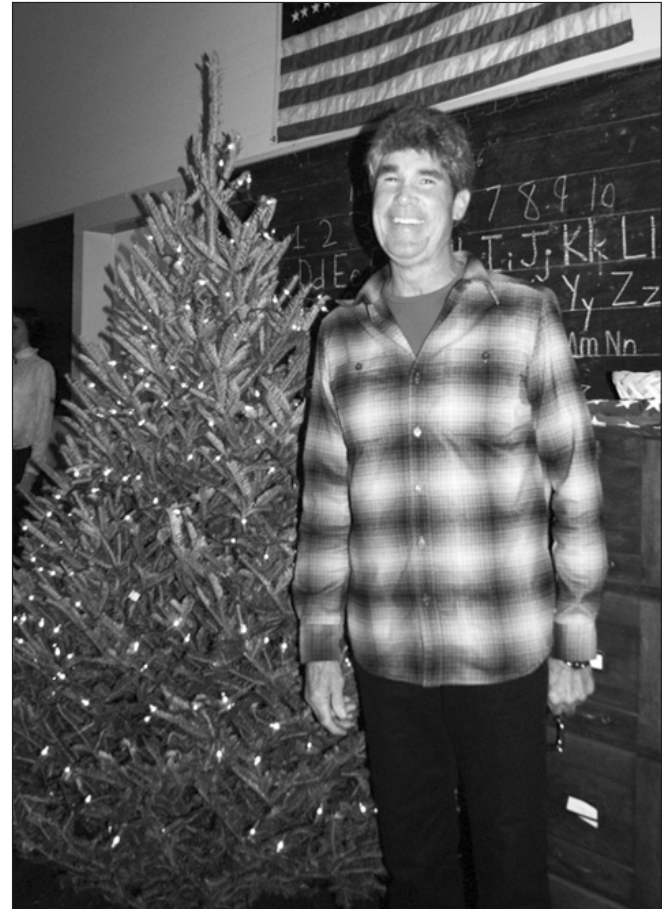
“We have Santa Claus in the schoolhouse for the kids and we’ve got cookies and warm drinks in our museum.”

The temperature was in the 50s on Saturday evening, but heavy fog made visibility difficult on the roads, which may have put a damper on attendance.

“Some people don’t want to drive in the fog,” said museum volunteer Janet VanWyek. “[Attendance] is a little slow.”

Out in Fallasburg Village, 13944 Covered Bridge Rd., they had a massive bonfire in Fallasburg field while, across the street, guests enjoyed beer, wine and snacks in the old schoolhouse.

“It’s going good, man,” said Fallasburg Historical Society president Ken Tamke. “It’s turned out really well. It’s the country vibe, like you’ve read about.”



Fallasburg Historical Society president Ken Tamke was the bartender during the Christmas party.



Janet VanWyek, Pat Thomet and Mary Corwell served hot drinks and cookies in the Bowne Center.



Santa Claus in the schoolhouse in Bowne Center.



Members of the musical group Hawks & Owls playing in the Fallasburg Village schoolhouse.



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LAS Superintendent Greg Pratt

My Holiday Wish... disconnect and re-connect

This year, some major retailers pledged to stay closed on Thanksgiving Day, allowing workers to stay home and enjoy the holiday. I for one was happy to know that more folks opted to skip doorbuster sales, and spend time honoring family traditions. Truth be told, it's easy to get distracted by the bustle of the season and lose sight of what is really important. The added pressures and expectations to keep up with society's evoked image of the holidays can be challenging for parents. Throw in the multi-tasking of tweeting, posting, and snap chatting and real conversation over pumpkin pie and grandma can quickly feel alienated from the celebration. In our world today, intentional strategies are nearly a necessity to protect family time and nurture family relationships.

One of my favorite pastimes at Christmas and holiday get-togethers is reminiscing with my

brothers about growing up. We laugh and jive about how upset our parents would be when we woke them up too early on Christmas morning, or how our mom was and still is the expert at giving us "the look" when we misbehaved. I admit that our sons roll their eyes at these tales because they have heard them so many times, but that too has become part of the Pratt tradition. Whether they come from the rhythm of daily life or meaningful family moments, memories shared between parents, children, siblings, and family members are the ties that bind us together. We know that families who spend quality time together are strong and resilient.

If the big box stores have taken a stand to reclaim the holiday for families, then perhaps we too can make purposeful changes in order to preserve precious family time, strengthen connections, and focus on what means the most to us

this holiday season. We can all benefit from turning off cell phones, putting down the iPads, and refraining from Instagram posts of the holiday ham. Instead, laugh alongside your child with National Lampoon's Family Christmas, play a family board game, or enjoy a winter walk together. Doing so will enrich the life you share and surely create opportunities for strong connection, love, and gratitude. If children believe that family time is important to parents, they will be more likely to value it too.

Life can sometimes throw unexpected curve balls that can occasionally take families down a road unplanned. The thing is that there's something about navigating that road together, as a family. The unconditional love of family and friends is life's greatest blessing. As you celebrate the season, take a stand to disconnect and reconnect, engage in real conversations, encourage the seniors in your family to reflect on their childhood traditions with kids, and make meaningful memories that will leave a legacy. During this magical season, hold and cherish those you love and enjoy every moment.

kidsView



by Sierra Hieshetter

This week for my article I am focusing on one question: "Do you feel safe in school?" With all the violence in the Middle East and even here in the U.S., it seems necessary to know if our schools feel threatened.

This week, I took a survey at my school, Lowell Middle School and asked 20 random students if they did indeed feel safe.

Most answered "yes" with only three unsure. No one answered that they did not feel safe. Mary Jo, an eighth grader at LMS, was one of the unsure students. When I asked her if the school was doing enough to prevent an emergency like those we've heard about on the news, her answer was, "Right now I don't feel like they are doing enough."

The general conclusion from everyone I interviewed was that the shootings around the country seem so unreal; it isn't very likely that they would happen here. LMS has plans in place in the event of an emergency like an attack and practices them on a regular basis.

However, when I asked one student who wished to

remain anonymous, what they would do in the event of a terror attack, they answered, "I would get out of the school." But the practice during a lockdown at LMS is for the teachers to have students stay in the school, line up against the walls and remain silent, the opposite of what the student said they would do.

It is really up to the teachers to keep everyone safe, but "We shouldn't worry about that," said 7th grade teacher Mrs. Hanson, "teachers care so much about our students I really feel that in an emergency we would do whatever it took to protect them."

The answer to the question: "Do you feel safe at school?" is so complicated that it is hard to find one solid answer. One thing is for sure, the majority of the student body at LMS feels safe and not threatened at school. As for me, I love school and knowing that all my teachers would do anything to keep me safe allows me attend school feeling very secure.


