



## On to 2017 - Area leaders reflect on 2016 and plan for the impending new year

2016 was a year of extreme ups and downs. It was the year the Chicago Cubs finally won the World Series and Donald Trump won the presidency. Dozens of beloved celebrities died and a Japanese factory manufactured the last VCR. Lowell had its share of notable events, with our biodigester and our contentious politics bringing local TV crews to town once in a while. We asked a selection of local leaders what their impressions of 2016 were and what they hope for in 2017.

### area leaders



**Dave Hildenbrand** is Lowell's representative in the Michigan senate. He

said he spent his time in the Senate last year working to improve healthcare for our military veterans.

"[In 2016] I have been working on legislation that will modernize our veterans' long-term healthcare system and construct new state-of-the-art veteran homes in Grand Rapids and Detroit," Hildenbrand said. "This legislation is awaiting a final vote in the Michigan House of Representatives, which we expect to occur this week. Once signed into law by

the governor, this package of bills will represent the most significant overhaul of our veterans' long-term healthcare system since the homes were first created following the Civil War. The legislation will create a new, independent authority to oversee the construction and operation of all new veterans' long-term healthcare facilities in the state. The authority will employ best practices for the operation and staffing of the homes, as well as, regular reporting requirements to the Legislature. The new facilities will be Medicaid/Medicare certified, which is not currently the standard they operate under. This certification provides additional accountability and inspections, something very common in privately

run facilities. Our veterans deserve the best possible care and the state has fallen short with this commitment. Once the authority is fully implemented and the new veteran homes are constructed, I am confident that it will transform the way we care for our veterans and their spouses for generations to come."

Next year Hildenbrand, chairman of the Senate's Appropriations Committee, plans to balance the state budget.

"In 2017 we will welcome a newly elected group of legislators in the Michigan House of Representatives," Hildenbrand said. "The governor will make his annual state budget recommendations in early February and we will begin

deliberations on what the state budget should look like, almost \$55 billion. As the Senate Appropriations chairman, I am fortunate to play a role in helping steer this process through the Michigan Senate. The budget process takes a number of months and involves numerous subcommittee meetings and discussions with my legislative colleagues and the governor. I have three main guiding principles as we work on the state budget. [First], deliver a sound, balanced budget months ahead of schedule. [Second], have an open and transparent budget process so the public can follow what we are working on.

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[Third], reflect the priorities of the people of Michigan in our spending decisions.”

Hildenbrand encouraged Lowell area residents to contact him.

“It has been a privilege to represent the 29th Senate District over the past six

years and I continue to welcome feedback and questions from anyone

in the district. You can reach my office via email at

sendhildenbrand@senate.michigan.gov or by visiting my webpage: www.davehildenbrand.com.”



**Thomas Albert**, a former marine from

Grattan Township, is part of that “newly elected group of legislators” that Hildenbrand was referring to. In the November election he beat candidates from the Democratic Party, Green Party and Libertarian Party to become the Lowell area’s representative in the state house. Albert said he had an even bigger milestone happen in his life last year.

“Without question I

am most proud of my wife and I having our third baby, Jack,” Albert said. “I am very excited to get to work for the constituents of the 86th district,” Albert said. “My campaign was based on supporting policies that promote stronger local businesses and stronger families.”

Albert said he plans to use his time in the legislature to try and bring

manufacturing jobs back to Michigan.

“There has been a lot of well-deserved attention to our nation’s trade policies, but they are only part of the cause of Michigan’s manufacturing decline,” Albert said. “I am passionate about fighting for lower taxes and reducing regulations to a level that makes Michigan competitive globally.”

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**Cliff Yankovich** who happened to be one of Albert’s opponents in that election is Lowell businessman and owner of the Chimera Design jewelry store, 208 E. Main.

“I decided to run for the 86th District Michigan House of Representative seat,” Yankovich said. “I learned a lot about Michigan politics - some good and some not so good. 2016 was a roller coaster for me. It was difficult with the biodigester and city council problems, but on the plus side we have several new

stores and a brewery. [I am] looking forward to 2017. I had [an absolute blast] dancing down Main St. with some great people in the Riverwalk Parade.”

Yankovich said that even though he lost the election he plans to continue fighting to protect the Great Lakes from environmental doom.

“I will continue to fight on behalf of Michigan’s most valuable resource: our water,” Yankovich said. “The situation in Flint is a disgrace on a national level. Adults and children were poisoned. Nestle Corporation wants to double what they take out of our aquifers and we still have a 64-year-old pipeline moving millions of gallons of crude under the Straits of Mackinac, endangering the freshwater supply for millions of people in four states.”



**Liz Baker** is the executive director of the Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce. She is the lady who coordinates many of the special events that take place downtown throughout the year, such as the Riverwalk Festival, Christmas Through Lowell,

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## the lowell ledger

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# On to 2017, continued

the Lowell Expo and many more.

“2016 will be a year to remember for everyone,” Baker said. “The presidential election is the most likely a cause for this. In Lowell it was a wonderful year for the chamber. Membership was very good; events were well attended and overall very successful. Living in Lowell for some had its disheartened moments. Those moments were outweighed with all the good and positive things that happen in Lowell on a daily basis. Main St. is coming back to life, empty buildings are filling with businesses and organizations. Manufacturers in the Lowell Community are busy and hiring. All of which has an optimistic effect for the economy of Lowell and the quality of life for our residents.”

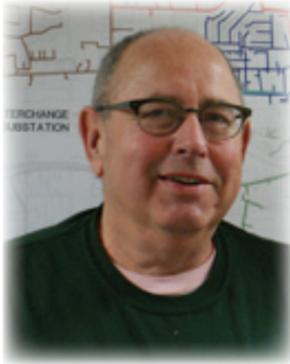
Baker said the chamber’s most successful event in 2016 was Christmas Through Lowell, the local shopping event that takes customers from house to house buying handmade goods.

“Christmas Through Lowell was one of the

moments when you just knew that all the hard work the chamber and volunteer staff does really pay off,” Baker said. “This event is Lowell’s largest shopping event of the year. This year was one of our better ones. Things just fell into place. The homes were happy and the businesses involved had very good sales. The great thing about an event like this is it has a positive effect on a large amount of businesses even if they weren’t a participant in the actual event.”

Next year could hold some news about one of Lowell’s biggest icons and, as usual, Baker and the Chamber are deeply involved.

“For 2017 I am very excited about future plans for the Lowell Showboat,” Baker said. “In 2016 the chamber board of directors made one of their goals to ‘Rebuild the Lowell Showboat.’ We are moving forward with the city of Lowell to make sure that happens. We are committed to preserve the history and to see a fresh and bright future for the Lowell Showboat come to fruition.”



**Perry Beachum** is a businessman, the chairman of the Lowell Light & Power board, chairman of the Parks and Recreation Commission, a member of the arbor board, a member of the Lowell Area Recreation Authority and one of the main volunteers behind Pink Arrow Pride. He said that he was most proud of the number of parks Lowell has.

“We have more public parks than most communities the size of Lowell,” Beachum said. “We try to keep moving forward to provide parks for sporting events, nature trails, youth, swimming, the dog parks, the skateboard park. We try to take the whole community into perspective, not just provide fields for sporting events.

We provide recreation to the community.”

Beachum said that the parks will continue to be improved and added to. Some possible additions include informational signs along the trail.

“This year we [the Parks and Recreation Commission] plan to get our

master plan updated so that we can look to the future and be able to apply for state grants for improvements to the parks,” Beachum said.

This year will be the tenth Pink Arrow Pride football game. Beachum has been one of the main Pink Arrow volunteers since day one.

“The Pink Arrow group [of volunteers] is really looking forward to 2017,” Beachum said. “It’s going to be against East Grand Rapids. Our goal is to make it the biggest event that West Michigan has ever seen in high school sports.”

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# business directory

## Clarification on LEAD biodigester totals

by Tim McAllister  
lead reporter

In last week's Lowell Ledger we reported a figure incorrectly in a story about the LEAD biodigester. The story, published Dec. 21, referred to invoices that Lowell Light & Power sent to LEAD between March 5, 2015 and Dec. 6, 2016. The invoices were for services Light & Power provided, for LEAD such as natural gas, Internet, electricity, propane, water, sewer and transportation

of manure. The invoices ranged from a low of \$10,783.67 on the first invoice to a maximum of \$89,232.31 on the June 3, 2016 invoice. Where the Ledger went wrong was when we said, "The total for these invoices is \$1,305,419.64." That was

incorrect. Our mistake was that we added the amounts listed as "account balance" at the bottom of each invoice, but instead we should have added up the amounts in the "invoice total" box. Therefore, instead of the \$1,305,419.64 we reported, it should

*"There were two other smaller invoices from January and February of 2015 that actually brings the total to \$595,068.30. Not all of this amount is 'profit,' though."*

~ Steve Donkersloot

have been \$584,695.08, a difference of \$720,724.56. All of the other information in the story was correct.

"I agree that the total should have been \$584,695.08, not the \$1,305,419.64 that was reported," said Lowell Light & Power general manager Steve Donkersloot. "There were two other smaller invoices from January and February of 2015 that actually brings the total to \$595,068.30. Not all of this amount is 'profit,' though. Some of the items that we invoice for are simply for the reimbursement of expenses we have already incurred. Others, like electric sales, are for both the recovery of expenses we have already incurred, as well as 'profit' that is used for many other things, including overhead, funding our capital budget, debt service and more."

Bottom line, Lowell Light & Power spent \$728,602.54 and received \$584,695.08 [\$595,068.30 if you include the two errant invoices] from LEAD and \$56,250 from the DEED grant. and as of the final invoice, LEAD still has a \$63,050.21 outstanding balance.



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DESC	QTY	PRICE	TOTAL
BALANCE FORWARD			5,941.09
NATURAL GAS USAGE Usage for 01/23/15 - 02/23/15 Difference between Feb. 2014 and Feb. 2015 usage - 304.40 Mcf	1	2353.60	2,353.60
INTERNET USAGE 50% of usage for 2/12/15 - 3/11/15	1	83.93	83.93
WATER AND SEWER USAGE	1	119.25	119.25
MANURE TRANSPORTATION Dates: 2/2, 2/3, 2/4, 2/5, 2/6, 2/6, 2/9, 2/10, 2/11, 2/12, 2/13, 2/16, 2/17, 2/18, 2/19, 2/20, 2/23, 2/24, 2/26, 2/27	20'	114.29	2,285.80
<b>INVOICE TOTAL</b>			<b>\$4,842.58</b>
<b>ACCOUNT BALANCE</b>			<b>\$ 10,783.67</b>

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A sample of one of the invoices that the Ledger received through FOIA.

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# viewpoint

## to the editor

### costly mistake

To the Editor,  
 Lowell's biodigester is shut down now because of its odor problem and the Lowell Ledger has brought to the attention of its readers that the LL&P spent \$728,602.54 on facility upgrades to the Chatham Street building related to the LEAD - biodigester. I believe the biodigester is just another of Lowell's costly mistakes. The city went through a costly four-year ordeal where the Public Works Department was denied a just contract.

Would a biodigester have been built if the public would have known that odor problems are likely if biodigesters aren't built correctly or run correctly? Would a biodigester have been built if the public had known that there are only a little over several thousand biodigesters in the United States and most of those are on farms, waste treatment plants, landfills and not in the heart of cities? Were decisions made from what they were told and

not by their own research? Was there any deviation from the plans when the biodigester was built? Was there a rush to build the biodigester to save money? Was building a pipeline from Litehouse to the biodigester a prime factor in making the decision to where the biodigester would be built? The location was chosen even though Litehouse produces just a small amount of waste needed to run the biodigester. I believe if the constituents of Lowell knew the problems that could arise from building and running a biodigester and that it could

be possible to get renewable energy cheaper by other means that they would have rejected the biodigester. Could putting the blame strictly on the owners of the biodigester be putting the cart before the horse? I believe so. Waiting to see what will be said about the biodigester at the January 3 city council meeting. I don't believe Lowell is even close to seeing the end of this costly ordeal. Hopefully the new city council will handle it honorably and bring out all the facts.  
 Jim Howard  
 Lowell Township

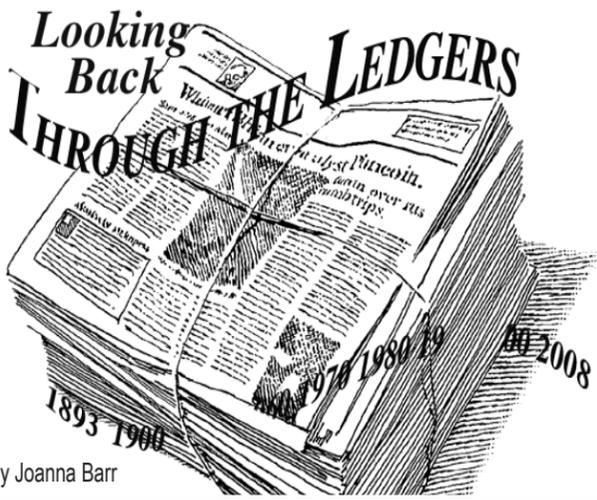
## outdoors

### cross country

Dave Stegehuis

Looking out the front window this morning I see about a foot of snow in the woods as birds come out of the trees like rain to the feeders. A bright red cardinal stands out prominently against the solid white landscape. This may be the winter for folks who rely on lots of snow and cold weather to provide an arena for enjoying their favorite outdoor activities. Previous winters have produced undependable snow conditions putting a drag on winter sports. Downhill skiing and snowboarding generate the most interest. Michigan has great downhill opportunities made only better by favorable snow conditions. Cross country skiing, however, is one of the most accessible wintertime activities. It can be done in all types of terrain across the state. Trails have been established on federal, state, county, township, and city properties. Many private ski areas have both downhill and cross country systems. Equipment can be rented at many of the above locations. It is a good idea to rent equipment at first to see if cross country is something you would like to continue to do. As with most sports, equipment is available for sale at a

wide range of prices. Skis, boots, and poles are the essentials. Clothing varies as to function, comfort and style but is a discretionary purchase. Skills needed to safely and effectively cross country ski are relatively easy to learn. Books, internet videos and personal lessons will quickly introduce basic technique and then practice will determine your level of competency. Designated cross country ski trails usually have markers indicating the degree of difficulty for a particular section of trail. You can choose a trail to suit your level of confidence. Some trails are machine groomed for classic skiing which keeps the skies parallel in set tracks. One can cut his or her own tracks in ungroomed snow. Skate skiing is a different technique and done with specialized equipment on trails groomed for that purpose. Popular trails may be groomed for both classic and skate skiers. Trail locations and maps are found in books and on line. If you are looking for a way to get outdoors and enjoy the season, cross country may be the answer. Gliding through the winter landscape will bring you to some neat places and provide needed exercise.



