

With the 2016 coming into view, a number of Lowell's prominent citizens reflect and look ahead

by Tim McAllister
contributing reporter

Like every year, 2015 was full of ups and downs, comedy and tragedy, all of the worst and all of the best. We asked a few prominent people around town to look back on 2015 and give us their thoughts on what 2016 could bring.

Liz Baker, the executive director of the Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce, is the lady who puts together many of the special events that take place in Lowell every year. You'll find Baker running around frantically behind the scenes at the Sizzlin' Summer Concert Series, Christmas Through Lowell, the Lowell Area Farmers' Market, Girls' Night Out, the Lowell Expo and many other events. Baker didn't pick one of her own projects for the most important event in Lowell, although she is involved in it.



Liz Baker

"I would have to say Pink Arrow Pride, not only in 2015 but the past years as well," Baker said. "I am involved because the chamber is represented on the Lowell Community Wellness Board. Lowell Community Wellness was empowered by the Pink Arrow Pride to use a portion of the proceeds to provide funding for innovative learning and enhancing programs for students and to promote programs or events that inspire and educate the Greater Lowell Community in cancer prevention, education and support. But the greatest part is 'Family Support,' a way to help families with a financial gift on their cancer journey. Sometimes this task is very sad and other times there is a feeling of joy knowing this small financial gift can

be the greatest gift of all. It's not really the dollar amount, it's the fact that the Greater Lowell Community stands behind the meaning of this gift; the community pays it forward."

Baker said the chamber has plans for Lowell's biggest and most iconic landmark.

"[In] 2016 the Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce will take on a very important initiative, the Lowell Showboat," Baker said. "The Showboat has weathered many years, but each year our beloved icon shows its age a little more. In 2014 the city of Lowell underwent a Riverwalk stage and Showboat master plan. The knowledge we gained from this study was that the community wants to keep the Lowell Showboat, feeling that it represents our history and identity. The chamber's board of directors approved and overwhelmingly supported a committee to research various means to fund, construct or restore the present Showboat. We are in [the] very beginning stages of this process. Look for more information in the new year as we forge ahead with this initiative."

Greg Pratt is the superintendent of Lowell Area Schools. Pratt's educational philosophy for Lowell's students involves cooperation between all of the adults involved in students' lives.

"Nothing can benefit a student's academic achievement more than a positive and strong partnership between the parent, the community and the educators," Pratt said. "Our staff shows support through their commitment to navigate legislated

evaluation systems; to continue growth via professional development; to provide fresh, nutritional meals; to ensure clean, safe and healthy learning environments; and to strive to provide the quality service for families.



Greg Pratt

Our community, businesses and education foundation provides financial support through sponsorships, grants and scholarships to ensure that kids get exactly what they need. Our parents provide solid home/school partnerships, volunteer services and care that bridges the home and school family together. Our unified support systems provide not only opportunity for academic success, but life success. It's the teacher, the counselor, the bus driver and school staff, alongside the parent, who play a vital role in assuring that a child experiences deeper learning that will set their path for a promising future."

Pratt said that building a positive, supportive staff is the best way to ensure success for Lowell's students.

"For Lowell Area Schools, it's not one significant event that shapes us as an organization, rather it's a culture that we build," Pratt said. "The most significant part of doing our business well, teaching and learning, is support. It's the support of our staff, our parents and our community that empowers students to achieve at high levels, to succeed and become well-rounded, compassionate, service-minded human beings. This support is important because it serves as a collective agreement that our students deserve

the best opportunities for success."

Pratt said that he will follow whatever curriculum requirements are mandated by law, but his ultimate goal is to give Lowell's youth the finest possible education.

"In a time of changing legislated requirements in standardized testing and demands of teacher evaluation, Lowell Area Schools will stay the course, continue to evolve and grow to meet and exceed the mandates," Pratt said. "[We] are dedicated to fostering a love for learning in our kids and help them become the people they are meant to be. We have and always will, believe that no standardized test, or no mandated legislation, will pour out knowledge, care and wisdom like that of caring adults and talented educators who dedicate their profession to helping students."

Bruce Doll said that the most significant event in Lowell in 2015 was the Kent County Youth Fair. Doll, however, might be slightly biased on that particular subject.



Bruce Doll

"I am the KCYF vice president and I head up the marketing and entertainment committees," Doll said. "I am in my 16th year on the board and was nominated the vice president for 2015/2016."

The fair brings a lot of people to Lowell every year, which is good for Lowell's economy.

"The KCYF reached thousands of families throughout Kent County and brought them to Lowell," Doll said. "The more kids and families we can reach

and have a positive effect on, the better."

As for 2016, it's way too early for anything specific, but Doll did make one promise for next year's fair.

"2016? A bigger and better fair," Doll said.

Jon Jacobs is the publisher of the Lowell Ledger and the Lowell Buyers Guide. Jacobs has been on the Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce board of directors for many years, so he has quite a bit of experience helping local businesses work together with the city. He said that the fate of Lowell's economy lies in the wallets and purses of local residents.



Jon Jacobs

"It's up to the consumers," Jacobs said. "They need to make a conscious decision, not just on Small Business Saturday, but year-round, to shop locally. Business in Lowell cannot survive on chamber events alone. As consumers, we need to make sure that we shop at our brick and mortar stores. If we don't, we're going to have a ghost town of empty buildings. The things you love, like the school system, the police department and fire department, you're not going to have the same level of service as you had in the past because you don't have infrastructure. You don't have business."

Although there is some development in that building, Jacobs said that downtown still hasn't recovered from the closing of one particular anchor store.

Reflect and look ahead,
continued, page 2



2015 Year In Review

Starts on page 11



Lhs sports



page 10

50 CENTS



8 0 4 8 7 9 1 5 3 8 3 2

And they heard him exclaim, as he drove out of sight that, once again, he had a magical time in Lowell

by Kathryn Atwood
contributing reporter

Nobody enjoyed the holiday season in Lowell more than the man in red. Santa Claus whisked into town for an extended stay this December as part of the city's annual Christmas festivities and said his time here was, as always, "magical."

Santa said one of his favorite experiences in Lowell is the heralded and heavily attended nighttime parade. "I've always loved parades, but the nighttime parade in Lowell is truly magical. All the organizations and people of all ages put so much effort into their entries that all you see are smiles the entire length of the parade. Mrs. Claus and I love all the lights and, of course, the kids of all ages."

Another highlight mentioned by Santa was his time at the annual pancake supper held in support of the Kent County Youth Fair. Though he never dines on the scrumptious piping hot breakfast, he noted, "You've never seen what maple syrup does to a long white beard!" "I get to talk with the entire family in a very relaxed setting," he said about the event.

This year Santa met the McCaulley family for the first time at the supper and saw them again along the parade route. Mother Brandi said that it was their first time at the holiday events, having traveled from Middleville after reading about the festivities online. "They had such a great time! We will definitely be making the pancake supper a new tradition. We loved the parade! It is really kind of magical having it at night," said Brandi.

At the Showboat, Santa said he saw nearly a thousand children come through the beautifully decorated Santa room armed with lists and Christmas wishes. Santa reported that the most popular requests for the younger kids have remained the same for some time, "Legos were still the number one request from the young boys and Star Wars toys are really big this year, as well as all the super hero action figures. For the young girls, it is still the Barbie and American Girl dolls leading in requests. All the Frozen movie items were big again this year, lead by the Anna and Elsa dolls. For the older girls, it's jewelry and clothing and the older boys it's still remote control cars, trucks and helicopters, however this year I received several requests for drones."

Santa said he looks forward to his time in the community each season and is always impressed with the holiday trim at the Showboat, the beautiful city and the abundance of Christmas spirit. "Lowell holds a special place in our hearts and it all has to do with the people here," concluded Santa Claus.



Seven-month-old Caleb McCaulley met Santa for the first time in Lowell.

Reflect and look ahead, continued

"We are still paying for the loss of Cousins' Hallmark," Jacobs said. "That was a signature store on Main St. that brought people into town who walked up and down the street after they shopped at Hallmark. We need another business or two much like Cousins', we need retail, but not chains. You have to have a strong downtown

and you have to have a strong business community. That's where you start. Unique shops, places that sell items that you can't find everywhere."

"At all costs, you have to protect your downtown and that doesn't just mean this two block stretch," Jacobs said. "That's a misconception. Downtown also includes all the way out

toward Meijer, that whole stretch. They're part of the community and they are downtown to me."

The Ledger and Buyers Guide are deeply involved in most community projects.

"We always try to get involved with projects," Jacobs said. "Every week somebody comes in here and they have a church function or a non-profit function and we assist them by promoting it as much as humanly possible. The two big projects we do every year are Pink Arrow, which is a whole year event now and we have Neighbor To Neighbor. We helped start that with a group of individuals, so that's something that we spend a lot of time on."

Jacobs expressed some optimism for the local economy in 2016.

"I think the economy has improved in Michigan and I see signs of it improving in West Michigan," Jacobs said. "I think industry did very well this year locally. That's a positive sign. Hopefully they'll continue to grow and they're successful. I think that Lowell will see growth in 2016. We've added

some new businesses. The chamber and the Downtown Development Authority have some new projects. The DDA especially is talking about some interesting things. Hopefully it will lead to more economic growth."

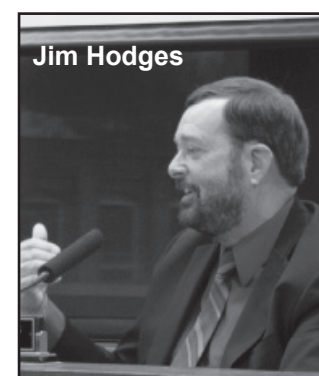
The election last November added three new faces to Lowell's city council. The election did not go the way many predicted and proved that voters had a desire for change in local government.

"It was interesting to see the transition on the city council," Jacobs said. "It's going to be interesting to see, in 2016, which directions they go. We'll all give them time to get their feet wet and see what it's like to be on the city council and we'll wait with bated breath to see what decisions they make. It's impossible to predict. At this point they're just trying to see how everything works. Change is a good thing in a lot of cases. We'll see which direction they go and how they want to change things and try to work together."

Jim Hodges, the mayor of Lowell, also

said that one of the most important events in Lowell in 2015 was the November election.

"I was quite surprised that Sharon Ellison lost [for reelection to the city council]," Hodges said. "You can't predict the future. Don't even try to, because you never know. That was probably the biggest deal of last year. The union negotiations came to a quiet end this year after three years. The continued success of Pink Arrow, the Showboat concert series, all of the great things that make this town special. It is a pretty cool place. It's the best place in the world to live."



Hodges hinted at some potentially major changes to

the Riverfront, specifically Lowell's famous Showboat.

"We'll see what happens with the Showboat," Hodges said. "We were supposed to have a forensic engineer studying the Showboat to see how dangerous it is and so on. They did a preliminary study, now they want to do another one. They had the EPA and the DNR and all the other 'alphabet people' there. It will be interesting, in the next year, to see what the prognosis is on the Showboat. My personal feeling is not so optimistic on this boat, but I think there may be something to replace it."

Hodges wouldn't guess at the future, but he did say that Lowell has many positive things ahead of it.

"This is a good community," Hodges said. "I'm always optimistic. Lowell has had its issues over the years, but I think the future's going to be just fine. It may be much different than you or I envision it. This town has seen bigger and worse things, so I'm very optimistic for the future, whatever it may be. It'll be interesting."

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Harold Zeigler Ford celebrates 40 years of business

by Tim McAllister
contributing reporter

Harold Zeigler Ford celebrated its 40th anniversary earlier this year. The chain of automotive dealerships started in Lowell way back in the 1970s.

“On Sept. 21, 1975, Harold Zeigler took all of his savings and invested them in a Ford dealership located in Lowell,” said Matt Thomas, the general sales manager at Zeigler Ford of Lowell. “He became the youngest owner of a Ford dealership

in the entire United States. He was eager to be an owner of a Ford franchise. He was already working at a Ford dealership and was truly excited about the brand and the future of Ford.”

The dealership in Lowell did incredibly well. Zeigler set sales records year after year, eventually establishing a huge automotive sales empire. The Zeigler Automotive Group currently has 20 dealerships in Michigan,

Indiana, Illinois and New York. Thomas said the key to Zeigler’s success was his devotion to his customers.

“The store was very successful,” Thomas said. “Harold took great pride in treating each and every customer like family. He believed in giving each customer a great experience, which is our same mission to this day. Harold sold 1,800 vehicles in 1979. In 1997 each of the Harold Zeigler Ford dealerships won

the Ford North American Customer Excellence award.”

The company strives to give something back to the communities that support it by supporting various charities and events.

“We support a great deal of local charities for every city we are located in,” Thomas said. “We host an annual Drive For Life Cancer benefit in Kalamazoo where over \$300,000 is raised each year

for local cancer research. Each year Harold Zeigler Ford helps host the ‘Drive 4 UR School’ event to help support the Lowell High School football team in which \$6,000 is raised.”

Harold Zeigler is currently the CEO and chairman of the Zeigler Automotive Group. His son Aaron Zeigler is the company’s president.

“We sold over 27,000 vehicles last year and are

on pace to break 28,000 this year,” Thomas said. “The Harold Zeigler Ford store in Lowell had the best year ever in 2014 and is going to break that record in 2015. It started with 10 employees in 1975 and now we have over 1,000 employees. We have always been able to give customers a great experience for all of their sales, service and parts needs.”

Chamber of commerce accepting nominations for Person of the Year

The prestigious Person of the Year award has been a Lowell Chamber of Commerce tradition since 1986 at the Grand Volute Ballrooms. The public is welcome at this event. The award is given out at the annual Gathering of the Membership to be held Feb. 25, 2016. Recipients qualified for this honor can be nominated by the guidelines listed below. The nominations are given to the selection committee and the Person of the Year is chosen. The selection committee is comprised of the recipients of the past five years who received the Person of

the Year award. The following criteria are used to determine the recipient for the current year:

- Over time, the candidate has freely donated considerable time to the community, school district, church, or humanity. This is over and above the demands of their regular profession.
- The community is a better place to live because of the efforts of the candidate.
- The candidate positively promotes the community in both word and action.

The candidate possesses new and innovative ideas that benefit the community.

The candidate cannot be a chamber board/foundation board member at the time of nomination.

If you know someone who is deserving of this honor, please submit in writing your detailed nomination to LACC, PO Box 224, Lowell, MI 49331 or email to info@lowellchamber.org or fax to 897-9101. Deadline is Friday, Jan. 8, 2016.

LPD November statistics

Lowell's police and fire departments were kept busy in November.

According to recently released statistics, Lowell police made 23 arrests during November, down from 30 the previous month. These arrests included four drug violations, one for drunk driving, eight for outstanding warrants and eight that are described in the police department's information as "other arrests." That adds up to 287 arrests by Lowell police during 2015 so far.

The police department

responded to plenty of misdemeanors during November as well. There were ten larceny calls, four dog complaints, four calls for malicious destruction, four disorderly conduct calls and five assaults. Lowell police wrote 36 citations and notified seven residents about ordinance violations. They were called to “assist” 50 times and were dispatched to five accidents. Out of 123 traffic stops they

let 111 drivers go with just a warning.

The Lowell Area Fire and Emergency Services Authority went on 24 runs in November. Among the runs were two structure fires, one vehicle fire, eight "miscellaneous" fires, four accident scenes and nine false alarms. They were also called to 32 medical emergencies during the month of November.

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HAPPY NEW YEAR 2016



Lowell Area Schools "Pink It Forward" on Jan. 8

by Tim McAllister
contributing reporter

Lowell Area Schools are doing something special called "Pink It Forward" this year to honor Pink Arrow and do some good at the same time.

"We do it on the eighth day of each month that we're in school," LAS athletic director Dee Crowley said. "We did it on October 8th and December 8th."

The next Pink It Forward event to benefit Gilda's Club Lowell will be on January 8. Students

will have the opportunity to bring various donations to benefit a local charity.

"On the eighth day of each month we remind students to wear pink," Crowley said. "They can either bring monetary donations or they can bring a donation for Gilda's Club. We have a wish list of needs, like paper products, napkins, plates, dish soap, hand soap, toilet paper, those types of things. Then we have money boxes where they

put in a dollar or a quarter or whatever they can and we give that to Gilda's Club to use."

Crowley said the collection boxes near her office are always filled with student donations during Pink It Forward.

"We collect it all here in the office at the high school," Crowley said. "We'll have a box of different products, overflowing with stuff to bring down to Gilda's Club."

kidsView



by Sierra Hieshetter

The holiday season is filled with happiness and cheer. There are so many opportunities to be kind, to help others and to honor tradition. I focused on the holidays for this article when I interviewed several Lowell Middle School students asking them how they would be celebrating

the holidays. Carson, an eighth grader at LMS, loves the food and the time she gets to spend with her family. Kacey also told me that she loves being around her family. In fact, every student I interviewed for the article stated the true meaning of the holidays as being able to spend time

with family and the ones they love. But, the holidays are also about giving back in a small way, like McKenna, a seventh grader at LMS. She is making all her gifts by hand this year instead of buying them. "They mean more that way," she said.

As for me, my family will honor some of our own traditions this year, like eating homemade cinnamon rolls on Christmas morning and spending the entire day in our pajamas. I hope everyone had a Merry Christmas and I wish you all good luck in the New Year!



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Once upon a time there was a girl named Ellie who loved to fish. She was introduced to fishing and coached by her father when she was very young. From time to time, Ellie turned up at family gatherings at a rustic camp on a picturesque private lake in the Huron Mountains in the Upper Peninsula.

The typical Canadian Shield lake had an abundance of rock in and around the lake as well as plenty of downed trees and limbs in the water. This was ideal habitat for bass.

Due to a long standing catch and release policy and lots of places to hide, the dark sided fish grew strong and big. The fishing was tricky because the robust fish lurked under and around the wood and rocks. Soft plastic lures and crank baits had to be skillfully presented to coax a strike and also to avoid snagging up on the cover. With a new fishing rod and a well-stocked pink tackle box, Ellie perfected her technique to a point where she consistently caught as many bass and

occasional toothy northern pike as anyone on the lake.

That far north the weather can swing from hot to bone chilling cold in a short time while sometimes accompanied by persistent rain. Toss in a blackfly hatch or clouds of marauding mosquitos and life in the backcountry can become exceedingly uncomfortable. And, as anyone who fishes knows, sometimes fish just don't bite.

Ellie endured all of these conditions at one time or another. The remarkable

thing I remember about Ellie was that no matter what happened, she never stopped smiling. Adversity did not dampen her optimism and joy. She was all in for the experience of being in beautiful surroundings and actively engaging nature at its best.

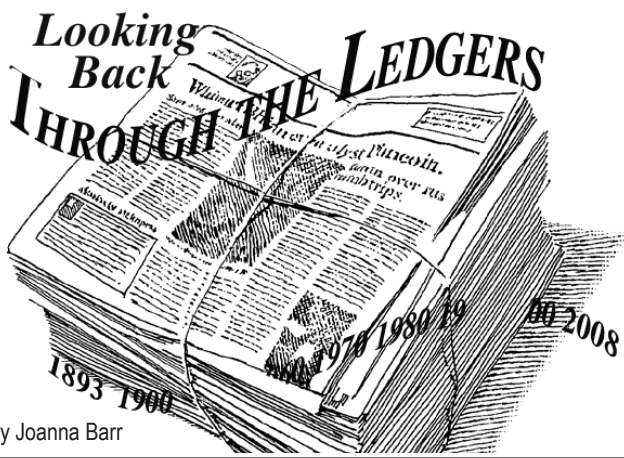
Some time has passed and Ellie is no longer a little girl, and she will probably read this and may have a little different recollection of my story. But that's O.K. because this is not only

about Ellie its about me. The older I get, the more pessimistic my view of the world becomes. I suppose it could be the times we live in and what goes on around us or maybe I am just getting tired.

