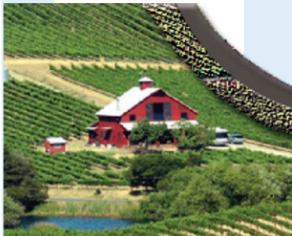


stories of perseverance



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celebrating area farms



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swisslane honored



page 11

50 CENTS



## LAHM's *River of Time* performance brings Lowell's founding history to life

by Kathryn Atwood  
contributing reporter

Nearly 50 young actors gathered at the convergence of the Flat and Grand rivers at the Kent County fairgrounds last Saturday afternoon for a special pageant-style performance of the founding of Lowell.

Members of the Alto Active Achievers 4H group performed the piece of history alongside friends and supporters of the Lowell Area Historical Museum. The performance was produced by the museum's education director Luanne Kaeb; the play was written by a member of Kaeb's family.

"My daughter, Heidi (Kaeb) Stoller, wrote it for the express purpose to teach the people of Lowell and the area their local history. She was in the 11th grade at Lowell High School in 1991 when she realized that her

friends knew nothing about our local history."

Kaeb has since put on the performance every four or five years welcoming the community to enrich themselves in the knowledge of the community's founding. Actors attended a workshop hosted by the museum and were directed by Kaeb in their blocking and delivery of the material. Utilizing the natural setting of the river bed, the pageant took to the water using canoes to travel down and across as they told their story. The performance began in the camp of the Native American Odawa tribe who first settled in the area. It tells the story of their people, as well as that of the European settlers who founded the city center.

River of Time,  
continued, page 2



This scene depicted the wedding ceremony of Jenute and Daniel Marsac.

### CANDIDATE'S CORNER

#### Mark Ritzema

by Tim McAllister  
lead reporter

In this November's election there are five candidates running for three open seats on Lowell's city council. Incumbents Michael DeVore and Greg Canfield are running for reelection along with new candidates Jake Davenport, Mark Ritzema and James Salzwedel. During the next several weeks the Ledger will profile the candidates and get their views on some of Lowell's important issues. Since he replied first, we're starting with Mark Ritzema.

Ritzema says he is running for a seat on the council because actions taken by the recent iterations of the city council have reflected badly on the city of Lowell.

"I just felt that maybe they needed some new blood on the council," Ritzema said. "Over the last few years Lowell has had a lot of negative press. Maybe it's time for some new blood. I just thought I'd try it."

Ritzema is a lifelong resident of the Lowell area. His family has deep roots in this area; Ritzema's great-grandfather, Frank McMahon, ran Lowell Light & Power for 50 years. Graduating from Lowell High School in 1972, Ritzema went on to obtain plenty of education and experience in government. He has also worked as an insurance investigator and an accident investigator. He retired earlier this year.

"I was a police officer for almost 35 years in Kent County and in Lowell," Ritzema said. "I have a bachelor's degree in business management from Aquinas and I have a master's degree from Grand Valley in public administration."

Another reason he is seeking a seat on the council is to restore dignity to the city council.

"I think we just need to have some civility on the council and not be at war with each other," Ritzema said. "I like to listen to what everybody has got to say before I make a decision."



I want to look at what's going to be best for the citizens of the city. We don't need a war. Let's work things out. We have a good town. It's time to bring back the positive press."

Ritzema said that, under his watch, there will be no biodigesters in Lowell.

One of my big concerns is that I don't want that biodigester coming back because I live close by there, three blocks away. I was walking along

Candidate Ritzema,  
continued, page 2

## First wheat load of the year delivered

by Tim McAllister  
lead reporter

This year's first load of wheat arrived at the King Milling Company, 115 S. Broadway, on Saturday, July 8. The initial load originated at Springbrook Farms in Carson City.

