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Council meeting covers budget amendments, public comments and city manager seeks to clarify the city's position on biodigester

by Tim McAllister
lead reporter

Lowell city council discussed the ex-biodigester and got an update about the police chief during their meeting at city hall on Monday, June 19. The meeting lasted about 35

minutes and was attended by 15 people.

At the beginning of the meeting, during the time reserved for public comment, Ross Pope, owner of Advanced Water and Energy Solutions,

addressed the council about the property where the biodigester used to be. Pope's company AWES was hired by the biodigester's anonymous investors to investigate what went wrong at the facility.

"I have been working over at the 625 Chatham

biodigester stunk and why it failed.

"The primary problem was the pre-treatment design of the holding tanks that we call the initial equalization and pre-treatment tanks at the facility," Pope said.

"That's what I really want people to take a look at

"As city manager I want all residents to know that you can come to me or anyone on the city council with questions, comments or concerns at any time..."

~ Michael Burns

facility doing an audit since about January, with a team of professionals, to determine what went wrong with the facility there," Pope said. "I've sent you folks an email and I'd like to extend a personal invitation again. I would like to have you come and see the facility. There are a lot of unique things that we've unpacked and uncovered. Seeing and touching and feeling would give you a clear indication of the things that went wrong with the operation and some of the design of that facility. The audit is just about complete."

Pope said that his team discovered the reason the

and see. What happened was 170,000 gallon tanks were consumed gradually to where, at the end they were only treating 20 percent of the water that was coming in, unbeknownst to anyone because it was sub-surface. It was a hidden defect in the design system that caused the odor, caused the decay and the tremendous growing odor. It was a design that was progressively failing as it went until we had the catastrophic event in November. That is initially the overview of what [the audit] is going to show, but with a lot more detail. The result, the summary is going to include the fact that



City manager Michael Burns said that Pope and AWES are "not involved" in the discussions on the ex-biodigester.

the lack of experience and knowledge in combination with design, operation and execution [failure] was the shortfall of the project. I'm anxious to get [the audit] out to everybody. It's probably three or four weeks away."

The council did not respond to Pope immediately, but near the end of the meeting city manager Michael Burns talked about the Chatham St. facility during his 'manager's report.' Burns said that he wants to have sole control over what information about the ex-biodigester is available.

Council meeting, continued, page 3



Pink Arrow Pride organizer Perry Beachum presented a reason he believes Lowell is the "next place to be."

It's almost time for the annual JuneGrass festival at the fairgrounds

by Tim McAllister
lead reporter

The West Michigan Bluegrass Music Association will hold their 22nd annual JuneGrass festival at the Kent County Fairgrounds on Friday, June 30 and Saturday, July 1. The fun in the campground will start well before Friday; many bluegrass fans will spend nearly the entire week camping in Lowell. In addition to constant live music and camping they will also have events, such as a bake sale, instrument workshops, an open mic, a potluck supper and a 50/50 drawing.

"There will be a potluck on Thursday night [June 29]," said WMBMA president Lee Strassberger. "We'll have all the jams and workshops. We have put together a vocal

workshop for Saturday morning. The vocal workshop was always very popular but we haven't been able to do it in past years."

Organizers say this year's lineup is one of the best in the event's history.

"Our lineup on Saturday is really good," Strassberger said. "We're starting off with the Williams Family Band which is a local band out of Grand Rapids. They've been playing in the Grand Rapids area for 50 years or so. They're a well-known band. We had them at JuneGrass last year. We brought them back as a headliner for this year because they were well-received last year. Then we have Bluetown out of Indianapolis. They've been in Nashville for a while and now they're out touring locally.

We've had them here before and people have been asking to get them back. We were able to this year. They're a great band led by a fiddle player named Barkley Davis. He's quite a singer and instrumentalist. He's pretty well-known in the bluegrass genre. His family is a bluegrass family so he's been in the business for quite a while. He also writes some of his own music. Another one that we have coming is Johnny Campbell and the Bluegrass Drifters out of Nashville. Johnny Campbell is a third generation fiddle player. His family has been well-known in the bluegrass industry. In fact, his father played with Jim and Jesse McReynolds and Bill Monroe. It's going to

JuneGrass festival, continued, page 3



along main street

LPD welcomes two new officers

by Tim McAllister
lead reporter

Lowell police department hired two new part-time officers last week, Andy Coaker and Derek Haan.

“Andy Coaker comes to us from the Mattawan police department where he works part-time,” said interim police chief Christopher Hurst. “His full-time job

Spectrum Health security at the hospital.”

There are still plans to hire one more part-time officer. These new part-time officers will fill holes in the schedule so that Lowell residents are protected at all times and so that officers are not overwhelmed.

“We were in need of about three people because



Derek Haan



Andy Coaker

is with Barfly in Grand Rapids; he has a supervisory role in security there. He has experience and he’s already certified through MCOLES [Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Standards, the certification required to work as a police officer in Michigan].”

The other new officer has decades of experience and is known personally by LPD officers.

“Derek Haan has retired from the Rockford police department,” Hurst said. “He had 24 years there. I’ve known Derek for a long time. We were paramedics together in Rockford for eight years. He’s a really nice guy, did a good job with Rockford PD and Rockford Ambulance. He also works part-time for

of other commitments that our other part-timers have,” Hurst said. “[We need] one more beyond the two we just got. We’re in the process of interviewing a few more. We’ve got several applicants for that. We like to have around 8-10 people on our part-time staff. We’ve got a few people right now who either have other full-time jobs or are not available. We need additional people to fill in the holes in the schedule as officers go away on training, vacation or take a day off. That’s what our part-time staff does year-round. We’ve got a lot of hours but not enough people, so we need a few more part-time people so that we have a larger pool of people to pick from.”

LUNCH BUDDIES

Lunch Buddies is a weekly food program for children age 3-18 living in the Lowell School District. Lunch Buddies meets once a week and provides five free meals each week. Children are able to shop for the meals in a pantry designed specifically for kids. Summer Lunch Buddies meet Tuesdays from June 13-Aug. 15 (except for July 4) from 1-7 pm at FROM.

THE BABY PANTRY of LOWELL

The Baby Pantry of Lowell will be open on Tuesdays from June 13-Aug 15 (except for July 4) from 1 -3 pm. They are also open every Monday 5:30-7:30 and Thursdays 2-4:30. Parents are welcome to come once a week. The Baby Pantry is a non-profit organization that helps area families with basic needs, like diapers, wipes, formula, baby food and clothing. They are located at 11535 Fulton Street E (FROM location). Connect with them on Facebook at Baby Pantry of Lowell or their website BabyPantryofLowell.com

BACKPACKS AND SCHOOL SUPPLIES

FROM provides backpacks and school supplies to school aged children living in the Lowell Area School District. Sign ups for Fall 2017 backpacks start Tuesday, June 20 – August 1 during Lunch Buddies at FROM. Backpack distribution will take place Aug. 8 and 15.

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

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June 9, 2017

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www.lowellartsml.org
www.discoverlowell.org



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Council meeting, continued

“In the past couple of weeks you may have been hearing or reading things about the biodigester from a number of different sources,” Burns said. “As city manager I want all residents to know that you can come to me or anyone on the city council with questions, comments or concerns at any time. The facts can get lost when translated through third parties, so I want to affirm that I will continue to communicate directly with residents through council meetings, videos or other updates on our website and social media and our monthly newsletter. I also want to affirm that at the request of Litehouse since May 23 we are working directly with them on their wastewater pre-treatment options. The group that spoke earlier this evening, they are not involved in those conversations. As a city we are committed to

working with our second largest employer on the solution.”

In an interview after the meeting Burns was asked what he will do with Pope's audit of the Chatham St. facility when he receives it.

“I would give it to the city attorney and let him look at it,” Burns said. “[He will] evaluate it, just to look at it. We're not working with them [Ross Pope and AWES]. [Pope] can give me anything he wants, it doesn't mean I have to do anything with it. They're not involved. They're a subsidiary of LEAD. We're not working with them. We're working with Litehouse.”

“We're not working with them, that's statement enough, I think,” mayor Michael DeVore added.

There was a brief update about police chief Steve Bukala, who is on unpaid leave after he was investigated and then charged with misuse of the



AWES owner Ross Pope said that his workers discovered what made the biodigester stink.

Michigan Law Enforcement Information Network, a misdemeanor punishable by 93 days imprisonment, a \$500 fine or both.

“He was charged this week with five misdemeanor counts of misuse of the law enforcement information network,” Burns said. “I believe he'll be arraigned sometime this week and hopefully that matter will be processed through the courts relatively shortly. He is on unpaid leave. I still need to conduct a personal investigation on the matter. I hope to have that, along with any disciplinary action I may take, within the next two to three weeks.”

Perry Beachum, one of the organizers of Pink Arrow Pride, updated the council about that group's activities and shared a story about some local kids who worked to raise money for the organization.

“This last weekend three young girls knocked on our door looking for Mrs. [Teresa] Beachum,” Beachum said. “They called themselves the 'Pink Arrow Club.' They had a lemonade stand and earned \$30 for Pink Arrow. This unselfish act is just another reason that Lowell is the place to be.”

The council also passed a lengthy list of amendments to their 2016-2017 budget, approved a “uniform video franchise agreement” with Comcast and discussed the city's insurance policy at the meeting.

Lowell city council's next regular meeting will be at city hall at 7 pm on Wednesday, July 5. They will also hold a 'Coffee With the Council' at the Chamber of Commerce building on the Riverwalk between 8 and 10 am on Saturday, July 1.

JuneGrass festival, continued

be interesting to see what he brings. He does a lot of the old style bluegrass music and that's what a lot of our members like. They like that traditional bluegrass sound, so that'll be good to hear. Our main headliner is the Trinity River Band. They are a family band out of Florida, they live north of Jacksonville, just across the Georgia line. It's the father, the mother, two daughters and a son. They do a lot of gospel music and bluegrass music. They've had a number of albums out already

and they're getting to be a pretty hot band. It's someone that we've been interested in for the last year or two so we got them to come up for JuneGrass. This year is their tenth anniversary playing as a family band. The father plays guitar, the mother plays bass, one daughter plays mandolin and does lead vocals, the son plays banjo and dobro, another daughter plays fiddle.”