Sitting in a deer blind at the close of muzzleloader season I had time to reflect on these feelings. I focused on the quite woods and forest creatures

scurrying around me on that particularly pleasant late fall day and I thought about Ellie and her joy and optimism. Although we may at times become discouraged, remember the delight of that young fisherman and, like her, appreciate the many blessings we have which can bring us peace and joy even in troubled times.

Have a happy and fulfilling New Year.



By Joanna Barr

125 years ago Lowell Journal December 31, 1890

The S. of V. Christmas Masquerade was a success, about 183 couples being present. The costumes of the Maskers were very brilliant. The boys netted about \$35.

The ice season has arrived and yesterday King, Quick & King, commenced storing the frost for the heated term next year. There is every prospect for ice to be cheaper in '91 than during the season just past.

100 years ago The Lowell Ledger December 30, 1915

Fell from train – but Carson City man escaped serious injury. James McNaughton of Carson City, fell from the west bound Pere Marquette train near Mosely Monday, and escaped serious injury. He was picked up and brought to Lowell, where he visited Mrs. D.O. Shear, an aunt by marriage. Mr. MacNaughton said he felt faint and stepped onto the platform for fresh air. The next thing he knew he was lying by the track. He and his wife were enroute to Grand Rapids to attend a wedding; and they were able to proceed on their trip by a later train. Contrary to the rule in such cases, Mr. MacNaughton had not been drinking.

The beautiful home of George Hart in Keene occupied by Mr. Hart and Silos Hull and family was destroyed by fire Monday evening between 8 and 9 o'clock. Most of the furniture on the ground floor was saved but everything in the chambers went with the house. Among other things lost in basement were 500 bushels of potatoes, apples canned fruit, belonging to Mr. Hull. The family had just retired and all of the clothing saved was what was taken off in going to bed.

Mr. Hart will go to the home of his son on the adjoining farm and Mr. Hull is moving to his own farm west of Greenville. The loss is several thousand dollars, partially insured. Fire is believed to have been caused by a defective chimney. The light of the burning house was visible for many miles and was seen by many people in Lowell and vicinity.

Wait for the wagon. Coons store will not close next Monday and Tuesday to rearrange the stock for their "Prosperity Special" sale opening Wednesday on account of the Treasurer's office being in the store. They will appreciate the kind indulgence of their patrons if they will withhold making their purchases until Wednesday, if convenient.

75 years ago The Lowell Ledger January 2, 1941

New Year comet is on its way – May be visible here to your naked eye. A spectacular heavenly show perhaps unsurpassed since Hailey's comet of 1910 is taking shape for Michigan's back-porch astronomers. The onrushing Cunningham comet has been observed nightly with field glasses and small telescopes by University of Michigan astronomers and is now visible to the naked eye. The luminous body and its fanlike tail should be best observed from Jan. 2 to 6.

The Christmas holidays saw all the records broken at the Lowell post office. During the 6 days immediately preceding Christmas more than 100,000 pieces of first class mail were handled. Monday, the 23rd, was the biggest day when 35,000 pieces of letter mail were received and dispatched. Parcel post packages that same day filled 52 pouches, or more than one hundred bushels.

Vergennes Twp. sheep raisers have had a number of sheep killed this winter by dogs in the Tom Murphy, J. Corrigan and Floyd Condon neighborhood.

50 years ago Lowell Ledger December 30, 1965

Bullet damages radio tower north of Lowell. A rifle bullet which put a hole in the transmission cable in the WYON-FM tower north of Lowell, on 5 Mile Road, put the station off the air. Water leaked into the cable and froze, causing considerable damage, engineers reported. The time necessary to repair the damage and put the station back on the air had not been determined on Tuesday.

Police report quiet Christmas, no accidents. Lowell Police reported a quiet Christmas, with no accidents

in the city, in spite of the icy condition of the roads on Christmas Day. Several cars went into the ditch on county roads around the city, but nobody was seriously injured. All highways were covered with ice and snow including the freeways. The snow storm hit this area about midnight on Christmas Eve and the snow mixed with the rain that had come down most of Friday, froze into a thick coating of ice. Christmas Day was pictorially ideal, but for families who had to travel, it was discouraging.

The Lowell Moose Civic Affairs committee distributed toys, food and clothing to over 100 needy families in the Lowell area as part of their annual Operation Santa Claus project over the week end. Before the Christmas packages are distributed, Mel Lewis, Civic Affairs chairman reported, the Moose members sorted and wrapped the gifts.

Looking Back, continued, page 8

We love to hear from you!



Your Hometown News Source

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

Letters may be submitted via email to: ledger@lowellbuyersguide.com ("to the Editor" in subject line) or dropped off or mailed to: The Lowell Ledger, 105 N. Broadway, Lowell, MI 49331.

the lowell ledger

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ledger@lowellbuyersguide.com

“Lunch Buddies” is there to help Lowell families

by Kathryn Atwood
contributing reporter

While some Lowell families enjoyed an abundant gift-filled Christmas season, other Lowell families struggled just to keep food on the table over the holidays.

Flat River Outreach Ministries (FROM), constantly on a mission to improve the quality of local lives, solved that problem for many last week with their “Lunch Buddies” winter program.

Holiday break can add stress to a budget already stretched thin by everyday living expenses. This is especially true coupled with additional Christmas purchases, such as presents, Christmas trees and expensive holiday meals.

FROM’s Lunch Buddies winter program, mirrored after their successful summer break program, is designed to

ease that financial burden by providing free lunches to area students.

The program was available to any family

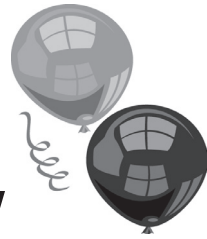
living in the Lowell school district with school age children and provided a variety of nutritious options for participants.

FROM serves around 200 Lowell families each month by way of its food assistance programs. Their staple program, a client choice food pantry, is also open to all in the Lowell Area

School District. Their hours of operation are Monday, Tuesday and Thursday 2-4:30, Wednesday 5-7 and Friday 10-12. FROM is located in Lowell at 11535 East Fulton Street.



happy birthday



DECEMBER 30

Stacy Thomas, Ben Hodges, Kyle Triplett, Joe Hunt, Stacey Craig, Joshua Gee, Maliree Trierweiler, Matthew Trierweiler.

JANUARY 1

Tory Abel, John Wenger, Alice Hesche, Carolyn Yonker, Amanita Fahrni, Bea Hoekstra.

JANUARY 2

Rose Nead, Helen Kuiper, Angie Sloan.

JANUARY 3

Jon Vezino, Audrie Olszewski, Lloyd Callihan, Jane Lalley, Rick Fyan.

JANUARY 4

Nicholas Knonenwetter, Ruth Wood, Clayton Brown.

JANUARY 5

Ryan Sauber, Craig Carpenter, Pauline LaDue, Genie Southwick, Jody Ann Young.

DECEMBER 31

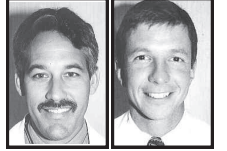
Marcie Page, Bill DeHaan, Charles Boerema.

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health



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

hepatitis C

Hepatitis C is a virus that causes problems with your liver. Hepatitis C can spread from person to person, usually through blood. In the US, most people get hepatitis C by sharing needles or other equipment used to inject drugs. Some people with this illness get better without any treatment within six months. This is called acute hepatitis C. However, many people develop chronic hepatitis C, which is an illness lasting longer than six months.

Most people with hepatitis C do not have symptoms. If you have symptoms, they may be flu-like and include feeling tired, body aches, fever, chills, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, and stomach pain. You could develop liver damage, cirrhosis (scarring of the liver) or liver cancer.

Hepatitis C can be diagnosed with blood tests. If the first test done is positive, it is recommended

to have additional testing done. People who should be tested for hepatitis C include people born between 1945 and 1965, if you have ever injected drugs, if you have HIV, if you have abnormal liver tests, if you have been exposed to blood through a needle stick, are on hemodialysis, received a blood transfusion or organ transplant prior to 1992, or have had sex with someone who has had hepatitis C.

There is no vaccine for hepatitis C, but research is being done on one. People with hepatitis C should get hepatitis A and B vaccines because these infections can further harm your liver. To protect yourself from getting hepatitis C, do not use injectable drugs. Do not share personal items that might have blood on them, like toothbrushes, razors, nail clippers or glucose monitors. Use condoms when having sex.



FROM’s Lunch Buddies winter program aided families through the financial stress of the holidays.

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(Youth Ministry moves to Wed. during summer)

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Hodges reflects on his time as mayor as council readies to select successor at next city meeting

by Tim McAllister
contributing reporter

Lowell mayor Jim Hodges recently announced that he would not seek another term as mayor. His final meeting as mayor was on Dec. 21. The council will have to pick someone from among their ranks to be the new mayor at the meeting on Jan. 4, 2016. Hodges' announcement came at the end of the last city council meeting on Monday, Dec. 7.

"It has been an honor, a privilege and a pleasure to have served our community

to continue and resigned in January 2009. Hodges was appointed mayor then and served the final year of Shores' term. He has been reelected to the council and thus remained Lowell's mayor ever since.

"There was a vacancy on the city council back in 1989," Hodges said. "I applied, ran and was elected. I was then defeated in the election of 1997. A few years later, Jeanne was mayor at the time and she

"We had the big bridge project when downtown was all torn up. I got to cut a ribbon to ceremonially open M-21 back up. All those things are kind of fun and kind of neat, the prestige and the honor and glory. It feeds the ego and all that. To have any of these jobs you have to have a little bit of an ego. It's important to be confident, but also to be humble."

Hodges said the most difficult part of being mayor is keeping the city council meetings on track.

"I think the challenging parts are when, quite frankly, when we've had some disagreement on adding items to the agenda and following the rules and guidelines as we have agreed to them," Hodges said. "I always want to respect the process. The city manager builds the agenda and we have the opportunity to contact the city manager or contact the mayor if you have things that you want to add to the agenda. The most challenging part is making sure that everything works out well. It's okay to have disagreements, it's okay to have votes that are three to two, so be it. The most important thing is that we adhere to and follow the process. I will not miss all the meetings."

The council will pick a new mayor and mayor pro tem at their first 2016 meeting.

"We gather again on Jan. 4, the first meeting of the year," Hodges said. "We'll select the new mayor and mayor pro tem. We'll also review the rules and procedures. Mark [Howe, Lowell city manager] has been working on that

already and he's had some dialog with some of the councilmembers already. There are usually some changes. It's important to know the process and make sure that the meetings are run smoothly."

Hodges said he retired

from Amway recently and wants more free time to spend with his wife and two grown sons.

"My wife and I want to do a little bit of light traveling," Hodges said. "Nothing too big."

Hodges said he was

happy to step aside and let somebody else take a turn as mayor.

"It's been nice, but these jobs are not forever," Hodges said. "It's time for somebody else to take a turn at it."

"It's been nice, but these jobs are not forever," Hodges said. "It's time for somebody else to take a turn at it."

- Jim Hodges

as your mayor these past seven years," Hodges said during his announcement at the Dec. 7 meeting. "It is my intention not to seek another term as your mayor when we choose our leadership in January. I will continue to serve on the city council [member] for the next two years to help our community, our new mayor and the council as they would find it suitable for me to."

Hodges, a native of Lansing, has been a Lowell city councilor off and on since the 1980s. He has officially been mayor since 2009, but his time in the mayor's chair started a little earlier due to some tragic circumstances. Former mayor Jeanne Shores became ill in the summer of 2008. Since Hodges was mayor pro tem at the time, he took over her duties as acting mayor. Shores eventually became too sick

started bothering me. She pushed me to run for city council all over again [in 2003]. We agreed on many things, we disagreed on many things, but we always respected each other and I think she wanted to have somebody like me back. I thought about it, talked to my wife and filled out the petitions. There were six people running in that election and I was elected. I got third place by two votes in that election. Al Matthews got the four-year term by two votes and I got a two-year term. So I've been on the council for the past twelve years with another two years to serve, so a total of fourteen years the second time around."

He said he has enjoyed being Lowell's mayor, especially taking part in ceremonial events.

"There have been lots of ribbon cuttings and dedications," Hodges said.



Mayor Jim Hodges in front of the city hall Christmas tree.

Honored for their service



2015 Don Souser and Herman Weststrate VFW Post 8303 Commander presenting 55 years member of Lowell VFW.

Several of Michigan's "blue" laws removed from the books

LANSING, Mich. – Cursing in front of women or children or playing the national anthem out of tune will no longer be criminal acts punishable by jail time in Michigan, under legislation signed today by Gov. Rick Snyder.

"Modernizing state government is an ongoing effort," Snyder said. "I appreciate the work of the legislature in analyzing the criminal code and eliminating statutes that no longer make sense in the 21st century."

House Bill 4248, sponsored by state Rep.

Chris Afendoulis, repeals a number of outdated criminal laws, some of which are burdensome or unconstitutional. These include the aforementioned acts, as well as six crimes relating to "dueling", or refusing to help fight a forest fire. It is now Public Act 210 of 2015.

HB 4249, sponsored by state Rep. Michael Webber, eliminates crimes related to trespassing that were made redundant by newer, broader statutes. These include trampling or otherwise injuring cranberry vines or huckleberry or

blackberry bushes without the permission of the owner or occupant. The bill is now PA 211.

HB 4250, sponsored by state Rep. Rob VerHeulen, repeals a law making it a misdemeanor to promote, conduct or participate in "endurance contests," otherwise known as walkathons. Walkathons are commonly used in Michigan to raise money for charitable organizations. The bill is now PA 212.

Blue laws, continued, page 8

obituaries

DORAN

John G. (Jerry) Doran, 82, of Belding, passed away Friday afternoon December 18, 2015 at home under the loving care of his family and Ionia Area Hospice. Jerry was born on November 8, 1933 near Parnell, the son of James and Pauline (Odette) Doran. He was a proud veteran of the Korean War, serving in the Navy aboard the USS Rochester from 1951-1955. Jerry was a true outdoorsman who hunted and fished his entire life, especially enjoying his hunting trips to Canada. He was a member of the Belding American Legion and the Belding VFW, where he served with the honor guard. Jerry was also blessed in fulfilling his life long dream of fly fishing in Ireland. He will be greatly missed by his family and friends. He was married on November 17, 1956 in Lowell to Mari Gail McMahon. Jerry is loved and survived by his wife, Gail; and their children, Sean Doran of Belding, Colleen (John) Timpson, Kathleen (David) Hoseth both of Lowell, Christine (John) Ray, Timothy Doran, Kimberly Doran and partner Daron Ensign all of Belding; 14 grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren; and his sisters, Bette Metts of Eaton Rapids, Verna Rogers of Lowell, Mary Stockinger of Florida and Polly McGlade of Tennessee. Jerry was preceded in death by his parents and one brother James Doran. Mass of Christian Burial was Wednesday December 23, 2015 at St. Patrick Catholic Church, Parnell with Father Mark Peacock as celebrant. Committal prayers followed in St. Patrick Cemetery. Following the committal prayers Military honors were given by the joint honor guard of the Belding American Legion and the Belding VFW. Visitation was Tuesday at Johnson-Feuerstein Funeral Home, Belding. Memorials may be given to Ionia Area Hospice. Messages of condolence may also be given at www.jffh.com

WALKER

Valdy E. Walker, age 88, of Lowell, passed away December 24, 2015. He was preceded in death by his wife Mary in 2006. He is survived by daughter, Deborah (Jerry) Hagerty of Ontonagon; son, Michael (Cathy) Walker of Jenison; five grandchildren, Jeremy, Mary Elizabeth, Daniel, Crystal Dawn and Matthew; 10 great-grandchildren; sister-in-law, Dolores Walker of Hastings; very special friends, Dave and Edee Kornolose of Saranac. Valdy was an Army veteran of WWII; he served in the Pacific. Special thanks to Spectrum Hospice nurses, Leslie, Gail, Bev and Alicia. Memorials to Spectrum Hospice would be appreciated. Cremation has taken place per his wishes.

Looking Back, continued

Postmaster Charles Doyle revealed this week that the Lowell Post office broke all records for the 20 days before Christmas with 112,189 pieces of mail going through the canceling machines. This is above the record number of last year which totaled 109,910. The local post office sold 60,800 five cent stamps and 42,000 four cent stamps during this period.

With snow accumulating on the streets in Lowell, residents are urged to take particular care in parking their cars. Snow can easily cover yellow lines, and a person could easily be parked illegally and get a ticket. Dally checking of the parking conditions on the city streets are being made.

25 years ago The Lowell Ledger January 2, 1991

Township Recreation Committee prepared for Jan. 17 public hearing. A five-year plan to give direction in developing recreational facilities in Lowell Township will be the topic of conversation at a Jan. 17 presentation to the Lowell Township public by the Lowell Township Recreation Committee. The plan presents an evaluation of Lowell Township's recreation opportunities and needs. It considers the existing facilities in and around the township, the anticipated demand for additional or improved facilities, and the means for providing those facilities during the course of the planning period. The plan would call for the development of two new parks over the next five years.

EARTH TALK



Questions & Answers About Our Environment

Dear EarthTalk: How are borderlands causing widespread environmental damage while splintering families and communities across the U.S. Southwest?

-- Peter Jackson, Baltimore, MD

Today, over 650 miles of border walls and barriers have been constructed in all four southern Border States: California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas. The Sierra Club Borderlands campaign has spoken up against the substantial border wall construction, arguing that it has had dire consequences for vast expanses of pristine wild lands, including wildlife refuges, wilderness areas and national forest lands, among other areas. Additionally, several species of wildlife have been observed and photographed stranded by the border wall, the group states, suggesting that many threatened and endangered species are suffering from border wall development as well.

In their short films, *Wild Versus Wall* and *Too Many Tracks*, the Sierra Club describes how the significance of the borderlands—a vast and ecologically distinct region with a multitude of mountain ranges, two of North America's four deserts and major river ecosystems—has been ignored by current U.S. border policy. The borderlands provide important habitat for rare and threatened wildlife species, including many federally-listed threatened and endangered species. But in 2005, Congress passed the REAL ID Act, which included a provision that allows the Secretary of Homeland Security to waive all local, state and federal laws, including the Endangered Species Act, deemed an impediment to building walls and roads along U.S. borders. Border patrol has now built stadium-like lights, roads and towers in sensitive, remote areas, the Sierra Club says, and the roads fragment and destroy habitat while high voltage lighting affects nocturnal animals' ability to feed and migrate.

"Border Patrol's off-road driving, tire dragging and ATV use in designated roadless wilderness has left an immense

The proposed sites would be the Eastgate sub-division and along the Grand River. The Eastgate facility would be a neighborhood park, encompassing a playground for children and picnic areas. The proposed park site along the Grand River would provide nature trails, boat access and a fishing dock. Donald Dubbink, Chairman of the Lowell Township Recreation Committee, said once the parks are developed then there could also be additional growth. "The type of growth would be dependent upon what the people wanted," he said. "There has been much talk about a bike path along Grand River Drive. There may also be a need for soccer and softball diamonds." A major component of this planning process was the distribution of a citizen's survey that encouraged public input and gathered public perceptions of recreation needs in the Township.