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viewpoint

to the editor

holiday concert praise

Dear Editor:

Mrs. Wendy Tenney, director of the Lowell Area Schools' orchestras and her musicians put on a fine performance last week during their holiday concert.

The Lowell Performing Arts Center was packed as over 150 students showcased their talents in a variety of selections ranging

from the familiar and fun to the difficult and serious.

Whether it was the eighth-grade orchestra, the concert orchestra or the symphony orchestra, all performed at a high level and gives us yet another reason to be proud of our community.

Tom Stahr
Ada

celebrate community

To The Editor,

Let's celebrate and be thankful that the spirit of Christmas and Hanukkah are alive in our fair community. Both the Hebrew and

Christian religions see giving and service to others as crucial to the true Peace and Joy of the seasons.

We, the residents of Lowell, have witnessed

these values alive and well in the events of the past few weeks. People have gathered downtown to share in shopping, eating in local restaurants and enjoying the seasonal decorations and activities along main street. Let's give a special recognition to the work of the chamber for the work they do to bring us the Christmas parade.

Perhaps you noticed this year that candy was given to the children just before the parade started. What you may not have noticed is the large number of high school youth who participated in the candy give-away and then lined the streets to help keep the crowd, especially our children, safely off the street as the parade vehicles passed. These youth, for the most part, were from

the Lowell Rotary High School interact club. These outstanding youth, through the Rotary interact program, have committed themselves to service above self. They bring service and acts of kindness throughout the community at Christmas as well as throughout the school year.

Truly, we in Lowell have been especially blessed by their work and the collaborative efforts of Rotary, Flat River Outreach Ministries, the business community, service clubs and church organizations working together at Christmas and all year through. What a great town to raise our families and grow our friendships.

Roger La Warre
Lowell

outdoors

off the pavement

Dave Stegehuis

Touring Michigan by automobile is popular with residents. If you notice the number of out-of-state license plates in tourist season it is apparent that visitors add significantly to the large number of vehicles on our roadways. Although the highways and popular tourist attractions may be crowded, the backcountry off the pavement is not. After years of skiing and hiking or just being out and about, I have found that relatively few people get far from the blacktop.

Without spending a lot of time or effort it is possible to visit quiet natural places free from traffic, crowds, and other distractions. Paper maps, trail books, and the internet highlight trails open to the public for cross country-skiing and hiking.

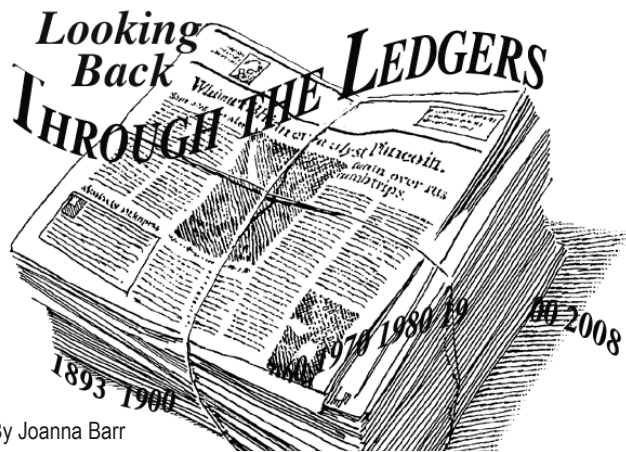
The North Country Trail begins in New York State, spans the length of both Michigan peninsulas, and ends in South Dakota. The trail can be hiked in its entirety or accessed at selected points along the route. The North Country Trail Association headquarters is located in Lowell.

The majority of other public trails can be found on state and federal land. Many

have designated trail heads where trail maps are posted. Trails can be researched in advance or one can keep an eye peeled for trail opportunities while traveling about the state. Trails can lead to special destinations like Pictured Rocks in the U.P. or meander through typical local landscapes. Encounters with wildlife are likely when quietly passing through natural areas.

Common sense and a little preparation will help to make exploring new trails safe and enjoyable. The trail could be a half hour loop or it could take all day to complete the planned route. On longer treks or if uncertain about what lies ahead, carry some water. Insect repellent is a must in bug season. Although most designated trails are well marked, a compass or GPS provides confidence and safety on longer hikes.

The objective is to find well marked trails to take one back to nature for a while and visit places where we can observe scenery and wildlife up close and personal without traffic and crowds. You never know what is around the next bend in the trail when off the pavement.



By Joanna Barr

125 years ago Lowell Journal December 17, 1890

Skating is very good along the river and the youngsters are making good use of it.

We have discovered that there are a few people, living in Lowell, who don't always attend church. How could they when they are up here, catching rabbits, at church time. Perhaps they were out of meat and had to have 'em. Gypsy.

Charley Green lost a horse last week but Charley is one of those kind that never gives up, so he has purchased another horse, so dame rumor informs us.

W. Stevens' son, of Oakfield, fell from the roof of the schoolhouse, last Monday and injured his back quite severely. Mrs Ambie Jenks also slipped on an icy door-step and hurt herself quite badly. Both are doing nicely now.

100 years ago The Lowell Ledger December 16, 1915

Advertisement: Xmas greeting from Ford's Hardware. "The store with the holiday spirit." Be a Santa Claus and select some of the beautiful gifts we have on display. We haven't space to enumerate all the good things we have but will just mention a few, and it would be well for you to bear in mind that something useful is most appreciated, and that something stable,

reliable and lasting will keep you longer in the minds of the recipient. For boys and girls – hand sleds, tool sets, boy's axes, flashlights, hunting coats, skates, fishing tackle, pocket knives, air guns, coasters, watches, trappers' axes, rifles, scissors.

William R. Oates, commissioner of the state game, fish and forest fire department, Lansing, has ordered all squirrel trapping stopped in Lowell. There are very few squirrels left, probably not to exceed twenty-five in the whole village.

A newspaper is forbidden to publish notices of lotteries or drawings either in advance or afterward to announce winners. The penalty is being barred from the mails. Readers, please remember.

In our opinion the new school building will not be ready for use before the middle of February or the first of March. It is true in this case as in most other building jobs that the finishing is relatively the longer part of the work.

Mrs. Charles McMahon entertained with a towel shower Friday evening in honor of Miss Bertha Bergin.

Haysmer Bros, are barbering again at the old stand.

The fire damage in the Bradish harness-shoe shop is being repaired.