Tickets to JuneGrass are \$35 for the whole weekend, \$15 for Friday and \$20 for Saturday.

WMBMA members can buy discounted tickets. You can buy your passes at the gate on the day of the festival or in advance at LowellArts or the fairground office. There are also additional fees for camping at the fairgrounds. More information, including a complete schedule of events, is available on

the WMBMA website, wmbma.org

“You're going to get a lot of bluegrass music,” Strassberger said. “There will be a lot of jamming; you can walk around [the fairgrounds] and see all the people playing. Early campers are welcome. Some come as early as the Sunday before. It's a big event.”

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Hildenbrand helps secure million dollar grant for Lowell Showboat

by Tim McAllister
lead reporter

State Senator Dave Hildenbrand has helped secure a \$1 million grant from the state of Michigan to help rebuild the Lowell Showboat. The funds will be available after Oct. 1, 2017.

"The Showboat is the icon of our community," Hildenbrand said. "When I heard the boat was no longer safe for public use, I went to work to find funding to assist in its rebuilding."

"We are extremely

ecstatic about the 1 million dollar grant, however with that said our mission is not complete," said Lowell Chamber of Commerce executive director, Liz Baker. We still need to raise funds and establish an endowment fund for the Lowell Showboat and the future generations to come."

Rebuild the Showboat committee chair, Lou D'Agostino added, "We are totally thrown back by this grant, we want to

continue fundraising for the Showboat. We need to look at the overall improvements of the Riverwalk and facilities making this area a showcase for our community and visitors to our City."

The Michigan legislature is spending this week completing the state's 2017-2018 budget. Hildenbrand is the chair of the Senate budget committee.



Plans are underway to rebuild Lowell's iconic Showboat and with the help of Senator Dave Hildenbrand, a \$1 million grant has been secured to help it come to fruition.

In the business world, the rearview mirror is always clearer than the windshield"
 ~ Warren Buffett (1930 -)

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viewpoint

to the editor

a better location

To The Editor,

The KCYF is going to move to a bigger, better location. That is a good, no, that is a GREAT thing. The fair is wonderful for a variety of reasons and the fact that it is growing is a sign of good health. Our kids were involved and I know firsthand the good that comes from KCYF, so the fact that it has to move from the current space is awesome.

We now have the opportunity to realize the dream of Jim Hall and many others. Most times when I cross the bridge and look at the current fairgrounds, I like to envision it as "The Jim & Bev Hall Campground."

One wonderful truth to remember is that the

campground will be on the convergence point of two rivers - the Flat and the Grand. The Hall Campground could offer several levels of camping experience - all of which would be impervious to flood waters. First - we can preserve some of the area for rustic camping. Folks who love tenting or just stringing up a hammock can do so. For the next level we can re-purpose some of the existing buildings to allow campers to sleep with the protection of a roof. Think of the horse stalls, they could provide semi-solid shelter while still allowing for an outdoorsy experience.

Then we can build some tree house-like, raised structures with four walls,

a roof and a door. Jim Hall once showed me some sketches for these when he wanted to put a campground on the island in the Flat River right by the existing fairgrounds. People could camp in these 12 months of the year if they so desired. (Yes, there are people who camp in the winter.... yikes!) The next level will be for trailers and RVs. That would involve putting down concrete slabs and electric outlets.

The fun happens when you expand to an even bigger picture by combining a wonderful, four star campground located on two rivers with all the cool trails for bikes and walking that are coming together in and around Lowell. We all need to remember that we are the national headquarters for the North Country Trail as well.

With a campground on the confluence of the two rivers, all kinds of opportunities will open up for kayak, canoe and tubing experiences and the potential of renting them to visitors. Add to this the potential rental of bikes because soon you will be able to hop on a bike and head up to Greenville or Ada, or Saranac and Ionia. Are you getting the vision? Do you see the wonderful possibilities for family-oriented, outdoor wonderfulness? I predict that it will be booked for months in advance. Hopefully, I am not the only one who caught Jim's vision. Now is the time when we could bring it to pass. Anybody else excited?

Cliff Yankovich
Lowell

We love to hear from you!

The Lowell Ledger welcomes your Letters to the Editor.

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

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125 years ago Lowell Journal June 24, 1892

The summer boom has come, a dime museum is holding forth in Pullen's vacant building, and a banjo soloist on the corner makes the welkin (we think that is the word) ring.

A party of tourists, six of them in two boats, passed through Lowell Sunday. They were from Rockford and started at Wabasis Lake, through Wabasis Creek and Flat River, to Grand River and to Plainfield, then across the country, four miles, home. They were enjoying themselves hugely. It takes a week to make the trip. They registered at Island Grove Park Hotel as D. C. Burch, Samuel Webber, Wm. Prescott, Daniel Devendorf, S. Betts and L. H. Wilkinson.

The weather was unfavorable for Mr Winegar's barn raising, only the bents and one plate was raised the first day appointed. Lowell was represented by Messrs Hicks, Winegar and Schneider.

There was a strike in the county jail last Friday and they refused to go to work at the stone pile. It is evident the strike was preconcerted as it was an

unanimous thing. There are, at present about 30 prisoners confined there and a diet of bread and weak water will be tried as a means to break the backbone of the strike.

Day Condon last April found on his creek bottoms a land turtle which had cut upon his shell the letters F. W. 18-74 Feb. 17. He cut the letters D. C. April 1891. June 24 his boys found him in the hollow north of their house, three quarters of a mile from where he was found last spring. Now if this should reach F. W. was it Feb., and where, Feb. seems to be an unusual time, but that was the month, near as we could make it. The other marks were very plain. Who will be the next to pick the fellow up?

Mr Kerr had a field of ten acres of oats and the cut worms have destroyed two thirds of them.

How easy it is to be mistaken. We had thought the cut worm's days were over some little time ago, but Mark Sneathen was planting corn over last Saturday.

Mr and Mrs Bert Lessiter visited their old friend Sunday—Mr A. L. Darrow, of Rockford, who sustained the fracture of his collar bone, and that of one limb, besides other injuries, from the unexpected fall of a tree.

O. Johnson, a Gd. Rapids saloon keeper, and a party of friends went to Spring Lake for some fishing. In endeavoring to pass from one end of the boat to the other, Johnson lost his balance, tipping the boat over, throwing the party into the water and Johnson was drowned. He leaves a wife and three children.

100 years ago The Lowell Ledger June 21, 1917

A Lowell hospital, Henry residence rented for that purpose. Mrs. Sadie Sauer of Jackson has rented the M. N. Henry residence and will immediately open a first class hospital there. She is accompanied by her brother and sister; and all three are experienced nurses. They find the location, apartments and surroundings ideal for hospital purposes; and the enterprise should fill a long-felt want, saving the ill of this section delay in critical cases and the tiresome removal to Grand Rapids hospitals. The Henry family

will make their home in Grand Rapids, but Mr. Henry will continue his drug business in Lowell.

Mid summer picnic, president of Ledger Press club issues official call. Last week the attention of The Ledger Press club was called to the date of June 30, Saturday, one thirty, p.m., on the beautiful lawn of our Editor and Mrs. Johnson for a picnic. President. Note—If the correspondents turn out in force, we plan to have a large group photo taken for publication in The Ledger. Don't miss being present.

Liberty bonds to the amount of \$36,300 were subscribed for in the Lowell banks, and this without any urging or drumming, and in the regular form of business only. As this is an agricultural district and extra efforts are being made to finance the farming interests for increased production, this free will offering speaks well for the patriotism of the people of Lowell and vicinity.

Walter Blakeslee is working on the road by Pratt Lake and Mr. and Mrs. Blakeslee are camping there. Fish dinner every day—may be.

Mrs. Alex Blakeslee returned Saturday from an extended visit in Lansing and Sunday evening she went to S. T. Seeley's to help care for the children who have the measles. Edwin, Wesley and Dorothy Hayden have been entertaining the measles the past week. Little Edwin was very sick, having had an attack of bronchitis also. The rest of the measley ones are on the gain.

The town line street of Alto has been recently graded. The drain on the south side has been enlarged and extended to meet the main ditch to the outlet. This is a good piece of work, as this was a bad piece of road with a sink hole at John Keiser's corner, that will now be dry. A corrugated iron culvert replaced the old tile that no longer served the purpose.

75 years ago The Lowell Ledger June 25, 1942

The new steel flag pole which was erected at the City Hall corner last week is now proudly carrying the

Social Security Q & A

Question: Do Members of Congress have to pay into Social Security?

Answer: Yes, they do. Members of Congress, the President and Vice President, federal judges, and most political appointees, have paid taxes into the Social Security program since January 1984. They pay into the system just like everyone else, no matter how long they have been in office. Learn more about Social Security benefits at www.socialsecurity.gov.

Question: How can I get proof of my benefits to apply for a loan?

Answer: If you need proof you get Social Security benefits, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and/or Medicare, you can request a benefit verification letter online through your personal *my Social Security* account at www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount. This letter is sometimes called a "budget letter," a "benefits letter," a "proof of income letter," or a "proof of award letter." You even can select the information you want included in your online benefit verification letter.

Question: I run a bed and breakfast. By this time every year, I am tired of all the paperwork involved with filing taxes. Is there an easier way for small businesses to file W-2s for their employees?

Answer: Absolutely. If you are a small business owner or entrepreneur, you should check out Social Security's Business Services Online (BSO) website. There, you can file your employees' W-2s and W-2cs

electronically and print out the W-2s to provide paper copies to your employees. You also can verify the Social Security numbers of your employees. Our online services are easy to use, fast, and secure. Visit our BSO page at www.socialsecurity.gov/bso

Question: How can I protect myself against identity theft?

Answer: First, don't carry your Social Security card with you. Keep it secure at home with your other important papers. Second, don't readily give out your Social Security number. While many banks, schools, doctors, landlords, and others will request your number, it is your decision whether to provide it. Ask if there is some other way to identify you in their records.