By Joanna Barr

### 125 years ago Lowell Journal Dec. 30, 1891

J. O. Chapin has bought the cold storage ware house of Mr Vickery and will operate it next season in connection with the creamery.  
 Steve Perry, foreman in the office of the Freemont Indicator and who learned his trade in the Journal office, spent Christmas with his relatives, Mr and Mrs M. M. Perry, in Lowell.  
 Will Hakes was in town Monday. Will feels at least four inches taller since his wife presented him with a daughter last Wednesday.  
 Miss Phebe Headworth received \$25 from her employers, C. J. Church & Son, as a Christmas reminder.  
 J. C. Train is quite seriously ill with the prevailing malady, the grip.

### 100 years ago The Lowell Ledger Dec. 28, 1916

Lowell's first frame house. Seventy years ago Christmas day, C. S. Hooker and family, consisting of self, wife, son John S. and Emeretta Townsend, moved into the first frame dwelling house in the township of Lowell. It was located on the ground where the M. N. Henry drug store now stands. A part of that house is still standing and owned by James Scott of Grand Rapids. Emerette later was the wife of Isaac White and the mother of Frank N.  
 The parents of Carl and Theo Hank who are on the Mexican border with the Thirty-Second Michigan, do not expect them to come home before the last of January.

Both of the boys were enthusiastic gymnasts in the Lowell High school and on the Border have played with the regimental foot ball team which has played seven games and won seven in a championship contest. They have another game to play New Years day, the winning which will give their team the championship of the Border and a free trip to California. Good luck, boys.  
 Melville H. McPherson of Vergennes has been named by Governor Ferris as one of the Kent county jury commissioners for 1917.

### 75 years ago The Lowell Ledger Dec. 31, 1942

LIKE all other American communities, ours has felt in full measure the impact of a year that for the most part has been filled with the desolation that is war. Yet even such somber days cannot wholly detract from the joy that the New Year traditionally echoes. For in this New Year of 1943, as always, is born anew — the HOPE and PROMISE of the ages. HOPE that our world will in the coming year be made a better place in which men may live and PROMISE that with free men aligned on the side of right—such HOPE cannot help but be fulfilled. Blood has been spilled by our sons to weight emphasis on such HOPE and PROMISE. To those American boys who have perished in the wilds of Bataan, in the depths of the seven seas, and on the reefs of the Pacific's coral islands, must we dedicate ourselves in the coming year. We must pledge ourselves to the cause that the loss of these heroes will surely result in humanitarian gain for the more fortunate world which now benefits from their acts. 1943 must be a constant, living fulfillment of such a pledge. For this is why these men of ours have died. That our country and the world may face the New Year—and every day—with the everlasting HOPE and PROMISE of freedom-filled days ahead...In 1943 and until the end of time.  
 One of the most familiar faces in the business district of Lowell will be missed after Saturday night of this week when Mrs. Jennie Nash resigns from the Harold L. Weekes store after 47 years of almost continuous employment in the same establishment. Mrs. Nash began work under her present employer's father, the late A. W. Weekes, in the horse and buggy days and knows the names and faces of hundreds of families for miles around. Mrs. Nash has made a noteworthy record for continuous service and retires with the best wishes of all.

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# LHS students celebrate with pranks for a purpose

by Kathryn Atwood  
contributing reporter

Senior students at Lowell High School lightheartedly celebrated the Christmas season with a series of fun holiday-themed pranks and punctuated the fun happenings with a community building fundraiser to warm the homeless of Grand Rapids.

LHS varsity soccer captain Amber Curtis identified a need for a warm clothing drive after heading downtown and noticing it first hand. "Just walking downtown seeing all the

people without good clothes on. Some just wearing t-shirts. It was crazy to me. I was freezing cold in my winter coat. It just made me want to help," explained Curtis who headed up the drive.

Bringing her idea back to LHS, Curtis said she suggested the drive as a great way to cap off the class's senior celebrations. She sent out a group message to her classmates and word spread from there. By the time the day of the drive arrived, last

Wednesday from 3-7 in the cafeteria, the community was in the know. Without any advertising outside of social media the drive was a smashing success.

"We didn't expect to get this much stuff," said Curtis with a smile. "A lot of people were saying that this is a great thing that we [are] doing but that is not why we are doing it, we are just want to help other people."

Curtis, who plans to pursue a degree in physical therapy, said that she and her classmates plan to host another drive in the near future. "We are looking



Katie Peterson, Kat Miller, Amber Curtis, Nate Stephens, Joey Schafer and Andrew Poulton during the winter clothing drive at LHS.

to do this again outside of Christmastime because we realize that the need is greater and it is really bringing the community together."

The students will team up with a local organization to distribute the items collected and are pairing

the clothing items with plates of Christmas cookies they will bake themselves. Curtis said the pranks, which included Christmas bombing the trees outside of the main entrance of the school and gift-wrapping chairs, were fun but the real Christmas joy for her came

from the ability to give back to others with the help of a community that celebrates volunteerism. "It is really exciting, especially because of Christmastime, to get out there and help people and volunteer my time for people who might not be able to help themselves."

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## happy birthday



**DECEMBER 28**  
Lisa Stormzand, C.J. Sokolowski, Matt Francisco, Randy L. Smith.

**DECEMBER 29**  
Amanda Martin, Donna Baker, Lauren Malone.

**JANUARY 1**  
Tory Abel, John Wenger, Alice Hesche, Carolyn Yonker, Amanita Fahrni, Bea Hoekstra.

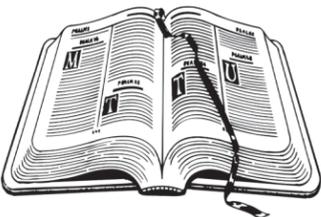
**DECEMBER 30**  
Stacy Thomas, Ben Hodges, Kyle Triplett, Joe Hunt, Stacey Craig, Joshua Gee, Maliree Trierweiler, Matthew Trierweiler.

**JANUARY 2**  
Rose Nead, Helen Kuiper, Angie Sloan.

**DECEMBER 31**  
Marcie Page, Bill DeHaan, Charles Boerema.

**JANUARY 3**  
Jon Vezino, Audrie Olszewski, Lloyd Callihan, Jane Lally, Rick Fyan.

# area churches



**GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
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Halfway between Lowell & Saranac on M-21  
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Worship Service ..... Sunday - 10:30 AM  
Sunday School..... 9:15 AM

Joseph Fremer, Pastor 897-8307  
All facilities are wheelchair accessible

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897-7060  
Rev. Dr. Paul Mpindi PHD  
1151 West Main Street, Lowell, MI

Morning Worship..... 10:00 AM  
Sunday School..... 11:20 AM  
Evening Worship..... 6:00 PM  
Nursery available at both services  
Barrier-Free

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Pastor Jon Pickens, Lead Pastor  
Pastor Phil Severn • Youth Pastor  
Christi Swain, Director of Children's Ministries

SUNDAY WORSHIP..... 9:30 AM (Nursery provided)  
SUNDAY School..... 11:00 AM (Nursery-Adult)  
Awana (K-5 during school year) Wednesday, 6:15 PM  
Middle & High School - Mon-school year/Wed, summer, 7 PM

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WORSHIP  
9 AM - Traditional • 11 AM - Contemporary  
Kid's Crew 11:15 AM  
Sr. Pastor - Brad Brillhart

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Lowell's Open Table - Thursdays 5 - 7 PM  
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- No gifts please -  
birthday wishes are all we ask

Red Arrow

- BASKETBALL

# SPORTS

## Arrows fall to Wyoming Wolves 77-70

by Kathryn Atwood  
contributing reporter

Despite a combined 54 point offensive effort from stand out seniors Austin Branagan and Matt Beachler the Red Arrow varsity boys basketball squad fell to the Wyoming Wolves 77-70 in exhibition play on the road last Tuesday night.

Multiple lead changes, sharp three point shooting and tough defense were the name of the game in Wyoming as the Wolves knocked off Lowell in the non-conference challenge after a hard fought battle on the hardwood. Wyoming outscored Lowell by six in the first period which ended 25-19. In the second the Arrows kept the margins tighter but only managed to gain back one point of their deficit scoring 20 to the Wolves 19 leaving Wyoming up at the half 44-39.

Wyoming increased their lead after the third with a series of drained threes giving them a 63-51

advantage moving in the fourth and final stanza of the game. Beachler, returning to the court after sustaining an injury against Godwin Heights last week and determined for a win, scored 13 of his game points in the fourth propelling the Arrows to a late rally that outscored their opponents 19-14. Despite the fierce offensive effort the Arrows came up short falling 77-70 at the final buzzer after the Wolves took advantage of several free throw opportunities granted off Arrow fouls.

Beachler led all scorers with his 30 point finish followed by Branagan who netted 24 and Zach Petroelje who added ten to the scoreboard. Andrew Poulton (3), Will Reynolds (2) and Mitchell O’Gorman (1) rounded out Lowell scorers. Wyoming had four shooters in the double digits in a wide spread offensive effort that might have been blow out had the Arrows

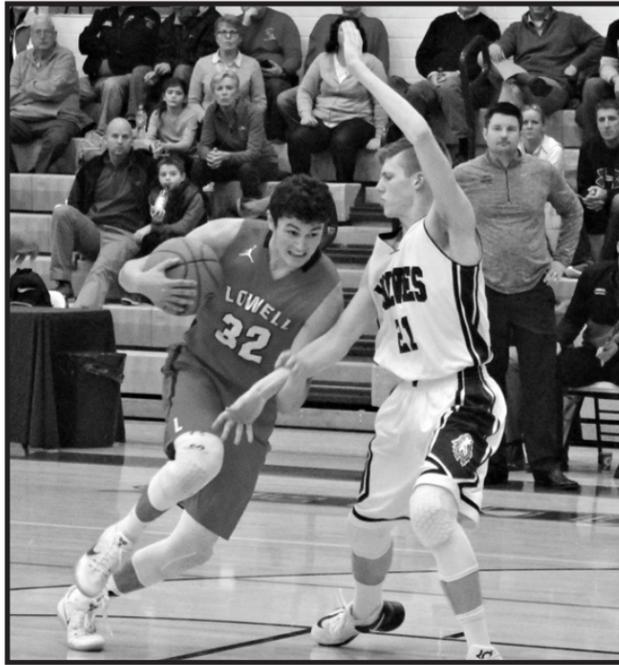
not executed a tight and energetic defensive game. The squad had a strong night rebounding, were able to break up passes and grab steals and played with aggression from end to end. Led by Branagan,

who has consistently been a tall defense threat for the varsity squad, the team and fans also saw Beachler get more in the mix displaying some sharpened moves on the court.

“Early in the summer I challenged him [Beachler] to improve his game on the defensive end.” explained first year Lowell head coach Travis Slinger, “He has accepted that challenge and continues to improve every day. His ability to pressure, deflect, steal, and rebound the ball has really helped us progress as a team.”

Slinger said the entire team in fact has stepped up their defensive game, something he and the

Arrows believe will earn them a shot at a second consecutive championship season. The team was crowned regional champs last year after a 32 year title drought, “I think as a whole, this team has bought into being a gritty defensive team. That is a tribute to our seniors, who are focused and determined to reach the lofty expectations we have set for ourselves.” said Slinger.



Senior Matt Beachler drives toward one of his 30 game points against Wyoming.

This week the Arrows will spend part of their Christmas break in the gym when they travel to Grand Rapids for the Cornerstone University High School Holiday Tournament. Lowell will play round one of the event on Wednesday, December 28 at 6 pm against the Wayland Wildcats and move on to round two on Friday, December 30 tipping off at either 6:30 or 7 pm depending on round one results.

## Sports Summaries

### GIRLS BOWLING

Red Arrow varsity girls bowling continued to struggle on the lanes last week dropping matches to both non-conference foe Jenison and OK White competitor Forest Hills Northern. Monday in Jenison the team was led by the efforts of Morgan Allison who rolled a 177 in the young team’s 27-3 loss. Laura Lachowski scored second best for Lowell tallying a 146. Wednesday at home the team faced the Huskies garnering seven more points than their previous outing but still falling 20-10. The team is now 1-4 on the season with their only win against West Catholic in their season opening dual.

### HOCKEY

Lowell Caledonia hockey earned a single win with a single goal in competition last week at Griff’s Ice House West in Holland against West Ottawa High School. The lone second-period goal was scored by Caledonia’s Alex Osborne.

### BOYS BOWLING

Landon Smith and Carson Clark led the Red Arrow boys varsity bowling team last week in a pair of competitions that resulted in one loss and one win. Monday in Jenison, Smith rolled a 214 to lead Lowell in their first dual loss of the

season 29-1. Ben Stewart rolled a 205 to place second for the Arrows. Wednesday on their home lanes in Ionia, Clark and Logan Smith led the bowlers to victory over Forest Hills Northern with scores of 211 and 203 respectively. The 19-11 win moves the team to a 4-1 record overall and an undefeated 3-0 record in conference competition placing them at the top of the OK White.

### GIRLS BASKETBALL

Red Arrow girls varsity basketball improved their season to 4-1 last week continuing a successful early season with victories over Wyoming and Lake Odessa on the court. Tuesday night in home action the ladies were led by sophomore Regan Coxon who netted 16 points for the Arrows in a 54-47 win. Senior Bridget Garter chipped in 12. Thursday, Lowell knocked off Lake Odessa on the road with a nwin of 58-31. The team will head into OK White conference competition after the holiday break starting with Cedar Springs and Ottawa Hills in home matchups on January 6 and 10 at 7pm.