"It was good quality soft red winter wheat at a 59 pound test weight," said Patrick Doyle, assistant vice president of King Milling. "[We use] soft red and soft white winter wheat varieties grown locally and across Michigan. These varieties are delivered to the King Milling Company at harvest and throughout the year by trucks. The company also uses hard

red winter wheat from Kansas and Nebraska and also hard red spring wheat from North Dakota and Minnesota which are shipped to the company by rail."

That was the first load of the year, but nowhere near the last. Expect trucks and trains to bring a lot of product to town.

"The Michigan wheat harvest is now in full swing," Doyle said.

"The hot dry weather has provided a good window for farmers to harvest their wheat in a timely manner and help preserve its quality. The state of Michigan is forecasted by the USDA to harvest 36.1 million bushels of wheat in 2017, down almost 30 percent from the record crop of 2016. Michigan was ranked 12th in total state wheat production within the US for 2016."

King Milling is accepting more wheat this year than ever before thanks to the new storage units they built this spring.

"The company's recently added storage capacity was ready just in time for harvest thanks to the efforts of Zook Farm Equipment in Alto," Doyle said. "This added capacity brings the total storage capacity of King Milling to 3.6 million bushels of wheat. The King Milling Company is the largest single location flour mill in the state of Michigan, is family owned and has been in operation for 127 years."

# River of Time, continued

“Fur traders Madame LaFramboise and Daniel Marsac arrive on the scene. The first steamboat sinks. Settlers like John Hooker and Sylvester Hodges arrive. Roxinda White names the town,” said Kaeb, highlighting some of the highlights of the production.

The well-attended show featured fine performances from Keegan Mebert as Chief Wabwindego, Caleb Ford as Chief Cobmoosa, Kelton Mebert as Daniel Marsac, Maggie Olander as Jenute and Ivy Stoller as Madame LaFramboise. The cast also included nearly three dozen children

in supporting roles acting as the village’s Native American and European settlers. The set featured teepees, a trading post, a real

campfire and a handmade village of Lowell brought in by the new settlers.



The river was part of their natural set.



Native Americans are pushed from their land by European settlers.

# Candidate Ritzema, continued

the river around 5 am one day wondering, “What’s that smell” and thinking there might be a dead body. I feel sorry for the people who live right next to it. If I’m elected, that’s going to be one of my top priorities. That is not coming back.”

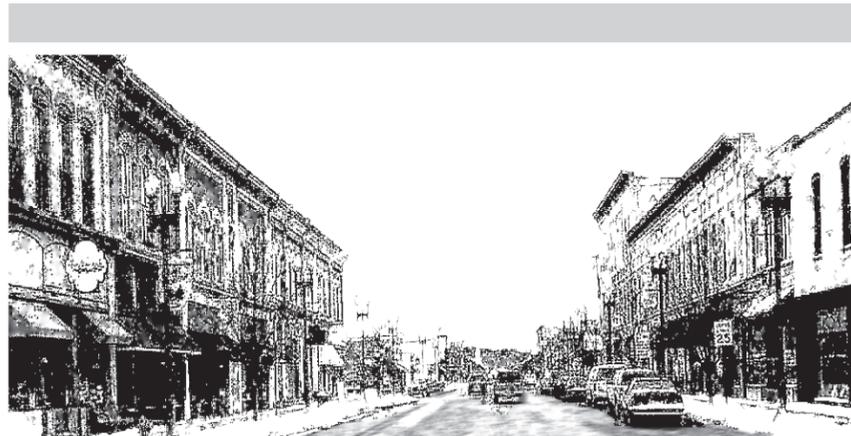
Ritzema said that he will also attempt to budget for more street repairs if he is elected.

“I want to take a look at the budgets because we need road work. I don’t really think we can afford tax increases. People are stretched now with everything else. I’ll take a look at the budget, see where our expenditures and incomes are coming in and go from there. We’ll have to prioritize. We have funds that are coming in here, where are the expenditures

going? I don’t see anything getting done. The roads really haven’t been done since the 70s when they redid everything to put in the storm sewers. We have to figure out where to get the money and how to make sure it’s done right.”