If you are the victim of identity theft, you should report it right away. To report identity theft, fraud, or misuse of your Social Security number, the Federal Trade Commission (the nation's consumer protection agency) recommends you:

- Place a fraud alert on your credit file by contacting one of the following companies (the company you contact is required to contact the other two, which will then place alerts on your reports):
- Equifax, 1-800-525-6285; or

Social Security Q & A, continued, page 7



Three things cannot be long hidden: the sun, the moon, and the truth.

~ Buddha

health



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

diabetic neuropathy

Diabetic neuropathy (DN) is a group of nerve disorders that can cause numbness and pain. Various nerves in the body can be involved, including the feet, legs, arms and internal organs like the heart, digestive systems and sex organs. The risk of developing neuropathy increases the longer a person has diabetes.

People develop different problems based on the specific type and location of the neuropathy. Most often, patients report a tingling and burning sensation in their feet and hands. There can be increased sensitivity to touch and varying degrees of pain. There may be loss of muscle in the feet, legs, hands and hips, along with difficulties with walking, balance and coordination. With numbness of the feet,

pressure points from shoes may not be felt, leading to ulcers and infections.

Patients with diabetes should have a detailed foot examination every year to look for early signs of DN. The most important part of treatment of DN is to achieve good control of blood sugar levels. Patients who smoke should quit to help reduce problems related to neuropathy. There are medications to help with pain due to DN. Foot self-care plays a central role: this includes daily self examination using a mirror to look for red spots, cuts, swelling or blisters. In addition, careful cutting and filing of nails, regular use of moisturizing lotions, wearing thick soled socks and using well-fitting shoes that allow the toes to move.

happy birthday



- | | |
|---|---|
| JUNE 21
Dennis McClure, Bill Burt, Heather Brown, Jimmy Brown, Sean Briggs. | JUNE 25
Ann Wittenbach, Kim Raines, Angela Lonero, Judy Taylor. |
| JUNE 22
Michael Korte, Byron Pat Brenk, Jim Francis I, Ken Stager III. | JUNE 26
Cathy Acker, Velma Perry, Dwane Cavanaugh, Pat Roth, Hunter Jamieson, David Scott, J.R. Alstine, Elliot Peel. |
| JUNE 23
Jane Rogers, Brinna Manszewski, Katy Fetterhoff, Quinton Wingerter. | JUNE 27
Dylan Schneider, Aaron Kroemer. |
| JUNE 24
Saralyn Vezino, Gay Pfaller, Ramee Guild, Fred Fyan, Roger Barr. | |

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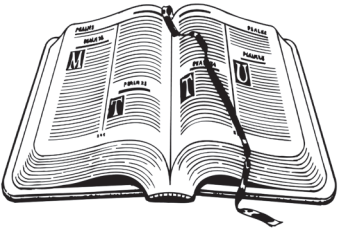
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area churches



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Sunday School..... 9:15 AM

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Sunday School..... 11:20 AM
Evening Worship..... 6:00 PM
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Christi Swain, Director of Children's Ministries

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SUNDAY School..... 11:00 AM (Nursery-Adult)
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Sr. Pastor - Brad Brillhart

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Social Security Q & A, continued

- Trans Union, 1-800-680-7289; or
- Experian, 1-888-397-3742.
- Review your credit report for inquiries from companies you have not contacted, accounts you did not open, and debts on your accounts you cannot explain;
 - Close any accounts you know, or believe, have been tampered with or opened fraudulently;
 - File a report with your local police or the police in the community where the identity theft took place; and
 - File a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission at 1-877-438-4338 (TTY 1-866-653-4261).

Question: Someone stole my Social Security number, and it's being used repeatedly. Does Social Security issue new Social Security numbers to victims of repeated identity theft?

Answer: Identity theft is one of the fastest growing crimes in America, so you aren't alone. If you've done all you can to identify and fix the problem, including contacting the Federal Trade Commission, but someone is still using your number, Social Security may assign you a new number. If you decide to apply for a new number, you'll need to prove your identity, age, and U.S. citizenship or immigration status. You'll also need to provide evidence you're having ongoing problems because of the misuse of your current Social Security number. You can read more about identity theft at www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs

Question: My same-sex partner and I recently married. Will we qualify for Social Security benefits?

Answer: You may be eligible to apply for Social Security benefits. Many factors affect your eligibility for benefits, including how long you worked and your age. Social Security is now processing more claims in which entitlement or eligibility is affected by a same-sex relationship. We encourage you to apply for benefits right away, even if you aren't sure you're eligible. Applying now will protect you against the loss of any potential benefits. You can apply safely and securely at

www.socialsecurity.gov/applyonline. Learn more about Social Security for same-sex couples by visiting www.socialsecurity.gov/same-sexcouples.

Question: I've decided I want to retire. Now what do I do?

Answer: The fastest and easiest way to apply for retirement benefits is to go to www.socialsecurity.gov/onlineservices. Use our online application to apply for Social Security retirement or spouses benefits. To do so, you must:

- Be at least 61 years and 9 months old;
- Want to start your benefits in the next four months; and
- Live in the United States or one of its commonwealths or territories.

college news

Alto resident Amanda Smith earned a spot on the University of Dayton spring 2017 dean's list, which honors undergraduate students achieving a minimum 3.5 GPA for the semester. Smith was also among the nearly 1,400 undergraduates receiving bachelor's degrees from

the University of Dayton during the spring 2017 commencement ceremony.

Butler University in Indianapolis graduated 955 students on May 11. Included in the graduates were Brooks Carey of Ada, and Alexandra Heffron of Lowell.

...

Whoever is careless with the truth in small matters cannot be trusted with important matters.

~ Albert Einstein

GRATTAN TOWNSHIP

Regular Meeting 7:00 p.m.
Synopsis of Minutes
June 12, 2017

Motions Approved:

1. Approved sewer connect for Bill Makuski
2. Appointed Lisa Sostecke as Planning Commission Rep on Zoning Board of Appeals.
3. Appointed John Poulias as Zoning Board of Appeals alternate.
4. To compose a petition for Cowan Lake Sewer Project.
5. Timber Contract for Cell Tower Site
6. To seek council with other townships for tribunal court.

Our next Township Meeting will be **July 10, 2017**
At 7:00 p.m.

The approved minutes may be reviewed on our website at www.grattantownship.org

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PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

LOWELL CHARTER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

PUBLIC NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Planning Commission of the Charter Township of Lowell will hold a public hearing on July 10, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. at the Lowell Township Hall, 2910 Alden Nash Ave. SE, Lowell, MI 49331, concerning an application to amend the zoning map of the Charter Township of Lowell.

The principal provisions of the application to amend the map of the Zoning Ordinance can be summarized as follows:

Amend the zoning map of the Zoning Ordinance to allow "small engine sales and service, and sales and service of lawn equipment and power sports equipment" as a conditional use at 14843 Fulton Street on parcel number 41-20-01-200-003, in the C, General Commercial Zoning District, further described as "the south 500 feet of the W 330 feet of the SW 1/4, NE 1/4, north of the centerline of M-21, section T6N R9W"

A public hearing to receive public input and comment on the proposed Conditional Rezoning, is required by the Township Zoning Ordinance effective October 7, 2009, and by the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (Act 110 of 2006), as amended.

The application is on file and may be examined at the offices of the Lowell Township Clerk, 2910 Alden Nash Ave SE, Lowell, MI 49331, during Township office hours. All interested persons may attend the public hearing and comment on the application to amend the Zoning Ordinance. Written comments concerning the application may be submitted to the Township office, at the above-stated address, up to the time of the public hearing.

Dated: June 15, 2017
Lowell Charter Township
Planning Commission

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

LOWELL CHARTER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

SPECIAL LAND USE

Notice is hereby given that the Lowell Charter Township Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on July 10, 2017, at 7:00 p.m., at the Lowell Township Hall, 2910 Alden Nash Ave. SE, Lowell, MI 49331, Michigan, to hear citizens' comments regarding a request for a Private Street permit. The principal provisions of the application for the Private Street can be summarized as follows:

Kissing Rock LLC, David S. Rapp, Owner Representative for a Condominium Project and Private Street on parcel number 41-20-17-100-044, located on Kissing Rock Avenue, further described as N 1237.50 FT NW 1/4 LYING E OF CL OF KISSING ROCK AVE EX COM 605.0 FT N 89D 11M 55S W ALONG N SEC LINE FROM N 1/4 COR TH S 2D 54M 24S W 465.32 FT TH N 89D 11M 55S W 752.58 FT TO CL OF KISSING ROCK AVE TH NELY ALONG SD CL TO N SEC LINE S 89D 11M 55S E ALONG N SEC LINE 723.61 FT TO BEG ALSO E 578.48 FT OF FOLDESC - E 1/2 OF S 85 A. OF NW 1/4 EX S 1/2 SE 1/4 NW 1/4 ALSO N 1/2 SW 1/4 NE 1/4 * SEC 17 T6N R9W. 68.70 Acres.

A public hearing to receive public input and comment on the proposed Private Street within the Kissing Rock Estates development, is required by the Township Zoning Ordinance effective February 25, 2010, and by the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (Act 110 of 2006), as amended.

The application is on file and may be examined at the offices of the Lowell Township Clerk, 2910 Alden Nash Ave SE, Lowell, MI 49331, during Township office hours. All interested persons may attend the public hearing and comment on the application to amend the Zoning Ordinance. Written comments concerning the application may be submitted to the Township office, at the above-stated address, up to the time of the public hearing.

Dated: June 15, 2017
Lowell Charter Township
Planning Commission

Summer begins to sizzle on the Riverwalk

by Kathryn Atwood
contributing reporter

Music lovers took a trip down under last Thursday evening at the first Lowell Showboat Sizzlin' Summer Concert of the season. Harper & The Midwest Kind took to the stage bringing a bit of Australia along to the premier of the thirteen week concert series.