**LOWELL CHARTER TOWNSHIP HOLIDAY HOURS**

2016 Holiday Hours for Lowell Charter Township:

Thursday, December 22 – Closed

Monday, December 26 – Closed

Tuesday, December 27  
Open 9:00AM – 5:00 PM

Thursday, December 29  
Open 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Monday, January 2, 2017 – Closed

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**BOWNE TOWNSHIP 2017 MEETING SCHEDULE**

1st Thursday – Planning Commission

3rd Monday – Board of Trustees

3rd Thursday (as requested) – Zoning Board of Appeals

Location – Historic Township Hall  
8240 Alden Nash SE  
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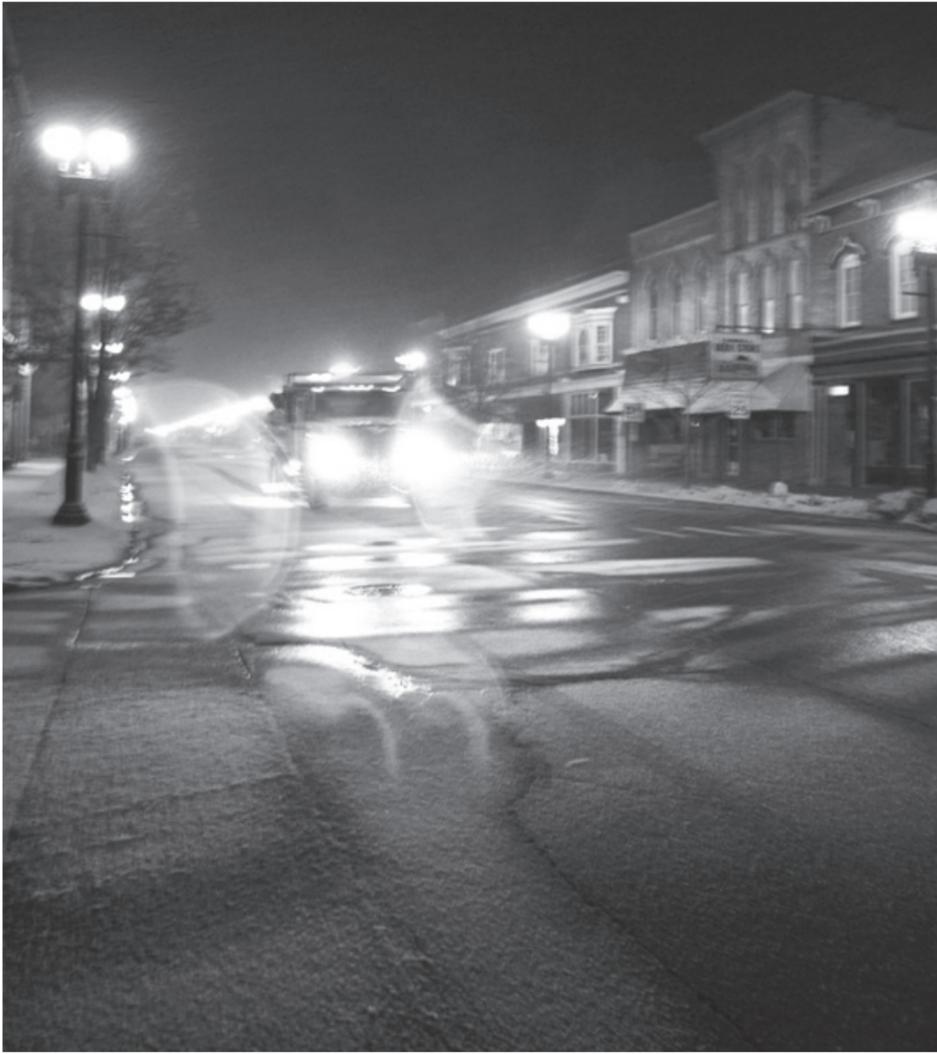
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# 2016 a Year in Review

## January 13, 2016

### Keeping Lowell's roads clear during the winter months



Everybody who's spent any time in a winter climate recognizes the distinctive, jarring sound of a snow plow scraping its way down the street in the middle of the night. Snow removal is a service we tend to take for granted and only really notice when it hasn't happened and we have somewhere important to go. City of Lowell Public Works employee Ralph Brecken showed up to drive a snow plow for the city at around 3:30 on Sunday morning. After a safety inspection of the huge, yellow truck, Brecken was ready to hit the road. The city owns three big plow trucks, one of which should probably be replaced before next winter.

### Lowell School's Capstone and safety program benefits from State Farm grants



State Farm agent Deborah Wilks presented two checks that will benefit the Lowell Area School district. The first check presented totaled \$10,000 and was a grant to support the high school's service learning and leadership development classes including the senior Capstone projects. Wilks' second check was a \$5,000 State Farm grant presented to sheriff and LAS safety officer Todd Summerhays, who accepted it on behalf of the Kent County Sheriff Department.

## January 20, 2016

### Lowell's new postmaster excited to take on the challenges of the job

Lowell has a new postmaster. Alex Sereseroz, a 44-year-old Cutlerville resident, officially took over the position on Jan. 9, but he has been interim

postmaster here for some time. "I have been with the post office since 1998, so almost 18 years," Sereseroz said. "I've been around a little while. I started off at the main post office. I was a clerk for a couple years, sorting mail, processing mail and whatnot and then I went into management around 2001

### Education foundation initiates fundraiser for tech needs

Students in Lowell Area Schools will be encouraged to bring a \$10 bill to school at some point between Feb. 1 and Feb. 10 as part of a "\$10 for Technology" fundraiser. The money will be used by the Lowell Area Schools Education Foundation to provide grants to teachers who want to purchase interesting, technologically-advanced learning tools to educate their students.

### LWC inducts two unlikely but deserving honorary members

During last week's annual joint meeting of the Lowell Rotary Club and the Lowell Women's Club, the LWC inducted two new honorary members. A very surprised Bill Wood and Dave Thompson listened as LWC president Ginny Weber listed their qualifications: "...years of lugging, toting and delivery of goods and services for the club."



## January 27, 2016

### Public objects to manner in which Lowell's city manager is fired at last council meeting

Lowell city manager Mark Howe was publicly fired by the city council during their meeting on Tuesday, Jan. 19. Council chambers were packed with a crowd of about 50 that spilled out into the hall. Although it would take the council a few more minutes to get to the issue, members of the public seemed to already know what was on the council's agenda. First to address the council was Perry Beachum, owner of Beachum Flooring. Beachum would return to the podium two more times during the one hour and 15 minute meeting.



"I have read that the council, or some of the council, is thinking of terminating the current city manager, Mr. Howe," Beachum said. "My question to you is, since the election and the new council being seated, has Mr. Howe gone against your direction or policies? The actions to fire Howe began about ten minutes into the meeting, when the council made their move to hire Belding attorney Katherine Henry as "special legal counsel." Before the council could take a vote, Lowell police chief Steve Bukala had a few words to add. Immediately after Bukala's speech, the council voted 4-1 to hire Henry. Councilor Jim Hodges was the sole "no" vote. The council then moved on to their second agenda item, firing city manager Mark Howe. The council voted 4-1 to fire Howe,

again with Hodges the sole "no" vote. As Howe took a seat in the audience there was a quick burst of scattered applause followed by a long, awkward silence as Altoft directed police chief Steve Bukala to retrieve various keys from the keyring in Howe's pocket. Contacted in the days after the meeting, councilors DeVore and Teelander each said that Altoft would speak for them. Altoft, however, said that he has been placed under a "gag order" by attorney Henry, but that he will be able to reveal more information "after the special meeting" on Jan. 26. City attorney Dick Wendt did not respond to the Ledger's attempts to contact him and Henry refused to comment.

### Participants party while sprinting through first ever Pub Poker Run

Downtown Lowell was taken over by a roving gang of gamblers last Tuesday when the Pub Poker Run enticed 25 card players to come play the traveling poker game. The Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce event was the brainchild of local residents Cutter Phillips and Betsy Davidson.



### LL&P general manager announces retirement

It was revealed at a recent Lowell Light & Power board meeting that general manager Greg Pierce plans to retire soon. Pierce's announcement came during the last five minutes of the LL&P board meeting on Jan. 14.

# 2016 a Year in Review

## February 3, 2016

### **A familiar face chosen as interim city manager at packed city council meeting**

City hall was packed for the Lowell city council meeting on Monday, Feb. 1 when the council unanimously appointed Dave Pasquale to be interim city manager. A capacity crowd filled every seat, lined the walls and spilled out into the hall.



### **Concert helps raise funds for new LowellArts! building**

LowellArts! and the Blue Water Ramblers joined forces last Saturday night at Larkin's Other Place to raise money for renovations of the new building and programs.



### **Smalligan honored to be recognized as a "newsmaker" for the arts**

LowellArts! was nominated for a Grand Rapids Business Journal "Newsmaker of the Year" award in the "Arts & Entertainment" category, but did not win at the ceremony that took place at Frederik Meijer Gardens on Wednesday, Jan. 27.

### **Last week's special meeting set the stage for council on Monday**

Lowell city council had a special meeting on Tuesday, Jan. 26. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss how the council is going to replace city manager Mark Howe, who was publicly fired by the council during their meeting on Jan. 19. The meeting was attended by about 30 residents, three of whom addressed the council. Former city councilor and current Vergennes Township resident Maryalene LaPonsie said that she didn't agree with the council's decision to fire Howe. "I'm a little bit distraught about what is going on," LaPonsie said. Former councilor Sharon Ellison approached the podium. Ellison said the newly-elected council has not been doing a very good job, in her opinion.

### **Ron Wenger inducted into Michigan fair hall of fame**

The late Ron Wenger, former manager of the Kent County Youth Fair, was inducted into the Michigan Association of Fairs and Exhibitions Hall of Fame at the convention at the Amway Grand Plaza on Thursday, Jan. 14. The award was accepted by Wenger's brothers Ken and Larry Wenger.

### **"Open Table" community meals to debut this spring**

First Congregational United Church of Christ in Lowell is preparing to launch their newest community ministry called "Open Table" this spring. In the same spirit as their annual Community Thanksgiving, the church and its community partners will be offering a free weekly meal to the public.

## February 10, 2016

### **With all the discussion of water quality in the state, Lowell's water passes with flying colors**

Flint has been in the national news quite a bit lately after the city's water was found to be contaminated with lead when they switched from treated city of Detroit water to the highly polluted Flint River water. Lowell's water treatment plant is 39 years old and serves over 5,000 homes and businesses. Could Lowell's water have lead in it too? "Not here, not with the plant we have," Lowell water treatment supervisor Brian VanVeelen said from behind his desk in the laboratory at the water treatment plant, 1596 Bowes Rd. "[Flint's] biggest problem was they changed their source water, then it got really aggressive and it started eating at the pipes and that's where you get your lead exposure. This plant was built in 1977 and it hasn't changed since. The process has been the same and we've never had a problem."



## February 17, 2016

### **LL&P board approves major equipment purchase**

The Lowell Light & Power board of directors had their latest regular meeting on Thursday, Feb. 4. The meeting was attended by every board member as well as two members of the public. The board approved the purchase of four pieces of "major equipment" that will be used to get the Rolls Royce turbine engine up and running. They bought a switch gear for \$110,450, a 5,000 KVA transformer for \$58,795, a 500 KVA transformer for \$10,595 and a recloser control for \$17,790, for a total of \$197,630.

### **Noel Dean inducted into Michigan High School Football Coaches Association Hall of Fame**

Red Arrow varsity football coach Noel Dean is scheduled for induction into the Michigan High School Football Coaches Association Hall of Fame on Saturday, March 12, at the Crisler Arena on the campus of the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.

### **Pasquale returns to role as city manager of Lowell**

After all the upheaval in city government lately, it must be somewhat comforting to see Dave Pasquale return to the role of city manager, a title he held for 24 years. Pasquale is 69 now. He is taking over after one of the most controversial city managers in Lowell's history and will also be dealing with a new city council. Pasquale said he paid attention to the Mark Howe situation as it unfolded, but declined to comment on it in any way. "I was watching," Pasquale said. "I really don't want to make any comments on it at this time, just because there's a sensitivity to it. That would be my feeling. I don't know what to tell you beyond that." He said that tentative plans are for the new city manager to take office this summer.

### **Flat River Outreach Ministries opens West Michigan Works!**

Unemployed and underemployed Lowell residents used to have to drive to Grand Rapids to receive employment assistance, but now they can access that same assistance right in their own backyard. Flat River Outreach Ministries has partnered with West Michigan Works! to launch Lowell's first Share Network Access Point.

### **Digital photography club forming in Lowell**

Did you receive a nice new digital camera for a present? Do you look at photos online and say, "I wish I could take pictures like that?" The Digital Photography Club of Lowell will be able to help you out. The new club is forming and looking for people who would like to learn more about their cameras, taking photos, composition and generally having fun taking pictures. Bruce Doll is one of the club organizers.

### **Lowell Youth Advisory Council helps to provide water for the residents of Flint**

After hearing about the tragic circumstances surrounding the water supply in Flint, Lowell's Youth Advisory Council got to work doing their part to assist Flint residents by providing clean bottled water.



### **Talbot accepts role as Lowell's varsity lacrosse coach**

After two years manning Lowell High School's JV boys lacrosse team, Eugene Talbot will head up the varsity team this spring replacing former coach Eric Bredin.

## February 24, 2016

### **Chamber events give back to the community**

Recently the Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce hosted their annual networking event, Souper Thursday Lunch and a brand new event called the Pub Poker Run. The Souper Thursday Lunch is a fun way to network with other business people and to allow them to promote their business. The chamber asked for a \$5 donation and they raised \$400 for Flat River Outreach Ministries. The Pub Poker Run raised \$160. They chose to donate this amount to the Alpha Women's Center.

### **Council approves severance agreement with former city manager, fireworks and breweries**

Lowell city council approved a severance agreement with former city manager Mark Howe during their meeting on Tuesday, Feb. 16. More council business was attended to during the meeting, including approval of fireworks for an upcoming event and some news about a couple new breweries that are coming to town.