Abby Vos visits "Another World" – No, not the fictitious soap opera. It was a different world than what six-year-old Abby Vos is used to. It was a world, quite frankly, that her youthfulness did not know existed. It was a world that created memories she will not soon forget. Vos traveled with her grandparents, Manuel and Alice Campos, and cousin, Lenna Tompkins to the unsettled world of El Salvador. From there, they flew to the serene world of Costa Rica. The trip commenced on Nov. 28 and concluded on Dec. 13. In between, Vos experienced the vastness of the Pacific Ocean, the harshness of a country's inner conflict, political unrest, and the immense difference in cultures. "We did not realize or even imagine just how unsettled things were in El Salvador," said Vos' mother.

scar on the landscape," said Dan Millis, borderlands program coordinator for the Grand Canyon Chapter of the Sierra Club.

The Sierra Club continues to raise awareness on borderland habitat degradation with the hope that they can combat further border wall development that may pose harm to the environment and wildlife. In a November 2015 trip to a U.S.-Mexico border wall in Bisbee, Arizona, Millis told Borderlands campaigners how the jaguar is an "emblematic species for why this wall is problematic... It's important for wildlife, like the jaguar, to be able to have access to a range. The jaguar used to live in the United States, all the way up to the Grand Canyon... the jaguar's critical habitat has been established by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and it includes areas that are bisected by these walls. And that's really problematic if we want to see a very majestic species like the jaguar... we're going to have to these problems like this border wall seriously."

Millis also informed the campaigners of several other ecological issues associated with border development, including increased erosion, flooding and soil degradation. "We're encouraging Border Patrol and Homeland Security to keep this stuff in mind as they move forward on projects," Millis said. "They need to do things in a way that is more sustainable."

CONTACT: Sierra Club Borderlands Campaign, www.sierraclub.org/borderlands.

EarthTalk® is produced by Doug Moss & Roddy Scheer and is a registered trademark of Earth Action Network Inc. View past columns at: www.earthtalk.org. Or e-mail us your question: earthtalk@magazine.com.

Blue laws, continued

HB 4501, sponsored by state Rep. Kurt Heise, deletes sentencing guidelines for the felonies being repealed under the above measures. It is now PA 213.

HB 4709, sponsored by state Rep. John Bizon, replaces a reference to "deformed human being or human monstrosity" with "disabled or disfigured". It is now PA 214.

HB 4710, sponsored by state Rep. Andrea LaFontaine, deletes criminal penalties associated with failing to post a registration card when camping on DNR land. The provision replaces the misdemeanor charge with a civil infraction so that it does not appear on a person's permanent criminal record. The bill is now PA 215.

HB 4711, also sponsored by Webber, eliminates the requirement that a prisoner not be released from incarceration until all fines are paid and eliminates the option for a judge to sentence a prisoner to solitary confinement or hard labor in prison or jail. The former is unenforceable

due to court opinions, and the latter is enforced at the corrections level. The bill is now PA 216.

Reducing over-criminalization by identifying archaic and redundant laws on the books was asked for in Gov. Snyder's Special Message on Criminal Justice delivered to the Legislature in May.

Gov. Snyder also signed two additional measures today:

HB 4173, sponsored by state Rep. Dave Maturen, allows a real estate seller or buyer who paid tax on behalf of the seller to request a refund of the tax paid if they believe the property was eligible for exemption at the time of transfer. The bill is retroactive to June 24, 2011. It is now PA 217.

SB 556, sponsored by state Sen. Ken Horn, extends the sunset of the Commercial Rehabilitation Act until Dec. 31, 2020. It is now PA 218.

For more information on this and other legislation, please visit www.legislature.mi.gov.

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Red Arrow SPORTS

Arrows fall to champion Wolverines, 76-62

by Kathryn Atwood
contributing reporter

Lowell Red Arrow varsity hoops struggled against the defending state champion Godwin Heights last Tuesday on the road dropping the game 76-62 under tremendous pressure from the Wolverines.

Godwin suffered a surprise loss to Hudsonville on their opening night and had since torn through two teams to victory. The Arrows came into the game 3-1 but didn't appear ready for the fiery Wolverines on the court. "They are a very aggressive team and we were not able to match their physicality, especially on the backboards and out on the perimeter," said Lowell head coach Kyle

Carhart. "Those are some areas where we are certainly going to have to improve."

The Arrows were in full force running hard and rebounding well, but had some difficulty netting their shot opportunities. By the end of the first Lowell trailed by six.

Godwin widened that lead in the second despite Lowell pushing back hard toward the end of the period. Austin Branagan nailed two from the foul line and successful three-point shots were added by Marcus Malling and Matt Beachler but Godwin was up 42-29 at the half.

Red Arrow Avery Buckius netted the first score of the third but his

points were two of only eight scored by the team in the period. Lowell had trouble from the line, which was a huge factor due to the high level of fouls. Godwin on the other hand went 19-23 at the line for the night and displayed incredibly strong defense throughout the game, which the Arrows will learn from. According to Carhart, "Their hard work defensively shows what it takes to be disruptive

and take another team out of what they are trying to accomplish. They all work hard together and that is something we can learn from and implement ourselves."

Behind by 19 moving into the fourth the Arrows tried desperately to salvage the game as they started to shine defensively racking up 25 points in the period, mostly on the shoulders of Beachler who exploded

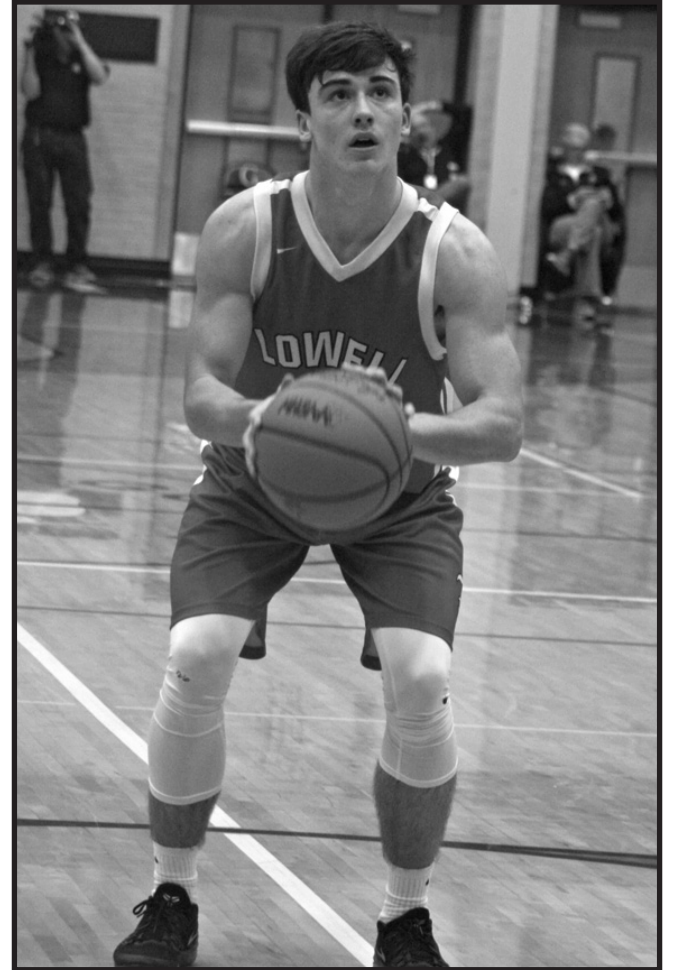


Senior point guard Ryan Stevens added 12 points to the board.



Junior Arrow defender Austin Branagan fights for a rebound.

The Arrows will face non-conference foe Cedar Springs at home on January 5 before welcoming Jenison for that first OK White conference challenge on Friday, January 8.



Senior Alex Anschutz adding six points for the Arrows.

with some nothing-but-net three pointers as the clock dwindled. Despite their ferocious late effort, the Arrows could not overcome the Wolverines falling 76-62 and moving their season record to 3-2.

Leading scorers for the Arrows were Beachler who totaled 24 points, Ryan Stevens who netted 12 and Austin Branagan who added nine. Alex Anschutz (6), Buckius (4), Malling (3) and Andrew Poulton (1) also added points to the board.

Carhart said that he shoulders some of the blame for the hard fought loss. "I did not do a good enough job of putting our players in a position to be successful. We were not adequately prepared for the

style of play that Godwin presents. That is an area where I will have to get better and you have to give them a lot of credit. They are a very good basketball team that is going to win a lot of games," said Carhart.

The team will dive into the ultimate test of the season next week when they face their first OK White conference matchup.

"The OK white presents a difficult challenge. We schedule difficult teams in hopes that it prepares us for a tough conference schedule," explained Carhart adding, "We need to get a lot better over break if we are going to be successful against some of the teams we are going to see during our conference schedule."

- HOCKEY

Lowell/Caledonia/South Christian douces the flames, hosts alumni game

by Kathryn Atwood
contributing reporter

Lowell/Caledonia/South Christian ice hockey team had a busy week of holiday play taking on the Grand Rapids Flames at Griff's Ice House and hosting an "Alumni" game on their home rink at the Kentwood Ice Arena.

On Wednesday the team dominated the Flames forcing a mercy. The team shut out their opponent 12-0 showing aggressive play both offensively and

defensively. Scoring goals in the first period were Nate Regan, Alex Osborn, Egan Simmons, Austin Whaley, and Logan Propst.

Second half scoring was attributed to Osborn, Mitchell Brennan and to Whaley, who contributed

two more goals to total five on the game.

Saturday, the team hosted an Alumni game

played by nearly thirty eager and enthusiastic former members of the team. The friendly match up gave the

opportunity for a reunion on the ice and helped to raise funds in support of the program.

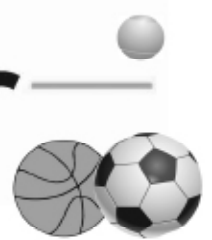
L
Go Red Arrows!



Catch Up On Lowell High School Sports

the lowell

ledger



2015 - A Year In Review

JANUARY 7, 2015

The new year brings new rules for city council

Lowell city council made a minor yet important change to its rules, revisited the LCTV fund and financed some heavy equipment at their meeting at city hall on Monday, Jan. 5. Seven citizens attended the 27-minute meeting. The council voted to adopt a slightly updated "Council Rules of Procedure." Before the vote councilor Sharon Ellison questioned the proposed change to the rules about special meetings. Two city councilmembers can now call a special meeting. Three councilors were previously required to do so. Lisa Plank, the executive director of the Lowell Area Historical Museum, updated the council. "Through all of our different programs we've had 25,000 people that we've served this year," Plank said. "We're excited to be here and we're looking forward to a great 2015. We've got a lot of exciting things planned."



Building razed to hopefully clear space for new business

Demolition crews tore down the building located at 1400 West Main in the outer lot in front of Curtis Cleaners. According to Curtis Cleaners manager Andy Curtis, the building had been on the market for about nine months. He explained that they decided to demolish the building in order to make the property more appealing to perspective buyers.

The Lowell Area Historical Museum director retires

The Lowell Area Historical Museum is beginning a new chapter at the start of this new year. Director Pat Allchin is retiring and the museum has hired Lisa Plank as the new director.

JANUARY 14, 2015

Cold temperatures, icy roads, schools close – Michigan winter returns

Last week's severe winter weather wasn't assigned a cool name like "Snowpocalypse," but local residents suffered just the same. The bad weather has caused Lowell Area Schools to be closed three times this year. Lowell Area Schools has not designated make-up days for the ones that were canceled. Total snowfall ended up at about six inches. The extremely low temperatures caused sinkholes to form on streets in Grand Rapids, including one on the busy East Beltline. Whiteout conditions were to blame for dozens of car accidents, including one near Battle Creek that involved over 200 vehicles and shut I-94 down for two days. Monday night brought a record-breaking -5 degrees in Grand Rapids breaking the previous record of -2 set in 1974 and originally in 1929. High temperatures are expected to be between 16 and 39 degrees by the end of the week and more snow is on the way.

Lowell woman completes hike of North Country Trail



With stretches of low temperatures, loneliness and length, the 4,600-mile North Country National Scenic Trail proved to be the most challenging for experienced long-distance hiker Gail Lowe, who recently became the first woman in U.S. history to complete the seven-state footpath in one season.

Historical museum helps children learn

For the fourth time this school year the Lowell Area Historical Museum welcomed children aged 0-5 and their caregivers to learn and explore as part of their new Museum for Tots educational program.

WWII drama has Lowell connection

Hollywood's recent World War II drama "Unbroken" has a local connection. Judy Rosenberger, an employee of the Huntington Bank in Lowell, had an uncle who fought along side Zamperini. "Yes, that was my dad's older brother," Rosenberger said. "His full name was Harold Brooks but they nicknamed him Harry. My dad had two brothers who went to war. Harry was ten years older than my dad. He was in the Air Corps group with Louis Zamperini."

Lowell gymnasts show appreciation for new mats

Lowell competitive cheer thanked Meijer last week for donating new mats to their athletic program in a special dedication ceremony.

First home meet team pays tribute to the military

On Saturday the Lowell varsity gymnastics team hosted their first home meet of the season, The Red Arrow Invitational, which

included an opening ceremony paying tribute to the men and women of the military. With the help of Boy Scout Troop 102 and the Lowell VFW color guard, Lowell gymnasts were introduced along with their selected military honoree who then made their way through a patriotic tunnel of flags.

JANUARY 21, 2015

Michigan Governor Rick Snyder signed the "Main Street Fairness" tax bill into law on Thursday, January 15. The law, which takes effect Oct. 1, will force large internet retailers such as Amazon.com to charge Michigan sales tax on all purchases. Local retailer Cliff Yankovich, owner of Chimera Design, 208 E. Main, was one of the local business leaders who helped get the bill passed. "I don't know if you remember, but initially Governor Snyder said, 'Hey, this is a federal problem. This has to be addressed in Washington. I'm not going to touch it,'" Yankovich said. "Maybe he realized that the people in D.C. weren't going to do anything, because they haven't done anything for four or five years and the state is losing revenue."

Small plane crashes near Lowell Airport

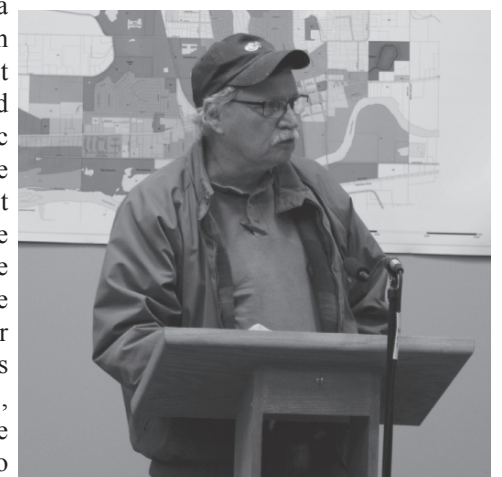
Tragedy was averted on Monday evening when a single-engine plane, destined for the landing strip at the Lowell City Airport, lost control and crashed in front of a nearby home. The plane, a 1962 Cessna 172, was piloted by a 40-year-old Grand Rapids man who was receiving flight training from Majestic Air to whom the plane was registered. After a two-hour flight, alongside his instructor, the pilot was attempting a solo landing. According to the Kent County Sheriff's Department the plane clipped several tall pine trees while in descent causing a crash landing onto the property of Suzanne Fedewa about a mile from the airport at 484 Lincoln Lake Avenue. The plane came to rest in the driveway just feet from Fedewa's front door.

JANUARY 28, 2015

City manager apologizes to residents, liquor license granted to Main Street BBQ

Lowell city manager Mark Howe told city residents "I made a mistake and I apologize" for the ongoing union negotiations at the city council meeting on Tuesday, Jan. 20. Howe's statement came near the end of the city council meeting. "I think we all make mistakes. I certainly made one here, probably bigger than I would have liked, but I made a mistake and I apologize for that and I hope we can move forward," said Howe. Before the meeting began councilor Jeff Altoft asked to add an item to the meeting's agenda. "I'd like to make a motion to add to the agenda under 'new business' a resolution to eliminate legal council from the law firm of Abbott and Nicholson, John McGlinchey, and resume legal council from [the] previous law firm that we used to negotiate contracts before Mark Howe," Altoft said. This motion was defeated. The council voted to grant a "developmental liquor license" to a restaurant called Main Street BBQ that will open at 210 E. Main St. (the old Moose building) in the near future. According to the meeting agenda, a developmental liquor license is "a special license allowed in a

downtown development district based on public and private investment during the past five years." Mike Larkin, owner of Larkin's Restaurant, asked the council to consider how



granting the license would impact established businesses. "If Ella's coffee shop would like to serve wine, they come before the council, would they be approved?" Larkin asked. If you start doing this randomly you decrease the value of the businesses that are already in this town... People who have been in this town for over 30, 40 years and I'd just like you to consider that." Erin VanEpps, one of Main Street BBQ's owners, was on hand and spoke to the council. "I think that there's been a lot of interest in a new restaurant in this area," VanEpps said. "It would not happen or be successful without that liquor license."

So before another minute goes by, we want to stop and thank you for all you've done to make 2015 a stellar year for us. Your visits and your kindness make us so glad to be here, and we wish you all the best as we ring in a New Year.

To your and yours -
Happy New Year

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2015 - A Year In Review

Council work session on governing

Lowell city council had a two hour and 21 minute “work session” meeting at city hall on Monday, Jan. 26. The work session was titled “Governance 301: Restoring Trust in Government and Doing Government the Right Way in the City of Lowell.” The work session was led by Lowell attorney Peter A. Letzmann.

February 4, 2015

More clarity over city vs union negotiations

The unfair labor practice charges against the city of Lowell were reviewed by three judges and found to be valid. The city has been negotiating a first union contract with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers for just over three years. According to information obtained through the Freedom of Information Act, the union negotiations have cost taxpayers \$134,433.68 so far.

Biodigester up and running, expected, to produce enough energy to power up to 300 homes

Lowell Light & Power’s new biodigester is up and running and creating electricity. “It’s been up and running almost every day for the last week or so,” said Lowell Light & Power general manager Greg Pierce. “It’s a process involving [evolving] over a three- or four-month period. We’re expecting that by March we should be up and running full time.” Once the biodigester is up and running 24 hours a day, Pierce said it will produce enough to power between 200 and 300 homes.

City council can not agree on agenda, meeting canceled

Lowell city council could not agree on an agenda and canceled their Monday, Feb. 2 meeting at city hall. If it had proceeded, the meeting would have included a resolution to end the city workers’ union negotiations. Before the meeting started councilor Matt Mayer asked to add an item to the agenda. “Under new business I would like to add ‘Discussion of MERC decisions,’” Mayer said. Mayor Jim Hodges and councilor Sharon Ellison voted not to add it. Councilors Matt Mayer and Jeff Altoft voted to add it. Councilor Jim Hall was absent. Because of the tie vote the item was not added to the agenda. The council’s next order of business was to approve the meeting agenda “as presented,” without any additions or corrections. Mayor Hodges and councilor Ellison voted to approve the agenda, while councilors Mayer and Altoft voted not to approve it. This caused confusion. “So we don’t have a meeting because we don’t have an agenda,” Ellison said. “Perhaps. Any guidance here,” Hodges said to Howe. “Should I call [city attorney] Dick [Wendt]?” Howe asked. “This never happens,” Ellison said. “I don’t [know] what we’re supposed to do. “Sure, yes, please.” Hodges said to Howe. City manager Mark Howe called for a five minute break while he attempted to call city attorney Dick Wendt. Howe returned after several minutes and said Wendt did not answer the telephone call. “My best advice to you is that the meeting’s adjourned,” Howe said. “You do not have an agenda.” “We do not,” Hodges said. “I declare this meeting adjourned.”