Australian native singer and songwriter Peter Harper, known simply as Harper in the music industry, lit up the stage with his big personality, bluesy voice and Aussie accent. "People from back home ask me why I would move from Australia to Michigan," said Harper as he greeted the crowd and shared a bit of his own musical history, "I always respond, 'well, your not here, for starters,'" he said with a laugh hinting at the humor he would share with the crowd over the two hour set.

Harper lent his deep vocals with both the harmonica and the didgeridoo. Developed by indigenous Australians and used for approximately the last 1,500 years, the didgeridoo emits a low and somewhat haunting tone that provided extra depth to the musical performance.

"It is a sound I grew up with, so it seemed natural to add it to my songwriting, particularly when the lyrics relate to the plight of the Aborigines in Australia. When I added the didgeridoo to the more traditional blues instruments, it worked," said Harper of his unique use of the instrument.

Harper's rocking backup band consists of Mike Howe, James Norris and Mario Copeland of the Detroit based Midwest Kind who provide a pair of electric

guitars and slamming drums to the quartet. Calling his own sound "World Blues" the award winning vocalist sang tracks from his latest CD "Show Your Love" which features 11 original tracks and has appeared at number three on Billboard charts here in the USA where it remained in the top 10 for six months. Its songs pull from all generations of music hitting upon 50s rhythms, the pure messages of the 60s and the funk of the 70s while incorporating his own Australian roots. An award-winner in Australia prior to his American label debut in 2005, Harper has released a total of six albums including a live performance that can be purchased online.

Music fans were not able to enter the Showboat as it is currently shut down.

Guests were still

able to enjoy spirits in a small courtyard developed by event organizers to replace the venue. Funds are currently being raised throughout the community to rebuild the boat, including a planned concert on Friday, August 26, that will complete the summer series titled *Rocking for the Showboat*.

The show will feature regional heavy hitters Alive & Well, Lowell favorite The Adams Family, young rockers The Preservers as well as vocalist Josh Rose, Time Hungry and The Upstage Crew Blues Band.

This Thursday's concert will welcome new local favorite Brena. The Grand Rapids based band will share their Motown infused modern rock on stage Thursday from 7-9 pm. Bleacher and lawn seating are available.



Lead singer Harper on stage in front of The Midwest Kind last Thursday evening.



A nice crowd gathered for the debut of the annual summer concert series.

Red Barn Market petting zoo expands for more hands-on fun

by Kathryn Atwood
contributing reporter

Red Barn Market has added a petting zoo to their seasonal concert series. Since the market's opening in 2014 animals have been a point of focus for their already wide and loyal customer base.

According to owner Barb Kropf-Roth, "Customers have been asking since we opened if we would have more animals than the chickens and horses already on our farm. Last spring, we added a few goats and the response was so great we expanded this year with donkeys, lambs, calves, ducklings and chicks."

The barnyard is open daily until 8 pm; there is a

small playground and guests can go inside the animal habitats for a hands-on farm experience. The barnyard is currently expecting their newest arrival, a baby donkey, to be born to current resident Frances. The foal will be named based on public vote. "As soon as baby comes we will make an announcement via social media and start taking suggestions. We will narrow it down to a couple and let the customers vote," said Kropf-Roth.

Already considered a success by staffers and attendees, the barnyard has plans for additional expansion next summer. "We will be expanding with more animals next year.

Our customers have loved our free Barnyard and bring their families back time and time again for a visit."

This free summer attraction joins the ranks of the Red Barn's already popular "Music at the Market concert series." They offer a free weekly show each Tuesday night during the summer months, with the exception of Independence Day and fair week dates. The series opened with The Weatherheads last week and will continue with the Hark Up Swing Band,

Mike Everhart, The Larsen Brothers, Tenderfoot, Upstage Crew, Terry Lee and the Cat and The Preservers.

"Customers are welcome to bring chairs, blankets or sit at the picnic tables. Bands play from 7:30 to 9 pm on our patio under the twinkle lights. We have a variety of family-friendly bands, including classic rock, country, blues and swing," said Kropf-Roth.

Inside the market guests will find ice cream. "Our market offers a full-

service ice cream shop and café with shakes, sundaes, flurries, slushies, cones, burgers, hotdogs and more," said Kropf-Roth, who also highlighted the selection of fresh produce including their own heirloom tomatoes and the variety of locally made products.

Open year-round, the fun at the market continues into the fall when they will offer u-pick opportunities for both pumpkins and apples and host several Halloween events. Christmas activities

are also already scheduled, including pictures with Santa and being a stop on the annual Christmas Through Lowell.

The market's summer hours are Tuesday through Friday 6 am -10 pm, Saturday 8:30 am - 10 pm, Sunday from 12 pm - 10 pm and Monday from 9 am - 10 pm. More details regarding the petting zoo and the musical lineup can be found online on the Red Barn Market Facebook page.



It's fun feeding the calves in the barnyard.



A young guest spends time with the goats in the Barnyard at Red Barn Market.

EARTH TALK™

Questions & Answers About Our Environment

Dear EarthTalk: What's the latest in greener booze? Are there any good organic beers, wines or liquors out there?

— Mike Richardson, Norwalk, OH

Perhaps no other industry has responded to the greening of consumer preferences quite like beverage producers. From wine to beer to spirits, greener choices made from local and organic ingredients and packaged in lighter-weight containers abound. Indeed, getting a buzz on has never felt so good.

Brewers' great contribution to the greening of the industry has been a renewed focus on localization. Back in the 1980s, there were less than 100 breweries across the U.S., most of them part of big multi-national corporations. But today Americans have upwards of 5,000 breweries at their beck and call, many which source ingredients from nearby farms and save money and greenhouse gas pollution by not shipping their products out of their local region.

Besides local sourcing and distribution, hundreds of brewers across the country are also going green by choosing organic barley and hops. Some labels to look for in sustainable beer include Peak Organic and Brooklyn Brewery, both based out of New York, and Colorado-based New Belgium.

For its part, the wine industry has made great strides in recent years by upping its production of organic wines, too. Frey Vineyards, Grgich Hills Estate, Porter Creek, Cain, Ernest Vineyards and Pacific Rim are just a few of the U.S. based winemakers embracing organically grown grapes.

Winemakers are also showing green leadership through product packaging, with many eschewing glass bottles in favor of cardboard boxes or plastic-reinforced Tetra Paks. Not only does the process of creating traditional



Mexico's Tequila Ocho lets some of the blue agave plants at its Los Fresnos ranch reach full flower—a process that can take up to eight years and makes the plants no longer able to produce tequila—for the sake of local endangered bat populations that depend on them to thrive.

wine bottles emit large amounts of greenhouse gases, the weight of the glass also adds markedly to transportation emissions—nearly half of the products' weight is in the bottles themselves.

Wine blogger Tyler Colman of DrVino.com estimates that boxed wine generates about half the greenhouse gas emissions per 750 mL as wine in glass bottles. That said, Tetra Paks aren't so easy to recycle and thus are more likely to be tossed into landfill-bound trash than their glass counterparts. But aficionados skeptical of wine in a box might want to taste test French Rabbit's Pinot Noir, created from organic ingredients and looking svelte in its Tetra Pak.

When it comes to sustainability, hard liquor may be the last to the party but is rallying hard to catch up. Mexico's Tequila Ocho, for instance, lets some of the agave plants on its Los Fresnos ranch reach full flower—a process that can take up to eight years and makes the plants no longer able to produce tequila—for the sake of local endangered bat populations that depend on healthy, flowering agave plants to thrive.

Meanwhile, California's Square One not only uses organic grains in its vodka but sources a significant amount of the electricity needed in its production facilities from a local wind farm. Kentucky-based Maker's Mark uses locally sourced grains in its famous bourbon and converts production waste into energy to power its distillery. And Puerto Rico's DonQ rum composts its waste and uses runoff to irrigate its fields while powering its still with excess steam from its treatment plant.

CONTACTS: Tetra Pak, www.tetrapak.com; French Rabbit, www.frenchrabbit.com; Frey Vineyards, www.freywine.com; Dr. Vino, www.drvin.com; Tequila Ocho, www.ochotequila.com; Square One, www.squareoneorganicspirits.com; DonQ Rum, www.donq.com.

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Murray Lake Elementary's Volunteer of the Month

First grade teacher Nancy Breuker explains, "Chery Valentine, Brady Acheson's grandma, has been a great addition to my classroom helpers this year. She is incredibly dependable, serving every Wednesday morning since the first of the year. She loves the kids and they love her as well. She is also willing to tackle any

job I send her way. It is a real pleasure working with her."

"I volunteer because I believe the teachers can use an extra set of hands to help with the tasks they have no time for and because I love interacting with my delightful grandkids in their classroom environments. It's a great way to keep in

touch with them and their friends and I consider it a privilege to be welcomed into their classrooms each year," commented Chery Valentine.

Volunteer of the Month, Chery Valentine, surrounded by students.



Staff Members of the Month at MLE

Karen Eldridge and Denise Washburn have been named Murray Lake Elementary Staff Members of the Month for May.

Kindergarten teacher Maria McGovern said, "We appreciate your dedication to keeping our kids safe out at parent pickup. Day after day, you both are out there on your own time helping kids get into their cars safely. Thank you so much for your help. It is greatly appreciated."

"I love MLE. While I enjoy teaching and interacting with my first-grade students daily, as they are some of the coolest, most interesting kids around, the incredible staff also stands out to me. The friendships and support I have experienced from staff members make working at Murray Lake feel less like a job and more like a family," replied Eldridge.



Karen Eldridge, left, and Denise Washburn with students.



Bold legislation would boost Michigan to 50 percent renewable energy by 2035

Michigan would generate 50 percent of its electricity from clean, renewable sources by 2035 and greatly reduce energy waste under soon to be introduced bills in the Legislature. The package of bills would reduce energy costs, create jobs and build upon recently enacted energy laws.

“Our legislation that increases the renewable energy standard to 50 percent by 2035 will spur innovation in Michigan’s clean energy industry and create good jobs for Michiganders,” said Sen. Rebekah Warren (D-Ann Arbor). “Expanding renewable energy will boost Michigan’s green energy sector and make our state a national leader within this emerging industry.”