# 2016 a Year in Review

## March 2, 2016

**Lowell Red Arrow wrestlers are three-peat state champions**



**Lowell gymnasts are headed to state meet**

For the second time in the program's history and in as many years, the Lowell varsity gymnastics team qualified for state level competition.

**Winter Gathering highlights Person of the Year and chamber member achievements**

Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce held their annual Winter Gathering of the membership at the Grand Volute Ballroom on Thursday, Feb. 25.

**New immersion program at LAHM has Lowell elementary students diving into their hometown history**

Students from Diane Titche's third-grade class from Murray Lake Elementary dove into Lowell history last week. They spent two days inside the Lowell Area Historical Museum experiencing the new Museum Immersion Program.

**Laughfest in Lowell will feature comedian Michael Palascak**

Comedian Michael Palascak will be appearing at the Grand Volute Ballroom at 8 pm on Friday, March 18, as part of LaughFest. Palascak, a native of Wabash, Ind., is most famous for his appearances on Last Comic Standing. Palascak has performed in Grand Rapids, but has never been to Lowell before.

## March 9, 2016

**"Forward Lowell" a new political action committee formed by community members**

A new political action committee called "Forward Lowell" has formed with the intent to recall mayor Jeff Altoft from the city council and from his position as mayor. The PAC had their first public meeting at the chamber of commerce on Monday, March 7 at 2 pm. Fifteen people attended the meeting, including Springrove Variety owner Mike Sprenger, Curtis Cleaners owner Bucky Curtis, Light & Power board member Andrew Schrauben, failed city council candidate Jim Salzwedel and Pink Arrow Pride organizer Teresa Beachum. The Forward Lowell PAC was founded last month by Roger LaWarre, Maryalene LaPonsie, Greg Canfield, Tina Dickerman and Jeff Dickerman, all of whom were also in attendance at the meeting.



Fifteen people attended the Forward Lowell meeting on Monday, March 7.

**Council listens to presentation on city manager search**

Lowell city council had their latest regular meeting at city hall on Monday, March 7. The council discussed a large legal bill and the search for a new city manager at the meeting, which lasted an hour and seven minutes.

**Lowell High School presents Peter Pan**

Lowell High School will be flying off to Neverland this Friday when the theater department premieres their annual spring musical "Peter Pan" at the Lowell Performing Arts Center.



## March 16, 2016

**Gallery Hop celebrates art in Lowell**

LowellArts! celebrated their second annual Downtown Lowell Gallery Hop last Thursday taking time to honor the winners of their 30th annual West Michigan Regional Art competition.



**LPAC marks 20th year of musical productions**

This week's production of "Peter Pan" is the 20th musical Lowell High School has produced at the Lowell Performing Arts Center. The annual productions of musicals began in 1996 with performances of "Little Mary Sunshine."

**Unusual primary season has its share of surprises**

So far this year's presidential election has been one of the wildest and craziest in American history. Michigan had its primary election on Tuesday, March 8. The big news in Michigan's primary was on the Democratic side. Contrary to what was predicted ad nauseam by the media, Vermont senator Bernie Sanders beat Hillary Clinton by 1.5 percent. Therefore, Sanders will get 67 of Michigan's delegates, while Clinton will get 60. Among Republicans, billionaire Donald Trump won 25 delegates, while Texas senator Ted Cruz and Ohio governor John Kasich each took 17.

# 2016 a Year in Review

## March 23, 2016

### Lowell Expo all set for this weekend

The Lowell Expo, which will take place at Lowell High School from 9 am until 3 pm on Saturday, March 26, is your chance to explore a ton of local businesses all at once without having to drive all over town.

### Citizens at packed city council meeting listen to discussions of lawyer's bills, endowments, trails and construction

There was another packed house at city hall Monday night for the Lowell city council meeting. The meeting lasted over an hour and a half and included discussions of legal bills, the LCTV endowments, local trails and some pricey construction projects.



### Maple Syrup Fest held at Wittenbach/Wege Center

Maple Syrup Fest was held Saturday morning at the Wittenbach/Wege Center, 11715 Vergennes. There was a pancake breakfast and demonstrations of historic syrup cultivation techniques and historic games.

### For the first time Expo will host a blood drive

This year will be the first time there has ever been a blood drive at the Lowell Expo. The blood drive is in honor of a Lowell resident who passed away recently.

## March 30, 2016

### Thousands attend 20th annual Lowell Expo

The 2016 Lowell Expo took place at Lowell High School on Saturday, March 26. Thousands of people attended and enjoyed tons of free samples, entertainment, networking and fun.

### Gov. Snyder asks for money for legal bills

There has been quite a bit of activity over the past few weeks as the Flint water crisis continues to unfold. On March 8 governor Rick Snyder asked the State Administrative Board to approve \$1.2 million to cover his legal bills related to the scandal. The \$1.2 million includes \$400,000 for Detroit civil attorney Eugene Driker and up to \$800,000 for Grand Rapids criminal defense attorney Brian Lennon. In addition, Attorney General Bill Schuette asked the board to approve a \$1.5-million contract with Royal Oak attorney Todd Flood, who will investigate the issue.

## April 6, 2016

### Council pays attorney, meets

### new public works' director, discusses updates

The Lowell city council paid attorney Katherine Henry, met a new city employee and received a couple updates at their meeting at city hall on Monday, April 4. Council chambers were about three quarters full of spectators for the meeting, which lasted fifty minutes.

### Enjoy spring break right here in Lowell

While some Lowell residents are relaxing on a beach or floating on a huge ocean liner this spring break, many are at home on a good old fashioned "staycation." While you will certainly not get a sun kissed tan or corresponding tan lines, there are many ways to enjoy spring break right here in Lowell. At the Englehardt branch of the Kent District Library along the Riverwalk, young minds can find a plethora of programs appealing to both learning and fun.

## April 13, 2016

### With spring comes construction

Road crews worked on Riverside Drive in

order to replace a sewer line located directly in front of the Backwater Cafe. Work on the one-way road was scheduled to finish yesterday but additional work is scheduled on other local streets. Both Monroe and Avery streets will be under construction throughout the remainder of April. Workers will continue sewer upgrades, resurfacing and improving sidewalks. This is scheduled to be completed prior to the MDOT M-21 resurfacing project.

### LAS board meeting

The Lowell Area Schools Board of Education met at the Runciman Administration Building, 300 High St., on Monday, April 11. Board member Brian Krajewski did not attend the meeting; his absence was unexplained. The board purchased two buses at a cost of \$83,976.50 each, an amount the board has budgeted for. "This is a continuation of trying to keep our fleet up to date," said LAS superintendent Greg Pratt. "That's been a large goal for the board, to maintain a fleet."



### Robotics team wins award, advances to state championship

Lowell's Red Arrow robotics team #3234 will compete with 102 other high school robotics teams during the Michigan FIRST Robotics Team Championship competition at the Delta Plex Arena in Grand Rapids from April 13 to 16.

## April 20, 2016

### Power restored quickly after transformer fire causes outages all over Lowell on Friday

A Lowell Light & Power transformer near the Englehardt Library caught fire at 9:30 am on Friday, April 15, knocking out power in dozens of Lowell homes and businesses.

### Packed city council alive with public discussion

Lowell city council had their latest regular meeting at city hall on Monday, April 18. Once again the room was packed with spectators. Nearly a full hour of the meeting was dedicated to public discussion, nearly all of which was extremely critical of mayor Jeff Altoft and other city councilors, Alan Teelander in particular.

### LowellArts! presents "Sex Please We're Sixty"



The cast of Sex Please We're Sixty.



# 2016 a Year in Review

## April 27, 2016

### **Big hats were the theme as GNO models this year's event after the Kentucky Derby**

Warm weather and colorful budding trees greeted shoppers last Thursday for the Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce sponsored spring Girls Night Out event themed this year after the Kentucky Derby.



## May 11, 2016

### **Lowell students enjoy a fun day at the farm**

The barnyard at the Wittenbach/Wege Center came alive with animals and activity last Saturday morning when the Lowell High School chapter of the FFA presented Fun on the Farm.



### **Although rumors abound, selling off LL&P and police department more difficult than it seems**

There have been a lot of rumors flying around town lately about the city council selling Lowell Light & Power and dismantling the Lowell Police Department. Since Lowell puts its entire city charter and all ordinances online, it's pretty easy to find out how they would go about doing these things. Turns out, it's not so easy. The charter states that Lowell is required to have a chief of police, but it does not say how many police officers are required. Section 4.2 of the charter lists the "administrative officers" that Lowell is required to have, such as a city manager, clerk, treasurer and others. This list includes a chief of police. Section 5.6 of the charter says the police chief is to serve as the "sergeant at arms" during city council meetings. The charter also states, in section 3.1, that "the city and its officers" must "provide for the public welfare" by "regulating the speed of vehicles, trains, and locomotives upon or across the streets." The same section also states that the city is required to "construct, provide, maintain, extend, operate, and improve" various facilities including a police station. The charter contradicts itself on whether Lowell Light & Power is part of city government. Section 16.1 of the charter says, "The city's electric utility facilities and services shall constitute a department of city government," but section 15.2 says, "All municipally owned or operated utilities, except the electric utility, shall be administered as a regular department of the city government."

### **ForwardLowell's efforts to recall Altoft underway**

The Forward Lowell political action committee is getting closer to their goal of removing mayor Jeff Altoft from his seat on the Lowell city council. The PAC must obtain a minimum of 274 signatures of registered voters in order to get the recall on November's ballot.

### **Search for new Lowell DPW director continues**

Lowell briefly had a permanent public works director. Scott Poyer was hired to replace interim director Ron Wood on April 11. Poyer quit almost immediately for reasons that remain vague.

## May 4, 2016

### **Annual CROP walk seeks to raise awareness to hunger**

Hunger was the enemy last Sunday for eleven area churches and organizations that took to the streets of downtown Lowell to participate in the annual CROP Hunger Walk kicking off at the Lowell First United Methodist Church on Main Street.

### **New public works director introduced and citizens speak out over recall disagreement**

Lowell city council met the new public works director, listened to citizen comments and had a discussion about next year's budget during their meeting at city hall on Monday, May 2.

### **Recall group hosts meet and greet for candidates in 86th district and collects enough signatures for recall of mayor**

The ForwardLowell political action group collected about 30 signatures on their petition to recall Lowell mayor Jeff Altoft and heard from all but one of the candidates running for a seat in the 86th district of Michigan's House of Representatives during a "Meet And Greet" event the group held at the Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce building on the evening of Thursday, April 28. The group has since collected the 274 signatures to make the recall happen.



### **It's not automated, it takes several people to make sure your Buyers Guide gets to you with all the inserts**

Every week the Buyers Guide is stuffed with inserts, flyers, coupons and other offers from local companies. One might imagine there is some kind of special machine that stuffs all that in there, but the work is actually done by five women, Darlene Southerland, Melinda Stevenson, Waunetta Hoitenga, Randi Millering and Laurie Lake, who do all the work by hand. They have a flexible schedule so only three of the women were on hand to interview. "There are 14,000 copies of each Buyers Guide," Southerland said. "Sometimes we only have four inserts but at Thanksgiving time we've had 13. It depends on the week. This week we have nine."



## May 18, 2016

### **Yankovich runs for state representative for the 86th district**

Local business owner Cliff Yankovich has decided to run as the Green Party candidate in the November election for the 86th district seat in Michigan's state House of Representatives. Yankovich owns Chimera Design, a jewelry store at 208 E. Main in downtown Lowell. "If you know me at all you've probably heard me rant about things that have been going on in Michigan for a number of years," Yankovich said. "I follow things, politically. I'm not hesitant to speak my opinion. Then all of the sudden, a little light bulb went off over my head and I said, 'Maybe you should take it to the next level and see if you can effect some change.'"

# 2016 a Year in Review

## Lowell Farmers' Market welcomes new market master

When the Lowell Area Farmers' Market opens the community will be welcoming a brand new market master, Cinnamin Piggott. Former masters Dave and Betty Deans served the local market for a decade, seeing it through multiple changes.

## Huge trees no longer shade post office

Two trees in failing health were removed from the property beside the Lowell Post Office Monday afternoon. According to Postmaster Alex Sereseroz, the two trees were evaluated by local business Oak Meadow Tree Service and Arbor Tree Service, out of Carson City, who both agreed the trees should be removed. "Some of the limbs were hanging down and it was getting worse and worse," explained Sereseroz. "We didn't want to take them down, they were nice trees." Ultimately the decision for their removal was handed down by the post office's district management who deemed they posed a significant safety risk if left standing. Michael Galvin of Arbor Tree Service removed the trees.



## Rent a bike when you check out a book

If you prefer to have adventures rather than read about them, the library is still your destination. The Englehardt Public Library, 200 N. Monroe, now has bicycles available to check out. All you need is a Kent District Library card, some identification and a helmet.

## Council listens to citizens and discusses 2016-17 budgets

Lowell city council heard from citizens and discussed the 2016-17 budget during their meeting at city hall on Monday, May 16. Council chambers were about three quarters full of spectators and three citizens addressed the council during the portion of the meeting reserved for citizen discussion. Local resident Bob Pfaller said the council is giving Lowell a bad reputation among local communities.

## New DPW director LaBombard looks forward to meeting the people of Lowell

Lowell finally has a permanent director of public works. Richard LaBombard started in the position on Monday, May 9. LaBombard replaced interim public works director Ron Woods, who took on the role when Dan DesJarden retired in May 2015. "I was looking for something in the Grand Rapids area; the opportunity came along in Lowell so I interviewed and got it," LaBombard said. "So far, so good. I'm still really in look, listen and learn mode. I'm just assessing what we do, how much stuff we have to do and picking up on some of the goals Ron Woods set up. The employees are very helpful. It's a lot of fun learning their backgrounds and finding out what they really have a passion for. Great people. I couldn't ask for better people."

## May 25, 2016

### The Food Fight – more than just food

The eighth annual Food Fight competition is about more than just food. Food Fight raises both food and dollars, which are used to support a variety of programs that benefit families in need. FROM uses those donations to empower people to make positive, sustainable changes in their lives. They offer several food programs, as well as financial management classes, employment assistance, home repair, utility assistance, and children's programs. These include Lunch Buddies (providing lunches during school breaks), backpack distribution and Christmas toy distribution.