FEBRUARY 11, 2015

DDA board member excited about changes coming to downtown Lowell

You won’t be able to miss all the changes the Downtown Development Authority has in store for Main Street. “What I’m most excited about is the appearance soon of the [Main Street BBQ] restaurant next door,” said DDA board member Cliff Yankovich, owner of Chimera Design, a jewelry store at 208 E. Main. “I’ve been telling people coming in the door about it. I think it’s going to be a real asset to Lowell. They’re shooting to open the restaurant in June or July. The DDA is working with MDOT and the Grand Rapids engineering firm Williams & Works to come up with ideas for improvements. One idea is adding “bump-outs” to the downtown area of Main Street to make crossing Main Street easier, safer and less intimidating for pedestrians. The DDA will schedule meetings in the future to get the public’s input on what should happen.



Murray Lake blood drive a success despite weather

The Murray Lake Elementary student council has held a blood drive for the past seven years. Unfortunately, the last two years’ drives have been on days with awful weather conditions. This year’s blood drive took place last Thursday when school was canceled due to weather conditions. Despite school being closed, Michigan Blood consultant, Wendy Berg-DeWeerd asked the district if the drive could still be held. “I was so appreciative that Mr. Pratt and Mr. Noskey allowed us to have this drive,” said Berg-DeWeerd.

Wrestlers clinch OK White and honor former coach Dave Dean

Red Arrow varsity wrestling faced OK White conference competitor Forest Hills Central at home and easily tallied the win with a 52-15 victory and clinched the OK White regular season title. The team also celebrated the seniors and former coach Dave Dean.

February 18, 2015

Side by Side concert

The Grand Rapids Symphony played a “Side by Side” concert with the Lowell High School orchestra on Wednesday, Feb. 11.

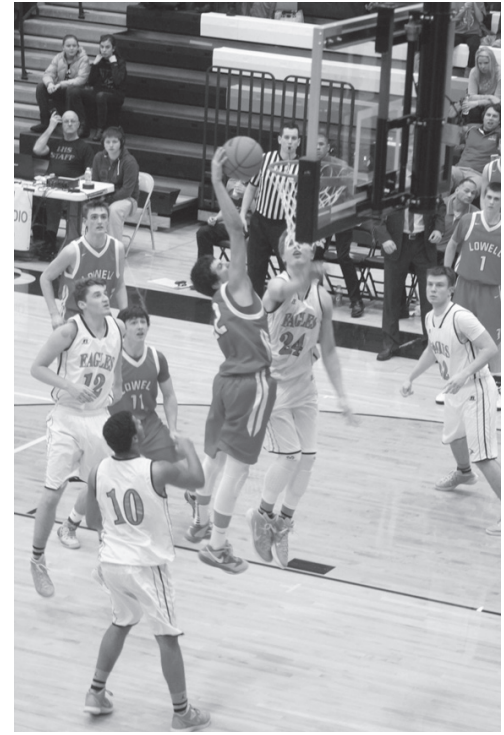
Downtown DIY

Lowell residents are invited to do some hands-on learning with downtown

merchants Thursday, Feb. 26, from 4-8 pm during the second annual Do-It-Yourself night sponsored by the Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce.

Lowell wins nail-biting showdown against GRC

Red Arrow boys varsity basketball team sealed another



conference win last Friday when they faced the Grand Rapids Christian Eagles on the road in a nail-biting OK White showdown winning 70-67. Lowell (10-4, 4-2) is currently ranked tenth in the area and is on pace to post the best record the school has seen

in years. The young squad, featuring only one senior, has solid defense and boasts some of the area’s top offensive players, including juniors Ryan Stevens and Gabe Steed and sophomores Austin Branagan and Matt Beachler.

New school team record for Lowell gymnasts

Lowell varsity gymnastics vaulted into the record books last week when they posted a new school team record during their final regular season conference competition against Forest Hills. Senior Lauren DeHaan led the way to the slim margin win as the team’s top all-around finisher earning a 35.525. The new team record score of 139.875 just edged out Forest Hills’ total of 138.775.



Year In Review, continued, page 17

HAPPY NEW YEAR 2016!

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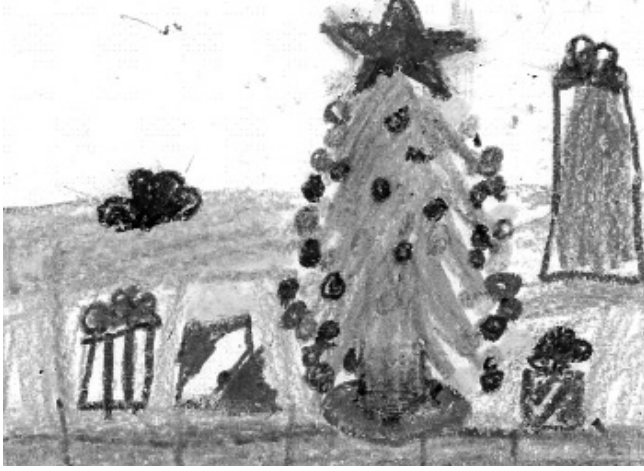
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Lowell Area Elementary Students answered the following question -
My favorite Christmas memory is....

When it was my dogs first Christmas and he made the tree fall over trying to drink the water.

Grace Hough
Murray Lake



Abbie Winn - Cherry Creek

When my sister paid me to get her a present. She gave \$10 to get her a \$2.00 chapstick. The other \$8.00 got myself a huge bag of candy. Yummm, it was delicious.

She never found out because I threw away the receipt. I was also supposed to pay her back but she forgot about that! So that day I got \$8.00 free, from my sister!

Lily Geelhoed - Alto

When I got world peace for Christmas, it was a can of peas, over the word sweet in sweet peas there was label that said world.

Lydia Gasper - St. Patrick's

Coming down the stairs with my little brother Wilson and seeing all the presents. But I love watching my mom and dad open what we gave them the most.

David Johnston - Alto

When my elf on the shelf, Elfin, took a dry erase marker and put mustashes and glasses on one of our family pictures. Elfin is so naughty.

Leah Davidson
Murray Lake

When I got hit with snowballs 122 times then got throughn into a snow pile.

Connor Smith - Murray Lake

When I went to see my Grandma CJ. I love my grandma CJ. But now she passed about.

Hayleigh Baird - Alto

When my grandmother made slippers for my brothers and I my brother put them on and ran down stairs really fast and sliped on the wood at the bottom of the stair well and hit his butt on the floor and he and the rest of us busted up laughing after a moment of silence.

Zoey R. Mierendorf - Murray Lake

When I was 5 it snowed in Texas.

Bethany Stahlin - St. Patrick's

Drinking hot chocolate with my family. One reason why it's my favorite because it is very yummy. It taste like melted milk chocolate. Another reason is because it means good times. It usally means you are spending time with your family. My final reason is it brings love. If your mom or dad is making it's filled with their love.

Lauren Visscher - Murray Lake

When we were at my grandma's and I pulled a prank on my cousin by giving him a toto for a Christmas present. At the end of the day I gave him his magic set. I got that for him because he likes magic.

He was very happy!!
Kaylee Meyer- Alto



Alexander Proper - Cherry Creek

When my grandma gets a board out and two dice and if you get snake eyes you go in the middle and pick a present. One time my mom got a box with a bunch of money in it.

Jaylin - Cherry Creek

By far going to our grandma and grandpas' house. I remember I was eight years old, and we were opening presents and my aunt Julie gave me the best birthday present ever! A homemade blanket! I was all like "Whoa! This is awesome!" It was a so soft, fuzzy, and warm. It feels like I'm sleeping on or by a cloud!

Abby Hewitt - Murray Lake

When I was 6 I woke up 4 o'clock in the morning and went to see my presents. When I got out to our living room I saw what Santa brought me. I stared going trough my gifts in my stocking. All the noise I was making woke my dad up. He asked me what I was doing. I told him I woke up super early and went back to bed.

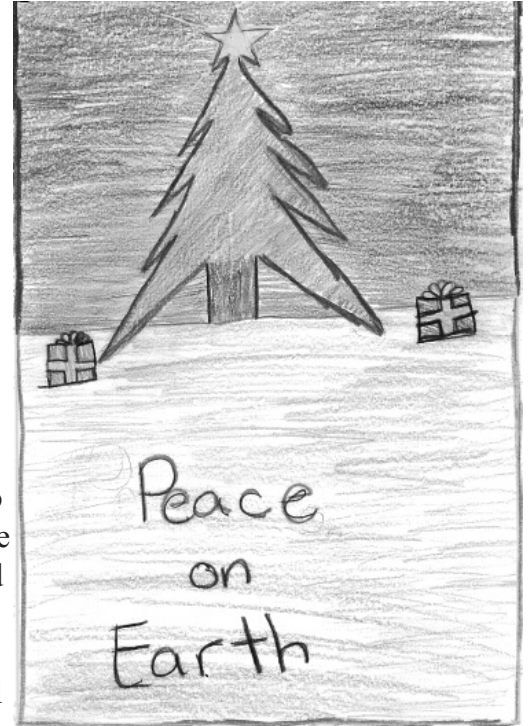
Evan Blazo - Alto

When my brother Franklin was drinking his hot chocolate and he was laughing and the hot choclote came out of his nose and he says that it felt like fire since it was hot choclote.

Jaquin - Cherry Creek

When we decorated our tree inside with the warm fire and with Christmas music. It's my favorite Christmas memory because I get to spend time with my family and have fun at the same time. I remembered that I got to put the star on the Christmas tree and put a lot of the ornaments on. We had to be careful because the pine neddles were very, very, pokey and the ornaments at the top were very sharp also.

Avery Miles - Murray Lake



Isabella Schmidt - St. Patrick's

1. When I gave my brother a carebare for Christmas. He gave it back to me. 2. When my dad threw my brother off the deck into a snowbank. It was acually more of an icebank. Ow.

Karina Peplinski - Alto

When I was 8 years old my family went over to my great-grandmas house and roud golf carts and went in thire mini hot tub. Then we open prezents and at a christmas dinner over there. Then I spent the night.

Brenden Wittendach - Murray Lake

When I got my wallet.
Ian - St. Patrick's

When after we all were done opening presents we had a nerf gun fight. My nana she shot a solo cup. But she was trying to shoot Jordan.

Ryleigh Wilder - Cherry Creek

Every year when we listen to Chistmas music and decorate the Chistmas tree. And when we wake up early to unrap Chistmas presents all together, than later we have are whole family come over.

Annika Sandman - Murray Lake

The time I was told I was having a horseback lesson and eventually learned I was receiving a present. I was amazed to find that the present was my horse Nikki. When I found out, my jaw dropped I couldn't believe it. I had gotten a horse for Christmas! Plus, who knows, maybe you will too!

Emily Ake - Alto

When one winter morning there was so much snow. Probably because it was poring snow through the night. There was like ten feet of snow.

Anywho my brother and my dad made an igloo.

Summer Havey - Murray Lake

Lowell Area Elementary Students answered the following question - My favorite Christmas memory is....

When I was opening presents and I was only 5. It was my last present - the biggest of all my presents. I got a whole builders toy of tools. I was crying tears of joy.
Easton - Cherry Creek

Going over to my Grandma's house. It was a very timid night. All I could think about was opening my presents. When I did open all my gifts I seen that I had so many. But my favorite part was seeing my whole family so happy to see me.
Odin Sever - Alto

When I accidently gave my brother cream instead of milk.
Elesha - Cherry Creek

All of them because there all so happy.
Dustin



Abby Hewitt - Murray Lake

When I had a Christmas tree fell on me 8 times. It was fun! P.S. It was this year 2015 Nov. 26.

Stefani Jade Olson - Cherry Creek

When my family wore our elf pajamas to bed and opened our presents in them.
Nicholas Seddon - Alto



Chris Elwell - Murray Lake

Watching my toddler brother react open his tricycle and then watch my younger sister open her life-size Elsa doll (which has a lazy eye), very creepy.
Evan - Cherry Creek

When my sister and I were playing outside and we had a snowball fight. We both build a shield, and we attacked. It was very fun. In the end my sister had beat me. However, I was only 5 and she was 10. This is my favorite Christmas memory.
Amber - St. Patrick's

Once my cousins from Iowa tricked me of leaving 4 days earlier. It was December 28 and I was hanging with my cousin, Livi and she said, "To bad your leaving tomorrow." I couldn't believe it, I was leaving tomorrow. Then I went upstairs to the kitchen and asked my mom and she said no. Thank goodness.
Lena Clark - Alto

When I got a toy train that circles around the Christmas tree a ton and makes train noises.
Luke McMillan - Cherry Creek

When it was Christmas night, me and my dad got this app called, "Santa Tracker" and we tracked Santa down and when it was time for bed I was so exited that I had to sleep in my mom's bed so I could go to sleep.
Nolan Simmons - Murray Lake

When we made our dog Dixie wear a Santa hat. She was totaly freaking out. Finally we got her to stay for the picture.
Steve Skinner - Cherry Creek

When I got a helicopter for Christmas. I got a remote control helicopter and it was huge. I flew it throughout the house. One day I saw my brother and chased him. He ran as fast as a roadrunner. Then I stopped and flew it up to my bedroom and landed it on my bed.
Ayden Pellerito - Alto

Hanging out with my family and having a good time and also playing games and having dinner. Also making cooking.
Ashlyn Karp - Cherry Creek

When I got my Hunger Games shirt. I was so excited! I love the Hunger Games and on the shirt there is a picture of the main charechter (katniss) and trees that make up the mocking jay.
Dylan Bomia - Cherry Creek

When I got my American girl doll. Her name was Caroline. When I opened the box I sat on the floor wide eyed with my mouth open.
Ilana Rhodes - Cherry Creek

When my dog drank the water out of the Christmas tree stand.
Quinn - St. Patrick's

When our Christmas tree fell over in the middle of the night. A lot of our ornaments broke. Then it fell over again, so my dad tied a string to the top and attached it to a piece of furniture. Then it finally stayed.
Anna Doyle - St. Patrick's

When it was our dog's second day at our house and her first Christmas. She ripped all of the wrapping paper. She also took all of the wrapping paper and protected it under the tabel. If you tried to steel it she would bite your hand.
Douma Douma - Alto

When my family watched "Emmit Otter" all together.
Ethan - St. Patrick's

When we decorated our Christmas tree, lights ornaments and all, and our cats would climb the tree and we rushed to get the cats out of the beautifully decorated tree. The cats would move some of the Christmas lights down the tree! We also though the cats would break all of the ornaments. But the cats came down ok and are safe.
Katrina Sandman - Murray Lake

When we got to my Aunt Sherren's and we go tubing at pando with are friends that we've known for ever. My other favorite memory is when we go to my grandparents and have a really good steak dinner and open presents with my family.
Carra - St. Patrick's

When I opened my first presents.
Aidan - Cherry Creek

The time when my uncle Terry pulled out a huge box and gave it to my aunt. When she opened it there was a smaller box inside it and when she opened that box there was a even smaller box and inside that box there was an even smaller box and inside that box was a very shiny and shimmery dragonfly necklace. My aunt said it was the best and funniest present ever!
Emmaline Wasciuk - Cherry Creek



Alex Cherpes - Cherry Creek

Lowell Area Elementary Students completed these statements -
**To celebrate New Year's Eve
 my parents can't wait to ... But I always ...**

To celebrate the New Year my parents can't wait to say "happy new year" and give us hugs and kisses.; but I always running around yelling "happy new year" so they can't catch me. When it's time to go back to school I get all of my stuff ready the day before and put a smile on my face.
 Nolan Jannenga - Murray Lake

To celebrate the New Year my parents can't wait to drink shanpain and say Happy New Year; but I always play vidieo games or if my parents make me come in the living room we face time my ant and uncle and say happy new year. When it's time to go back to school I felt really tired and sad.
 Morgan Kistler - Murray Lake

To celebrate the New Year my parents can't wait to go over to are firends to celebrat my brith day; but I always 2 day after new years dad is my birth day. When it's time to go back to school I go to bed at 10:00 and do that every night.
 Avery H. Miller - Murray Lake

To celebrate the New Year my parents can't wait to watch a food football game on January 1; but I always play a game with my family. When it's time to go back to school I get prepared by going to Meijer to buy materials for school.
 Landon Hart - Murray Lake



Kelton Devito - Cherry Creek

To celebrate the New Year my parents can't wait to go to Arizona. And go to the Grand Canyon; but I always get to go sleiding and dive right into the snow. When it's time to go back to school I make snow men and snow forts with my friends.
 Caleb Yomtoob - Murray Lake

To celebrate the New Year my parents can't wait to do fire works; but I always go on the boat. When it's time to go back to school I get ready.
 Gavin -St. Patrick's

To celebrate the New Year my parents can't wait to kiss when the ball drops! Ewww... but I always cheer and yell happy New Year! When it's time to go back to school I ask my friends what they got for Christmas.
 Lily June Hornik - Murray Lake

To celebrate the New Year my parents can't wait to have my brother, sister and I to go to bed; but I always want to stay up for awhile longer. When it's time to go back to school I am ussally ready because I get bored not learning, somtimes.
 Cadance Ferguson - Murray Lake

To celebrate the New Year my parents can't wait to stay up until midnight and drink shampaine; but I always can't wait until the next New Year. When it's time to go back to school I eat one last holiday meal and say goodbye to holiday break and sleep tightly. That is until 7:00 AM.
 Chris Elwell - Murray Lake

To celebrate the New Year my parents can't wait to hang out with friends/family and wait for the ball to drop; but I always am happy to stay up late and drink fruit punch. When it's time to go back to school I always get really happy to hang out with friend and tell my teacher what I got.
 Patrick de Voest - Murray Lake

To celebrate the New Year my parents can't wait to stay up extra late and watch the New Years ball drop; but I always play a game of dice with my family and my grama. When it's time to go back to school I am excited to see my friends after the long break.
 Krista Jungblut - Murray Lake



Emmaline Wascluk - Cherry Creek

POP Goes the New Year!

As we wrap up the old year and ring in the new, we'd like to say thanks to good folks like you, whose visits and friendship, and patronage too, have made us so happy the whole year through.

Happy New Year, Friends!

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Happy New Year!

2015 - A Year In Review



Caleb Yomtoob
- Murray Lake

February 25, 2015

Wrestlers claim regional championship

It was a triumphant week for the 26-2 Lowell varsity wrestling team as they bested competitor Byron Center 53-19 to win the team regional finals championship.

LHS soon to offer students new 'marketing' class

There will be a new 'marketing' class at Lowell High School soon. The new class will give students hands-on knowledge about how projects are completed in the real business world. "We're putting together a class to try to simulate real world activities," said LHS teacher Bill McElroy, who will be one of the teachers in charge of the class.

Conference champs – boys bowl over the competition

Lowell's varsity boys bowling team claimed the OK White conference championship last Saturday at Spectrum Lanes earning a total combined pinfall of 3,323 and their ticket into regional competition.

March 4, 2015

Division II State Champs!

For the second consecutive year Lowell varsity wrestling plowed through the competition at Battle Creek's Kellogg Arena to claim the Division II Wrestling State

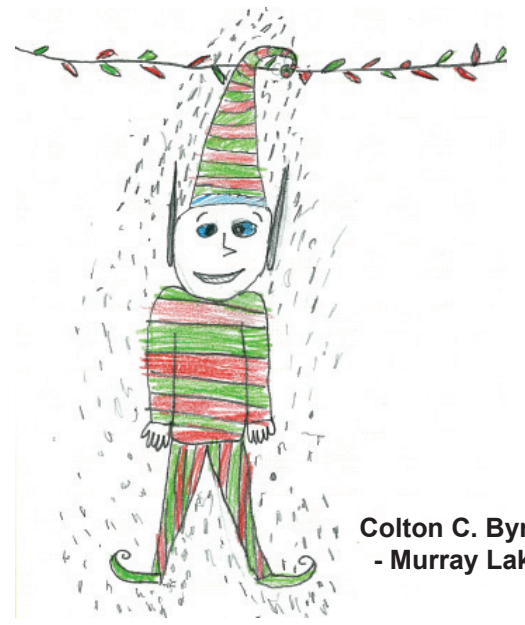
Championship racking up impressive wins over Comstock Park, Gaylord and final round rival Eaton Rapids.