Energy laws enacted in April increased the renewable energy standard to 15 percent by 2021 and maintained the current energy efficiency standard of one percent, which sunsets in 2021. The legislation introduced today will expand on those provisions by:

- increasing the renewable energy standard to 50 percent by 2035; and
- increasing the energy efficiency standard to two percent energy savings per year, beginning in 2022.

“Burning fossil fuels like coal and oil spews dangerous pollutants into our air and water and this legislation will improve the health of Michigan families, children and seniors,” said Rep. Jon Hoadley (D-Kalamazoo). “Accelerating the transition away from dirty fossil fuels to clean energy will protect the health of Michiganders, reduce asthma and lung disease and ultimately save lives.”

Sen. Warren and Rep. Hoadley are introducing bills that would increase the renewable energy standard. Sen. Hoon-Yung Hopgood (D-Taylor) and Rep. Donna Lasinski (D-Scio Township) will introduce bills that would increase the energy efficiency standard.

“The cheapest electricity is the electricity we don’t use and boosting investment in energy efficiency will rein in rising electricity costs while reducing pollution,” said Rep. Lasinski. “The current energy efficiency standards have saved ratepayers more than \$5 billion since 2009, which is why we should double down on reducing energy waste to save ratepayers money while making Michigan a leader in designing and manufacturing energy-efficient appliances that fuel our economy.”

“Reducing pollution in our air and water supports our tourism industry, which drives Michigan’s economy and attracts visitors from across the globe to our amazing beaches, lakes and rivers,” said Sen. Hopgood. “Expanding clean, renewable energy and energy efficiency is good for our economy and will help protect our precious Great Lakes, which are part of our culture, our way of life and our economy. That’s why this legislation is so important and I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this bold package.”

When encountering Michigan’s snakes, it’s best to leave them be

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources gets many questions this time of year about Michigan’s snakes. Eighteen different species of snakes call Michigan home, but only one of them poses any real harm to humans.

“Whether you think snakes are terrifying or totally cool, it is best just to leave them be,” said Hannah Schauer, wildlife communications coordinator for the DNR.

The snake the DNR gets the most questions about is the eastern massasauga rattlesnake, the only venomous species found in Michigan. This snake rarely is seen and is listed as a threatened species by the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service due to declining populations from habitat loss. As its name implies, the massasauga rattlesnake does have a segmented rattle on its tail. It should not be confused with the other, harmless species of snake in Michigan that do not have segmented rattles, but will buzz their tails if approached or handled.

“The massasauga rattlesnake tends to be a very shy snake that will avoid humans whenever possible,” said Schauer. “They spend the vast majority of their time in wetlands hunting for mice and aren’t often encountered.”

Schauer said that when a massasauga is encountered, if the snake doesn’t feel threatened, it will let people pass without revealing its location.

“If you do get too close without realizing it,



Michigan is home to 18 different species of snakes, 17 of which are harmless to humans.

a rattlesnake will generally warn you of its presence by rattling its tail while you are still several feet away,” Schauer said. “If given room, the snake will slither away and likely will not be seen again.”

Rattlesnake bites, while extremely rare in Michigan, can and do occur. Anyone who is bitten should seek professional medical attention.

Learn more about the massasauga and get more snake safety tips.

Another snake that can cause quite a stir is the eastern hog-nosed snake, one of the many harmless species found in Michigan. When threatened, hognose snakes puff up with air, flatten their necks and bodies and hiss loudly – this has led to local names like „puff adder“ or „hissing viper.“ If this act is unsuccessful, they will writhe about, excrete a

foul-smelling musk and then turn over with mouth agape and lie still, as though dead. Despite this intimidating behavior, hog-nosed do not pose a threat to humans.

Michigan snakes do not attack, chase or lunge at people or seek out human contact. If you have spotted a snake, stay at least three feet away from the head to avoid getting bit. Handling or harassing snakes is the most common cause for humans getting bit. Simply put, if left alone, Michigan snakes will leave people alone.

To find out what other kinds of snakes Michigan has and how to tell the difference between them, check out the „60-Second Snakes“ video series on the DNR’s YouTube channel.

Learn more about Michigan’s snakes by visiting mi.gov/wildlife and

clicking on the “Wildlife Species” button, then selecting “Amphibians and Reptiles.”

Please consider reporting any reptile or amphibian sightings to the Michigan Herp Atlas research project to help monitor amphibian and reptile populations in the state and protect these important Michigan residents for future generations. Visit www.miherpatlas.org for more information.

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources is committed to the conservation, protection, management, use and enjoyment of the state’s natural and cultural resources for current and future generations. For more information, go to www.michigan.gov/dnr

School retirement reforms approved by House

The Michigan House approved landmark reforms for the state’s school employee retirement system, clearing the path for more funding to go directly to the classroom.

“This vote is a giant step in the right direction for Michigan,” said Rep. Thomas Albert of Lowell, sponsor of the House legislation. “It keeps our promises to retirees and current school employees and it also moves us toward a better future.”

“This legislation will free up more money directly for the classroom, investing in the next generation of teachers and the students who will depend on them,” Albert said. “Our great

public school employees will have more control over their own financial future, while we protect taxpayers from a growing liability.”

The legislation provides an improved 401(k)-style plan for current and new public school employees. It also gives employees an annuity option through the 401(k), if they desire a guaranteed portion of retirement income. The plan will give new school employees more control and freedom to manage their own retirement savings because the money will follow them throughout their careers, even if they change jobs or professions.

New school employees will have the option of

selecting a revised hybrid plan – with elements of a 401(k) and pension -- that is more stable, predictable and less risky than the current version. The current hybrid plan created in 2010 will be closed to new entrants.

Benefits for retired and current workers in Michigan’s public schools do not change, except in one category where the benefits improve. Current school employees who already have opted for a 401(k) plan will get the new, more lucrative defined contribution plan along with new hires.

Michigan’s broken public school employee pension and retiree health care system is buried in debt, with an unfunded liability

approaching \$40 billion – including \$29 billion on the pension side alone. The debt costs the state and local schools nearly \$2,000 per student annually and the debt has been rising each year.

“Too much of our school funding has gone to paying pension liabilities for too long,” said Albert, who worked as an investor for the state pension system before his election to the Legislature. “With this vote today, we are saying we will no longer tolerate passing along debt to our kids.”

The legislation affecting the Michigan Public School Employees Retirement System advances to the Senate.

obituaries

WINGEIER

Kathryn (Kloosterman) Buttrick Wingeier, age 90, left her earthly body Sunday, June 18, 2017. She was preceded in death by her parents, Nick and Mildred (Schwab) Kloosterman; two husbands, Grover Buttrick and Walter Wingeier; brother and sister-in-law, Berwyn and Shirley Kloosterman; and brother-in-law and sister-in-law, C. Harold and Frances Buttrick. Kathryn is survived by her children, June (Doug) Vander Molen, Elwood (Renee) Wingeier, Alan (Cathy) Wingeier, and Carolyn (Terry) Cavanaugh; sister, Reathel (Austin) Waldron; grandchildren, Derek Vander Molen, Bethany (Seth) Hughes, Alex (Robyn) Wingeier, Robert (Kristen) Wingeier, Chris Germann, Eric (Jennifer) Harms, Patrick (Myla) Cavanaugh; 11 great-grandchildren; 3 great-great-grandchildren; also several nieces and nephews. Kathryn also leaves a devoted friend, Jane Wood and her "adopted" family members, Christine (Bill) Brooks and family, Tom (Diane) Cribley and family, Hollis B. Locke II and family. Kathryn loved being part of the "heart" of Cascade – taking care of firefighters, deputies and teens that showed up at her door. In later years she made quilts for friends, family and Cascade Christian's Second Mile House, where she volunteered for over 40 years. Visitation will be held Tuesday, June 20, 4:00-7:00 p.m. at O'Brien-Eggebeen-Gerst Chapel, 3980 Cascade Rd. SE, Grand Rapids. Services will be held Wednesday, June 21, 1:00 p.m. at Cascade Christian Church, 2829 Thornapple River Dr. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49546. Rev. Jill Forton officiating. Memorial gifts may be made to Cascade Christian Church or to the charity of your choice.



In loving memory of
WOOD, JAMES D. (WOODY)
 June 8, 1936 - June 25, 2010
 His charming ways and smiling face
 Are a pleasure to recall,
 He had a kindly word for each
 And died beloved of all.
 Always missed by,
 Wife Ruth, Troy and Angie and family
 Jeff and Candice and family

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 the lowell ledger
 105 N. Broadway, 897-9261

Looking Back, continued

grand old Stars and Stripes from its masthead which is some 80-odd feet above the pavement. The new flag measures 15 feet by 10 feet and is visible from a long distance. "Long may she wave o'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!"

Fire destroys barn but house is saved. Fire of unknown origin which occurred around 6:30 Tuesday evening, completely destroyed a barn, a car parked in the barn and an outhouse at 1078 Vergennes Rd. The property had just been purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Will Geary of Grand Rapids and they were not yet completely settled. The barn and outhouse were covered by insurance but the car, which was quite an old model, was not covered. The Lowell fire department was called and did a fine job of keeping the fire from spreading to the house, which was directly in line with the blaze being whipped up by a strong west wind. There being no city water hydrant out that far, the water was pumped from a cistern which happened to be full, and which went quite a ways in helping save the house.

Newspapers, as a matter of public service, are called upon to publish many unpleasant reminders and this paragraph is one such. We refer to the federal law governing auto use tax stamps, which are now on sale at all postoffices throughout the country. All automobiles and other power-driven vehicles, including motorcycles, used on the highways must have a new stamp by next Wednesday, July 1. The stamp costs \$5.00, is good for one year and should be placed in a location on the car which can be easily seen. Obtainable at your nearest postoffice.

50 years ago Lowell Ledger June 22, 1967

The Ramona Railway train which moved from Grand Rapids to Lowell in 1957, will resume running this Sunday, after a four-year stillness of operation. The novelty train, located at the west city limits, on M 21, is operated by H. D. Glidden.