## Guidelines for transgender students and public schools

On May 13 the U.S. Education and Justice departments issued guidelines for public schools that said they must allow transgender students to use the bathrooms and locker rooms of their self-identified gender rather than the gender of their birth. The directive coincided with a recent controversial "bathroom bill" in North Carolina, where the Public Facilities Privacy & Security Act eliminated anti-discrimination protections for LGBTQ citizens and legislated that, in all government buildings, people must use the bathrooms

and locker rooms that correspond to the sex on their birth certificate. The Michigan Department of Education had a public debate about the issue on May 11 and they plan to release guidelines for Michigan schools in the future.

## Annual Drive Your Tractor to School Day held last Friday

Lowell High School's annual Drive Your Tractor to School event took place last Friday coordinated by Agriculture Science teacher Kevin Nugent and assisted by fellow staff members Amanita Fahrni and Curt Cummings.



## Tour through an oak savanna in Lowell Township

On Thursday, May 19, MSU ecologist Jesse Lincoln led a group of about 20 local residents on a tour of the rare oak savanna known as "Huckleberry Hills" in Lowell Township. The oak savanna is directly behind the township headquarters at 2910 Alden Nash SE. Oak savannas are now a very rare ecosystem to find in the state, but that is what most of the Lowell area used to be like before European settlement.

## June 1, 2016

### Warm temperatures and blue skies grace annual Memorial Day parade

On Monday, Main Street was lined with people for the annual Memorial Day parade to honor the service and sacrifice of fallen soldiers. The parade and ceremonies are planned and hosted by volunteer members of American Legion Post #152 and The Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 8303. Local servicemen and women were greeted by applause and saluted. The parade portion of the event also featured star spangled musical performances from both the Lowell Middle and High School bands, the Kent County Youth Fair royal court and local Girl and Boy Scout groups.



## Portland contingent visits Lowell during Mayor Exchange Day last week

A delegation from the Portland, Michigan city government spent Thursday, May 26, getting to know their counterparts in the city of Lowell. The event was called Mayor Exchange Day. Portland will host a group from Lowell's city government later in June.

## Freshmen participate in annual service learning project

Lowell High School's class of 2019 fanned out into the community last Thursday morning to take part in the school's 12th annual freshmen service learning project.

## June 8, 2016

### Lowell's 138th commencement celebrated

"Pomp and Circumstance" filled the air last Sunday as the Lowell High School class of 2016 made their way into Red Arrow Memorial Stadium for the school's 138th annual Commencement Ceremony.

## Service learning project has 2016 seniors giving back

Lowell High School's class of 2016 completed the last service learning project of their high school careers last Tuesday when they took to the community to participate in the school's annual Senior Give Back Day.



# 2016 a Year in Review

## Open Table welcomes public to first community meal

Open Table, a new ministry brought to the community by the First Congregational United Church of Christ in Lowell will welcome the public to their first free weekly community meal this Thursday at the church from 5-7 pm.



## June 15, 2016

### 21st annual JuneGrass festival

#### brings a weekend of music to the fairgrounds

The West Michigan Bluegrass Music Association will hold their 21st JuneGrass festival at the Kent County Fairgrounds on Friday, June 24 and Saturday, June 25.

### New parking lot is almost ready

The parking lot behind the Moose building is nearing completion. The new lot adds some desperately needed parking spaces to Lowell's thriving downtown business district.

## June 22, 2016

### Lowell Township Riverfront Park receives \$2.5 million grant from the State of Michigan

The under-construction Grand River Riverfront Park North in Lowell Township just received a \$2.5 million grant from the State of Michigan. The money will be used to build a bridge across the river to Grand River Riverfront Park South.

### Chief Martin retires from Lowell's fire department

Lowell fire chief Frank Martin retired recently after 45 years of service to the community. Martin started in his position back in 1971. Dozens of friends, family and coworkers attended a retirement party at the Look Memorial Fire Station on Wednesday, June 15. Many people had nice things to say about Martin.



### Two vie for city council vacancy this November

The election on November 8 was not originally going to include a Lowell city council seat, but a political action committee called Forward Lowell petitioned for a recall of mayor Jeff Altoft. According to the official recall language, they are recalling Altoft from the council because "Lowell city councilmember and mayor, Jeff Altoft, voted yes to hire Katherine (aka Kathryn) Henry as special legal counsel on January 19, 2016." Local business owner Greg Canfield is running as Altoft's opponent in the election.

### Off The Ledge rocks the Riverwalk for first sizzlin' concert of the season

LowellArts! and the Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce presented the first Lowell Showboat Sizzlin' Summer Concert of the season last Thursday welcoming the blues infused rockers from Off The Ledge to the Showboat stage.

*Jolly, Happy Christmas*

Hats off to you, our valued customers and friends, at Christmastime! We'd like to take this opportunity to thank you for your goodwill and support year round. We certainly do appreciate it.

Here's hoping you and your loved ones enjoy a most merry season. May it be filled with all of the special things that make the holidays so magical and memorable.

*Best Wishes!*

**City of Lowell**

301 East Main  
Lowell  
897-8457  
www.ci.lowell.mi.us

City Manager - Michael Burns  
City Clerk - Susan Ullery  
Treasurer - Suzanne Olin

Councilmembers: Greg Canfield, Mike DeVore, Jim Hodges, Jeff Phillips, Alan Teelander.

*Merry Christmas*

*The halls are decked, the lists are checked; Christmas is here, bringing good cheer.*

There's just one thing we've left to do: Send our very best wishes to each one of you!

Thanks to our customers and neighbors all around town for your friendship and support. We wish you and yours all the best at Christmastime and in the New Year. Happy Holidays!

2910 Alden Nash • Lowell  
Phone 897-7600  
www.twp.lowell.mi.us  
Hours: M-Tu. 9 - 5 • Th. 9 - 1

Supervisor - Jerry Hale • Clerk - Linda S. Regan • Treasurer - Ronda Benedict  
Trustees - Carlton Blough, Mark Anderson, William Thompson, Steve M. VanderZiel

# 2016 a Year in Review

## 4H group carve canes for Lean on Me project

Since the Civil War, wood carvers from Michigan have been making intricately carved wooden canes for wounded returning soldiers. Members of the 4H group Alto Active Achievers recently carried on the respectful tradition by creating their own for the Lean On Me project initiated by the Michigan Wood Carver Association in 2007.

## June 29, 2016

### Republican candidates for 86th district hold public forum

Republican candidates for the open seat in the 86th House district held a public forum at the VFW hall, 3116 Alden Nash SE, on Tuesday, June 21. All five candidates for the Republican nomination in the August 2 primary election, Matt VanderWerff, Katherine Henry, Bart Lower, Thomas Albert and Jeff Johnson participated. About 60 local citizens attended the event. Democrat Lynn Mason was also on hand to check out her eventual competition in the November election.

### Lowell Relay For Life 2016 raises over \$46,000

Caped crusaders invaded the downtown Lowell Riverwalk last Saturday for the debut of the eleventh annual Relay For Life at its new venue and raised more than \$46,000 to defeat cancer.



## July 6, 2016

### Riverwalk Festival

The Riverwalk Festival is Lowell's annual three-day summer party. This year the Riverwalk Festival will take place on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, July 7, 8 and 9.

## Farmer's market in full swing on Thursdays

Lowell's downtown Farmers' Market is in full swing each Thursday afternoon located at the city parking lot on the corner of Monroe and Avery Street, just east of the Showboat. The market is open from 12-5:30 pm and features about a dozen vendors from Lowell and surrounding areas.

*Wishing You a Stellar New Year*

We hope your year sparkles from the first day to the last! Friends and customers like you are truly a delight, and we thank you for your loyal support. **Happy New Year!**

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As we wrap up another year,  
we'd like to share our thanks  
and well wishes with all of you.  
**Happy New Year!**

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Treasurer - Jenean Hoffman;  
Trustees - Rick Gillett and Duane Rasch

# A New Year Is Here!



We hope 2017 is your best year yet. We're so grateful for friends and customers like you.  
*Happy New Year!*

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Supervisor - Christian Wenger; Clerk - Sandra Kowalczyk  
Treasurer - Tammi Wingeier;  
Trustees - David Fuss & Robert Flynn

# A Time to Remember

As we count down to the New Year, we remember all of the good times we've shared with all of you in 2016. Thank you for making it so special!

*Happy New Year!*

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*Wishing You Pure Joy in the New Year!*

We appreciate your trust in us. Thanks for your loyal support and friendship.

**Happy 2017!**



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# 2016 a Year in Review

## Lowell to become a Trail Town,

Lowell is already the national headquarters of the North Country Trail. Soon it will also become a "Trail Town." A Trail Town is a town that lies on or near a long distance trail and offers interesting and unique attractions to hikers. The North Country Trail is 4,600 miles long and goes through New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and North Dakota.

## LL&P to install high tech meters

Lowell Light & Power's Advanced Metering Infrastructure Project is getting closer to implementation. The new meters will replace every L&P customer's electric meter with a new, high tech meter. The new meters will allow L&P customers to view power use statistics, pay bills online, closely monitor their electricity consumption online, check for outages, communicate with the company, and a lot more. "It's going to be awesome," said Lowell Light & Power assistant general manager Steve Donkersloot. "One of the biggest benefits will be for commercial customers, because they'll be able to monitor their power usage on half hour increments so they can try to control their demand, which is a component of big commercial customers' bills."

## Little Leaguers bring home district 9 championship

The Red Arrow sluggers hit the Little League fields this season on a mission for victory and one succeeded in the ultimate way bringing home the organization's first District 9 Championship title.

## July 13, 2016

### Annual FROM Food Fight raises \$77,887

Flat River Outreach Ministries' Food Fight wrapped up during the Riverwalk Festival with a final total of \$77,887. The North side won, they raised \$41,431. The South side did very well also, raising \$36,456. Money and food collected during the Food Fight will be used as part of FROM's many programs that benefit struggling families. FROM fills hungry bellies year-round with their food pantry, Foodmobile and Lunch Buddies programs.

### Downtown Lowell alive with activity during Riverwalk Festival



The annual Riverwalk Festival parade in downtown Lowell.

### Donkersloot named new LL&P general manager

Steve Donkersloot has been named the new general manager of Lowell Light & Power. In January 2016 he was promoted from chief accountant, a position he held since 2011, to assistant general manager. When former general manager Greg Pierce retired in March 2016, Donkersloot took over the general manager duties on an interim basis.

### Candidates for Lowell city manager meets with public

The three candidates for the Lowell city manager position met with the public at the Grand Volute, 655 Lincoln Lake, on Monday, July 11. Mike Burns from Fenton, MI; Tony Graff from Wilmington, IL; and Josh Eggleston from Durand, WI; are the three men in the running for the job.

## July 20, 2016

### Pokémon craze in downtown Lowell



You would have to be incredibly unobservant not to have noticed a dramatic increase in young people who seem to be wandering around town aimlessly while staring at their cell phones. These people have not been turned into zombies, they are playing Pokémon GO, the most culturally ubiquitous video game phenomenon since the glory days of Pac Man and Donkey Kong.

### Historical Society raises funds to rebuild Whites Bridge

Whites Bridge Historical Society announced last week that on August 5 the Michigan Department of Transportation will begin advertising for bids to rebuild the bridge. The WBHS has worked to obtain grants and donations totaling over \$475,000, which will pay for the reconstruction project. This includes a \$200,000 grant from Meijer and a \$275,000 contribution from MDOT themselves.

### City offers Mike Burns position as Lowell's city manager

Lowell city council has offered the city manager position to Mike Burns, the assistant city manager of Fenton, a city about 20 miles south of Flint. Burns, a former Macomb County sheriff deputy, is also Fenton's economic development director and the executive director of their Downtown Development Authority. "I've accepted a conditional offer of employment," Burns said. "It's just subject to a background check and approval of a contract. Hopefully, in the next couple of weeks they'll be able to sort those things out."



### LowellArts! enters public phase of renovation



The LowellArts! renovation of the former Hallmark building at 221 and 223 W. Main has entered what they are referring to as the "public phase." This means LowellArts! is now looking for donations from local businesses and individuals. "In August of 2015 LowellArts! embarked on a \$1.1 million 'Moving to Main' capital campaign in order to purchase, restore and renovate two historic adjoining buildings to be used as their new home in downtown Lowell," said LowellArts! executive director Lorain Smalligan.

## July 27, 2016

### Steps being taken to reduce odor produced from biodigester

Lowell's "LEAD" biodigester might be good for the environment, but its neighbors say the facility stinks. "There were approximately 30 or so residents or business owners at our July 2016 board meeting," said Lowell Light & Power general manager Steve Donkersloot. The people in charge of the biodigester said they are doing everything in their power to keep odors from befouling the neighborhood and are in the process of fixing the problem.

### Red Arrows and Bulldogs team up to raise funds for pediatric cancer research

The Lowell Red Arrows and the Grandville Bulldogs teamed up this week to raise funds for pediatric cancer research in support of Grant Pratt. The Lowell student, who will be a freshman at Lowell High School in the fall, was diagnosed with leukemia last winter.



# 2016 a Year in Review

## August 3, 2016

Lowell city council officially hired Mike Burns to be the new city manager at their meeting at city hall on Monday, August 1. The council also approved repairs to the wastewater treatment plant, amended an ordinance and heard about a big Lowell Light & Power project. The meeting was attended by 21 citizens and lasted an hour and 18 minutes.

### **LARA asks DDA for funds to connect trails to parks**

Lowell Area Recreation Authority is asking for some money from the Downtown Development Authority to expand and connect local trails into a network.



### **Alphorngruppe Alpentraum performs**

The Alphorngruppe Alpentraum brought the unique Swiss sound to the Riverwalk wrapping up the Midwest Alphorn Retreat held at the Franciscan Life Process Center, with a live performance.

## August 10, 2016

### **Youth fair fills the week with fun**

The 82nd Kent County Youth Fair is in full swing. The fair runs through this Saturday and features loads of free daily activities, carnival rides and animal exhibits.