Poor turnout spells the end for DIY Night

The Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce held their second and final annual DIY Night last week after poor attendance and merchant participation called for the cancellation of the event.

Lots of entertainment planned for upcoming March 28 Lowell Expo

It's almost time for this year's Lowell Expo. "The details are still being fleshed out right now, but it's going to be exciting," said Josh Bruwer, general manager of Arrowhead Golf Course and one of the people putting the Expo together. "I think we have a good game plan in place to get folks out there." The Expo, which will take place on March 28, is your chance to explore a ton of local businesses without having to drive all over town.



Colton C. Byrne
- Murray Lake

Year In Review, continued, page 19

Be the Life of the Party.

Stay Safe....Don't Drink and Drive, and Don't Let Friends Drive Drunk.



The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety reports that New Year's Day is one of the worst days of the year for fatal crashes involving drunk drivers. Don't let the good times cloud your good judgement. As you make your New Year's Eve party plans this year, be sure to include plans for safe and sober transportation. Here are some suggestions to help you plan ahead for a responsible ride home.

- Decide in advance on a designated driver.
- Save the number for a taxi service in your phone.
- Download a ride service app to your phone.
- Attend a party at a hotel or location where you can make overnight arrangements.
- Host or attend an alcohol-free New Year's Eve celebration.
- Make plans to have a friend, relative or car service pick you up from the celebration.

Thank you for all your support and generosity throughout 2015. Here's to good health and lasting friendships in the New Year !

Pink Arrow Pride urges you to be aware, be responsible and be safe on New Year's Eve.



Lily June Hornik- Murray Lake

Lowell Area Elementary Students completed these statements -
**To celebrate New Year's Eve
 my parents can't wait to ... But I always ...**

To celebrate the New Year my parents can't wait to have me go back to school; but I always like to see my friends. When it's time to go back to school I make sure I am ready to learn and I have fun before school.

Isabella Schmidt - St. Patrick's

To celebrate the New Year my parents can't wait to stuff them selfs with a bunch of food and holiday sweets; but I always get trierd, drink soda, eat sweets but mostly hang out with family.

When it's time to go back to school I try to make up a good reason to stay home.

Grace Richmond - Murray Lake

To celebrate the New Year my parents can't wait to scream HAPPY NEW YEAR; but I always pop a balloon. When it's time to go back to school I get my school supplies and cloths for school.

Grayden Rooker - Murray Lake

To celebrate the New Year my parents can't wait to count down the last 10 seconds and eat all the crab legs; but I always eat most of the crab legs with my sister. When it's time to go back to school I read a couple hours, set my alarm and catch up on my sleep.

Alanee Selover - Murray Lake



Karina Peplinski - Alto



Gwen Kinney - Alto

To celebrate the New Year my parents can't wait to get all of the stuff we use for New Year; but I always want to get sparkling grape juice even though it's really expencive. When it's time to go back to school I have to get everything back in my bag so I am ready in the morning.

Keara Crawford - Cherry Creek

To celebrate the New Year my parents can't wait to go to family parties and visit their brothers and sisters; but I always try to make them leave way earlier than they need to. When it's time to go back to school I want another three weeks of break. I try to sleep in as long as possible which is about 8:40 A.M.

Anna Richmond - St. Patrick's

To celebrate the New Year my parents can't wait to see what the new year brings; but I always get nervous.

When it's time to go back to school I whine.

Michael Goffer - St. Patrick's

To celebrate the New Year my parents can't wait to see my brother Christopher but he hates his name so he likes to be called Chris; but I always get really anxis to open presents really bad. When it's time to go back to school I can't wait for it to be Chrismas again.

Jordyn Lesky - Murray Lake

To celebrate the New Year my parents can't wait to go to bed; but I always want to stay up. When it's time to go back to school I try to sweet talk them in to leting me stay home.

Elle Inman - Murray Lake

To celebrate the New Year my parents can't wait to have a lot of fun and have friends over and my friends to intill I can play to; but I always get the kids wine from the store and share it with

my friends. When it's time to go back to school I talk to my friends and see what they got for Chrismas, what they did for New Years!!

Mackenzie Vandersloot - Cherry Creek

To celebrate the New Year my parents can't wait to get us back in school; but I always look foward to playing with my friends. When it's time to go back to school I yell "no."

Blake Bennett - St. Patrick's

To celebrate the New Year my parents can't wait to buy lottery tickets and make a bunch of snacks and go down stairs to watch the ball drop; but I always I sometimes never go to bed. When it's time to go back to school I bring gifts for a bunch of my friends.

Brooke Ellsworth - Murray Lake

To celebrate the New Year my parents can't wait to have their friends come over and have lots of fun; but I always stay outside and play with my friends. When it's time to go back to school I can't wait to tell my freinds what I got for Christmas.

Alex Cherpes - Cherry Creek

To celebrate the New Year my parents can't wait to open presents and eat alot of chocolate and hang with family; but I always open presents and play video games. When it's time to go back to school I bring all the left over candy.

Tristan Bulthuis - Cherry Creek



Anna Richmond - St. Patrick's

We Hope Your New Year Is a Booming Success!

From the stroke of midnight to Dec. 31, may 2016 bring you good luck and happiness all the way.

Thanks for everything!

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The time has come for us to say,
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2015 - A Year In Review

City council renews wastewater contract, airport agreement and establishes criteria for sidewalks

Lowell city council held their regular meeting at city hall on Monday, March 2. Seventeen citizens attended the meeting. One of them, Perry Beachum, spoke during “public comment.” Beachum reminded the council about the LaughFest event that will take place at the Grand Volute Ballroom on Saturday, March 7. He also thanked the Department of Public Works and the lacrosse club for maintaining the ice skating rink. The council spent over 45 minutes discussing the wastewater treatment plant and whether or not to renew the city’s contract with United Water, the company that runs the plant. The council approved a five year “fixed base operation agreement” between the Lowell City Airport and the company Williams Air Power. The council established “deficiency criteria” for how badly sidewalks have to be damaged before letters are sent to residents. Homeowners can expect to get a letter if there is a one inch or greater elevation between the sidewalk squares in front of their home.

Huge road repair project scheduled for this year

There will be a huge road repair project downtown later this year. “We will resurface [the] asphalt [on] 2.3 miles of M-21, from Valley Vista Drive to the Kent/Ionia county line,” said John Richard, MDOT communications representative. The project won’t be cheap. “Project cost is approximately \$1.5 million,” Richard said.

March 11, 2015

Laughfest welcomes comedian Costaki Economopoulos to Lowell



Seriously funny comedian Costaki Economopoulos took to the stage at the Grand Volute Ballrooms last Saturday as part of the fifth annual Laughfest comedy festival. Laughfest is the first and only community-wide festival of its type. It lasts ten days and boasts nearly 300 comedic performances each year with both improv and stand-up comedy.

Extreme winter weather damages Lighthouse silo

There is a partially-collapsed silo outside the Lighthouse Foods plant, 1400 Foreman St. SE. The damage was caused by extreme winter weather which weakened the structure.

March 18, 2015

Icy river takes a toll on Lowell troll

The Lowell troll is dead. “Old man winter played a major role in [our] the Lowell troll’s demise,” said Liz Baker, director of the Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce. “The ice pushed the piling that our sculpture was mounted on up and over. The Lowell troll went for a swim and ended up on the south side of Main Street. It did not go through the dam but it was damaged at large. Greg Canfield rescued it from the water on Sunday morning [March 15]. After taking a look it was decided that the troll was too damaged to salvage and thus its life has come to an end.”



Chamber names Seese 2014 Person of the Year

Rick Seese is the Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce 2014 Person of the Year.

City council talks balancing funds and planting trees

The city council got their meeting at city hall on Monday, March 16, finished in less than half an hour. The council passed a “Fund Balance Policy.” The Fund Balance Policy says, “The budget shall be prepared and activities managed to result in an ending unassigned fund balance of at least the greater of \$500,000 or 15 percent of general fund expenses.”

City assesses light impact on Main Street

The city has unscrewed every other light bulb in the light fixtures downtown. The city released a memo recently stating, “The city will be unscrewing light bulbs in every other fixture to actually see the impact of this change.”

March 25, 2015

Three city council seat openings for May election

There will be three seats on the city council up for election on Tuesday, May 5. The seats currently occupied by Sharon Ellison, Jim Hall and Matt Mayer are expiring. Almost anyone can run for one of the vacancies as long as they meet some specific criteria.

Baseball players read to students

To help celebrate March is Reading Month Lowell varsity baseball players showed up at Murray Lake Elementary on St. Patrick’s Day to read students their favorite childhood books. Many of the team members were former Murray Lake students. The students were very excited to have these players read to them. Matt Cooper is pictured reading to his brother Robert’s kindergarten classroom.

Live game show and lots of entertainment planned for expo this year

At this year’s Expo you’ll be able to participate in a live game show and destroy Tokyo as part of a life-sized board game. “There will be five games and over \$1000 in prizes contestants will have the opportunity to compete for,” said Josh Bruwer, general manager of Arrowhead Golf Course and one of the people putting the Expo together.

New FROM director looks ahead



Flat River Outreach Ministries formally introduces Dawn Broene as its new executive director. Board chairman Dave Emmette made the announcement saying, “I know Dawn is very excited - as are we - to have her continue to move the organization forward with many great things to come.” “I am very excited about being given the opportunity of executive director,” she says, “I feel that the organization took me in and made me part of the family when I became a volunteer. It is amazing how much the organization has grown since I first stepped foot on

the premises in 2008. It has been an honor to watch and be a part of the expansion of the programs and even the facility, and now to be given the opportunity to lead.”

Art was hoppin’ in downtown Lowell

LowellArts! held two big arts’ events in town on Thursday, March 19. At the King Gallery in the LowellArts! building, 149 S. Hudson St., the awards presentation for the 29th annual West Michigan Regional Art Competition took place, while the Downtown Lowell Gallery Hop event was held at five art galleries and three restaurants around town.

Annual Maple Syrup Fest breakfast held at WWC


One of the first signs of spring at the Wittenbach/Wege Center for more than a decade has been hosting the annual Maple Syrup Fest. After being forced to cancel last year due to extreme ice on the trails, this year the event celebrated clear skies and great attendance.

April 1, 2015

Perfectly pettable pachyderms poised to prance down Main Street

Ringling Bros. Barnum & Bailey Circus has stopped using elephants in their three-ring shows. Seeing an opportunity for new staff that will work for peanuts, city officials are giving the homeless pachyderms a place in Lowell. The retired circus performers’ primary function will be to replace the equines that pull Santa’s sleigh during the annual Christmas parade. Given their height, Lowell Light & Power will also be using the trunk-wielding beasts to help decorate prior to the parade. It is expected that the presence of these new workers will give Lowell a huge competitive edge when fairgoers bet on the annual Cow Patty Bingo game and especially when city officials plan another poop toss during their next ground-breaking ceremony. In conclusion, it must be said that everyone at the Ledger hopes you enjoyed our tribute to April 1st.

Year In Review, continued, page 20



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2015 - A Year In Review

Visitors flock to 2015 Expo

Over 5,000 people attended the 2015 Lowell Community Expo last Saturday, March 28 at Lowell High School. "Attendance was much higher than past years," said Liz Baker, director of the Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce. "The weather conditions were perfect for Expo, with cold temperatures and sunshine. We sold out this year and we featured the Hall of Flame with over 15 different school groups and clubs, as well as the added entertainment in the LPAC."

Concert raises funds for Whites Bridge Historical Society

Lowell's Grand Volute Ballrooms hosted a free event at their facility this past weekend featuring local rock legend and veteran Lowell performer Alive & Well to benefit the rebuilding of Whites Bridge.

April 8, 2015

The Other Place scheduled to be ready for May events after some major restorations

They'll be cutting it close, but the renovations to Larkin's The Other Place, 301 W. Main St., will be finished by the start of dinner theater season. "It probably had upwards of \$180,000 worth of damage to the roof and the walls," said owner Mike Larkin. "The walls got pushed out, the truss fell down, they had to break up the roof a little bit and replaster a lot of the ceiling that was cracked, and when it fell it cracked the dome area."



DesJarden to retire from LPWD

Dan DesJarden, the director of the Lowell Public Works Department, will retire on May 15. DesJarden is a life-long resident of Lowell and has been a city employee for 33 years. DesJarden said there weren't any secrets to his success in Lowell's government. "There are no tricks," DesJarden said. "Just be honest and up front and work with the guys. Communication is the biggest thing."

April 15, 2015

Plans discussed during Vergennes Township Planning Commission meeting

A plan for some major development in Vergennes Township was revealed at a Vergennes Township Planning Commission meeting last Tuesday, April 7. The plan was discussed at the meeting for two hours. "This project is a site plan review for a tentative preliminary plat home

development of 106 lots plus three land division lots on about 98 acres on the east side of [910] Alden Nash Ave SE," said Jeanne Vandersloot, Zoning Administrator of Vergennes Township. "The review is only for phase 1 of 24 lots plus the three land division lots. It is at the Planning Commission level."

April 22, 2015

Whites Bridge will be rebuilt

It's official, Whites Bridge is going to be rebuilt. The Whites Bridge Historical Society announced that they received a \$200,000 endowment from the Meijer Foundation. This announcement was made during a banquet at Grand Volute Ballrooms on Thursday, April 16. "We've raised over \$475,000, that should be sufficient to build a bridge," said Tom Byle, chairman of the Whites Bridge Historical Society. "We're going to draw up plans and build a bridge, hopefully next summer [2016]. That's what we're aiming for."

Cowgirls shop and have fun at Lowell's Girls' Night Out

Last Thursday evening proved that "Cowgirls have more fun" when shoppers and fun seekers converged for the spring Girls' Night Out event.

From clean-ups to Tasers, much was discussed council meeting

Lowell city council had their regular meeting at city hall on Monday, April 20. The council discussed next year's budget, Tasers and resurfacing a local street, among other topics. About 12 residents attended the meeting. Lowell Light and Power board member Perry Beachum was the only member of the public who spoke during the opportunity for public comment.

April 29, 2015

Proposal 1 on the ballot Tuesday, May 5

There will only be one thing on the ballot on the election May 5, the controversial constitutional amendment that will raise sales tax to fix roads.



New building for the arts may generate more business downtown with their activities

As reported last week, LowellArts! has purchased the former Hallmark/River Hollow building at 221 and 223 W. Main St. "The Lowell Area Community Fund gave us the down payment to purchase the building," said Lorain Smalligan, LowellArts! executive director. "I really think we'll help bring businesses into the downtown and help generate more traffic downtown with our activities." It's an old, historic building. Cousins' Hallmark was there for almost 30 years. It will need a lot of work before LowellArts! can start using it. "We know that we're

going to have to do some roof work and obviously we're doing the brick repair to the exterior of the building," Smalligan stated. "That will happen this summer." Part of the renovations will include a new entrance in the back. They may no longer use the front entrance.

May 6, 2015

Lowell's Veen Observatory celebrates golden anniversary of area stargazing

The latest event commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Veen Observatory was a presentation on the observatory's history at Englehardt Library on Tuesday, April 28. Dave DeBruyn gave a presentation called "Lowell's Treasure: The James C. Veen Observatory, 1965-2015." DeBruyn is president of the Grand Rapids Amateur Astronomical Association and the curator emeritus for the Roger B. Chaffee Planetarium.



Annual Crop Walk celebrated

Nine churches and organizations gathered this past Sunday for the annual "Crop Walk" which started at the Lowell First United Methodist Church (LFUMC) on Main Street and trekked through the Lowell community in an effort to end hunger worldwide.

Firefighters join more than 100 participants in Alto's 5k walk/run

More than 100 Alto community members turned out for the sixth annual Alto 5K run/walk held last Saturday morning.

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2016

Happy New Year

As we turn the page to a new year, we hope it delivers 365 days of happiness and good luck to you and yours. We're so grateful for the many good times we've shared in 2015, and we look forward to your visits in the days ahead.

Thanks for your support, and Happy New Year!

May your calendar be filled with reasons to celebrate!

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Lowell Area Elementary Students completed these statements -
**To celebrate New Year's Eve
 my parents can't wait to ... But I always**

To celebrate the New Year my parents can't wait to go to a hotel; but I always make them bring family. When it's time to go back to school I am hoping to don't have to go.
 Izzy Field - Cherry Creek

To celebrate the New Year my parents can't wait to send you to my grandmas and cousins house!!! but I always have fun at there house anyway??? When it's time to go back to school I am really sad and mad so I am smad.
 Alexis Tyler - Cherry Creek

To celebrate the New Year my parents can't wait to say the count down with me; but I always ending up falling asleep. When it's time to go back to school I am sad because I had so much fun. Also I'm glad to come back to see my wonderful teacher.
 Kayla Bibbler - Alto

To celebrate the New Year my parents can't wait to have a party and have fun; but I always have none that I can think of. When it's time to go back to school I won't to go home and go to sleep.
 Michael - Cherry Creek

To celebrate the New Year my parents can't wait to eat Christmas dinner; but I always can't wait to play video games. When it's time to go back to school I cry and say it went by to quick.
 Jonah Phillips - Murray Lake

To celebrate the New Year my parents can't wait to make origami, and go to a chinese resteraunt; but I always get sweet and sour chicken. When it's time to go back to school I want to go to are gym and run, and do football.
 Noodin Bardwell - Alto

To celebrate the New Year my parents can't wait to go to Minnesota and handgout with my friends; but I always watch the ball drop and can't wait to go to Minnesota as well. When it's time to go back to school I am kind of sad, but excited to see my friends.
 Macy - Cherry Creek

To celebrate the New Year my parents can't wait to buy lottery tickets; but I always sometimes don't go to bed. When it's time to go back to school I bring the most awesome present to school.
 Emma McCormick - Murray Lake

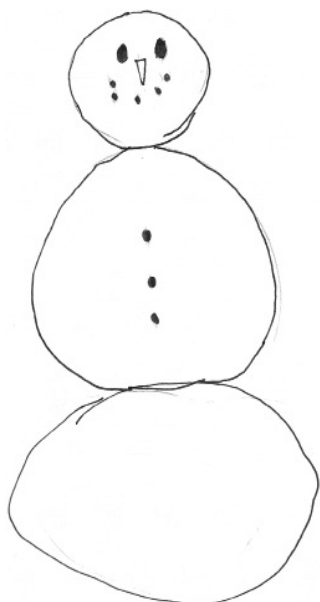
To celebrate the New Year my parents can't wait to stay up till midnight while watching movies; but I always have cinnimon jello and sparkling cider with our dinner. When it's time to go back to school I am really excited to see my friends.
 Rebecca Gray - Alto

To celebrate the New Year my parents can't wait to yell at the top of their lungs Happy New Year; but I always stay up until midnight and prank my mom by decorating her room while she's asleep. When it's time to go back to school I hangout with my friends the day before school starts.
 Alexandria Hope Vantil - Cherry Creek

To celebrate the New Year my parents can't wait to forget about all the bad stuff that happened last year; but I always look forward to doing the best fireworks of the year. When it's time to go back to school I usually sleep in the day before and make the best lunch of the schooll year out of briskets.
 Hunter Stephanovich - Murray Lake

To celebrate the New Year my parents can't wait to wach the super bowle; but I always cann't wait to watch the super bowle. When it's time to go back to school I get all my metaril fo school.
 Tate Hare - Alto

To celebrate the New Year my parents can't wait to make resilutions so we think we will make them; but I always make reslutions and never get to do the resloutions we wrote down. When it's time to go back to school I hide under the table so that I can not go to school!
 Hannah Witherell - Murray Lake



Brenden Wittenbach - St. Patrick's

Year In Review, continued, page 20

Happy New Year

As we count down the days to a brand-new year, we'd like to thank you for stopping here. Your friendship, support and kindness too make us so very grateful to each one of you. We hope that your New Year is simply a blast from the very first moment until the last.