New street signs on all the city streets are being installed. The new green and white signs are educating the citizens of the community on street names. For years the standard reply when asked a street name and number was, "Who are you looking for?" Few members of the community knew the names of the streets.

Main Street improvements continue with Curtis Distributing Company painting their building at the corner of Lincoln Lake and West Main St., and Lowell Bakery is painting their two buildings on East Main Street. Christiansen Drug Co., is remodeling their Main Street frontage, and will close off one of their entrance doors. A new sidewalk is being installed on the south side of Main St. by Bernard Baer and Dr. Robert Kyser.

A new antique shop is opening this Thursday in the old bank building, at East Main and Monroe Streets. The ViLee-Bob Antique Shop specializing in china and glass, and is being opened by Mrs. Violet Dasher of Graden City, Mrs. Theo Schutt of Lowell will manage the wholesale and retail operation here, and will be open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily.

25 years ago The Lowell Ledger June 24, 1992

Local go-kart racer Jonathan Smith continued his pursuit of a state driving championship this past weekend. The Lowell driver won both heats and the feature race after qualifying the fastest at Palmayra Speedway near Adrian. The Michigan State Championship series is a four race program at four different race tracks located throughout Michigan. Competing in the 12 to 15 year old bracket the young driver has now won the first two races and carries a comfortable point lead going into the third race to be held at Ravenna Motorsports Park in mid-July. Smith also currently holds the point lead at his home track located in East Lansing, where he has won nine out of 11 races. The East Lansing track draws drivers from all over the state but ironically second place is held by a classmate of Smith, Lowell resident, Curt Symko. Smith is the junior driver on the team sponsored by the Raber Racing Engines Shop of Allegan.

A parade is measured by the number of entries,

its organization and whether it starts on time. Lowell Showboat parade chairman Dee Brown and assistant Dick Korb struck a chord with all three Thursday, as the largest Lowell Showboat Parade ever marched through the streets of Lowell. The 75 parade entries marked the biggest parade in Lowell since 1976 when 120 entries participated in the Bicentennial parade. Brown and Korb credited the success of the parade to following up and following through in regards to work in organizing the entries.

Someone must have told the "Weather Gods" that the Lowell Showboat would open up on Wednesday. The storm that rocked most of Michigan last Wednesday, did not leave Lowell without leaving its mark on the Showboat. Pro Audio Inc., 282 S Dormaz SW, Grandville, contracted out to supply lights and sound for The Lettermen, The Smothers Brothers, and The Oak Ridge Boys, spent most of Wednesday preparing for Thursday night's show. Everything was going well until the storm's high winds came whistling through at 5:30 and grounded eight speakers from their 10-15 foot towers. Pro Audio's employee Mark Feugel said he was not sure the total amount of damage, but said it was well over \$10,000. "We didn't have them battened down," Feugel said. "This is the first major weather related accident Pro Audio has had." Feugel said the company's first concern is to make sure all the band's requirements are met. "The contracts sent by the performers are usually 4-12 pages. Surprisingly, the big bands aren't usually the most demanding." The Pro Audio employee said most performers just want things done right. "The Smothers Brothers are very professional and want things done right. The Oak Ridge Boys also want things a certain way." The weather at mid-week last week made the first couple of days at the Lowell Showboat nerve-wracking for the men and women from Pro Audio. Feugel said there are benefits to working at a community event. "People here in Lowell are very helpful in getting us what we want and need. It's a community effort and if a board is needed someone runs and gets us a board." The Pro Audio employee said they arrived on Thursday, but the Showboat gate was locked. "A man who was there setting up a booth, said he'd go get the guy who was sweeping the streets, that man had a key and let us in the gate," Feugel said. "This is definitely a community volunteer effort."

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

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7	6	1	8	9	3	5	4	2
5	7	4	2	8	6	3	9	1
8	2	9	7	3	1	4	5	6
1	3	6	9	5	4	2	8	7

Lowell High School 3rd trimester Honor Roll

3rd trimester term GPA must be a 3.000 or higher to qualify based on final grades

9TH GRADE

Anderson Anschutz
Bradley Baas
Brandon Baker
Conner Balabuch
Grace Barber
Neely Bardwell
Kathleen Basinger
Krin Beach
Emma Bennett
Marissa Berg
Jacquelyn Bileth
Isabella Blakely
Ryleigh Blough
Ashley Boehr
Samuel Bonner
Lauren Booth
Gabrielle Brace
Leah Bredwell
Mary Buechler
Zachary Cardis
Cameron Cheney
Shelby Chumney
Caleb Clark
Collin Clark
Jacob Cleaver
Audrey Conrad
Jennifer Cooper
Lillian Cooper
Jarrett Corder
Lucas Cossar
Savanah Crace
Danica Cupp
Nolan Cusack
Jacob Cutler
Abigail Davis
Mackenzie DeBold
Olivia DeCator
Logan DeKok
Jaron DeVito
Hannah Diamond
Bernie Diekevers
Ellery Droog
Miles Droski
Delaney Duimstra
Brett Evink
Benjamin Fabiano
Akalia Foreman
James Fotis
Aaron Fox
Ember Fox
Tristan Fox
Molly Frederickson
Aaron Fritsma
Riley Fuller
Anna Gaskin
Brock Gemmell
MaKenzie Givens
Sidney Gordon
Brayden Gould
Aubrie Halbert
Madison Halfmann
Braiden Hamilton
Emma Hancock
Jenna Happie
Ashlie Hathaway
Khloe Hayes
Emily Hoeksema
Ronald Hofmann
Roy Hoin
Sophia Hornik
Jacob Hough
Craig Hudson
Logan Hudson
Elliana James
Dawson Jankowski
Abraham Jannenga
Willem Jewell
Adrienne Johnson
Katelyn Johnson
Mackenzie Jordan
Jacob Kanoza
Addison Karp
Sophia Katsul
Collier Kaufman
Mya Kaywood
Aidan Kelley
Benjamin Kinnucan
Benjamin Klein
Alexander Kleinedler
Connor Kleinedler
Kambry Kloosterman
Kara Korcek
Nicholas Korhorn
Lucas Kramer
William Kuhns
Brianna Lachowski
Grace Langdon
Jared Lardie
Keegan Laux
Grant LeBarre
Dominic Lohide
Phoebe Looman
Jenavieve Lyon
Karissa Mansfield
Natasha Marsh
Matthew Martin
William Martin
Nolan Mazarka

Grady McDonald
Abigail McMillian
Mitchell McMillian
Grace McNaughton
Alyssa Melnik
Meghan Meyer
Nigel Mika
Jada Millhisler
Steven Moore
Graysen Nauta
Ian O'Strander
Koby O'Strander
Zachary Oberlin
Emma Organek
Austin Pallottini
John Patrick
Brennan Pawloski
Dominik Peplinski
Seth Perez
Isiah Perysian
Samantha Peterson
Reina Placer
Alexander Pollock
Sierra Post
Grant Pratt
Colton Prill
Breyden Race
Kaitlyn Rankin
Alexis Reedy
Madelaine Revere
Cade Rogers
Paige Romig
Devan Rutz
Abigail Sandborn
Kyla Sanders
Tejeshwar Sandhu
Elianna Sandman
Lark Sawyer
Lena Schlientz
ShiLeigh Shepard
John Sherman
Katelynn Sikkenga
Ryan Sikkenga
Tyler Sikkenga
Dylan Smit
Austin Smith
Nolan Smith
Mitchel Snarski
Cade Solomonson
Everardo Soriano Lopez
Quan Sprague
Ezra Stadt
Donald Staley
Shi Steinberg
Madison Stevens
Hayden Stickney
Caleb Swart
Zachary Swart
Jared Sweet
Sebastian Szymanski
Isabelle Tackmann
Cassandra Thomas
Matelyn Torline
Natalie VanDyke
Carson VanNoy
Kayla VanOosten
Carson VanVeelen
Malcolm Venema
Elizabeth Vredevelt
Jenner Willard
Zachary Williams
RaeAnne Woody
Jaden Young
Skylar Young
Joshua Yowaish
Stephanie Zalis
Kaia Zimmerman

10TH GRADE

Chase Anderson
Nichole Anheuser
Lauren Aud
Danielle Barnes
Joslynn Battle
Kyle Bibbler
Halaina Bladey
Breanda Boersma
Mikayla Boersma
Renee Boersma
Anneke Breuker
Tyler Brown
Hunter Browning
Eddy Butare
Jeisel Calero Cortez
Connor Cater
Bridgett Clay
Amber Clouse
Eleanor Cooper
Gavin Coxon
Regan Coxon
Morgan Cremer
Tyler Cross
Linnae DeBoer
Sarah DeKam
Conner DeKok
Savanna Dempsey
Jordan Dent
Mackenzie DeRaad
Phuc Do
Katarina Doty
Ella Dougherty
Michaela Duursma
Sarah Ellsworth

Logan Everhart
Zachary Fabis
Aili Fisher
Laine Fleszar
Kaitlyn Florian
Tristan Fogarty-Thomas
Taegan Folk
Jace Forward
Marlie Fowler
Mitchell Franck
Riley Frazer
Ava Frederickson
Ethan Furtaw
Lora Gable
Nevada Gale
Lin Gallagher
Parker Georgacakes
Charity Gerig
Harlie Gerth-McMullin
Deijah Gissendanner
Mason Godbold
Kohl Goldsmith
Zane Goldsmith
Jailine Gomez-Tellez
Allexis Gonzales
Samantha Graves
Kollen Gruizenga
Gwendolyn Hackett
Emily Haefner
Amaya Hansen
Addie Hart
Ikuko Hashimoto
Shannon Havlik
Jaklyn Hayes
Jackson Helder
Logan Hesche
Carly Hoekstra
Alyvia Holdridge
Jared Hough
Aileen Hussey
Callie Ingram
Ashleigh Jarrard
Annabelle Johnson
Olyvia Johnson
Madison Jordan
Patrick Kargl
Ethan Kelley
Danielle Kermeen
Nuttanit Kingkaewrungrrote
Karsten Kirkendall
Justyn Kreps
Kelly Kroll
Samantha Kurti
Meghan Landgren
Meriah Langdon
Allyson Lange
Emily Larson
Jeffrey Leach
Anya Lehman
Paige Lewis
Emily Lothian
Matthew Mahalic
Emma Malec
Jovan Marcos
Gramm McCormack
Connor McLane
Megan Meadows
Madison Melle
Corah Miller
Brendan Milligan
Karoline Moll
Eric Mooney
Mia Munger
Jada Murley
Avry Mutschler
Hadyn Nash
Ella Nauta
Khai Nguyen
Haley Nieuwkoop
Grace Ostrander
Camila Padula De Santis
Natalie Paiz
Andrew Parsons
Ignacio Pascual De La Fuente
Katherine Peal
Trevor Petroelje
Brendan Philo
Zackery Post
Nadia Preston
Ethan Ray
Isabel Remar
Christopher Reynolds
Ivan Reynolds
Sydney Riffle
Nathan Roest
Ryan Roest
Leanna Rose
Andrew Russell
John Russell
Madison Sage
Sairge Saldivar
Paula Sanmarti Comella
Shianna Sawdy
Jayme Schlanderer
Robert Schneider
Isabel Serrano Vivancos
Lucas Sherman
Calvin Simmet
Mason Simmet
Samuel Simmons
Dwayne Simpson Jr
Grace Sinen