75 years ago The Lowell Ledger December 19, 1940

"Why, it's like heaven!" This was the delighted exclamation of one well-known schoolma'm to another the other night as they drove into Lowell from the west and saw Main street stretching before them gay with ropes of evergreen, brilliant with Christmas lights of many colors. That schoolma'm may never have actually seen heaven but we all appreciate the comparison.

All stores carrying Christmas gift lines are being kept open every night this week for the accommodation of holiday shoppers and will continue to be open evenings until Christmas eve. All food stores will be kept opened next Monday night but will close at 6 o'clock on Christmas eve.

Robert Palmer, 17-year-old son of Mrs. Harriet

off the cuff

Jeanne Boss



The twelve sites of Social Security

Familiar carols are a part of the season. This song is so popular that holiday revelers clamored for it again. It's "The Twelve Sites of Social Security," inspired by the popular traditional holiday song, "The Twelve Days of Christmas," — a holiday favorite since 1780.

For the first site of Social Security, we give to you: our home page, www.socialsecurity.gov. It's the place to go for all things Social Security. Everything you could want — from online services and benefit screening tools to publications and frequently asked questions — you can find easily on this site.

For the second site of Social Security, we give to you: answers to all of your Social Security related questions at our Frequently Asked Questions page at www.socialsecurity.gov/faq.

For the third site of Social Security, we give to you: an easy way to learn how to replace your Social Security card at www.socialsecurity.gov/ssnumber.

For the fourth site of Social Security, we give to you: an online application for retirement benefits that you can complete and submit in as little as 15 minutes at www.socialsecurity.gov/applytoretire.

For the fifth site of Social Security, we give to you: five estimates of your future Social Security benefits! Or as many estimates as you would like using different scenarios. Get instant, personalized estimates of your future benefits at www.socialsecurity.gov/estimator.

For the sixth site of Social Security, we give to you: a convenient way to

apply for disability benefits at www.socialsecurity.gov/applyfordisability.

For the seventh site of Social Security, we give to you: an online application for Medicare that you can complete in as little as 10 minutes, at www.socialsecurity.gov/medicareonly.

For the eighth site of Social Security, we give to you: *Extra Help* with Medicare prescription drug plan costs. You can learn more and apply online at www.socialsecurity.gov/prescriptionhelp.

For the ninth site of Social Security, we give

to you: our convenient publication library with online booklets and pamphlets on numerous subjects, at www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs.

For the tenth site of Social Security, we give to you: services for people

who are currently receiving benefits, such as the ability to replace your Medicare card, get or change a password, request a proof of income letter, or check your

Twelve sites, continued, page 7

LEGAL NOTICE

PUBLICATION OF NOTICE OF HEARING STATE OF MICHIGAN The Probate Court for the County of Kent In the matter of LENA TOWNS, Guardianship FILE NO. 15-198059-GA TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS including: Emily Towns (daughter) whose address(es) is/are unknown and who interest in the matter may be barred or affected by the following: TAKE NOTICE: A hearing will be held on January 05, 2016 at 9:00 a.m. at Kent Co. Probate Court, 180 Ottawa NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49503 before Judge David M.

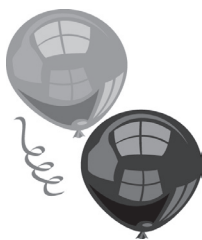
Murkowski (P35026) for the following purpose: Appointment of a Guardian and Conservator.

December 8, 2015

Adult Protective Services, DHHS, Petitioner 121 Franklin St., NE Grand Rapids, MI 49507 616-391-1675

VAN ESSEN AND ASSOCIATES PLLC Atty.s. for Petitioner by Amanda S. Van Essen (P75001) 3425 Kelly St. Hudsonville, MI 49426 616-633-0196

happy birthday



DECEMBER 16
Timmy Buechler.

DECEMBER 17
Bill Ellison, Jerry Scott, Amy Riddle.

DECEMBER 18
Danielle Anchors, Hillary Graves, Julie Alberts, Heather Walenzik.

DECEMBER 19
Lori Moore, Carol Chamberlain.

DECEMBER 20
Ed Mohr, William Henry Burt, Jackie Spencer, Rob Lombardo.

DECEMBER 21
Brooke Page, Zachary Tykocki, Debbie Walenzik, Eric Koepfel.

DECEMBER 22
Jason Seeley, Cody Soyka.



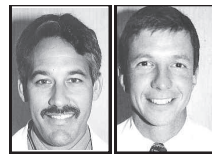
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health



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

acute coronary syndrome

Acute coronary syndrome (ACS) refers to a group of conditions characterized by poor blood flow to the heart muscle. ACS includes both unstable angina (increasing chest pain or chest pain at rest) and myocardial infarction (heart attack). Most cases are caused by a blocked blood vessel in the heart. Because of the blockage, the heart muscle does not get enough blood or oxygen. Patients who already have blocked blood vessels in the heart have especially high risk for ACS. Other risk factors include high blood pressure, high cholesterol, cigarette smoking, diabetes, and increasing age.

Symptoms of ACS include pressure-like chest pain, pain in the shoulders, jaw or back, shortness of breath, cool clammy skin, nausea, and lightheadedness. Other conditions can cause these symptoms. The

time between the start of symptoms and treatment should be as short as possible. If you have chest pain, especially if you have one or more of the above risk factors, you should call 911.

There are several treatment options for ACS. Treatments include medicines to lower blood pressure, lower cholesterol and keep your blood from clotting. These medications will be started in the hospital. You may also need a stent placed in the artery that has the blockage. Sometimes, open-heart surgery is indicated. To reduce your risk of ACS, eat a healthy diet, exercise regularly, quit smoking, control blood pressure and cholesterol, and control your blood sugar if you have diabetes. You may also want to discuss taking a low-dose aspirin daily with your doctor.

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De

By Mark Mundt,
Lowell Wastewater

LHS talent returns to the stage during idol competition

by Kathryn Atwood
contributing reporter

A dozen talented vocalists took to the stage for an evening of music at Lowell High School inside the Lowell Performing Arts Center during the return of the LHS Idol competition.

After a year hiatus, the contest returned to the auditorium under the direction of drama teacher

Laurie Summerfield, with the assistance of choir director Nathan Masterson, LPAC director Julia Crawford, softball coach Bill McElroy and his team, and the evening's hosts senior students Derek and Brianna Massey.

The event is fashioned after the hit reality series

American Idol, where singers perform before being evaluated by a panel of judges with musical expertise. This year the judges were former event organizer and spring musical director Heidi Kolp and local musician Ryder Jones.