He said that one way the city could generate revenue would be by bringing more tourists to Lowell.

“Lowell used to be the next best place to be and we can do that again,” Ritzema said. “Take a look at everything that goes on here. We’ve got the summer concerts on Thursdays, we’ve got all kinds of festivals and things coming in all the time. It draws people. Hopefully whatever they decide to do with the showboat will come into play.”



# along main street

## KENT COUNTY PARKS TOUR

The Kent County Parks Foundation and Grand Rapids Bicycle Company present the “Kent County Parks Tour” on Sun., July 30. Cyclists of all ages and abilities are invited to join us for a fun ride that showcases our Kent County parks and trails. The ride begins at Roselle Park in Ada, with various routes that feature different lengths, difficulty and scenery to suit all riders, with rest stops at various Kent County parks. The goal of this event is to highlight some of Kent County’s premier parks and green spaces surrounding our area. We will provide each rider with an event-day packet, a fully marked course and with snacks or lunch at our volunteer-run aid stations. This event is a benefit for the Kent County Parks Foundation and all proceeds will go towards preserving our local natural areas. <https://www.bikereg.com/kent-county-parks-tour>

## VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION

Looking for a way to get involved in the community? Want to volunteer, but don’t know what to do? Come to our volunteer orientation and learn about all of our day, evening and weekend opportunities. Our needs range from evening cashiers to daytime donation sorters with lots of options in between. Volunteer orientation at Flat River Outreach Ministries will be Wed., Aug. 2 at 6 pm. Call 897-8260 for more information.

## 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 through Aug. 15 from 1-7 pm at FROM.

## 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 through August 1 during Lunch Buddies at FROM. Backpack distribution will take place Aug. 8 and 15.

## THE BABY PANTRY of LOWELL

The Baby Pantry of Lowell will be open on Tuesdays through Aug 15 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 us on Facebook @ BabyPantryofLowell and our website BabyPantryofLowell.com



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*Giorgio from Italy, 16 yrs. Loves to play baseball and spend time with his dog. Giorgio also plays the guitar, and his dream is to join a drum club at his American high school.*

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# 126 Army Band shares the stage at sizzlin' concert

by Kathryn Atwood  
contributing reporter

The Lowell Showboat Sizzlin' Summer Concert series packed a one-two punch last week with a pair of shows featuring eclectic Michigan based band Lindsay Lou & the Flatbellys with a special patriotic performance from the 126 Army Band "The Governor's Own."

Classic bluegrass sound mixed with uniquely composed harmony and unique vocals highlighted

the series regular Thursday evening performance featuring Lindsay Lou & the Flatbellys. Originally formed inside dorm rooms in Ann Arbor back in 2009, the Flatbelly's band added lead vocalist and former college roommate Lindsay Lou to their musical lineup in 2010. Solidifying the foursome in 2013, the band now consists of Joshua Rilko, PJ George and Mark Lavengood. Several albums and major tours later, the

group landed on the historic Showboat stage busting out a two hour set of original tracks enjoyed by music fans in perfect weather conditions.

Sunday afternoon the series welcomed the 126 Army Band "The Governor's Own." The more than centuries old musical ensemble travels throughout Michigan performing patriotic selections and spreading goodwill though



Piccolos add fun to the American centered song list.

their service. Comprised of members of the Michigan National Guard stationed at the Belmont Readiness Center in Belmont, Michigan, the band pays homage to the tradition of taking music into battle via

drum, fife or bugle which dates back to the Civil War. The now wind and brass based ensemble is currently led by Chief Warrant Officer 3 Jon Montgomery and First Sergeant Devin Hahn.

Featuring tracks that symbolize the freedom and spirit of America included "America the Beautiful" and the "Star Spangled Banner," the military band brought concert attendees to their feet multiple times as they paid respect to the soldiers' service, as well as their fine tuned musical talent. Members of the band stayed after the show, which lasted just over an hour and held a meet and greet session with audience members who eagerly shook hands with the soldiers thanking them for their service and dynamic performance.