Kanvara Siripong
Marleigh Skibbe
Gracyon Slagell
Gabriel Smith
Ricco Sobbe
Haley Sobie
Maggie Spoelstra
Daniel Staup
Joel Steinebach
Kylee Stephens
Brandon Storrs
Nicholas Struckmeyer
Emily Stump
Alex Summerfield
Faith Tava
Alexander Taylor
Xavier Taylor
Jonas Thompson
Philip Thompson
Briac Tourmant
Irene Trierweiler
Jana Trietsch
Mackenzie Uhen
Michael VandenHout
Colin VanderWarf
Nathaniel VanDeWeert
Taylin VanDyke
Kendra VanOverloop
Sara Visser
Abigail Wester
Nicholas Weston
Abigail White
Hope Winters
Mason Winters
Regan Zimmerman
Anna Zook

11TH GRADE

Madelaine Anderson
Sky Angelo
Bryan Ashenbremer
Collin Baker
Noelle Baker
Atlas Barrie
Keaton Bell
Hannah Bennett
Jacob Bennett
Jonathan Berklich
Laurel Blakie
Bethany Blattner
Hailey Boggs-Osman
Hannah Bowker
Alexander Brandt
Devin Breen
Olivia Brenner
Zachary Briggs
Amber Brown
Emily Brown
Joshua Bush
Sydney Carmichael
Jarred Casalina
Ashton Charron
Tayler Chertos
Morgan Chubb
Carson Clark
Kimberly Clouatre
Marlon Coe
Riley Conlan
Elizabeth Cooper
Travis Cornell
Brittany Corner
Madelynne Crace
McKenna Creighton
Logan Cunningham
Devin Cupp
Katherine Cussimano
Ella Nauta
Christian Davis
Cassandra Dean
Darby Dean
Isabelle Dial
Eric Dimmick
Elijah Dixon
Selena Doty
Brady Douma
Connor Douma
Jonathan Draigh
Katrina Droski
Quinne Duhr
Jarrett Duimstra
Alexandra Edwards
Tarrance Edwards
Dylan Eggleston
Austin Engle
Mitchell Evink
Keana Fahni
Jillian Fidler
Maura Fitzpatrick
Geoffrey Fleenor
Katelyn Flier
Joel Fritsma
George Gonzales
Hannah Halfmann
Joseph Hancock
Jacob Hanson
Garrett Hardman
Brandon Hare
Jenna Harper
Maria Hart
Joshua Havey
Alexis Higley
Lindsay Hindley
Hailey Hoevenaer
Lydia Hull

Morrison Ismond
McKenzie Jack
Peyton Jankowski
Hendrick Jannenga
Cole Jaskolski
Dylan Jernberg
Evan Johnson
Roman Johnson
Shelly Johnson
Ethan Kaminski
Abigail Kastanek
Fiona Kelly
Haley Kenkel
Akasha Khalsa
Alyssa Klaver
Annelise Kolp
Dawn Kondor
Katherine Kroll
Emily Kropf
David Kruse
Dakota Krzysik
Hunter Krzysik
Elizabeth Kuhns
Laura Lachowski
Alexander Laird
Andrew LeFebre
Joanna Link
Benjamin Lobbezoo
Cassiopiea Longway
Chloe Looman
Courtney Lubbers
Abigail Mangus
Nicholas Mason
Cameron Massel
Caleb Mast
Zachary May
Abigail McDowell
Cody McGee
Alexander McPherson
Gabrielle McRee
Blake McVey
Justin McWayne
Ethan Meyer
Matthew Meyer
Conner Meyers
Raiden Miller
Madison Minier
Samuel Misak
Nichole Mitchell
Karina Moore
Karleigh Mrozinski
Eden Nethercott
MacKenzie North
Connor Nugent
Jacob Nugent
Nicole Nugent
Mitchell O'Gorman
Jeffery Oesch
Magenta Oyler
Alexander Patrick
Nicole Paulus
Ryan Pawlowski
Justin Plunkett
Austin Pollock
Morgan Polsgrove
Macy Potter
Sydney Powell
Garrett Pratt
Natalie Price
Marcel Primeau
Ethan Quiggle
Miah Ransom
Devin Read
Kelly Reitsma
Brianna Roest
Seth Ross
Roman Rozell
Brendan Sanders
Holton Sawyer
Chloe Schmidt
Drake Seese
Erin Smith
Lauren Snarski
Kya Sparks
Noah Spencer
Emma Stockreef
Kenneth Stump
Megan Summerfield
Nathaniel Svoboda
Thaddeus Swart
Madelaine Taylor
Zachary Tichelaar
Rena VandenBerg
Vanessa VanderBoon
Bailey VanderMark
Jordan VanOosten
Zachary Vatter
Amelia Vogt
Chelsey Watson
Austin Whaley
Elijah White
Jade Williams
Tesfalidet Woldemihret
Trenton Wyant
Nathan Yomtoob
Keigan Yuhas
Kennedy Zimmerman

12TH GRADE

Hannah Allan
Natalie Alverson
Adam Anderson
Karmen Anderson

Sterling Anderson
Hayden Barry-Coulier
Brennan Battle
Sela Bauman
Austin Bazen
Matthew Beachler
Johanna Bem
Jeremy Bergin
Delaney Bierlein
Dakota Bileth
Jacob Bishop
Maxwell Bishop
Faith Blakely
Katherine Bodemann
Elijah Boulton
Collin Bowers
Austin Branagan
Majesta Braybrooks
Maria Briggs
Clayton Brown
Mitchell Brown
Madeline Burt
Stephanie Carlson
Kyle Cater
Samantha Celori
Emma Chapin
Brodrick Chapman
Autumn Chrisman
Colton Churches
Ryne Clarke
Katie Clemenshaw
Paige Clouse
Marreona Coe
Rachel Cole
Sydney Conard
Riley Coxon
Amber Curtis
Makenzie Daly
Andrew de Voest
Maria DeCator
Paige DeHaan
Bryce Dempsey
Casey Depew
Samuel DeVito
Kyla Dixon
Sydney Dodde
Alexander Dommer
Michael Doyle
Robert Dubisky
Jonah Epema
Brayden Ergang
Devin Falk
Victoria Fezzey
Edward Fisher
Isabelle Fleszar
Callie Ford-Weber
Rose Ford-Weber
Alise Forward
Paige Fosburg
Cassandra Franklin
Laurel Frederickson
Darby Fuller
Taylor Furtaw
Kamryn Gaines
Bridget Garter
Bethany Geldersma
Haley Godbold
Parker Grant
Sonja Grasman
Emily Grochowalski
Salem Grody
Blake Groom
Madelaine Haines
Megan Hall
Rebecca Hall
Nathan Hawkins
Brianna Haywood
Edward Heikkila
Kollin Hieftje
Taylor Higgins
Emily Hock
Olivia Hock
Shannon Hoekstra
Kamryn Holdridge
Jacob Holmes
Molly Hoseth
Thomas Hubert
Anderson Hudson
Noah Huizinga
Jerrod Humphreys
Bailey Inda
Kara Jeffries
Eric Judd
Kelsie Jurmo
Terese Kane
Jeremy Kargl
Caleb Kaufman
Corah Kaufman
Kaitlin Kelley
Harley Kline-Scheltmeyer
Bretton Kooistra
Adam Korozen
Trevor Labron
Josie Ladner
Aidan Lane
Clayton Launer
Zachary Laux
Jeremy Leavell
Geniaya Lewis
Jared Lezan
Isabel Lillie
Kayeleigh Lubbers

Katie Lynn
Christina Lyon
Mallori MacPherson
Sara Majestic
Jack Malone
Makyla Martinez
Angela Mauric
Madison McCormack
Carsen McDonald
Alyssa McIntire
Kenzie McLarty
Alyssa Mears
Jarrod Melle
Robert Meneghini
Marshall Mercer
Tessa Micho
Aron Mierendorf
Chase Miller
Kathryn Miller
Kennedy Mitchell
Nicole Mooney
Daniel Moore
Ryan Morris
Benjamin Mullins
Riley Nethercott
Nova Nietling
Benjamin Noffke
Hayden Noon
Olivia Nurmikko
Hunter Owens
Grace Paiz
Tiana-Marie Peavey
Nicolas Perry
Jayce Perysian
Jasmine Peters
Katie Peterson
Mary Peterson
Tiana Petricevic
Zachary Petroelje
Remington Phillips
Caleb Pickens
Abigail Pickett
Richard Pitcher
Josealyn Pontius
Andrew Poulton
Alexander Powell
Griffen Preston
Lisa Price
Jacquelyn Pytlik
Lillian Quiggle
Mansel Reed
Aiden Remar
Andi Reynolds
Gina Ricards
Brayden Rickert-Myers
Jillian Riney
Collin Rinks
Megan Ritchie
Samantha Robinson
Brady Fox
Cassandra Franklin
Laurel Frederickson
Darby Fuller
Taylor Furtaw
Kamryn Gaines
Bridget Garter
Bethany Geldersma
Haley Godbold
Parker Grant
Sonja Grasman
Emily Grochowalski
Salem Grody
Blake Groom
Madelaine Haines
Megan Hall
Rebecca Hall
Nathan Hawkins
Brianna Haywood
Edward Heikkila
Kollin Hieftje
Taylor Higgins
Emily Hock
Olivia Hock
Shannon Hoekstra
Kamryn Holdridge
Jacob Holmes
Molly Hoseth
Thomas Hubert
Anderson Hudson
Noah Huizinga
Jerrod Humphreys
Bailey Inda
Kara Jeffries
Eric Judd
Kelsie Jurmo
Terese Kane
Jeremy Kargl
Caleb Kaufman
Corah Kaufman
Kaitlin Kelley
Harley Kline-Scheltmeyer
Bretton Kooistra
Adam Korozen
Trevor Labron
Josie Ladner
Aidan Lane
Clayton Launer
Zachary Laux
Jeremy Leavell
Geniaya Lewis
Jared Lezan
Isabel Lillie
Kayeleigh Lubbers