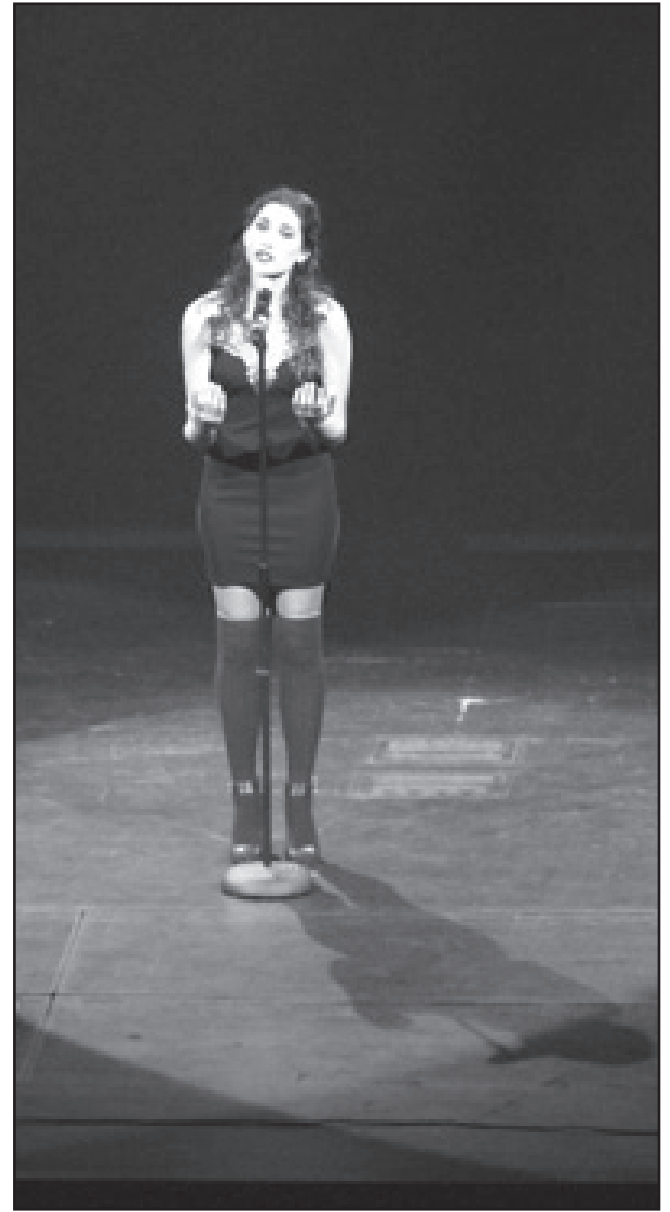
According to Summerfield, the night was well attended with more than 100 audience members and featured some outstanding performances.

"The students were amazing! All of them performed well. It's a nice opportunity for students to gain experience on a big stage with lights and haze and have family see them perform in the showcase atmosphere," said Summerfield.

The contestants were Tiana Petricevic, Abby VanderBerg, Rachael Fotis, Archer Pina, Bridget Lally, Marreona Coe, Salem Gordy, Jacquelyn Pytlik, Keara Anderson, Haley Kenkel, Anna-Maria Zook, and Bella Craig.

After careful consideration the judges chose sophomore Australian exchange student Bella Craig as the 2015 LHS Idol. Junior Salem Grody was awarded second place and senior Keara Anderson placed third.

Proceeds earned through the nominal entry fee will be used to benefit the choir and girls softball programs at the school.



Talented songstress Rachael Fotis performs an opera piece during the LHS Idol competition.



Engaging performer Jacquelyn Pytlik listens to judges' critiques alongside hosts Derek and Brianna Massey.

Twelve sites, continued

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letters, update your Social Security information, and more at www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount.

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Thank You

The Alto Lions Club would like to thank the following businesses and individuals for their donations to the 2015 Children's Christmas Party.

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	Weeland Farms
	Zook Farm Equipment

Alto Area Lions Club



A special thank you to Lowell Meijer!

Christmas cheer, continued

seems to be happy and having fun. There have been kids from Lowell, Rockford, Greenville, all over the place.”

“A couple years ago it was a blizzard and the line was still pretty good,” said Lacey Langkamp, who was

waiting in line to meet Santa with her boyfriend Eric and her four children: Asher, Nolan, Gracie and Addison. “We do it every year. It’s very busy and very lively.”

This was not your last chance to visit with Santa. He will be meeting kids on the

Showboat every Wednesday from 5:30 pm to 7 pm and on Saturdays from 10:30 am until 1 pm. Check out the Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce website for more information.



Local teen musicians provided entertainment.



The area around the Showboat was crowded with holiday revelers.

Unless we make Christmas an occasion to share our blessings, all the snow in Alaska won't make it 'white'.

~ Bing Crosby (1904-1977)

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WWC Luminary Hike enjoyed by area nature lovers

by Kathryn Atwood contributing reporter

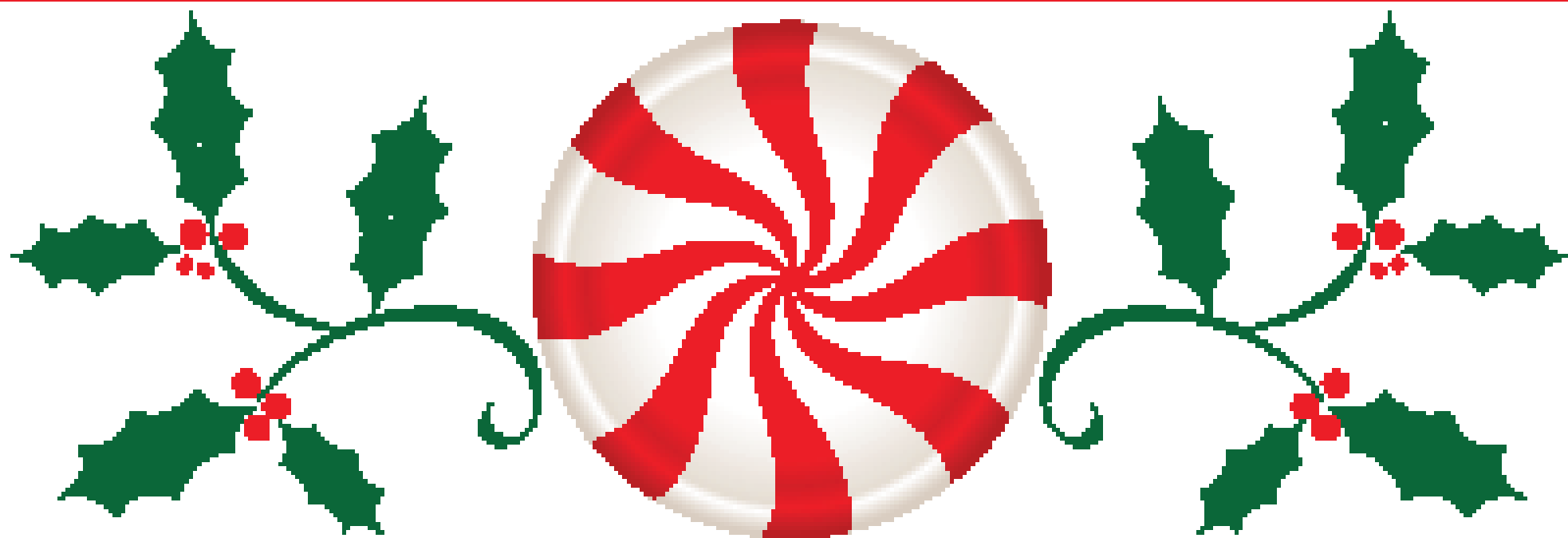
Foggy conditions did not deter attendees of the annual Luminary Hike at the Wittenbach/Wege Center last Saturday as droves of nature lovers came out to enjoy the event in unseasonably warm weather.