### **Young artists express themselves during Summer Arts Explosion**

Young artists gathered at Lowell's Impact Church last week for the 2016 Summer Arts Explosion which celebrated the arts with sampler classes. Local residents shared their artistic passion with 128 first- through ninth-grade students with more than two dozen classes during a four-day arts camp. Classes ranged from watercolor, woodworking and crochet to the technical art of movie making, photography and studio recording.

## August 17, 2016

### **Flagpole installed as part of Eagle Scout project**

Daniel Kane, of Boy Scout Troop #202 Caledonia, needed to come up with an idea for his Eagle Scout project. He and his father Robert approached Earl King, Squadron Commander of the Alto Sons of the American Legion, with his idea.

### **Youth fair livestock auction raises nearly \$608,000**

The livestock auction, an annual highlight of the Kent County Youth Fair raised about \$608,000.



## August 24, 2016

### **Health fair collects blood donations, offers fun activities and debuts Pink Arrow t-shirts for 2016**

The Pink Arrow Health Fair on the Riverwalk was the first chance to buy the new Pink Arrow Pride IX t-shirt and sales were booming. The event on Thursday, Aug. 18, also presented free food on the grill, ice cream from the CaBus, a bouncy slide, games, live music and a blood drive with four buses from Michigan Blood on hand.

### **LEAD continues to work on correcting biodigester odor problems over the weekend**



A technician from German company Baur Folien GmbH at work on the biodigester on Saturday, Aug. 20.

### **Lowell DDA donates \$35,000 to LARA for trail project**

Lowell's Downtown Development Authority held a special meeting at noon on Thursday, Aug. 18. The purpose of the meeting was to correct a mistake made at their Aug. 4 meeting when they tabled a motion after DDA board member Dean Lonick requested changes to it. After some discussion the DDA board donated \$35,000 to the Lowell Area Recreation Authority for a trail project.

## August 31, 2016

### **Last concert signals summer's sunset**

The sun set on another season of the Lowell Showboat Sizzlin' Summer Concert series last Thursday evening. An enormous crowd enjoyed the 50s and 60s folk, doo-wop and classic rock music of the popular local quartet – The Adams Family.

### **LAHM's Summer Fest fundraiser is well attended**



There was a large crowd at the event, which was a benefit for the museum's activities and exhibits.

# 2016 a Year in Review

## Funds raised at annual Pink Arrow Pride Pinknic



Greenridge manager Rick Seese presenting Pink Arrow Pride cofounder Teresa Beachum with the money raised at Pinknic.



LEAD principal Greg Northrup heard citizen complaints about his company's biodigester for an hour at the Lowell city council meeting on Sept. 6.

## September 7, 2016 Lowell students head back to school



Tuesday morning Lowell schools welcomed back nearly 4,000 K-12 students for the first day of the 2016-2017 school year.

## OK White realignment brings changes

A brand new season of fall athletics at Lowell High School is underway with some big changes on the schedule due to the realignment of the OK conference.

## LHS class of 1956 celebrates 60th reunion



Picture, back row: Bill Muller, John Bergin, Ernie Weigele, Bobby Whitaker, Lil (Byrne) Vroma, Jerry VanStee, Steve Hartley, Iola (Comodore) Doty and Joan (Householder) Link; front row: Connie (Overholt) Falconer, Doris (Johnson) Feasel, Gail (McMahon) Doran, Nancy (Ward) Muller, Mrs. Betty Yeiter, Ken Canfield, Phyllis (Cole) Shaler, Sandra Fonger, Kay Wood, Pat (Balcerzak) Haddad and Pat (Rittenger) Thomet.

## September 14, 2016 Citizens voice concerns on biodigester at packed Lowell city council meeting

It was standing room only in council chambers during the Lowell city council meeting on Tuesday, Sept. 6, as Greg Northrup from the Lowell Energy Anerobic Digester listened to an hour of citizen complaints about his company's stinky biodigester. The council also approved a resolution that will put Lowell a little closer to some Showboat improvements and it was the first city council meeting for new Lowell city manager Mike Burns.

## Art auction set to raise money for gallery move

LowellArts! is auctioning off over 50 pieces of artwork by West Michigan artists to raise money for their move to Main St. The moving to Main Art Auction ends Oct. 1. LowellArts! needs to raise \$1.2 million in order to complete their move.



## September 28, 2016

### Local author's writing tells spooky Michigan tales

Grand Haven author Amberrose Hammond gave a presentation called "Strange, Spooky, Wicked Michigan" at the Englehardt Library on Monday, Sept. 26. Hammond is the author of three books chronicling some of the more bizarre incidents in local history: "Wicked Grand Rapids," "Ghosts and Legends of Michigan's West Coast" and "Wicked Ottawa County."

### Special joint meeting held to determine fate of Lowell's biodigester

Lowell city council and the board of Lowell Light & Power had a special joint meeting on Thursday, Aug. 22 at city hall. The two bodies met to decide the fate of Lowell's infamously stinky biodigester. The meeting lasted over two and a half hours and was attended by about 10 citizens. The meeting was also attended by Lowell city attorney Dick Wendt and LEAD principal Greg Northrup, the person in charge of the biodigester.

### New girls swim and dive team begins season

Lowell swimmers and divers are making waves this September with the new co-op varsity girls swim and dive team in their first season. The three-school partnership featuring the Lowell Red Arrows, Caledonia Scots and the South Christian Sailors has experienced some early success in their highly anticipated debut picking up wins over Grand Rapids Union and the Mona Shores co-op in dual competition and nabbing first place at the Spring Lake Invitational.

### Lowell breaks new ground with girls wrestling team

Lowell athletics is breaking new ground this fall with its participation in the Michigan Girls Wrestling Association (MiGWAY). Lady Arrows from grades 7-12 will compete in a state tournament in Battle Creek's Kellogg Arena later this fall.



# 2016 a Year in Review

## October 5, 2016

### **Special events throughout Lowell during Harvest Festival**

Saturday, Oct. 8 will be the annual Harvest Festival, with special events all over town that day. There will be a chili cook-off, an open house at Lowell Light & Power, a 5K race and an autumn market.

### **Community Clean Up Day designed to provide residents with free waste and recycling service**

Residents within the Lowell Area School district were invited to head down to the Kent County Fairgrounds Saturday morning for the city's annual Community Clean Up Day featuring free waste and recycling services.

### **City council receives updates as LEAD promises solutions to biodigester issues**

Lowell city council had their most recent regular meeting at city hall on Monday, Oct. 3. The council heard another update about the biodigester, voted to buy some replacement parts for the wastewater treatment plant, talked about trash removal options and more. The meeting was attended by about 25 citizens.

### **Bark for Life celebrates canines and raises \$800 for ACS**

Lowell Relay For Life hosted their third annual Bark For Life event at the Kent County Fairgrounds last Saturday celebrating the relationship between canine and cancer patient with a lineup of entertaining and fundraising activities for pet and owner. Guest speaker and cancer survivor Carol McGregor opened ceremonies addressing the crowd briefly with the story of her own faithful pup. "My little dog never left my side. He was always in a chair behind me. He was my shadow."

## October 12, 2016

### **Crowds of people enjoy the events and sunny weather at Lowell Harvest Festival**



Lowell was bright and sunny but super windy during the Harvest Festival events that took place around town on Saturday, Oct. 8. There was a chili cook-off at Larkin's Restaurant, an open house at the Lowell Light & Power headquarters and an Autumn Marketplace at the Kent County Fairgrounds. Nineteen teams competed in Larkin's chili cook-off, which took over an entire block of Broadway. Chris Roberts and Jason Carley, the Brothers BBQ team, were making smoked chili, something they invented in their garage.

### **City officials hold special joint meeting to discuss LEAD's plans for eliminating biodigester odor**

Lowell city council and the Lowell Light & Power board had a special joint meeting at city hall on Thursday, Oct. 6, to discuss LEAD's plan to end odors at the biodigester. The two hour and fifteen minute long meeting was also attended by LEAD principal Greg Northrup, LEAD attorney Jay Rosloniec, Lowell city attorney Dick Wendt and about five other citizens. After making some amendments to it, the council and the Light & Power board voted to accept LEAD's plan.

### **Bushnell Bear and Cherry Creek Champ Walk-a-thon raises \$22,641.93**

Students at Bushnell and Cherry Creek elementary schools in Lowell joined forces last week for the combined PTO's fifth annual Bushnell Bear and Cherry Creek Champ Walk-a-thon fundraiser.

## October 19, 2016

### **Neighbor to Neighbor volunteers once again extend a helping hand to Lowell residents**

Volunteers from Flat River Outreach Ministry and Lowell Rotary worked on homes all over town on Saturday morning, Oct. 15. The project was called Neighbor 2 Neighbor. Around 30 people visited several area homes to work on home improvement projects for people who lack the resources or physical ability to do it themselves. A crew from Lowell High School's Interact Club was picking up garbage and other debris outside of Valley Vista Mobile Home Park.



### **Lowell's fur trading history on display at area historical museum**

A new exhibit called "The Fur Trade in Lowell" opened last week at the Lowell Area Historical Museum, 325 W. Main. Two large rooms inside the museum have been converted into a fur trader's cabin like those from Lowell's early history.

### **LL&P approves cost of living adjustment for retirees**

The board of Lowell Light & Power had their latest regular meeting on Thursday, Oct. 13. The board heard a presentation about their fiscal year 2016 audit and gave retirees a "cost of living adjustment." The meeting lasted over two hours and was not attended by any members of the public.

## October 26, 2016

### **Downtown building razed**

King Milling tore down one of their buildings on Broadway on Thursday, Oct. 20. The building used to belong to the Michigan Wire company but was purchased by King Milling about a year and a half ago, according to company president Brian Doyle. The mill is not sure yet exactly what they will put in the old building's place, but Doyle said they were considering building a warehouse on the site to store grain.

### **"The Mousetrap" dinner theater opens this weekend**

The LowellArts! Players will present a dinner theater production of Agatha Christie's "The Mousetrap" at Larkin's The Other Place for two weeks starting this weekend.

### **LHS 76th reunion will be the last**

The Lowell High School class of 1940 celebrated its 76th reunion on Sept. 22, 2016, at Schneider Manor. A luncheon was catered and served by the owner and staff of the Backwater Café. The class of 1940 had 77 graduates but only five are alive today. They are Helen Clark Blow, Marjean Fonger Brillhart, Inez Cole Craig, John Jasperse, and Jack Tornga, however, only three were able to attend, Helen, Marjean and Jack.

It is very sad to report, but our class had more casualties in World War II than any other Lowell High School class. Since graduation, the group has held 19 reunions and has met yearly since our 65th reunion in 2005. Unfortunately, all good things must come to an end. Because our membership has been reduced to a precious few and we are all over 90 years of age, this will be our swan song.

### **Longtime friends collaborate on children's book**

Janet Johnson and Pat Markle are publishing their third children's book, "Gertie Goose," the beautifully-illustrated, engrossing story of a young goose who overcomes bullying through friendship. Markle, a Hastings resident, wrote the story and Johnson, a Lowell resident, was the artist.



# 2016 a Year in Review

## November 2, 2016

### Arboreal enrichment in Lowell

One of the major reasons people flock to the Lowell area is to enjoy the natural beauty. The Lowell Department of Public Works and the Lowell Arbor Board have been working hard to improve the canopy. You might have noticed the results on Main St. when a public works crew was out there on Thursday despite the wet, chilly weather. “With the approval of the Arbor Board, the Department of Public Works is removing two trees on the south side of the 200 block of W. Main,” said Rich LaBombard, Lowell director of Public Works. “Four trees will be replanted on the south side of the same block. The new plantings will beautify the south side of Main St. by the Antique Mall. As with any streetscape project, the intent is to make the area more visually appealing and inviting to residents and visitors.”



### Lowell businesses in costume for Halloween



Reagan Family Dentistry: Patty Wade, Julie Spaans, Carrie Woolworth, Dr. Jim Reagan, Ron (last name withheld), Lori VanHeulen, Gail Thomet, and Becky Hansen.

## November 9, 2016

### Artist creates mural for the Lowell Showboat



### For now the smell is gone for Lowell's odoriferous biodigester

The LEAD biodigester seems to have met the November deadline to stop the stink. LEAD leader Greg Northrup invited the public to sniff the place out on Wednesday, Nov. 2. Lowell city council and the Lowell Light & Power board had several special meetings working out a plan with LEAD to put an end to the disgusting odor problem that has been plaguing the city ever since the facility opened. The plan included a Nov. 1 deadline to build an enclosure for a stinky wastewater tank, a solution that should end the odors permanently.

### Council approves sale of improvement bonds and seven-day notice for biodigester odors

Lowell city council discussed the LEAD biodigester and approved the sale of \$3.5 millions worth of “general obligation limited tax capital improvement bonds.” The cash generated from this sale will be used to fund a list of infrastructure improvements. The meeting lasted just under an hour and was attended by about 25 people. During public comment allegations flew between Greg Canfield and John and Heidi Ogle over a long-standing disagreement. City manager Mike Burns offered an update on progress to the LEAD biodigester, which apparently still stinks despite the recent construction that was supposed to fix it. LEAD principal Greg Northrup was not on hand at the meeting to answer charges that the rotten stench at the facility persists despite LEAD's efforts to fix the issue.

### Studio Downes earns featured artist title for 2016 CTL

Instead of a single featured artist, this year one entire Christmas Through Lowell location has been honored because of the high quality of all of their artists. MaryJo Fox Fell, Janel Mullen, Anne Mohan, Chelsea Hill, Julie Phillips and their handiwork can be found at stop number five, Studio Downes, 9693 Downes Rd.



## November 16, 2016

### LowellArts! unveils new location early for weekend's Holiday Market

Crews from several local contractors are working hard to get the new arts space at 223 W. Main ready in time for the LowellArts! Holiday Market. The market opens on Friday, Nov. 18 and will run through Dec. 24. There will also be a public reception from 6 to 8 pm on Thursday, Nov. 17. LowellArts! was granted a special temporary occupancy permit for the duration of the holiday market, which will be the public's first chance to get a peek inside the new building.

### Christmas Through Lowell celebrates 25 years of local holiday shopping this weekend

This weekend is the 25th annual Christmas Through Lowell shopping event. It will take place in locations all over the Lowell area on Nov. 18, 19 and 20. Hundreds of local artists will have their creations on display and for sale at over 50 homes and businesses on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Much of the art at the stops, but not all of it, is holiday-themed.