STATEPOINT CROSSWORD

**THEME:
THE 4TH OF JULY**

ACROSS

1. Like Catherine or Peter, in Russia
6. Norwegian band of "Take on Me" fame
9. "I call first ____!"
13. "Home on the ____"
14. Charlie Parker's style of jazz
15. Comedian Silverman
16. Not upright
17. Greek H
18. Acrobat maker
19. *Like the July 4th holiday
21. *Pre-state state
23. Thanksgiving tuber
24. Hold as a conviction
25. Ides mo.
28. Expunge
30. Catching like a cowboy
35. ____ 'n' Andy
37. Trash containers, e.g.
39. Of war and sea?
40. It wasn't built in a day
41. Happily ever when?
43. Car with a bar
44. Loud noise
46. Dublin land
47. Lecherous look
48. Lampoon
50. Pouches
52. Not sweet, as in wine
53. Plant anchor
55. Brown truck delivery company
57. *Traditional July 4th meal
60. *Fire ____
64. Filthy dough
65. Bird word
67. Tee off

CROSSWORD															
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68						69					70				
71						72					73				

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68. Enclose in a recess
69. Big coffee server
70. Dine at home
71. Shakespeare's metrical unit
72. Hi-____
73. Type of wheat

DOWN

1. Tennis' Steffi
2. Denote as "PG," e.g.

3. Children's author Blyton
4. "The best laid schemes o' mice an' men gang aft ____"
5. Foursome
6. Cain's brother
7. *Like a dog
8. Rapidly
9. Type of cabinetry joint
10. De-wrinkler
11. "Rosemary's ____"
12. Anything female
15. Omega 3 source
20. Naked protozoa
22. "____ the fields we go"
24. ADA member
25. Jacobs and Anthony, e.g.
26. ____ or a spy
27. * ____ candle
29. *____, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness"
31. ____ Mall, London
32. Like a Harvard building?
33. Name-chooser
34. *Old ____
36. Seal with a kiss and do this
38. Plural of serum
42. Happen again
45. Patient's bed
49. Interesting person, acronym
51. Queen of these
54. Happen
56. Junk yard stuff
57. Wild feline
58. Ballistic missile acronym
59. Dungeness, e.g.
60. Flipside of pros
61. Flying toy
62. Reagan's reference to Russian "empire"
63. As opposed to own
64. Hula girl's flower
66. Metal-bearing rock

Puzzle solutions, page 12

THE CLASSIFIEDS

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JUNE 14 - JUNE 20

- Otto Warmbier, 22, a U.S. citizen who was freed last week after more than a year in North Korean detention, has died. Doctors said last week that he had "extensive loss of tissue" in all parts of his brain.
- Another attack in London was reported when a van drove into pedestrians leaving the Finsbury Park Mosque. The driver of the van has been apprehended.
- Officials in London are now reporting that as many as 79 people are either dead or presumed dead after a fire last week in Grenfell Tower, a 24-story apartment building.
- No one knows how seven sailors aboard the destroyer USS Fitzgerald were killed, and other crew members injured, when the warship collided with a cargo vessel off Japan. Officials are investigating.



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

**LAST WEEK'S
ONLINE
POLL
RESULTS**

Did you watch former FBI director James Comey and/or Attorney General Jeff Sessions testify?

- I watched/listened to Comey 20%
- I watched/listened to Sessions 0%
- I watched/listened to both 70%
- Why would I? It's fake news 10%
- NO 0%

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thelowellledger.com**

Charlie Jeffrey

Behind
The Scenes

Position: General manager, Betten Baker GMC
Residence: Greenville
Education: Greenville HS, Davenport Business College
Experience: 31 years in auto sales
Family: Wife, son, grandson
Hobbies: Family time, outdoors, road trips
Pets: Dogs, Razy and Sadie
Favorite book: Westerns, motivational, management
Favorite movie: John Wayne films, Grumpy Old Men series



Jeffrey is back in Lowell and loving it more than ever

by Tim McAllister
lead reporter

Charlie Jeffrey, general manager of Betten Baker GMC, started in the car business at the tender age of 20 way back in 1986. He worked in Lowell for many years, then he left town and took a position with a big city dealership. Now he's back in Lowell and loving it more than ever.

"For a lot of years I worked at the Ziegler organization down the street," Jeffrey said. "I was general manager at that store, then they gave me the opportunity to be the general manager at their store in Kalamazoo, so my wife and I moved to Kalamazoo. I eventually left the Ziegler organization and I took a position in Grand Rapids for about a year. That was a good opportunity and I learned a lot from it, but it wasn't a good fit. I like the smaller country stores. I recognized over time that I was more comfortable at a smaller store where I had more hands on input, more direct contact with my people and customers.

I'm not very good at being an administrator, I'm more hands on. This size store allows me to do that. When this job became available it was the right position for me. We've been back in this area about a year. The neat thing for me is walking down the street and knowing the many people you come in contact with. Doing business on a handshake still happens in Lowell. It doesn't happen in Grand Rapids. In Grand Rapids when somebody shakes my hand we may or may not have a car deal. If somebody shakes my hand here, it's a done deal on both sides. You don't worry about that. If somebody tells you they're going to buy the vehicle, it's done. People here have more integrity. People live here because they like the small town flavor and that's why I like working here."

As general manager, Jeffrey is in charge of the whole Betten Baker operation here in Lowell. A big part of the job lately that is getting locals used to the name change after the

dealership was purchased by a new owner.

"My responsibilities are to oversee the day-to-day operations of the store," Jeffrey said. "I have a team of three managers that report to me on a daily basis. We work together as a team to run the dealership. For me the most rewarding part of the job is the people. I get to be the head coach. That's kind of the way I look at my role. I'm the head coach and if everybody understands the play we're going to run we'll score a lot of points. I'm big on communication. We all want to run the same offense and if we drop the ball let's pick it up and run again. It's going to happen, so let's pick it up quickly. The biggest challenge number one is rebranding the store. This facility has been known for a lot of years as 'Wittenbach' and it probably always will be. It is what it is. We're not ashamed of that name, the Wittenbachs are wonderful people in the community. But we are now the Betten Baker Group. We want

people to know that the Betten Baker Group is a great organization. They are very family focused and very employee focused. They take care of their employees. They are very positive people and they want to be part of the community. The one thing that attracted me to the Betten Baker Group was their positivity. In this business, if you close 30-40 percent of sales, you're doing above average compared to a lot of companies. You strike out more than you get hits, so you have to be able to take that rejection, build on it and get ready for the next guest. Positivity is huge."

Jeffrey said the car industry has changed a lot since 1986, mostly because consumers are more well-informed nowadays.

"The industry has changed a bunch," Jeffrey said. "It's different but it's still the same. I've been in this business for 31 years. When I started I was a 20-year-old kid. I'm not 20 anymore. I used to be the young guy on the floor, but

not anymore. I always felt pretty fortunate. I figured out that I liked sales at a very young age. I always wanted to get into automobile sales. I had that opportunity back in 1986 and I've worked my way through the ranks. With the internet, people are a lot more informed. We're a lot more transparent, which I like. The old days of trying to negotiate and arm wrestle for a good deal, nobody really enjoyed that, not even the dealers. Consumers never really knew if they were actually getting a good deal. Now they come in with information, they pretty much know what they want and most people are very reasonable. Today the average consumer spends about 14 hours online before they even set foot in a dealership. Ten years ago when car shopping, people visited five dealerships on average, today they visit 1.6 on average. We know that a lot of people don't enjoy the purchasing process. We want to make it fun and stress free. We have to make

a living, but we don't take advantage of people. What I enjoy about the business is that it's still a people business. Automobiles are still an emotional purchase. It's a large expenditure. You want to touch it, feel it, smell it and experience it before you plunk down your hard-earned money. People have lots of choices where to do that today. The only thing that separates us from the competition is our people."

When he isn't selling cars, Jeffrey enjoys spending time with his family, enjoying the outdoors and going on long road trips.

"I'm very family oriented. My grandson takes up a lot of my free time. I enjoy boating and fishing, it's just relaxing to go sit out on a lake. Hunting in the fall. We enjoy traveling around the United States. I've lived here 52 years and I've traveled a lot but I still haven't seen a great deal of this country. Last time I counted I think we were at 32 states that we've road-tripped, so there's a lot to see yet. If I have time I prefer to road-trip rather than fly. You can see the countryside, you can see the people. I always enjoy going into small towns and seeing the people. Are they friendly or are they uptight? I've been to Boston, New York, Los Angeles, and in big towns they're all in a hurry. People in small towns have a tendency to take just a little more time. If you're looking for a restaurant, a gas station, some directions, they've got time to tell you."

Jeffrey, a native of Greenville, still lives in that area with his family.

"My wife and I are originally from Greenville," Jeffrey said. "We live west of Greenville, close to our family. All of our family is up there. It's a nice 20 minute commute to work every day."