The event was held from 6-8 pm and featured a candlelit path through

the center's vast forest. The hike passed by the center's cabin where guests enjoyed hot cider, trailed to the wetland observation deck for viewing of the Geminid meteor shower and then returned to the main building. There, participants enjoyed hot chocolate while creating ornaments and stringing popcorn among other crafts.

First time attendees, the Johnston family, reported that the night was very much enjoyed by all members of their family. So much in fact that they intend to make it a new Christmas family tradition. According to mom Cindy, “We really loved it! It was incredible. We are very happy we came.”





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KCTC Students of the Month

Lowell High School has announced that four Lowell High School students have been named Student of the Month at Kent Career Technical Center. Greta Gustafson, 12th grade, is enrolled in the Graphic Communications program; Marc Langlois,

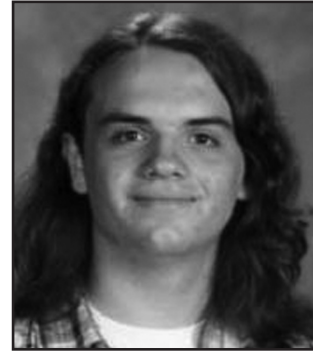
11th grade, is enrolled in the Entrepreneurship and Marketing program; Samuel DeVito, 11th grade, is enrolled in the Information Technology program; and Kodie Wilcox, 11th grade, is enrolled in the Graphic Communications program.



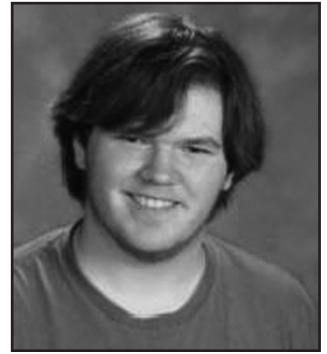
Greta Gustafson



Marc Langlois



Marc Langlois



Samuel DeVito,

Looking Back, continued

Palmer, left last week Thursday afternoon for the naval training station at Great Lakes, Ill., from which he will enter active service in the U. S. Navy. Bob's friends all wish him the best of luck.

50 years ago Lowell Ledger December 16, 1965

Final judging of outdoor decorations. The Lowell Lions Club and the Lowell Chamber of Commerce are jointly sponsoring an outdoor Christmas decorating contest this year. The contest is open to anyone in the city, with no entry blanks to be filled out by the contestants. If you have not previously tried your hand at decorating the exterior of your home, this would be a good year to start. The final judging of the contest will be made next Tuesday evening, December 21, by a select panel of judges. The judges will pick a first, second and third place winner and will award prizes of gift certificates redeemable here in Lowell, at the stores of the participating merchants. First prize will be a twenty-five dollar gift certificate; second, a fifteen dollar gift certificate; and third, a certificate worth ten dollars.

Class for parents in modern math. The fall meeting of parents to introduce "Modern Math" created so much interest among those that attended that a Modern Math Workshop is being planned. The six week workshop will start on January 6 and be completed on February 17. The class will be for any interested adults, not just

parents of children in the elementary grades. Mrs. Hester White, third grade teacher, will lead the class program, other members of the faculty will be brought into the class work at various stages.

25 years ago The Lowell Ledger December 19, 1990

Middle School nurtures giving tree. Lowell Middle School students for the past two weeks have collected hats, scarfs, mittens and food products for the Lowell community's less fortunate. Nearly 1,000 items were collected. The goods were taken to the Lowell United First Methodist Church to be used for Christmas Baskets. Craig Allen's seventh-grade quad collected over 200 items. Allen's class collected 82 items.

Lowell's school administration and School Board select Owen, Ames and Kimball as project construction manager. No matter which of the four firms it was interviewing, Lowell's School Board and Administrators heard the same piece of encouraging news from each - It's a buyers market. "The cream of the crop" sub contractors will be giving highly competitive bids on Lowell's \$30 million bond issue. "A year ago we did not have any idea what the market would be like today. I think everybody is aware of where the market is today," Lowell School Board President Roger Kropf said. "Hopefully, Lowell Schools will be able to take advantage of this opportunity. This is very timely and nice for the school system."

At a special Board of Education meeting, the Lowell Board and administrators interviewed four firms for the construction manager position for the new high school project and renovations. Then, on Monday, in another special Board of Education meeting, Lowell's Administration and School Board unanimously agreed to offer the construction manager contract, subject to negotiated fee, to Owen, Ames and Kimball.

Bus supervisors react to bus legislation. There is some legislation going on right here (Michigan), that's not setting well with Michigan Bus Transportation Supervisors. State bill 1128 calls for a revision in the busing within the next five years. The revision would require schools to switch over from snub nose buses to flat nose buses. "It may not pass this year, but Triple AAA supports it so eventually it will go through," said Lowell Transportation Supervisor Larry Mikulski. The main reason cited for the change is safety. At some point as children are crossing in front of the bus, bus drivers lose sight of them. "The only way this could be prevented is if children would walk 18 feet in front of the school vehicle," Mikulski said. "I'm of the opinion that snub nose buses are safe provided there is proper training and knowledge." The difference in cost between the snub nose (currently used) and the flat nose buses (recommended) is roughly \$10,000. Lowell purchases four new buses in December each year, for the following fiscal year. This year the buses cost \$41,333 per bus. The cost totaled \$165,332. Mikulski added that the flat nose buses cost roughly \$51,000 apiece.