Happy New Year & Best Wishes!

.....

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Here's hoping your New Year is filled with countless good times and good fortune. We have so many reasons to be grateful as we ring in 2016, and friends like you are among them. We greatly appreciate your kindness and your valued business, and we look forward to seeing you soon in the New Year.

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2015 - A Year In Review

Lowell drivers earn first place at Bus Road-e-o



May 13, 2015

Two new officers join Lowell's police force

Lowell Police Department has hired two new police officers. Dan Wheeler started in April and Wil Smith will start May 11.



Wil Smith and Dan Wheeler

Lowell says no to Proposal 1

Proposal 1, the controversial constitutional amendment that would have raised sales tax to fix roads, was soundly defeated in the election on Tuesday, May 5.

Buyers Guide Mother of the Day enjoys a day of pampering

Saranac mother of four, Barb Estes, was selected as the 2015 Buyers Guide "Mother of the Day" after her daughter sent in a heartfelt letter on her behalf. She emphasized how her mother sacrificed for her children, made every situation look bright along with her ability to pass her own positive qualities on to her children.

May 20, 2015

Detour! Hudson Street bridge to close for resurfacing

Hudson Street bridge will be closed for a resurfacing project from Thursday, May 21 until Thursday, July 2. According to a notice on the Kent County Road Commission website, "Traffic will be detoured approximately three quarters of a mile to the east and will cross the river at the Jackson Street bridge."

Annual Drive Your Tractor to School Day



Council passes next year's budget

Lowell City Council passed next year's budget and saved some money on police dispatch at their meeting at city hall on Monday, May 18. The meeting lasted 40 minutes and was attended by six residents, none of whom spoke during the opportunity for public comment. Councilor Matt Mayer was absent and new director of public works, Ron Woods, attended a city council meeting for the first time.

Lowell baseball claim second consecutive conference title



First graders have fun on walk

First-grade students from Bushnell Elementary hit the streets last week Friday, May 15, for the school's annual Lowell Community Walk. Decked out with backpacks and armed with water bottles, the little learners took the all-day tour stopping at six local businesses and enjoying lunch in the park.

Local veterans take part in Tight Lines for Troops fishing tournament

Last weekend three Lowell veterans attended the sixth annual Tight Lines for Troops fishing tournament in Manistee. Tight Lines for Troops was started by Army veteran Bob Guenthardt in 2009. According to their website, Tight Lines for Troops exists "to show appreciation to members of the military for their dedication and sacrifice." It takes over 500 volunteers to pull the annual two-day event together, which is free to all military veterans.

May 27, 2015

Lowell's annual Memorial Day parade - a ceremony of remembrance



Ceremonies opened at Oakwood Cemetery with a traditional bagpipe performance.

Thompson to retire as Legion Post commander

After nine years at the helm as commander of the Lowell American Legion Post #152, U.S. Navy veteran Dave Thompson is stepping down from his active duties later this summer.



Person of the Year and Brick awards bestowed at annual chamber gathering

Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce gave out this year's awards at their annual Gathering of the Membership dinner. The event was held at River Edge Bed and Breakfast, 538 Flat River Dr. on Wednesday, May 20.

June 3, 2015

Sunny skies greet the class of 2015 at Lowell High School's 137th commencement ceremonies

Students take part in annual Senior Give Back Day

Lowell High School seniors spent their last day of school giving back to the community as part of the annual "Senior Give Back Day." Chaye Klomparens helps to oversee the event along with Dee Crowley.

Council discusses budget, taxes, zoning and clerk's retirement

The city council approved a bid for some work to a building, denied a zoning variance and announced the retirement of a long-time city worker at their meeting at city hall on Monday, June 1. Three members of the public addressed the council during the public comment portion of the meeting. First, Tony Ellison, husband of councilor Sharon Ellison, asked councilor Jeff Altoft why he voted "no" on the city's budget at the council meeting on May 18. Retired Lowell City Airport manager Jim Sowle read a prepared statement expressing his support for the city council. O'Reilly Auto Parts, 1427 West Main St. SE, applied for a zoning variance that would allow them to double the size of the store's sign. Ron Conner, O'Reilly's district manager, was on hand. After a lengthy discussion, the council voted unanimously to deny the variance, therefore O'Reilly's sign will remain the same size. The council had a brief review of Michigan's newly-revised Freedom of Information Act laws. They will vote to adopt the new laws at the next council meeting. Howe announced that the

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2015

2016

Thanks for bringing so much joy to our year with your visits. We look forward to seeing you again soon!

May the New Year bring good things your way from every direction.

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2015 - A Year In Review

county will require Lowell to hold a "Truth-in-Taxation" hearing at the next city council meeting. The council's final business of the evening was the announcement of the retirement of Betty Morlock, who has been Lowell's city clerk for decades. "Her last working day will be July 31," Howe said. "She will be greatly missed and she has just been a wonderful asset to the city staff and a wonderful asset to us."

Former Lowell paramedic honored for saving man's life

A former Lowell paramedic received an award from the city of Fremont after he saved a man's life on May 5. "I work at Fremont Ford up here in Fremont," said John Wilterink. "We had a customer of ours actually came flying into the parking lot. He had a heart attack and he smashed into one of our poles here." He was recognized by the city of Fremont on May 15.

June 10, 2015

Blough celebrated for her many hours of volunteering at LAHM



Carolyn Jane Blough recently became the first person ever to hit the 2,000 volunteer hour milestone at the Lowell Area Historical Museum, 325 W. Main St.

Farmers' market opens this week

Local vendors, fresh produce and unique artisan works will be available to shoppers again this year as the Lowell Area Farmers' Market opens for its ninth year on June 11. The market originally opened in 2006 at the Kent County Fairgrounds and has undergone several hour and site changes over the years in order to better serve the community. "The farmers' market definitely is changing," said Liz Baker, executive director of the Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce. "There will be a nice ambiance to it this year." "For almost three years it was held uptown in the Tractor Supply Co. parking lot," Baker said. "We heard constantly from people that it wasn't a really great location and they've always wanted to see a farmers' market in downtown Lowell." The move downtown allows the Lowell Area Farmers' Market to change and expand what it offers.

June 17, 2015

Concerts sizzle under threatening skies

Gray skies did not discourage music fans last Thursday when the first Lowell Showboat Sizzlin' concert of the summer featured hometown favorite The Kari Lynch Band.

Ullery appointed as new clerk at productive council meeting

Sue Ullery took over the city clerk position permanently on August 1.



Fire department sells 1946 fire engine

Lowell's fire department sold a 1946 Seagrave fire engine to a Caledonia man.



Lowell Bucks designed to strengthen buying locally

Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce announced plans to strengthen and grow its Buy Local program by partnering with Conpoto, a Holland-based Community Currency software firm. The chamber is naming its program "Lowell Bucks." Lowell Bucks can be purchased from the chamber's website at www.lowellchamber.org. The chamber will use the program to drive local spending by connecting merchant members with large employers, providing a community gifting alternative for employee incentive and recognition giving.

June 24, 2015

10th annual Lowell Relay for Life raises \$41,000 for the American Cancer Society



Fifteen local teams comprised of 173 participants took part in last weekend's tenth annual Lowell Relay For Life at Red Arrow Stadium. The event raised more than \$41,000 for the American Cancer Society.

Nelson named Michigan School Bus Driver of the Year

Lowell Area Schools' bus driver Betty Nelson was recently selected by the Michigan Association for Pupil Transportation as the Michigan School Bus Driver of the Year.

Retiring city clerk will miss working with the public

Lowell city clerk Betty Morlock is retiring after 27 years working at city hall. She was hired as deputy clerk on February 1, 1988, then promoted to city clerk in April 2000.



July 1, 2015

Spirited young mother succumbs to rare illness

Shelby Offrink died Sunday, June 28, 2015. She was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer in 2014. She leaves behind her husband Ben and their daughters Maeve (four) and Hazel (18 mo). At the Ledger, we all stopped and had to catch our breath. Our hearts were instantly, collectively heavy.

Hudson Street bridge project completed earlier than expected

In a lovely surprise for the citizens of Lowell, the Hudson St. bridge resurfacing project was completed two weeks early.

Year In Review, continued, page 24

A Toast to Our Friends & Customers

Once again, the time is near to wish you all a joyous New Year filled with good luck, health and happiness too. We hope for the best for each of you!

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2015 - A Year In Review

Worker killed in accident at King Milling

A man was killed while working at King Milling, 115 S. Broadway St., on Saturday, June 27. Jared Looyenga, 30, was power washing the large silos when he broke a power line and plummeted to his death around 11 am.



Annual JuneGrass festival

This year's JuneGrass bluegrass festival was a big success despite some rain and a power outage caused by a tragedy at nearby King Milling. "The show is great this year as always," said Steve Albert of Zellies Opry House Band. "Everybody is having a great time. A nice vibe. This is a nice festival. It's very straight-ahead bluegrass. A lot of festivals have a wider array of musical styles, but this one is hardcore bluegrass. I like that. Acoustic music doesn't need electricity."

July 8, 2015

Riverwalk Festival starts

The highlight of summer in Lowell is always Riverwalk Festival, the two-night, three-day party the chamber of commerce throws downtown the second weekend in July. This year's Riverwalk Festival will take place on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, July 9, 10 and 11.

Motorcycle auction to benefit Pink Arrow Pride

Pink Arrow Pride will be placing 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.

WWII era big band hits the Riverwalk

Last week's Sizzlin' Summer Concert starred the River City Jazz Ensemble. They played a set of big band hits from the World War II era. A huge, diverse crowd enjoyed perfect weather, hot dogs and burgers on the grill, and booze on the Showboat, while the River City Jazz Ensemble played songs by artists like Duke Ellington, Glenn Miller and Frank Sinatra.

City council discusses street plan, approves youth football park and authorizes tree removal

Lowell city council had their regular meeting at city hall Monday evening, July 6. None of the nine residents in attendance addressed the council during the 30 minute meeting. City manager Mark Howe updated the council about the council's goal of creating a "street asset management plan." "We made more progress on identifying streets for repair over the next five years and [I] plan to get that list to you [the council]," Howe said. "We're also coordinating with any water work and any sewer work that may need to be done over the next five years."

July 15, 2015

Annual Riverwalk Festival celebrates summer in historic downtown Lowell

Lowell's three day Riverwalk Festival took place last weekend drawing thousands to historic downtown and along the Flat River for a slew of entertainment options. Festivities kicked off Thursday evening when Addorio Technologies presented the Riverwalk Pig Roast. For just \$8 dinner guests enjoyed pork cooked on site with a variety of side dishes. Diners were able to enjoy the Bronk Bros. on stage just yards away as part of the Lowell Showboat Sizzlin' Summer Concert Series. Free rowing classes, concessions and State Farm Duck Raffle sales were also a part of the day one lineup. Early activities included guided pontoon rides down the Flat River where passengers learned about the history of Lowell and the waterway on which it resides.

Bird flu will make fair like no other

The bird flu will make this year's Kent County Youth Fair a completely different event than it's ever been before. Events statewide were cancelled when a virulent bird flu strain called H5N2 showed up in Michigan and 20 other states. "Bird flu is affecting the entire United States," said Mary Crosby, KCYF poultry superintendent. "There were three goslings [baby geese] down near the Detroit area in Warren that were found with [H5N2]. There are several states that have had outbreaks of it. We've had it in Michigan. There are farms in Indiana that have it. As a preventative measure these different states have decided to limit the movement of poultry. They don't want two different farms coming together. That's how you prevent it from getting spread as much as you possibly can."

The postman saved the day

A Lowell family may have had their house saved from fire by a vigilant United States Postal Service employee. Lowell mailman John Clymer noticed sparks coming from the home at 712 Lincoln Lake when he was doing his route on Monday, July 6. "It was raining super, super hard that day," Clymer said. "I was a couple houses away when I heard a loud popping noise and saw a bright flash. I thought maybe somebody was doing fireworks. Then I thought that if it was raining out, why would anybody do fireworks? I knocked on the door and nobody answered, probably because it was raining so hard. I ran back to my truck and called the Lowell police. I went back to the house and I saw some young guys in the garage." Nathaniel Clark was one of those "young guys." He lives at 712 Lincoln Lake and had no idea about the potentially dangerous situation. "I was sitting in the garage with a friend," Clark said. "The mailman was walking up and he said 'Hey, your house is smoking and sparking.' I couldn't believe it, man. I had to get out of my wheelchair and tell my mother what was going on. We called 911. Somehow it got wet and it started to short out and started sparking. I think the mailman had already called Lowell Light & Power to cut the power off." "They went and checked on it," Clymer said. "The mom was in the house, so I said, 'If somebody is in the house, we'd better get them out.' Probably about four or five minutes later Lowell Light & Power was already out there. I guess it was the wiring on the outside of the house. The fuse box."

Main Street BBQ plans August opening

The wait for wood smoked BBQ and brews is drawing to a close as construction of the soon to open Main Street BBQ is approaching completion. The restaurant will be located at 210 E. Main in Lowell, the former site of the Moose Lodge.

21st annual Covered Bridge Bike Tour



Hundreds of cyclists converged at Fallasburg Park last Sunday for the 21st annual Covered Bridge Bike Tour. Beginning and ending in the historic village of Fallasburg, the tour offered a variety of tour lengths ranging from the shortest 12-mile trek to the endurance building 100-mile tour. The rider's paths took them along scenic paved roads in and around the park and ended with a home cooked supper back in Fallasburg.

LHS class of 1950 holds reunion

Lowell High School, class of 1950, 65th class reunion was held at Deer Run Golf Course on June 25, 2015.

July 22, 2015

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.

Interim public works director enjoying his job

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.'"

Retiree kayaks 740 mile trail in 25 days

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." 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.

July 29, 2015

Vintage baseball – All-American pastime played the same as in 1858

Since 2007 The Fallasburgh Flats have been playing baseball like its 1858. The vintage base ball club uses bare hands, wooden bats and superb sportsmanship in an attempt to return the all-American pastime to its fun family oriented roots. The Cubs became The Flats in 2012 when the team decided to honor their local history by paying homage to the river that runs through historic Fallasburg, north of Lowell. The club also developed a relationship with the Fallasburg Historical Society who granted the team use of the school house field for their home events.

Lowell grad mentors former biology teacher

In a unique role reversal, a Lowell High School graduate is mentoring his former teacher during her internship at the Van Andel Institute, 333 Bostwick Ave. NE, Grand Rapids. Dylan Dues, a 2009 LHS graduate, works as a research technician in the laboratory of aging and neurodegenerative disease at the Van Andel Institute. Heather DeJonge has taught science at LHS since 1990. Dues was one of her students not too long ago.

And the winner is...

Robert Woldhuis, is pictured with Sherri Zandstra, office manager at Wittenbach GMC in Lowell, when he arrived to pick up his 2008 Yamaha V-Star 650 custom motorcycle. He placed the winning bid of \$3,000 for the cycle that was donated to Pink Arrow Pride by the late Renee Grant.



August 5, 2015

City council discusses removing outdated cell tower and vacant garage

Lowell city council's regular meeting didn't have much new business, but they did discuss updates on a couple large, outstanding projects. Eight citizens attended the meeting, which lasted 16 minutes. City manager Mark Howe said that the huge cell tower behind the buildings on Main St. will finally be torn down. He said he expects this to take place before the Labor Day weekend. City councilor Jeff Altoft asked about the status of an old garage behind the Moose building that was supposed to be torn down. "We need to let the Boy Scouts know," Howe said. "I told them we would give them some notice because they are using that

2015 - A Year In Review

building for a trailer and I committed to them that I'd give them a month's notice before we actually took it down." Greg Canfield, the Moose property's owner, addressed the council. He said that waiting a month would be bad for the barbecue restaurant that is currently being built in the Moose building. "There's a lot to do, but they intend to be open September 1," Canfield said. "If we need to give the Boy Scouts 30 days notice, that's going to create an issue because they're starting to do interviews and hire employees this week."

Local rockabilly legend Delilah DeWylde and the Lost Boys perform at Sizzlin' concert

The Showboat was the place to be last Thursday night as local rockabilly legend Delilah DeWylde and the Lost Boys played the weekly Sizzlin' Summer concert. It was a perfect summer evening, although a bit breezy. "The wind is almost blowing me over up here," DeWylde said from the stage. "The bass is like a big sail and I'm going to sail right away."

Lowell High School's class of 1940 gathers for 75th class reunion and open veritable time capsule

A time capsule was opened on Thursday, July 23rd, at the Lowell Area Historical Museum. This time capsule was not the Hill's Shoe Store shoebox that Charley Hill, the first class historian, actually handed Marjean Fonger-Brillhart and Jack Tornga years ago; it was the living memories of all five remaining members of the Lowell High School class of 1940.



August 12, 2015

The 2015 Kent County Youth Fair is in full swing till the end of the week

The 2015 Kent County Youth Fair started on Monday and is in full swing until the closing on Saturday at 11 pm. They have all of the features and events that they usually do along with some interesting additions. "We have so many things that come back year after year because they're good," said KCYF vice president Bruce Doll... "Wednesday is the Kari Lynch band, she's amazing. All the entertainment is free, as is the rodeo."

August 19, 2015

Record livestock auction sales at annual Kent County Youth Fair

Hundreds of buyers, sellers and spectators gathered inside the Reath Barn on the grounds of the Kent County Youth Fair (KCYF) last Thursday for the annual Livestock Auction. One of the largest and most anticipated events of fair week, the auction serves as an opportunity for young fair exhibitors to earn money from the animals they have diligently raised and prepared for show. The auction earned more than \$460,000 in 2012, north of \$505,000 in 2013 and increased by 25 percent in 2014 with a total sales of \$630,926.65. This year's sale added up to yet another increase according to KCYF president Jon Bieneman, "The auction was another huge success. This year's total was \$633,117.18. It was another record breaking auction beating last year's total by a little over \$2,000."

Council declares Sept. 11, 2015 Pink Arrow Pride Day

Lowell city council held its regular meeting at city hall on Monday, August 17. Among the topics the council discussed were Pink Arrow Pride, a deck on the Riverwalk and the future of the Showboat. Nine members of the public attended the 44 minute meeting. One of them, Sue Hanline, spoke about the recent alphorn concert and retreat that took place in Lowell last month. The council discussed the construction of a deck that will be attached to the Englehardt Library. In other Englehardt Library news, the library's new branch manager, Heather Wood-Gramza,

introduced herself to the council. "I've been here for three weeks now and I have to say that this community has been most welcoming to me," Wood-Gramza said. "I can tell Lowell loves its library, so it's very exciting to be here." The council approved a six month moratorium on the erection of any new communication towers in Lowell. The council unanimously adopted a resolution declaring Sept. 11 "Pink Arrow Pride Day" in Lowell. They also unanimously adopted a resolution declaring Sept. 18 "Prisoner of War/Missing in Action Recognition Day." One interesting tidbit came at the end of the meeting when mayor Jim Hodges said that the Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce plans to get more involved with the Showboat. "The Chamber of Commerce is taking the leadership on the Showboat repair and restoration work and whatever the future may be there," Hodges said.