### Nationwide and locally voting results are dramatic

Donald Trump's victory in the 2016 presidential election shocked the entire world. Millions hoped that Hillary Clinton would finally be our nation's first female president, but instead the country decided that billionaire Trump will be the next President of the United States. Like Al Gore in 2000, Hillary Clinton won the popular vote but lost the election. Trump's 306 points in the Electoral College beat Clinton's 232 points, winning the election for Trump despite getting 630,877 fewer votes. In a race closer to home, local businessman Greg Canfield won the recall election for former mayor Jeff Altoft's seat on the Lowell city council. Canfield's 1,176 votes beat Altoft's 519.

### Lowell's first team of girl wrestlers win state title



The Red Arrow girls wrestling team claimed the MIGWA state championship title at the Kellogg Arena in their first season.

# 2016 a Year in Review



## **Hearts of Gold Play-Doh Drive donates funds to Pink Arrow Pride**

LHS senior Jillian Riney presents a donation of \$1,032.30 to Pink Arrow Pride's Teresa Beachum. The Hearts of Gold Play-Doh Drive raised \$2,294 and collected over 3,000 cans of Play-Doh for Helen DeVos Children's Hospital.

## **November 23, 2016**

### **Lowell City Council seeks court order to shut down smelly biodigester**

Lowell city council is getting a court order to shut down the perpetually malodorous LEAD biodigester. About

40 citizens showed up to the city council's meeting at city hall on Monday, Nov. 21. Many who live near the Chatham St. facility voiced their frustrations to the council and to representatives from LEAD, whose own expert on the subject said that it was "not possible" for there ever to be zero odor from the facility.

### **Winning season comes to an end for Red Arrow football**

The road to the Ford Field was once again snowy for Red Arrow varsity football but the outcome ruefully different. After rallying back from a 31-14 halftime deficit, Lowell fell short of a second consecutive MHSAA Division II state finals game losing to the Walled Lake Western Warriors 37-34 at Brighton High School last Saturday afternoon.

### **The Grand Volute declares Chapter 11**



### **Food drive held for Flat River Outreach Ministries**

The Awana program of the First Baptist Church of Lowell completed its annual Share-a-Blessing food drive. Clubbers and leaders collected over 1,000 food items to be donated to Flat River Outreach Ministries.

### **Science students at LHS work on real world research**

A biology class of 14 students at Lowell High School, taught by Heather DeJonge, has been performing "real world research" in partnership with the Van Andel Institute in Grand Rapids. LHS students recently presented and defended their results after 12 weeks of research on caenorhabditis elegans worms, zebrafish and daphnia. The explicit goal of the research was to "apply concepts of statistics and probability to explain variation and distribution of expressed traits."



### **Christmas Through Lowell draws crowds of shoppers during three-day start of the season event**

Lowell was packed with shoppers all weekend for the 25th Christmas Through Lowell event. The three-day holiday shopping extravaganza was held last Friday, Saturday and Sunday. There was typical schizophrenic Michigan weather during the event, with sunshine and temperatures in the low 70s on Friday and then snow on Saturday.

### **Four Lowell athletes sign to Division I colleges**

Four Lowell High School athletes' accomplishments were celebrated during a ceremony commemorating their signing to Division I colleges.



Lowell athletes Jarrod Melle, Bryce Dempsey, Matthew Beachler and Nate Stephens at the Division I signing ceremony.

### **Warm weather welcomed annual Veterans Day luncheon attendees**

Lowell Senior Neighbors honored local American heroes on Friday, November 11, for Veterans Day with a luncheon provided by the center and its volunteers.



Pictured are Dave Thompson, Leo Peters, Robert Garcia, Jim Breen, John Schrouder, Herb Rice, Herman Weststrate, Herman Weststrate Jr., Jerry Vredevelt, Chuck Boerema, Don Souser and Richard Bieri.

## **November 30, 2016**

### **Despite halting operations, odorous biodigester continues to smell and have leakage problems**

Despite fix after fix to the facility by LEAD, the biodigester's odor problems persist. The plant is even stinkier than ever this week after a dome ruptured and a valve leaked at the Chatham St. facility, releasing rancid odors and nasty substances. "Late last night or early this morning, we noted a tear in the dome atop the digester unit," Greg Northrup, LEAD principal, said on Monday. "Additionally, some material from the digester was lost through a pressure valve. The cleanup was handled quickly and crews have been on-site throughout the day today to deal with the situation." LEAD was instructed by the Lowell city council to cease operations at the facility after it continued to receive \$300 odor citations beyond the Nov. 1 "no more odors" deadline.

### **Whites Bridge Historical Society needs additional funds in order to rebuild landmark**

In August 2016 the Whites Bridge Historical Society announced that the Michigan Department of Transportation would begin advertising for bids to rebuild the bridge. There has been no construction yet, however.

# 2016 a Year in Review

## Annual community Thanksgiving dinner serves nearly 200



Six wrestlers, one dedicated wrestling mom and a few other volunteers served dinner last Tuesday night at Gilda's Club.

## Arrow wrestlers volunteer to serve dinner at Gilda's Club



## New coach

Lowell alumni Dayna Crumback will join the coaching staff at LHS this winter as head of the competitive cheer team.



## December 7, 2016

### Motions passed at joint meeting of LL&P and city council to flush failed biodigester project

After a nearly three hour joint meeting at 7 pm on Thursday, Dec. 1, Lowell city council and the board of Lowell Light & Power passed three motions that will close the LEAD biodigester. The first motion revoked the LEAD's wastewater discharge permit, making it impossible for the biodigester to operate; the second motion terminated LEAD's lease with the city for their use of the Chatham St. property; and the third terminated Lowell Light & Power's power purchase agreement with LEAD. The company has until Jan. 16, 2017, to clean the facility and get out of town.

### Gas leak and broken water line repaired on Broadway

A gas leak in front of the Lowell post office led to a broken water line and a huge crater on Broadway St. on Thursday, Dec. 1. The situation was irritating, but not catastrophic, for daily operations at the post office.



### Vote recount underway in Michigan

The Michigan Secretary of State begins a statewide recount of the Nov. 8 presidential election requested by Green Party candidate Jill Stein



### Baker recognized by Lowell Rotary

Pictured, left to right: Jim White and Liz Baker with her husband Mike.

### No snow for Lowell's sparkling nighttime Christmas parade - lots of holiday enthusiasm

Santa Claus did, in fact, come to town last Saturday traveling through the Lowell community with his red suit and good cheer signaling the official start of the holiday season in Lowell.



## December 14, 2016

### A Nite of Christmas Cheer celebrated along Lowell's Riverwalk

Christmas celebrations continued in downtown Lowell when the Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce and the Lowell Downtown Development Authority teamed up with area businesses and organizations for the fourth annual Nite of Christmas Cheer along the Riverwalk. While Santa visits on the showboat have been a tradition for some time, the official Nite of Christmas Cheer began in 2012. According to LACC executive director Liz Baker, "We added the live reindeer, ice sculpture, roasted chestnuts and hot dogs. We wanted to create a family event that created memories. It is important to spread our activities over the entire month of December, bringing residents and visitors to our community, encouraging shopping, eating and fun locally."

### Senate passes agreement to provide critical help for Flint and other communities

Congress has finally passed an agreement to provide \$170 million in long-awaited assistance for Flint and other communities affected by lead. The bipartisan agreement, championed by Senator Stabenow, Senator Peters and Congressman Kildee, passed the Senate 78-21 as part of the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act. This agreement closely mirrors legislation that passed the Senate in September by a margin of 95-3. It now goes to the desk of the president for his signature.

## December 21, 2016

### LHS Christmas play

Lowell High School welcomed the community to the performing arts center last week for their annual holiday production. This year they presented the comedic mystery Christmas Scene Investigators or Who Stole Santa Claus?

A cast of 27 high school students along with dozens of elementary age extras graced the stage for the show. Directed by LHS drama instructor Laurie Summerfield and student assistant Jacquelyn Pytlik, the show centered around a group of high school musical performers puzzled by the disappearance of their show-ending Santa Claus statue.



### Ledger publisher awarded

Lowell Ledger publisher Jon Jacobs received a special award from the Community Papers of Michigan on Tuesday, Dec. 6. The award was given to Jacobs "in honor and with deep appreciation of your visionary guidance and undaunted leadership." Jacobs served as president of the CPM since 2010.

### More athletes sign

Four more top Lowell High School athletes pledged to play at the collegiate level last week. Hosted by athletic director Dee Crowley and attended by friends, family and coaches, the event celebrated these athletes: Austin Branagan, Sela Bauman, Laurel Frederickson and Brennan Battle.



*Happy New Year to All!*

# obituaries

## PAWLAK

Carol Sue Pawlak (nee Ayres) age 69 of Sierra Vista, Arizona, passed away December 12, 2016. Carol was born July 6, 1947, to Kenneth and Elva Ayres. Carol lived most of her life in Lowell, moving to Arizona in 1991. Carol is survived by her husband of seven years, Robert Pawlak; her sons, Ronnie and Michael Raymond; special daughter-in-law, Miriam; grandchildren, Asia, Dakota and Cheyenne; and great-grandson, Braxton; all of Tucson, Arizona. Carol also leaves to cherish her memory her siblings, Gary Ayres and Gail Roderick; and dearest friend Suzie Phillips, all of Lowell. Carol was a four-time cancer survivor, meeting each health challenge with courage and determination. She last traveled to Lowell in 2014 to help care for her mother Elva until her passing on August 4 of that year. Memorial contributions may be made to Pink Arrow Pride, PO Box 246, Lowell, MI 49331.



# Looking Back, continued

Kerosene users must send blank at once. All domestic users of kerosene (cooking, lighting, etc.) must get their application from their kerosene dealer, fill it out at home and mail to the Rationing Office for their January, February and March allotments. These applications should be mailed in at once as the dealer will not be able to sell the kerosene without the coupons in the future. Do not take in the application—be sure it is filled out completely and signed. Then mail it to the War Rationing Board, 236 Pearl St., Grand Rapids, Mich.

The final week of the old year of 1942 was ushered in with a mingling of snow, rain, sleet and ice. It rained for hours on Christmas night, accompanied by lightning, reminding one of a spring thunder storm. Traveling on highways was both difficult and dangerous over the week-end and pedestrians who ventured out risked their legs in doing so. Honey and Cherry creeks in the west part of town overflowed their banks on Sunday and by Monday morning water was from one to two feet deep in places on M-21 west of the P. M. railroad crossing, but later in the day workmen had succeeded in opening sewers so that water could escape and M-21 was soon back to its normal condition.

\$100,000 damage was way off. He estimated the repair and clean-up costs at \$25,090. The derailed cars were empty and suffered little damage. The roof of the station and the signal system were torn up. Greatest damage was to the two repair trucks, belonging to the C&O, which were parked just east of the station. Lowell police were kept busy rerouting traffic on M-91 and shooing away sight-seers for several hours following the wreck, while waiting for the roadway to be cleared of debris.

The break down of the heating unit in the American Legion Bowling alley on East Main Street has led to many inconveniences for the bowlers and skaters of Lowell, the past few days. Alley manager, Mrs. Helen Koewers reports that work is progressing on the installation of new heating equipment. In the meantime, portable heaters are hard at work trying to keep the temperatures in the building above freezing. If all goes well, the alleys may be open sometime this week end.

## 25 years ago The Lowell Ledger Dec. 30, 1992

Lowell's Thom Ellis advances to nationals. Key Heights Club House in Lowell was the setting for the Thom Ellis Fan Club Christmas party on Saturday, Dec. 12. Ellis flew from his new home in VA and the recording studios of Nashville to join his many loyal fans. Among them were local radio station promoters including Kevin Reynolds (Account Executive for WCUZ). Many of the fan club members are Lowell residents as well as fans from surrounding areas. Ellis was surprised when represented with a personalized guitar strap and an attache' case. He shared with his fan club many new and exciting developments in his career. Since entering the TrueValue/GMC Country Showdown last summer, Ellis has won the local, state and regionals in Wheeling, VA. He is now looking forward to advancing to the nationals at the Grand Palace in Branson, MO on Jan. 9. Kenny Rogers will be hosting the showdown. The winner of the national finals will receive a new GMC pickup, \$50,000 and a record contract. Fan Club President Diane L. Bennett has put together a super weekend package which includes a chartered bus and lodging. If you're interested in a fun filled weekend call Bennett at the Thom Ellis Fan Club Headquarters, 897-4258. Ellis's next local performance will be at the Amway Grand Plaza's New Year's Eve party.

Carpenter to march in London's New Year's parade - Lowell High School senior Karla Carpenter left Dec. 26 to perform in the Lord Mayor of Westminster Parade in London England. She was nervous, not about the performance, but the flight over. "I've never flown before. I'm a little nervous about the flight," Carpenter said. Carpenter was eligible to participate in the parade after she was selected to the All-Star team this summer at a cheerleading camp at Central Michigan University. Teammate Molly Byrne was also selected. The New Year's Day parade in London is being sponsored by the Universal Cheerleading Association. Carpenter will return on Jan. 2.

## 50 years ago Lowell Ledger Dec. 28, 1967

Three cars in a 98-car C&O freight train passing through Lowell Christmas Eve derailed and smashed two trucks and damaged the railroad station on South Hudson Street. One car evidently climbed the rails and was dragged along the right-of-way and across the Flat River bridge before it hit two parked trucks and the depot. After crossing Hudson Street, three of the cars jammed sideways, going across all three tracks. No one was injured in the mishap, which tore up some 1,000 feet of track. The undamaged cars were pulled away on Christmas Eve, but the three derailed cars lay across the tracks until Tuesday, when a wrecker crew equipped with a crane were called out of Grand Rapids. The tracks were cleared and repaired by Tuesday evening, and the line was back in service. A C&O official on the job Tuesday, said the reported

## LEGAL NOTICE

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
PROBATE COURT  
COUNTY OF KENT

December 14, 2016

NOTICE TO  
CREDITORS  
Decedent's Estate

Mary L. Benedict  
(P45285)  
4519 Cascade Road SE  
Ste. 14  
Grand Rapids, MI 49546  
616-942-0020

FILE NO. 16-200426-DE

Estate of DAVID W.  
LICHTE. Date of birth:  
June 12, 1941.