Concussion care, continued

fall became the first state association to offer pilot sideline concussion testing, with 62 schools taking part in one of two programs. One of the objectives of the pilot

programs was to increase awareness of concussions and improve sideline detection; and preliminary results indicate that the average number of possible concussions reported by pilot schools exceeds the average reported by schools outside the pilot group.

Of 36 schools reporting the most concussions this fall, 11 are part of the MHSAA's pilot sideline detection programs. Those programs - King-Devick Test and XLNTbrain Sport - utilize technology to provide on-site testing of athletes who have sustained possible concussions, with results of those examinations then compared against baseline tests taken by athletes previously.

The MHSAA also is the first state association to provide all participants at every member high school and junior high/middle school with insurance intended to pay accident medical expense benefits - covering deductibles and co-pays left unpaid by other policies - resulting from head injuries sustained

during school practices or competitions and at no cost to either schools or families. The program will produce additional data about the frequency and severity of head injuries. While it is still early, only 34 claims have been made on the insurance policy designed to assist in payment for concussion care. Twenty of the claims are for football, 11 for soccer.

"These three efforts combined are part of making our good programs better," MHSAA executive director John E. "Jack" Roberts said. "We're pleased to provide these services to our schools and we anticipate having a comprehensive report after the end of the school year, with that data then used by the National Federation of State High School Associations and research institutions to continue to make our games safer."

Schools report possible concussions online via the MHSAA website. Reports are then examined by members of the MHSAA staff, who follow up with school administrators as

those student-athletes continue to receive care and eventually return to play. Student privacy is protected.

Previously, the MHSAA also was among the first state associations to adopt a return-to-play protocol that keeps an athlete out of activity until at least the next day after a suspected concussion and allows that athlete to return to play only after he or she has been cleared for activity by a doctor (M.D. or D.O.), physician's assistant or nurse practitioner.

"These pilot programs and the reporting of potential concussions by all of our schools, have made administrators, coaches and athletes more aware of the possibility of concussions and the importance of immediate detection and care," Roberts said. "Many of our schools have long had programs in place to detect concussions and provide care. The opportunities to test, report and receive financial assistance in the event of a concussion have encouraged all of

our schools to consider additional ways to better care for their student-athletes.

"These latest in a long line of health and safety initiatives will establish a baseline and eventually allow us to determine if we are making progress year-to-year in Michigan school sports in this critical area of health and safety."

The MHSAA is a private, not-for-profit corporation of voluntary membership by more than 1,400 public and private senior high schools and junior high/middle schools which exists to develop common rules for athletic eligibility and competition. No government funds or tax dollars support the MHSAA, which was the first such association nationally to not accept membership dues or tournament entry fees from schools. Member schools which enforce these rules are permitted to participate in MHSAA tournaments, which attract more than 1.4 million spectators each year.



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Red Arrow **SPORTS**

Arrows win season opener over FHE, 66-57

by Kathryn Atwood
contributing reporter

After earning the Arrows' best finish in 31 years last season with a total of 14 victories, Lowell varsity hoops opened their season with a 66-57 win over non-conference rival Forest Hills Eastern (FHE) last Tuesday in the Arrow home opener.

A veteran rich Lowell team, only losing one senior from last season, took to the court with fierce aggression in front of a large home crowd. They put the first points on the board and kept

the game within a basket for the entire first period which ended Arrows up 17-16.

Senior Gabe Steed and junior Matt Beachler launched a pair of three pointers to kick off scoring in the second where the Arrows pushed ahead of their opponent for much of the duration. FHE crept back up the scoreboard as the clock dwindled leaving Lowell up by just six, 36-30, at the half.

Though the team missed a few scoring opportunities early on in the half they

started to see a warm up especially in the form of juniors, Branagan, who was on point for the team working well on both sides of the court; and Beachler, who ended the first half with 12 points.

The Arrows maintained a pretty steady ten-point lead for much of the third with multiple successful shots coming from Beachler, Steed, Ryan Stevens and Carter Noskey, who threw in an impressive lay up through traffic for two. The period ended with the

Arrows still on top 50-40 at the buzzer.

FHE just barely managed to outscore Lowell in the final period 17-16, due in part to several trips to the line for free throws due to Arrow fouls, but the pugnacious Arrows claimed the 66-57 victory. Top performers for the night were Beachler who led all scorers with 27 points, Stevens who produced 14 and Branagan who ended the night with 11. Others adding to the opening win total were Steed with six points and Noskey and Alex Anschutz who chipped in four each.



Junior Austin Branagan had a great night working well defensively and adding 11 points to the Arrows' win.



Point guard Ryan Stevens scored 14 points in the team's season opener.

The team will face a trio of challenges this week as they welcome Northview High School on Tuesday, travel to Greenville High School on Friday and take part in the Battle of I-96 Holiday Hoops Classic at Ottawa Hills High School on Saturday.

- WRESTLING

Red Arrow grapplers start the season off right

by Kathryn Atwood
contributing reporter

Red Arrows two-time defending state champion wrestling team took to the mat twice last week as they kicked off their season with their sights already firmly set on another run to the state finals.

Despite a late start for full team practices, due to the extended football season that kept away 20 dual athlete team members, the Arrows came out firing on all cylinders Wednesday at Rockford High School. The Rams hosted the Arrows for the Rockford Quad, a four team competition that also featured Greenville High School and Byron Center High School in action on the mat.

The Red Arrows handily defeated their host in the first round by a score of 42-10. In the second round they faced Greenville whom they topped by a similar margin of 47-12 giving the team the perfect start to the

season that they have been working for during the off season. "We gave our guys a lot of opportunities to compete and get better," said head coach RJ Boudro. "We worked them hard but we also let them be kids."

Lowell continued to perform top notch on Saturday as they added another team win when they traveled to the Allegan Invitational for a full day of grappling action that also added up to a slew of individual champions for the team.

First-place finishers included Max Bishop, Avry Mutschler and former state champion senior Lucas Hall, who moved up in weight class from 119 to 125 this season. Placing second for the squad were Bryce Dempsey and Austin Engle, while Keigan Yuhas and Eli Boulton placed third.

Rounding out the field for Lowell were other

top finishers: Jeff Leech who placed fourth, Logan Blough who claimed a fifth-place spot and Tyler Lynch and Kyle Washburn whom both took sixth.

According to Boudro,

the team is rich with talent and experience that he expects to see develop into a fantastic season. "We have four senior All-state wrestlers, three of whom are returning state champions,

that will give us some of the best leadership we have ever had. I can tell you that this year's team will be exciting to watch," said Boudro.

This Saturday the team will face off in two locations

on the road as they take part in both the Kent County Classic at Davenport University and the Grand Haven Duals. Both events are scheduled to kick off at 9 am.