August 26, 2015

Remains of "bicycle man" may have been found

The remains of Donald "bicycle man" Dietz might have been found in Lowell on Saturday, Aug. 22. Two different cadaver dogs indicated there were human remains buried behind the garage at 909 Bowes Rd. That is the former home of Rami Saba, the alleged murderer of Dietz. In 2011 Saba was sentenced to 32 years in prison for 11 counts of bank fraud, identity theft, kidnapping and conspiracy in connection to Dietz's death. He was not charged with Dietz's murder due to lack of evidence, mainly because Dietz's body was never found.

Local band rounds out Sizzlin' Summer Concert series Outdoor movie celebrated the close of 2015 concerts



LowellArts! and the Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce celebrated the close of the 2015 season of the Lowell Showboat Sizzlin' Summer Concert Series with a free outdoor movie and a special performance by Arts in Motion along the Riverwalk last Friday evening.

Chalk the Walks debuts at future LowellArts!

LowellArts! brought the global movement Chalk the Walks (CTW) to downtown Lowell last Tuesday, August 18, in front of their soon-to-be home located at 221 and 223 W. Main. CTW is a project of The Joy Team, a non-profit organization, formed with the goal of building community by spreading joy, optimism and inspiration. More than 35,000 participants from the U.S., as well as Canada, England, Ireland, Mexico and Japan among others, took part in the annual event which kicked off in 2011 with only 333 participants.

September 2, 2015

Lowell Area Historical Museum hosts Summer Fest

Lowell Area Historical Museum had their Summer Fest garden party last Friday, Aug. 28. The event was sponsored by Addorio Technologies, Grand Volute Ballrooms and the Red Barn Market. All the food and drink served was from local businesses and included a beer brewed especially for the event by Ada's Gravel Bottom Brewery. "We wanted to do a fundraiser

that would showcase the museum and bring people in to see our local history," said Lisa Plank, the museum's executive director.

Councilmembers debate value of additional meetings

Doing city business in a new way has some citizens and even some Lowell city councilmembers expressing reservations. Adding one or two "work sessions" to the council's regularly scheduled two meetings each month, however, makes good sense to a number of others. "We have these work sessions so that we can get information," maintains councilmember Sharon Ellison, "either on items we've asked Mark [city manager Howe] for, or topics that are coming up in meetings, or things that we're dealing with in the city. We get the information, we discuss it and we don't make any decisions. It's kind of open. We can ask questions, we can find out what everyone else wants to know. It's informal." Criticism of the new format is not limited to just public citizens. Mayor Jim Hodges considers the work sessions to be an opportunity for councilmembers to air out issues so that they can be comfortable with the vote they eventually cast at the upcoming official council meeting. "This meeting serves as an information and discussion time for the council to help with decisions that may be made in the future," says Hodges. "No votes or decisions are made at work sessions. Often, there may be a consensus or even agreement on subjects. However, no votes or actions on policy or business matters as addressed in the city charter take place." City manager Mark Howe stated, "The mayor's comments seemed sufficient to me. I might add that there are several dozen residents of the city involved in moving the community forward through their participation in local boards and commissions. "I think the idea of a work session is good, but the frequency is not," points out councilmember Matt Mayer. "I don't attend because I am at work until eight pm. I didn't sign up for a meeting every week, nor do I have the time for it." "In my opinion (the work sessions), are a way for the council to do Mr. Howe's job because he doesn't know what to do next, or a way for him to feel out the council on items that he knows he shouldn't do," said Mayer.

September 9, 2015

Investigation into "bicycle man" remains ongoing

The story about the possible discovery of human remains in the backyard of a Lowell house blew up local media last week. After the Ledger broke the story in the Aug. 24 edition, it was picked up by TV stations 8, 13 and 17, as well as mlive.com. All media outlets except for Channel 8 seemed to get the facts right. "That Joe LaFurgey with Channel 8, he must have checked with the lieutenant that was never at the scene who said their dog never sat, even though the other trooper there saw it sit twice," said the investigator hired by the Dietz family Vic Weeks. "I don't quite get that one." The search turned up some buried metal grates with burned material on and near them and then two different cadaver dogs indicated the presence of human remains. Weeks said that the Michigan State Police are not releasing any information about the case. Weeks said that he isn't going to stop his own investigation.

Year In Review, continued, page 26

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2015 - A Year In Review

SwissLane Farms celebrates centennial

SwissLane Farms welcomed approximately 600 visitors to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the founding of the farm and receiving the Historical Society of Michigan's Centennial Farm designation.

New principal welcomed at Alto Elementary this year

Newaygo native Paul Papes joined the ranks of Lowell Area Schools' principals beginning the 2015-16 school year by replacing Randy Fleenor as leader of the district's southernmost elementary school in Alto.

Gary's Country Meats celebrates 50 years of local business



Gary's Country Meats, 205 E. Main, celebrates its 50th anniversary this month. "Butch Thompson started it as a meat market in the 1940s," said Aaron Laux, son of owner Gary Laux. "My father worked there for a while; then he bought the store in 1965. He was 24 years old. The story goes... a few of the townfolk at the time said he'd never make it; there had been meat markets there before, but here we are 50 years later and he's still there. It was called 'Lowell Cut Rate' then; dad eventually changed the name." When asked, "What is the secret of his longevity?" Owner Gary Laux joked, "Just live long enough!" "I always tried to treat people the way I would want to be treated," Gary said. "I've gone out of my way to try and make things happen right. I've always tried to be really honest and I think that's the main thing. There's probably a little luck involved too. A lot of luck. What can I say? I think I'm probably the oldest person in business [in Lowell] now."

September 16, 2015

The sun sets on Septembers' Pink Arrow Pride charitable event



Lowell varsity football improved their Pink Arrow Pride record to 8-0 when they hosted OK White conference rival Jenison for the annual fundraiser.

J&H Family Stores kicked in support with Pink Arrow Tailgate party



Owner of Pork Fat Slims Backyard BBQ, Bryce Ziehl, puts the finishing touches on the tailgate dinner.

Ride for Warriors raises funds for local veterans

The fourth annual Ride for Warriors went off without a hitch under sunny skies as bike riders converged in support of local veterans.

Biodigester up and producing power, steps taken to control odor

Recently there have been reports of foul odors around the Lowell Energy Anaerobic Digester, 625 Chatham. Other citizens have expressed concerns that the biodigester was giving off dangerous amounts of the poisonous gas hydrogen sulfide; that the biodigester hasn't ever produced any power and that it's putting an unnecessary burden on the wastewater plant. Spart, LLC is the Grand Rapids company behind the biodigester. Greg Northrup, Spart's principal, says "everything is clicking right along." Work on Lowell's biodigester began back in 2011. In February 2014 construction on the building at 625 Chatham was begun, changing it from a vacant factory into an anaerobic biodigester. They are currently dealing with some issues that have delayed the project. Northrup and his partner Pam Landes expect to get the biodigester running at full capacity in about three weeks. Neighbors of the biodigester have complained of terrible odors wafting out of the facility. Landes and Northrup say they have taken steps to fix the problem. "During the course of dealing with that solids issue we had too many of those light solids getting into the water cleaning part and that caused a little bit of odor in the neighborhood," Landes said. They also said that the biodigester has been producing power almost all year. "We are generating power," Northrup said. "We have been generating power since January, but it's been like a ramp-up process. I wanted to make sure that we fixed the solids problems before we started pushing it too hard." The biodigester will help Lowell meet the requirement that all Michigan municipalities have to get at least ten percent of their energy from renewable sources. The law that requires this, the Michigan Clean, Renewable and Efficient Energy Act, was passed in 2008. "I think we'll be close [to ten percent]," Landes said. "We're doing what we're supposed to do," Northrup said. "We have a plan. We have contractors that are helping us implement the plan that we have. We've got a good team of people that are working on getting us to where we need to be. That's all you can ask for."

Tombstones getting cleaned, preserved

Some historic tombstones are getting cleaned and preserved at Alton Cemetery, 2655 Lincoln Lake NE. "They hired us to do 150 stones," said Connie Doty, who owns the Orleans, Mich. company Gravestone Services, Inc. with her husband Tom. "We do the veterans for free on our own."

Amash hosts town hall in Lowell

Michigan third district congressman Justin Amash held a well-attended, hour-long town hall meeting at the Lowell City Hall on Monday evening. Republican Amash, a Grand Rapids native, has been serving in his position since 2010.

September 23, 2015

Fun all under mostly sunny skies at annual Fallasburg Festival

The Fallasburg Festival for the Arts was held in Fallasburg Park last Saturday and Sunday. There was live music, fresh food, artisan demonstrations and booths with artists from all over Michigan, the United States and Europe. A little rain throughout the festival didn't seem to have much effect on attendance.

Regular city council meeting report

Lowell city council had their regular meeting at city hall on Monday, September 21. Eight people attended the meeting, which lasted just over half an hour. Councilors Jim Hall and Matt Mayer were absent from the meeting. Their absences were not explained. City manager Mark Howe said there has been a delay with the downtown cell tower removal. "As I reported to you at your last meeting, we expect[ed] the tower to be removed today," Howe said. "It hasn't been removed today. I'm told the reason for that is the crane company that SyncWave had to come [to] today to remove the tower decided it was going out of business last week. The council passed an ordinance lifting the moratorium on the building of new cell towers and approved modifications to the cell tower portion of city zoning ordinances. The council approved a utility easement agreement between the city of Lowell and First Baptist Church of Lowell, 2275 W. Main St. The council voted to adopt the agreement without any discussion. At the end of the meeting during council comment, councilor Sharon

Ellison suggested making "Coffee with the Council" events more accessible to senior citizens. Mayor Jim Hodges said that the Saturday, November 7 Coffee with the Council will take place at Schneider Manor instead of at the chamber of commerce.

Alto Harvest Festival and Car Show celebrates 35th year

The community of Alto gathered downtown last Saturday in celebration of fall at the 35th annual Alto Harvest Festival & Car Show. The half-day event started inside the Alto/Bowne Township fire barn for the annual fundraising pancake breakfast. This year they served a record amount of breakfasts, nearly 500, in support of the firefighters. According to Alto fire chief Phil Dougherty, "One of the biggest reasons the breakfast is so successful is that our community is very generous to us. There are many families that give \$100 or more for their pancake breakfast. We know the breakfast is good, but it's not that good. The work that we do is just really appreciated in the community."

A meet the candidate forum

There was a meet-and-greet with the four new city council candidates at Schneider Manor on Wednesday, Sept. 16. Mayor Jim Hodges and city councilor Sharon Ellison, an incumbent candidate in the election, were also at the event, which was organized and paid for by the group Voters Organized In Civic Excellence. The election is Tuesday, Nov. 3. Six candidates are running for the three city council seats currently occupied by Sharon Ellison, Jim Hall and Matt Mayer. Ellison and Hall are running for reelection, but Mayer has decided not to seek reelection. Alan Teelander, Michael DeVore, Jim Salzwedel and Jeff Phillips are the new names on November's ballot. The top two vote-getters will each win four-year terms on the council. The third-place winner earns a two-year term.

September 30, 2015

Council holds special meeting to clarify vacancies and terms of office

Lowell city council had a special meeting at city hall on Monday, September 28. The purpose the city gave for the special meeting was to "clarify the process for filling a vacancy on the council and the terms of office for councilmembers." Lowell city attorney Dick Wendt was on hand to explain to the council and the public how to handle the vacancy left by city councilor Jim Hall, who passed away September 22. The meeting lasted just over half an hour and 16 citizens attended.

Local clergy respond to Pope's first visit to the U.S.

Last week's visit to the United States by Pope Francis, the leader of the Roman Catholic Church, was all over the news. A Lowell priest was among those who traveled to the capitol to attend a papal mass. Pope Francis arrived in Washington D.C. on Tuesday afternoon. On Wednesday morning the pope met with President Obama, had a parade through the capitol and said the midday prayer at St. Matthew's Cathedral. Wednesday afternoon the pope said the Mass of Canonization of Junipero Serra at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. Monsignor Edward Hankiewicz, parish priest at St. Mary Great Mother of God Catholic Church, 402 Amity, Lowell, attended this mass.

Jim Hall dies

Lowell councilmember and Showboat designer Jim Hall died Wednesday, September 23. Hall was a mainstay in city business and politics for decades. He graduated from Lowell High School and attended college at Kendall. For decades Hall served his community on the Lowell Light & Power board, the city planning commission, the city council and many other boards and committees. Hall was currently a member of the city council and was running for reelection this November. Beverly, Hall's wife of 46 years, died of cancer on February 2, 2015. The Halls had five children and twelve grandchildren.

Larkin's renovations nearly complete

It looks like the renovations to Larkin's The Other Place, 301 W. Main St., are just about finished. "It's close," said owner Mike Larkin. "We've had a comedy show and a wedding in there. We've got LowellArts! dinner theater scheduled for October. It's operational." Larkin said the building had over \$180,000 worth of damage to the roof and the walls.

**Lowell Area Elementary Students completed these statements -
On Christmas Eve my family always ...
We never get to ... When we don't have snow we ...**

On Christmas Eve or during Holiday break my family always watches movies and play board games and then we all eat a big lunch/dinner. We NEVER get to go skiing. When we don't have snow we play outside football, baseball, basketball. When there's lots of snow we go sledding at my grandma's house because she has a big hill. When I'm not in school I like to hang out with my little brother.
Will Johnston - Murray Lake

On Christmas Eve or during Holiday break my family always drinks warm, minty, hot chocolate and make our own and then we all watch Charlie Brown Christmas episode and The Grinch. We NEVER get to go to Florida or Mexico. When we don't have snow we hang Christmas decorations and eat candy canes. When there's lots of snow we go snowboarding and sledding down the big, gig. When I'm not in school I like to cuddle up in a warm blanket and make cookies.
Sophia - Murray Lake

On Christmas Eve or during Holiday break my family always makes snow forts in the snow and then we all go inside for refreshing hot chocolate. We NEVER get to go ice fishing. When we don't have snow we play basketball in our basement. When there's lots of snow we run around outside stuffing snow down each other's shirts. When I'm not in school I like to read and play basketball.
Benjamin Bromley - Murray Lake



Dylan Bomia - Cherry Creek

On Christmas Eve or during Holiday break my family always go to Grand Rapids and see the tree and then we all go to bed early. We NEVER get to stay up till midnight. When we don't have snow we stay inside. When there's lots of snow we slead, bild forts, and make snowballs. When I'm not in school I like to go out side.
Ryan Baker - Murray Lake

On Christmas Eve or during Holiday break my family always puts up, but first buy, a Christmas tree and then we all decorate the tree. We NEVER get to ruin my brothers fort. When we don't have snow we go on a hike in the woods. When there's lots of snow we go sledding down a really steep and icy hill. When I'm not in school I like to build snow forts then have a snowball fight.
Colton C Byrne - Murray Lake

On Christmas Eve or during Holiday break my family always goes to Ohio to visit my grandparents and then we all celebrate Christmas with my family in Ohio. When we don't have snow we sit in front of the fireplace.

When there's lots of snow we build snow fort's and go sledding.

When I'm not in school I like to read, and do gymnastice.
Vivi Bledsoe - Murray Lake

On Christmas Eve or during Holiday break my family always puts out cookies and milk for Santa and then we all go to bed and wait for the presents under the tree. We NEVER get to go ice skating.

When we don't have snow we play sports that we can't play in the snow. When there's lots of snow we like to go to a big hill and go sledding.

When I'm not in school I like to play video games.
Andrew Veldman - Murray Lake



Cadance Ferguson - Murray Lake

On Christmas Eve or during Holiday break my family always goes to my grandparents house & we all open presents together & listen to songs, and then we all sing the Twelve Days of Christmas to gether. We NEVER get to spend the night there. When we don't have snow we ride bikes. When there's lots of snow we always go sledding or sit by the fire & watch movies. When I'm not in school I like to play out side with my family.

Aiden Dial - St. Patrick's

On Christmas Eve or during Holiday break my family always on Christms eve, my family always watch a movie and then we all open all the presents after the movie. We NEVER get to go carroling. When we don't have snow we play street hockey or watch TV. When there's lots of snow we either snowboard or we sled. When I'm not in school I like to watch TV or play street hockey or snowboard.

Alex Smith - Cherry Creek

On Christmas Eve or during Holiday break my family always opens 1 present and then we all put on are Christsmas p.j.s.

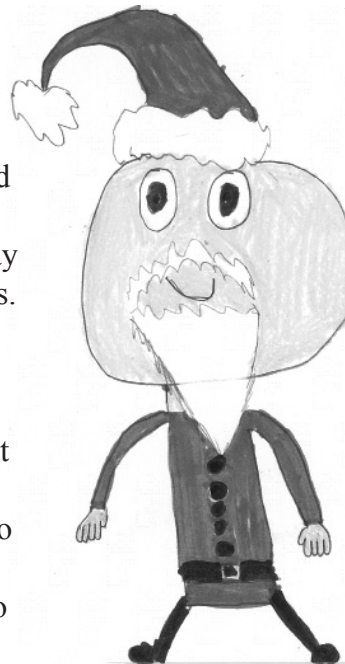
We NEVER get to stay up late at night.

When we don't have snow we whach Christsmas movies.

When there's lots of snow we go sledding.

When I'm not in school I like to spend time with family.

Ava Peterson - - Cherry Creek



Evan Blazo - Alto



2015 - A Year In Review

October 7, 2015

Lowell police receive motorcycle

Lowell's police department received a free Harley Davidson motorcycle from the United States government. "It's a 2006 Harley Davidson," said LPD chief Steve Bukala. "It has 13,000 miles on it. It came from the Pentagon motor unit that was disbanded. We cleaned it up, washed it and took the Pentagon logos off and put Lowell Police Department logos on." "We got it from the federal government's '1033' surplus program," said Bukala. "Every law enforcement organization in the United States is eligible. You'd be surprised how many vehicles the federal government has. I was amazed when I was there." The department plans to get more items from the 1033 program in the future.



Lowell hosts 2nd annual Bark for Life

Lowell Relay For Life celebrated their second annual canine fundraising event "Bark For Life" at the Kent County Fairgrounds last Saturday afternoon. Bark For Life is an extension of the ACS's largest fundraising arm, RFL, that focuses on the role of the canine caregiver during a patient's cancer journey.

2015 LHS Homecoming parade

Lowell High School brought Arrow pride to Main Street last Friday as part of their annual Homecoming festivities.

October 14, 2015

Festivals and exceptional weather bring lots of folks out to enjoy fall happenings

Downtown was hopping last Saturday, October 10, when three festivals brought people to Lowell in droves. The Kent County Youth Fair's Autumn Marketplace, Lowell Light & Power's open house and Larkin's Chili Cook-off all took place in the morning and afternoon. The events downtown attracted many out-of-town visitors. "The chili cook-off brings people to town," said Larkin's owner Mike Larkin. "It gets good exposure for everybody's business. Chili is just chili." The "Dragon Spit" team from the Holiday Bar, 801 5th St. NW, Grand Rapids, has won the contest four times, including last year. Tony Dommer and his team "Boiler-Up! Chili" won first place in the cook-off for the third time in the event's history.

Schools "Pink It Forward"

Inspired by the theme of the 2015 Pink Arrow Pride event "Pink It Forward," a brand new, year-round initiative in support of Gilda's Club has been enacted within the Lowell Area Schools district. Each month students are asked to don their favorite pink shirts for a day of donation to the charity.