Roxanne L. Lichte  
118 South Grove St.  
Lowell, MI 49331

TO ALL CREDITORS:

NOTICE TO  
CREDITORS: The  
decendent, David W.  
Lichte, died October 4,  
2016.

Creditors of the  
decendent are notified  
that all claims against  
the estate will be  
forever barred unless  
presented to Roxanne  
L. Lichte, personal  
representative, or to  
both the probate court  
at 180 Ottawa Avenue  
NW, Suite 2500, Grand  
Rapids, MI 49503 and the  
personal representative  
within 4 months after  
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**PUBLIC NOTICE**

The Lowell Cable TV (LCTV) Endowment Fund Board is now accepting grant applications for 2017. Application forms and instructions are available at Lowell City Hall, Lowell Charter Township Hall, Vergennes Township Hall, Englehardt Public Library, Lowell Area Schools Administration Building and online on the City and Township websites. The LCTV Endowment Fund is a nonprofit fund established in late 2007 from the sale of the assets of Lowell Cable Television and is invested and administered by the Grand Rapids Community Fund. The LCTV Endowment Fund supports and promotes projects that benefit a broad segment of the Lowell area community, enhances the quality of life in the area, encourages cooperation among the communities and qualifies as a one-time capital improvement.

2017 grant applications should be submitted to the Lowell City Clerk's office, 301 E. Main Street, Lowell, Michigan 49331. The deadline for submitting 2017 applications is 5:00 p.m. on Friday, February 10, 2017. Questions should be directed to Susan Wilkey, City Clerk.

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# On to 2017, continued



**Mark Mundt** is the superintendent of Lowell's wastewater treatment plant and president of the Lowell Rotary. He said 2016 was a great year to live here.

"In 2016 my wife

Theresa and I celebrated our 27th year of living in Lowell and it was another great year," Mundt said. "I'm not sure why it was a great year. It could be the other people that live here, the wonderful businesses, the many fine restaurants, the Riverwalk Festival, the Thursday night concert series, the Pink Arrow, Santa on the Showboat or one of the dozens of other things that make Lowell such a unique community and a great place to live."

Mundt, a long-

time Rotarian, was elected president of that organization this year.

"The most significant event that happened for me personally in 2016 was becoming the president of the Lowell Rotary club," Mundt said. "Lowell has a fantastic Rotary club and I am very proud to be a member. From doing local projects, to helping fund other local projects or helping install water filters and wells in foreign countries, our club is very busy and it is great to be a

part of it." Mundt is part of the committee that is working on the Showboat, a project he said could make the news in 2017.

"One of the things I am most excited about for 2017 is the Lowell Showboat," Mundt said. "I am part of the group that is working on replacing the Showboat. It will be exciting to see what the committee comes up with as the next generation of the Showboat in our community. Happy holidays, everyone!"



**Greg Pratt**, Lowell Area Schools superintendent, is not just the Lowell school system's top administrator, he is also a parent in the district.

"As a superintendent and parent in this community, I feel very fortunate to live in Lowell," Pratt said. "We have had wonderful economic stability, are fortunate to have so many wonderful restaurants in our town to take advantage of, and the Lowell Chamber of Commerce has done a wonderful job putting on events for the entire community. The Chamber of Commerce seems to be a hub of activity. We have so many positive things in our community to be proud of it is hard to select any single event that I could say I was most excited about. I am really excited about our community as a whole from LowellArts moving downtown, the continued upgrades and expansion of the trails, and the work being done at the Flat River Outreach Ministries. The entire community continually works hard to make Lowell a great place to work and live."

Pratt said that, for him, the biggest event in Lowell in 2016 was the Pink Arrow Pride football game and cancer charity.

"As a superintendent, I am exposed to numerous

student events and activities," Pratt said. "The success of these events and activities has special meaning to those involved and the community as a whole. The one event that was extra special to me this year was Pink Arrow. This event had special meaning to me this year due to my youngest son, Grant, being diagnosed with leukemia. It is amazing the way the community rallies around this event each year. Pink Arrow has such a positive impact on not only those that are walking their cancer journey, but all the students within the school that work on this service project and get support whether it's through Gilda's Club grief counseling or through the act of giving, which has its own positive influences on people. Pink Arrow is always special, but this year it had a little extra meaning to me."

"The district has had great success in all areas including music, art, and athletics," Pratt said. "Students have received many awards, both individual and team. This thing that I am most proud of is when students come back to Lowell, from college or working, and talk about their success. Many college students come back and relay how good they feel about their success at college and feel that they were prepared and ready to take on post-secondary opportunities. Students feel they have advantages over some of their classmates and friends. Knowing that our students leaving Lowell have so many doors open is a point of pride for our entire community."

*Hallelujah!*



In the spirit of this holy season, we'd like to join our friends and neighbors throughout the community in giving thanks for all of the blessings our Lord has so graciously bestowed upon us. We have so much to be grateful for, including your kind support. Thank you for your trust in us.

*We hope your Christmas season is blessed and happy in every possible way. May it find you surrounded by peace, love, friendship, faith and goodwill. All the best!*

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**Steve Bukala**, Lowell's police chief, said that the biggest problem his department faced this year was dealing with biodigester complaints.

"Lowell is still a great community to live and work in," Bukala said. "We still have our same crime we've had for years and as long as the general public continues to lock their cars and homes, we will maintain our lower burglary numbers. The most significant event I personally was involved in has to be the

biodigester. This business single-handedly lowered the quality of life for half the town. Lowell police took the lead on enforcement action through local ordinance and reporting to the city council with the amount of complaints and fines LEAD incurred. We are now in the final stages of enforcement and hoping to be done with the entire issue of the biodigester soon."

Bukala said that in 2017 he hopes to continue reducing crime and he hopes that the Showboat committee meets their financial goal and is able to complete their project.

"My hopes for 2017 [for the [department-wise are to continue to keep crime at the levels we've been able to maintain over the last 15 to 20 years," Bukala said. "When I first came here,

On to 2017, continued, next page

# On to 2017, continued

Lowell had a reputation of the Wild West, but now we are known as the 'next place to be.' We have a great core group of police officers here and I want to maintain this team. My last wish for 2017 is securing funding for the 'Restore the Showboat'

committee so that our Showboat [and] stage can be completed. Our current Showboat is in disrepair and I'm glad I can be a part of the team [or] committee to save the city's landmark for generations to come."

other city staff, the Lowell Light & Power Board, and the city council to engage with numerous residents about a very serious issue in a constructive, meaningful way. For this, I am thankful."

Despite the setbacks at the biodigester, Donkersloot said that Light & Power had a long list of successes in 2016.

"Lowell Light & Power, as a team, had so many amazing, milestone accomplishments in 2016," Donkersloot said. "From the [Advanced Metering Infrastructure] project that will empower residents and businesses to change their energy habits in a positive way, to the development and adoption of a five-year plan that will improve our distribution system's reliability, to the addition of local generation through the commissioning of the Siemen's combustion turbine; it is awesome to look back and see how much has been done. For me, though, the thing I am most proud of is the entire Lowell Light & Power

team, from the board all the way down to the staff, continuing to grow and work hard together as one. When this happens, great things and accomplishments will continue to follow."

Donkersloot said that Light & Power will work together with various city departments on various projects in 2017. "I am most excited to continue to grow and work with the other departments of the city," Donkersloot said.

"Over the past number of months it has been fantastic to work with and get to know city manager Mike Burns, police chief Steve Bukala, department of public works director Rich LaBombard, waste water superintendent Mark Mundt and many, many others through a variety of different arenas and projects. The reason this excites me is that when people communicate, work together and share a common goal [and] vision, great things are very often the byproduct."



**Mike DeVore** has only been Lowell's mayor for a few weeks, but he has been on the Lowell city council for over a year. Once the stench complaints started to waft in, DeVore was one of the loudest, strongest voices in opposition to the biodigester.

"Unfortunately, the biodigester issue was the most significant thing I was involved in this year," DeVore said. "It was upsetting to see such a promising source of energy fail so miserably and affect so many people along the way. I'm happy that we were able to finally shut it down. Shutting down the biodigester is something I'm very proud of."

DeVore was also involved in hiring Mike Burns as Lowell's city manager.

"The hiring of Mike Burns and the process involved is also a large source of pride for me," DeVore said. "It was great to be able to have such high quality candidates, so much community involvement and to find a city manager as fantastic as Mike is."

DeVore had a whole list of 2016 events he enjoyed and said there will be even more stuff to do in 2017.

"Lowell is always a great place to live," DeVore said. "The people are great and we have some amazing events. My favorites of 2016 were definitely the Kent County Youth Fair, Riverwalk Festival and the summer concert series. I am excited to see what we can achieve as a community in 2017. There are some great, new businesses in town, LowellArts! has a beautiful new downtown home, the trails are coming along better than expected, there is a new park going in behind Walgreens, and Liz [Baker] and her chamber team are always working on new and exciting events to bring people to Lowell. It only takes one and they'll be hooked."



**Rich LaBombard** has only been director of Lowell's public works department for a few months, but the town has made a big impression on him.

"Lowell is a very bonded community," LaBombard said. "Residents and business owners are very passionate about making this a great place to be. All the events that take place here and the number of people that turn out is a testament to the effort and passion that goes into making Lowell unique and interesting. Lowell is a gem of a community and leaders have done an excellent job accentuating all the positive aspects of our beautiful city. I think other communities should pay attention to what's happening here and learn from Lowell's successes. Being that I've only been with the city since May, I'm most proud of the fact that I've made so many connections in the community. I really enjoy building relationships with leadership, business owners and residents. Those connections make me feel at home here. There is still a lot more to learn and those relationships help me with understanding what Lowell is about."

LaBombard said that, even though Lowell is already great, his plans include improvements to many aspects of the city.

"I've selfishly said that I have the best job in city government because I get to work on really interesting projects that can have a big impact on the community," LaBombard said. "During my time with the department of public works, we completed the construction on the South Monroe parking lot, we completed a sidewalk project for the Downtown Development Authority, we started a major reconstruction of the city's sewage lift stations, we planted trees and beautified the city, we've worked to reduce energy costs in city facilities, we've made many improvements to the library, we are working on a safety program for city staff, and we procured new equipment necessary to maintain our infrastructure. Wow, we've been busy. It's all a team effort of course. It takes the support of the city council, city manager, Downtown Development Authority, arbor board, parks board, chamber of commerce and city staff and vendors. 2017 is going to be about continuing to build strong relationships, developing and updating the organization, and making positive change. I'm fortunate to have a supportive work environment and excellent working relationships with my work colleagues. My first year has been about practicing the concept of 'look, listen and learn' and 2017 will be more about developing a path to the future. I'll fight for safety and security issues when it comes to protecting the public and city staff's health, safety and welfare. And I'll fight for technology that makes the organization more effective and efficient. It's going to be another great year."

Happy New Year!



We've had so much fun serving you in 2016, and we thank you for your generous support. As we count down to 2017, we'd like to share our sincere best wishes for a year filled with good health, good times, good fortune and true happiness. Happy New Year!



**Steve Donkersloot** is Lowell Light & Power's general manager and was intimately involved in the

stinky biodigester every step of the way. He said this was Lowell's biggest story of 2016.

"This probably does not come as much of a surprise, but the most important event that I was involved with this past year was the biodigester facility and the odor it produced," Donkersloot said. "Obviously the situation and the odor was very unfortunate, to say the least. However, it did allow me,



**1450 W. Main St.  
Lowell, Michigan**

**(616) 897-9231  
(800) 798-9973**

Monday - Friday 8 am-7 pm • Sat. 8 am-5:30pm. • Sun. 9 am-3 pm



THE 2016

# Elliot Awards



**Several Awards Go To Donald Trump** - The Bully on the Playground Award; The She Did It, Not Me But If You Elect Me I'll Do It More Award; The Put Other Peoples' Money In Your Mouth Award; (of course) The Baddest Wig Award along with the Worst Hat Award and of course The Anything To Win Award

## The BFF Award

Goes to Vladimir Putin  
(We all know how long these adolescent friendships usually last)

## The Stand Up Award

Goes to Colin Kaepernick for sadly not standing up for the National Anthem while taking a knee for his convictions

**The What The 'H' Happened Award** - Goes to Hillary Clinton for, well - "What the heck happened?"



## We'd Love It - If We Fyer Get to See It

Goes to Lin-Manuel Miranda for "Hamilton"

## Muchas Gracias! Award

Goes to Jan (and Dave) Thompson for their much-welcomed thanks and for Jan's delicious, albeit waist-expanding, baked goods

## Walking Into Light Poles Award

Goes to the wandering Pokemon Go players here in Lowell and all over the country



## The Almost Perfect Timing

Goes to Bernie Sanders for his presidential run

## The Timing Is Everything Award

James Comey for knowing when to inform the public

## Subtlety Award

Goes to Jeff Altoft for his creative use of signage

## Get Them Out of Their Shell Award

Goes to Billy Bush for getting Trump to open up and be himself



## Money Money Money Award

Goes to the Epi Pen re-pricers

## Get Your Poop In A Group Award

Goes to those who still treasure their "Cow Pie" plaque

## The Missed It By 'This Much' Award

Goes to the pollsters supplying info on the 2016 election

## The Green Fields Award

Goes to Jerry Hale for his land preservation initiative

## The Green Eggs and Ham

Goes to Cliff Yankovich for standing up to convention

## The Incognito But There Award

To Dianne LaWarre for her desire not to be photographed in public

## The Can't You Just Get Lost Award

Goes to Anthony Weiner

## The Seamstress Award

Goes to Jeff Dickerman for his mighty attempts to control his perceived slanted bias

## The Golden Plunger & Drain Snake Award

Is reserved for new city council member Greg Canfield for his desire to keep the pipes clean - only if absolutely necessary

## The Tennessee Ernie Ford Award

Goes to Jim Hodges for his rendition of "16 Tons"

## The 'Fragrant' Foul Award

Goes to Greg Northrup

# 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 2016.  
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.*