Sports Summaries

BOYS BOWLING

Boys varsity bowling rolled their way to two top finishes last week. Tuesday at Eastbrook Lanes the team topped Forest Hills Eastern 23-7 with bowlers Carson Clark and Logan Smith leading the way with scores of 221 and 186 respectively. Saturday at the Allendale Invitational Foster Skoog topped the Red Arrows with a score of 411 as the team claimed a respectable second-place finish

GIRLS BOWLING

In a tough week of competition for the Lowell girls varsity bowling team the Arrows fell to Forest Hills Eastern at Eastbrook Lanes on Tuesday and landed in seventh place on Saturday at the Allendale Invitational.

GYMNASTICS

Lowell's varsity gymnastics team recently announced that their second annual military tribute invitational will be held January 9 inside the high school gym. The Red Arrow tumblers will honor former and current veterans during a special pre-meet ceremony dressed in specially designed American flag uniforms and will also be collecting donations to benefit several veteran organizations.

HOCKEY

Lowell-Caledonia-South Christian varsity hockey fought hard but fell to Manistee on the road last Friday by a score of 5-1. The team hopes to get back into its winning ways this Friday night when they host student night at the Kentwood Ice Arena against Forest Hills Central. Students with ID will be admitted free and able to enjoy prizes, refreshments, the opportunity to win a \$100 Subway gift card and a performance from the Lowell High School drumline. Puck drops at 7:30.



obituaries

ELLISON

Bill A. Ellison, age 58 of Lowell, passed away after a long courageous battle with cancer on Saturday, December 12, 2015. He was preceded in death by his grandparents; Ruth and Albert Smith, Grant and Edna Ellison, as well as his mother, Delores Ellison. He is survived by his wife, Terri; children, Wayne (Katie Campbell) Baker and Kyle (Melissa Weil) Baker; father, Billie Ellison; brother, Dick (Gerri) Ellison; sister, Debra (Todd) Lenneman, and many nieces and nephews. Bill loved to fish, build model cars and was a big NASCAR fan especially of Dale Earnhardt Sr. He worked at NAPA for many years and considered them to be his second family. Visitation will be Wednesday 2-4 and 6-8 PM at the Roth-Gerst Chapel, 305 N. Hudson, Lowell. There will be no formal funeral services. In lieu of flowers, the family asks that you consider a donation to the American Cancer Society (129 Jefferson Ave. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503), or to the family to assist with funeral expenses.



MINIER

Richard Dale 'Ralph' Minier, age 66 of Parnell, formerly of Belding, passed away unexpectedly Tuesday, December 8, 2015. He was preceded in death by his parents and sisters Alice Woodhams and Shirley

Larson. He is survived by his wife and best friend of 46 years, Bobbie and children Joe (Angie) Minier, Mike (Mindy) Minier and Sarah (Alan) Watts; his 6 grandchildren M a d i s o n , Hannah, Hunter, Caleb, Ella & Casey; brother Elwin Minier; sister Marion Parks; sister-in-law Patti (Bob) Harberts; sisters-in-law Katie Wilson, Carol Fox and Dorothy Anible; many nieces and nephews and countless friends. Ralph was a most beloved husband, father, grandfather and friend. He took great pride in his family. He served his county in Vietnam and was awarded a purple heart for his service. He was a US Postal worker for 42 years. Ralph was a devoted coach of many sports at St. Patrick's and Lowell schools, Little League and Youth Football. He graduated from Belding High School and Davenport College. Memorial donations may be made to Lowell Little League, PO Box 292, Lowell MI 49331 or Lowell Schools Athletics, 300 High Street, Lowell MI 49331 or the Wounded Warrior Project, 4899 Belfort Road, Ste. 300, Jacksonville, Florida 32256.



PORTER

Irma Colleen Porter, Age 88 of Lowell, went to be with her Lord with her family by her side on Sunday, December 6, 2015. She was preceded in death by her husband of 44 years, Frank, in 1994 and brothers Clare, George and Harold Krebs. She is survived by her brother David (Susanne) Krebs; sister-in-law Gladys Krebs; several nieces and nephews and good friend George Parrault. Irma was a member of East Congregational Church in Grand Rapids, where she faithfully worked at the food pantry until health issues forced her to retire. Every Sunday morning she would greet parishioners and offer them a candy or cough drop. When she lived in Florida, she was in charge of the food pantry for the city of Wildwood. A funeral service was held. Interment Chapel Hill. Memorial contributions may be made to the East Congregational Church Food Pantry, 1005 Giddings Ave SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49506 or Schneider Manor, 725 Bowes Rd., Lowell, MI 49331.



♦♦♦

Remember, if Christmas isn't found in your heart, you won't find it under a tree.
~ Charlotte Carpenter.

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

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TOWNSHIP OF GRATTAN COUNTY OF KENT, MICHIGAN PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF GRATTAN WILL HOLD A PUBLIC HEARING ON JANUARY 6, 2016 AT 7:00 P.M. AT THE GRATTAN TOWNSHIP HALL, 12050 OLD BELDING ROAD, WITHIN THE TOWNSHIP, ON THE APPLICATION OF JACK VANSTEE FOR A SPECIAL LAND USE TO DIVIDE A NON-CONFORMING LOT AND PURSUANT TO SECTION 13.21 OF THE GRATTAN TOWNSHIP ZONING ORDINANCE; PARCEL NUMBER 41-12-33-408-011; 4482 CAUSEWAY DR, LOWELL, MI 49331.

ALL INTERESTED PERSONS MAY ATTEND THE PUBLIC HEARING AND COMMENT ON THE PROPOSAL. WRITTEN COMMENTS CONCERNING THE ZONING ORDINANCE AND SPECIAL LAND USE MAY BE SUBMITTED TO THE TOWNSHIP OFFICE, AT THE ABOVE ADDRESS, UP TO THE TIME OF THE PUBLIC HEARING. THE APPLICATION AND RELATED MATERIALS CAN BE REVIEWED OR PURCHASED DURING NORMAL BUSINESS HOURS (MON-FRI, 8:00AM TO 4:00PM) AT THE TOWNSHIP OFFICE.