Regional equestrian champs center on to state



Student behavior main focus of discussion at LAS board of ed meeting

Lowell Area Schools Board of Education held their regular meeting at the Runciman building on Monday, October 12. Seven people attended the 45 minute meeting. Most of the meeting was dedicated to a discussion of ways to track and improve student behavior. Cherry Creek principal Shelli Otten, Lowell Middle School dean of students Erin Walters and Murray Lake teacher Brooke Culver delivered a 25 minute presentation about PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports) and MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports). These are rewards-based systems of behavior control recently instituted in Lowell schools. Each school has a different way of charting and monitoring student behavior in the classroom and on school buses.

A staple in Lowell King Milling observes 125 years in business

One of Lowell's most famous and historic companies turned 125 this year. King Milling, 115 S. Broadway, started making flour on the Flat River in 1890 and they've loomed large over Lowell ever since. The towering silos dominate the downtown skyline and the giant red "KING" sign is eye-catching as well as iconic. The King Milling Company started in 1890 when Francis King, Frank T. King, Charles McCarty and Reuben Quick bought the Superior Mill for \$20,000. In 1896 they absorbed another local company, Forrest Mills. The guys immediately started improving their milling facilities, converting to the new steel roller mill process. This vastly improved efficiency. Francis King was president of the company until he died in 1900. His son Frank T. King then took over as president. In 1911 Thomas Doyle bought Charles McCarty's shares in the company. King Milling purchased the Peckham Furniture Company in 1927 and converted it to a poultry and livestock feed manufacturing facility. They put Frank's son William Doyle in charge of this venture. When Frank T. King died in 1934, Charles Doyle took over as company president. Unfortunately, Charles was paralyzed by a severe stroke in 1936. While Charles retained the title until his death in 1943, his brother William Doyle began acting as company president at that time. The biggest setback in company history occurred on March 7, 1943, when the mill burned to the ground. In April 1945, ten days after the mill reopened, company president William Doyle died of a heart attack while on a business trip to Chicago. His son King Doyle became the new president of King Milling. King Doyle was 23 years old at the time of his father's death and was over in the Pacific fighting in World War II. King remained president of the company for 50 years. During King's tenure the company expanded their storage capacity and installed many technological advancements. Assistant vice president of King Milling Patrick Doyle remembers spending a lot of time with his grandfather. "We plan to keep providing our customers with high quality flour and keep growing as the business grows," Doyle said.

Auction house closes after decades in Grattan

Bill and Jill Landstra bought a vacant eight acre property at the corner of Seven Mile and Lincoln Lake back in 1977 and built an auction house they would run together for years. On Monday, after decades as the friendly fast-talking auctioneer, Bill closed the doors for good at the Grattan Auction House.

October 21, 2015

Over 40 businesses participate in Lowell's pirate-themed Girls' Night Out

Shopping pirates hit the streets in search of treasures inside more than 40 local businesses participating in the city's fall edition of Girls Night Out last Thursday.

Construction underway for new park in township

Construction crews broke ground on a new park behind the Walgreens in Lowell Township about three weeks ago. The new park, which will be called Grand River Riverfront Park North, is located at 11998 Fulton St. It will include walking trails, a disc golf course and a bridge to the island, among other amenities.

Another ArtPrize for MacNaughton

Lowell native Roger MacNaughton has again taken home the ArtPrize award for jazz music. MacNaughton won the popular vote in the 2015 jazz category for his song "Michigan Morn" from the CD of the same title.

BC Pizza is Franchise of the Year

Lowell's BC Pizza franchise, 1335 W. Main, was declared "Franchise of the Year" last week by the parent company and won a free automobile for the restaurant.

October 28, 2015

Two of the six candidates show up for sparsely attended, Rotary sponsored, meet the candidate event

Lowell Rotary sponsored a "meet the candidates" for city council event at the Lowell Area Schools administration building on Thursday, October 22. The meeting lasted one hour. Two of the five candidates showed up to the meeting, Jeff Phillips and Jim Salzwedel. Nine citizens attended the event, including mayor Jim Hodges. The discussion was moderated by Lowell dentist Jim Reagan. Reagan asked the two candidates the questions that all five of the candidates answered in last week's Ledger, which took about twenty minutes.

Annual clean-up day helps community get rid of old junk

Community Clean-Up Day was held out at the fairgrounds last Saturday, Oct. 24. People from the local area brought tons of their old junk to be disposed of and recycled. They were taking all that bulky junk that you can't leave on the curb with your weekly trash, old appliances, electronics, auto parts, mattresses, ammo, tires, batteries, wood, metal and glass. "Lowell Township is probably edging out the city by a little bit, but Vergennes Township is a close third place," said mayor Jim Hodges, who was volunteering at the event. "It's a good way to clean up the community."

Play Bytes by Playwrights on tap at The Other Place

The LowellArts! Players are putting on "Play Bytes by Playwrights" at Larkin's The Other Place, 301 W. Main. "Play Bytes" is a collection of eight short plays by writers from all over the country, including Chicago, Racine, Los Angeles and Brooklyn. One of the plays was written by Lowell playwright Matthew Tawney.

Red Arrows win outright OK White football championship

The Lowell Red Arrows earned the OK White championship title for the second consecutive year last Friday night with a 28-14 victory over Grand Rapids Christian.

November 4, 2015

N2N chalks up another successful, heartfelt season of volunteers helping out the community



Since its inception, Flat River Outreach Ministries (FROM) has offered programs designed for the betterment of Lowell community members, including a food pantry, a low cost thrift shop and free summer lunches for students. Again this fall, in partnership with The Lowell Ledger and the Lowell Rotary Club, the non-profit organization went to work on their Neighbor To Neighbor (N2N) program which offers home improvements to citizens who might not otherwise be able to afford them.

Snowmobile trail may melt into oblivion without support

The Alto Snowmobile Trail could disappear if nobody steps up to maintain it, says Terrence "Terry" Barton, certified snowmobile instructor and president of the Yankee Springs Snowmobile Association. "At one time the trail ran from Lowell to the main West Michigan Snowmobile

Lowell Area Elementary Students completed these statements - To celebrate New Year's Eve my parents can't wait to ... But I always ...

To celebrate the New Year my parents can't wait to a party with their best freinds; but I always eat a big breakfast with my family. When it's time to go back to school I sit down and get ready for math.
David Foster - Murray Lake

grandmas house. When it's time to go back to school I can't wait to talk and write what I did during Christmas break.
Drew Ferrill - Alto

To celebrate the New Year my parents can't wait to have a party for new year; but I always come with them. It's fun. When it's time to go back to school I wish for weekends to come.
Logan Buckingham - Cherry Creek

To celebrate the New Year my parents can't wait to take me to see my family and relatives; but I always enjoy the New Year's Eve Griffins game. When it's time to go back to school I get very, very, very sad that I don't get lots of free time.
Aidan Ro. - Cherry Creek

To celebrate the New Year my parents can't wait to do stuff; but I always know what to do. When it's time to go back to school I panic and protest.
Ian B. - Alto

To celebrate the New Year my parents can't wait to take us to Zehnders waterpark; but I always pack early. When it's time to go back to school I have do homework. Wake up early.
Abbie Winn - Cherry Creek

To celebrate the New Year my parents can't wait to see the New years ball drop and start a new year; but I always stay up just to see the ball and make goals. When it's time to go back to school I am always dissupionted and sleepy, then I just cary on.
Joe Kovacs

To celebrate the New Year my parents can't wait to watch the ball drop in New York; but I always stay up 'till 1:00 a.m. When it's time to go back to school I feel miserable.
Easton Lyons - Alto

To celebrate the New Year my parents can't wait to see everyone's expression for the gift they got; but I always wait for my turn. When it's time to go back to school I wonder what my friends got from Santa.
Andy - St. Patrick's

To celebrate the New Year my parents can't wait to crash the party by setting the clocks back and say it is midnight but realy it is 10:00; but I always stay up untell midnight anyway. When it's time to go back to school I pretend that I never heard about it.
Emmaline Wasciuk - Cherry Creek

To celebrate the New Year my parents can't wait to get to Indiana to see grandma; but I always have to wait 4 hours to get to my



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2015 - A Year In Review

Trail," Barton said. "With the building of homes we have lost many miles in Kent County." Members of snowmobile clubs are in charge of trail maintenance, but membership in those clubs has declined drastically in recent years. At their peak there were ten snowmobile clubs in the area. Now there are only four. If you're into snowmobiling, it might behoove you to contact the West Michigan Snowmobile Club for volunteer opportunities this winter. Barton said they could definitely use the help.

Mayer bids adieu

Lowell city council had a very short regular meeting at city hall on Monday, Nov. 2. This was the final meeting for outgoing city councilor Matt Mayer. It was attended by 14 citizens, including members of counselor Mayer's family and it only lasted 13 minutes. Because of the election on Tuesday, Nov. 3, there will be some new faces on the council at their next meeting which will take place at city hall on Monday, Nov. 16.

November 11, 2015

Candidates react to election results

Lowell's city council will be undergoing some drastic changes after the election on Tuesday, Nov. 3. Jeff Phillips and Alan Teelander each won four year terms on the council and Michael DeVore won a two year term. Incumbent Sharon Ellison came in fourth and will therefore not be returning to the council. New candidate Jim Salzwedel came in fifth place and the late Jim Hall came in last. The new councilors were sworn during a brief ceremony at city hall on Monday, Nov. 9. "The people of Lowell have spoken," said mayor Jim Hodges. "I congratulate Jeff Phillips, Alan Teelander and Mike DeVore on their election to the city council and look forward to serving with them. I was very surprised that Sharon Ellison did not do as well as I had expected. I would thank those who did get out on election day and voted for the candidates of their choice." "Lowell is a great community and we have an opportunity to keep moving forward with newly elected councilmembers," said city manager Mark Howe. Ellison seemed both relieved to be off the hook and concerned for the future. "I enjoyed my time on the council," Ellison said. "I'm proud of my record and the things that I've done. I'm hoping that they'll be reasonable. I actually wasn't going to run, but I got convinced to run because we were afraid this would happen. I would have been happy to serve again, but that's not what the people wanted. The people have spoken. I hope they move forward in a positive, good way and they don't undo too much. I hope it works out." "I'm going to listen and we'll see where we go from there," Teelander said. "Anything can happen down the road. I'm hoping for great things for our city." "My first priority is going to be to come in, sit down, listen and see what's going on," Phillips said. DeVore said, "My plan is to become familiar with the budget. My plan is to begin fixing the roads immediately."

No Shave November raising funds for Gilda's Club

During Lowell school's second monthly "Pink It Forward" effort, male staff members are skipping the shaver to raise funds for Gilda's Club. The staff at Lowell Middle School is shown sporting five o'clock shadows during week one of the competition.

Sixth annual Turkey Trot 5K at WWC

Sunny skies and brisk air greeted running enthusiasts at the Wittenbach/Wege Center last Saturday morning for the sixth annual Turkey Trot 5K presented by the Lowell YMCA and sponsored by the Attwood Corporation.

Red Arrows are district champs!

The Red Arrows leashed the Byron Center Bulldogs last Friday night trumping their Division II district final opponent by a score of 48-17 to claim the district championship.

November 18, 2015

New city council appoints new mayor pro tem, reveals new city logo and listens to accounting presentation

Lowell city council's three new councilors attended their first meeting on Monday, Nov. 16. The council appointed a new mayor pro tem, bought some equipment, voted to clean up some gravel and sat through a long accounting presentation at the meeting, which lasted an hour and 26 minutes. About 30 members of the public attended, three of whom spoke during public comment. At

the very end of the meeting the council unanimously voted to appoint councilor Jeff Altoft to be the new mayor pro tem. Altoft replaced Sharon Ellison, who recently lost her bid for reelection to the council. Altoft was also appointed to the Lowell Area Fire and Emergency Services Authority. Further appointments will occur in January.

Successful cookie drive for Veterans

The eighth annual Cookie Drive for Veterans was held on Saturday morning, Nov. 7 and provided 5,091 homemade cookies to the Veterans. The cookies were baked by 96 Lowell area bakers who then delivered them to the Lowell American Legion Post #152.

Gilda's Night of Gratitude celebrates Pink Arrow Pride at awards banquet

Pink Arrow Pride received the Community Partner award from Gilda's Club Grand Rapids at the Gilda's Night of Gratitude banquet at New Vintage Place in Grand Rapids on Thursday, Nov. 12. Other honorees at Gilda's Night of Gratitude included Meijer, G.E. Aviation and Sister Sue Tracy.

Coach gets 200th win and Arrows are on to semi-finals

Championship dreams came true last Friday when Lowell Red Arrow football trounced all over the Muskegon Big Reds 36-7 to win the Division II Regional title. The victory also marked head coach Noel Dean's 200th win with the Arrows since he began coaching here in 1996.

November 25, 2015

Fans fill the stands for snowy game that sends Red Arrows to Ford Field

The road to Ford Field was covered in snow for the Lowell Red Arrows last Saturday afternoon when they topped Walled Lake Western 49-36 in the Division II state semifinal at Alma College's Bahlke Field.

December 2, 2015

Annual tree sale raises funds

Holiday preparations began at 677 Lincoln Lake Avenue where the Lowell Relay For Life is hosting their sixth annual Christmas tree sale. The fundraising holiday sale hosted by A1 Laser donates 100 percent of the profits to the American Cancer Society.

A forever family



A Lowell family got two new additions as part of Adoption Day on Tuesday, Nov. 24. The two brothers, seven-year-old Jazarion Perry and two-year-old Jahleel Perry; were officially adopted by Joshua and Amber Perry of Lowell, who now have eight children. The brothers have been living with their new family since July 25, 2014 and are the new siblings of Cheyanne, Trent, Sierra, Sean, Josiah and Larissa Perry.

State title hopes dashed for Red Arrows in last seconds of play at Ford Field



Beloved Lowell educator remembered

Beloved Lowell educator Mark Weber passed away on Saturday, Nov. 21, at age 70. Weber was an English teacher, tennis coach and principal at the middle school for decades. He worked in Lowell schools from 1968 until his retirement in 2001. He was also involved in a video project that documented the experiences of local war veterans.

Celebrating community at annual Thanksgiving dinner



Guests gathered at the First Congregational United Church of Christ last Thursday afternoon for the sixth annual Lowell Community Thanksgiving Dinner. Close to 200 meals were served at the event made possible by donations and volunteers of the community's churches and Flat River Outreach Ministries. The event was conceived in an effort to encourage a sense of community and fellowship by literally offering neighbors the opportunity to break bread on the Thanksgiving holiday. Since its inception the event has experienced a steady growth in both volunteers and attendees.

December 9, 2015

Annual parade brings Christmas

Holiday cheer took over downtown Lowell last Saturday during the annual Christmas festivities and nighttime parade.

Longtime fire chief to retire in new year and changes ahead for Lowell

Mayor James Hodges announced that he will step down as mayor after the next city council meeting. Hodges made an emotional speech thanking his colleagues in city government and his spouse. "It has been an honor, a privilege and a pleasure to have served our community as your mayor these past seven years," Hodges said. "It is my intention not to seek another term as your mayor when we choose our leadership in January. I will continue to serve on the city council [member] for the next two years to help our community, our new mayor and the council as they would find it suitable for me to." Lowell Area Fire Department chief Frank Martin will be retiring in 2016 after decades of service. "Chief Martin has had a distinguished career with the department lasting over 42 years," said city manager Mark Howe. Later in the meeting the council voted to suspend its own rules in order to immediately appoint councilor Alan Teelander to a vacancy on the Planning Commission rather than waiting until after the new year.

Lowell Area Elementary Students completed these statements - On Christmas Eve my family always ... We never get to ... When we don't have snow we ...

On Christmas Eve or during Holiday break my family always go to my dad's and my mom's side of the family and then we all have a Christmas party. We NEVER get to open early presents. When we don't have snow we play board games. When there's lots of snow we build a huge snow fort and go sledding at big hills.

When I'm not in school I like to build a snow fort.
Gage - Cherry Creek

On Christmas Eve or during Holiday break my family always let me open a present every day and then we all on Christmas we open all of them.

We NEVER get to open the presents when someone is sleeping.
When we don't have snow we stay inside.
When there's lots of snow we go sledding.

When I'm not in school I like to watch you tube.
Tay Shagh -Cherry Creek

On Christmas Eve or during Holiday break my family always goes to a Christmas party and then we all go have fun.

We NEVER get to go to Canada.
When we don't have snow we take out the Ranger.
When there's lots of snow we go on a snowmobile.
When I'm not in school I like to go deer hunting.

Collin -St. Patrick

On Christmas Eve or during Holiday break my family always go to my grandma's house on my dad's side, then go to my other grandmas on Christmas day and then we all open stockings and presents. We NEVER get to break our new gifts. When we don't have snow we have hot

chocolate. When there's lots of snow we play outside after we have opened our presents. When I'm not in school I like to play outside, have hot cocoa, and go to my grandma's house.
Alexis Lamoreaux - St. Patrick

On Christmas Eve or during Holiday break my family always stay home and build lego's and then we all eat lots of stuff and good things to eat.

We NEVER get to travel on the holidays.
When we don't have snow we stay inside and play.
When there's lots of snow we go snowboarding and have snowball fights.
When I'm not in school I like to play Lego's with Heidi, my sister.
Joop - St. Patrick

On Christmas Eve or during Holiday break my family always get's together and has a huge diner and then we all go upstairs by my tree and exchange gifts. We NEVER get to stay downstairs.

When we don't have snow we decorate for Christmas more. When there's lots of snow we all go to my grandma's barn and go sledding on her hill. When I'm not in school I like to go to my grandma's and drink her hot chocolate.
Ava Mallindine - Murray Lake



Zoey R. Mierendorf - Murray Lake

2015 - A Year In Review

December 16, 2015

"A Night of Christmas Cheer" in Lowell

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."

Old fashioned Christmas events help to celebrate the season

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



WWC Luminary Hike

enjoyed by area nature lovers

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.



Renovations nearly complete

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.

December 23, 2015

Sugar maple that once shaded Lowell's library finds new life

Several students at Lowell High School, who crafted a table out of wood from the sugar maple tree that stood in front of the Englehardt Library, were honored by the city of Lowell. The students, Garrett Nauta, Lakota Tidd, Mason Misiak, Noah Worsley and Jacob Hanson, worked on the table as part of an industrial arts class taught by Tony Ellis. Lowell city manager Mark Howe presented

principal Amy Pallo with a letter naming LHS a 'Tree City USA Collaborative Partner.' Lowell is a Tree City USA city, a designation given out by the Arbor Day Foundation. The 130-year-old sugar maple tree was cut down in 2014 because an arborist said that it was going to die within five years no matter what steps the city took to preserve it.



City council continues discussion on LL&P budget amendment

This week's Lowell city council meeting, held at city hall on Monday, Dec. 21, was the final one with Jim Hodges as mayor. The largest part of the meeting was a long discussion of a \$935,000 amendment to the Light & Power budget that the council tabled at their last meeting on Dec. 7. The councilors tabled the issue because they wanted to do more research and they all wanted to take tours of the Light & Power facilities, including the biodigester. Light & Power general manager Greg Pierce and chief accountant Steve Donkersloot were on hand to explain issues to the council and answer their questions. A long time was spent discussing a Smart Meters project that Light & Power wanted to start but couldn't until the budget amendment was passed.

Lowell company celebrates 20 years

Purforms, Inc., a polyurethane molding company at 615 Chatham, celebrated their 20th anniversary in business on Friday, Dec. 18, by throwing a party and inviting their customers, suppliers and vendors from all over the United States. The company started in Grand Rapids in 1995 but moved to Lowell in 2003 when a suitable building became available.

*May good fortune,
good health and good
people light up your
year with happiness.*

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*for brightening
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