PLANNING COMMISSION
TOWNSHIP OF GRATTAN
(818) 891-8450
DATED: DECEMBER 3, 2015
(12315FJF)

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GRATTAN TOWNSHIP

Regular Meeting 7:00 p.m.
Synopsis of Minutes December 7, 2015

Motions Approved:

1. Bagladi Rezone will be sent back to Planning Commission with no fees charged except public notice.
2. Resolution 2015-020 to approve the language for the proposed fire millage.
3. Approved Planning Commission 3 year terms for Lisa Soslocke, Anna Visser, Doug Geldersma.
4. Approved Planning Commission 1 year term renewal for Denny Heffron.
5. Approved Zoning Board of Appeals 3 year terms for Nancy Benner, John Jakeway, Dee Hockemeyer.
6. Approved Fire Administration and Safety Committee term renewal for Mary Kay Groening and Paul Knoerl.
7. Approved Safety Board of Appeals 3 year terms for Louis Kirkbride, Patrick Brink, Kin Bradburn and a 1 year term for Paul Knoerl.
8. Approved Sewer Advisory Committee 3 year term for Alan Rumbaugh, Jennifer Medema, and a 1 year term for Frank Force.
9. Approved Cable Committee 1 year term for Paul Knoerl.
10. Approved Construction Board 2 year term for Alan Rumbaugh, Gary Slosser, and Greg Brown.
11. The McArthur Drain to be repaired in January, not to exceed 2,000.00.
12. The 2016 Grattan Township Calendar.
13. The 2016/2017 Meeting Schedule.

Our next Township Meeting will be January 11, 2016 At 7:00 p.m.
The approved minutes may be reviewed on our website at www.grattantownship.org

Fountain View renovations nearly complete

by Tim McAllister
contributing reporter

Renovations to the non-profit assisted living facility, Fountain View of Lowell, 11537 E. Fulton, are finally almost complete. The remodeled areas include offices and some nice new amenities for residents. Staff will be completely moved in by Dec. 31.

“It’s finally done,” said Kurt Lardie, Fountain View administrator. “All of our offices, the hair salon, the spa and the activity room are now all connected between our two buildings.”

The renovations began in September 2014. The buildings were originally constructed in the 1980s and required many upgrades and repairs, which caused delays.

“Regardless, it’s all done now; we finally moved in and that’s all that matters,” Lardie said. “It’s beautiful. They did a lot.”

Among the residents’ new luxuries at Fountain View is a stand-up bathtub with water jets, temperature controls and lots of sophisticated-looking dials and switches.

“Many elderly people can’t take a bath, they have to take a shower,” Lardie said. “So we invested in a walk-in tub. It’s kind of like the ones you see on late night TV, or like a hot tub, but much, much nicer.”

Not only are the offices and facilities new, Lardie himself is relatively new as Fountain View’s administrator. He took over the position in September 2015 when the former administrator suddenly left the company. Lardie grew up in Saranac and has lived in Lowell for 13 years. He has a wife and a son. He worked in banking until 2009 when upheaval during the great recession caused him to leave that industry.

“I didn’t know what I wanted to do, but I knew I didn’t want to go back into banking,” Lardie said. “I started as maintenance director at Fountain View last July. I was in management in banking all those years, so I took the administrative exam and passed it, then waited for

an opening. Fortunately and unfortunately, that opening was in Lowell. Rose [Hollinshead, former Fountain View director] was wonderful. I miss her a lot.”

Lardie said the residents didn’t seem to mind the long construction period and that it was well worth the wait anyway.

“It caused excitement,” Lardie said. “It was something to watch for a while. My favorite part of the renovation is how much easier it is for the residents to move back and forth and utilize the spa room and the hair salon, go exercise in the activity room, that type of thing. It’s so much easier and that is a great thing. Now we can cater to the residents even more.”



The new walk-in bathtub for residents of Fountain View.



The beauty salon and the kitchen were also remodeled.

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...
They err who thinks Santa Claus comes down through the chimney; he really enters through the heart.”
~ Mrs. Paul M. Ell

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**STATEPOINT
CROSSWORD**

**THEME:
WINTER FUN**

ACROSS

1. Appear like a chick
6. Unit of electrical resistance
9. " ____ the word"
13. Convex molding
14. Honey maker
15. Japanese-American
16. Russian author of "Dead Souls"
17. "C' ____ la vie!"
18. English county
19. *Students' winter delight?
21. *Apres-ski site
23. Goose egg
24. *Snow ____
25. Olden-day aerosol can propellant
28. Post WWII military alliance
30. Lorraine's neighbor
35. Word of mouth
37. Drug smuggler
39. " ____ a high note"
40. Orange traffic controller
41. Parting words
43. Bookie's quote
44. Like draft beer
46. Apiece
47. 7 days
48. Made amends
50. Clarified butter
52. Like martini or humor
53. Justice's garb
55. A late time of life
57. *He stole Christmas
60. *Frosty, e.g.

CROSSWORD														
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DECEMBER 9 - DECEMBER 15

- A new study finds some popular antidepressants, if taken during the second and third trimesters of pregnancy, are associated with an 87 percent increased risk of autism.
- The red carpet was rolled out for the actors in the new film - Star Wars: The Force Awakens. The movie premiere took place on Monday night in Los Angeles.
- The USA's high school graduation rate has gone up slightly to 82 percent. The Education Department said that the rate for the 2013-14 school year was the highest since it started using a new, uniform measure in 2010. Still, nearly 1 in 5 students leave high school without a diploma. Education secretary Arne Duncan said too many students still aren't graduating, but he praised the newly released numbers as encouraging.
- Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl who was held hostage by the Taliban for five years, could now face life in prison for abandoning his outpost in Afghanistan and endangering his fellow soldiers.



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- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| 64. ____ profundo | 68. Furiously angry | cold, according to meteorologists |
| 65. Tropical American cuckoo | 69. Container for liquids | 27. Ann Patchett's novel "Bel ____" |
| 67. Index and middle fingers extended | 70. Island off Manhattan | 29. *Donut-shaped sled |
| | 71. "Lights out" signal | 31. *Chionophobia is fear or dislike of this |
| | 72. Weary traveler's destination | 32. Supplemented |
| | 73. *Toboggans | 33. Computer programmer |

DOWN

1. The ____, Washington's offensive line, 1980s-90s
2. Shakespeare's hometown river
3. A meal order for takeout
4. Pierrot or Harlequin, e.g.
5. ____, as in breath
6. Be obedient
7. "For ____ a jolly..."
8. Subway in Paris
9. Japanese soup
10. Brezhnev's country
11. Track event
12. Half dozen
15. Get cozy
20. Remember this battle site!
22. Baseball stat
24. Autumn attraction
25. *Popular hot winter beverage
26. Can be hot or

Puzzle solutions on page 12

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Fill in the blank squares in the grid, making sure that every row, column and 3-by-3 box includes all digits 1 through 9.

THIS WEEK'S
ONLINE
POLL

Is it appropriate to prohibit people from immigrating to the U.S. because of their religion?

- Definitely
- Never
- Sometimes

TO VOTE IN
THIS WEEK'S
ONLINE POLL

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