On tap this week for music fans is the award winning country rock outfit The Natchez Trace who will take the stage Thursday evening from 7-9 pm beside the historic General E. Lee Showboat. The free for all ages show offers both bleacher and lawn seating as well as food, beverage and spirit purchasing options.



Lindsay Lou & the Flatbellys perform on the Showboat stage.

## Eagle Scout natural prairie project to be dedicated Thursday

by Tim McAllister  
lead reporter

An Eagle Scout has worked with the nuns at the Franciscan Life Process Center, 11650 Downes St NE, to transform some of their land into an idyllic, natural prairie. The new prairie will be dedicated at a ceremony on Thursday, July 27 at 7 pm. This event is open to the public.

"About a year-and-a-half ago a young man named Joe Trenshaw was doing an Eagle Scout project here," said Sister Colleen Nagle. "He worked with a naturalist named Chris Baer to establish a prairie grass

field. We're reclaiming some of our pasture and turning it into prairie grasses and wildflowers that would attract the natural birds, insects and other types of animals that would be natural here to Michigan."

The center sits on 230 acres of land, which leaves them a lot of room to make their wild prairie even bigger, something they plan to do.

"Hopefully it will continue to grow," Nagle said. "We're going to work on growing it and doing a lot of different natural areas

here on our farm that would reattract a lot of the native birds, insects and animals. It's wonderful. We will use it for education, for people's enjoyment and a way to promote scouting and Eagle Scout projects."

Nagle said that late July was the perfect time to have a public event on the prairie.

"The time of the dedication, this Thursday, will be kind of the high point of the blooming of the natural grasses and wildflowers; it's going to be gorgeous," Nagle said.

# Yep

we cover Home



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# business directory

## Low unemployment rate due to several factors in MI

by Tim McAllister  
lead reporter

Information released by the state of Michigan indicated the unemployment rate in Michigan is at its lowest point in 17 years. Michigan's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in June fell by four-tenths of a percentage point to 3.8 percent, the lowest number recorded since August of 2000. The number of unemployed Michiganders dropped by 20,000 and total employment declined by 9,000 in June.

"The state's jobless rate decreased in June, reflecting labor force reductions for a second consecutive month," Jason Palmer, director of the Bureau of Labor Market Information and Strategic Initiatives, said in a press release accompanying the statistics. "This occurred after several months of steady workforce growth in 2016 and early 2017."

Thomas Albert, Lowell's representative in the Michigan legislature, said that lower business taxes and deregulation were among the factors that are helping the state's economy.

"There is certainly not a single variable that explains Michigan's economic recovery and low unemployment rate," said Albert. "Getting rid of the Michigan Business Tax was a big step to reconstructing our state's business environment. We've also worked hard to reduce regulations that can put unnecessary burdens on all size businesses. At the national level, the Federal Reserve's ultra-low interest rate policy has greatly incentivized companies from holding onto cash. Over the last eight years this has been pushing companies to seek growth though investment."

Albert said there are still a lot of things lawmakers can do to improve even more.

"There is still more to be done," Albert said. "The state should look at a full repeal of the personal property tax, reducing income tax and continuing to battle unnecessary regulations that restrains business growth. These changes would continue

to make Michigan an extremely attractive place to live and work."

Employment in the manufacturing and construction industries actually decreased in June, which seems surprising considering the state of our infrastructure.

"You can't just look at one data point when it comes to work force data," Albert said. "You have to see the big picture and look at three to five year trends. Michigan's has been on the road to a comeback and will continue down this path with the right leadership."

Albert said that proper training of workers is important if we want this trend to continue.

"As I have spoken with business owners in our district, I have found their number one obstacle restraining economic growth in our community is a shortage of qualified labor," Albert said. "If continued, this trend concerns me. The federal government estimates the nationwide labor force participation rate is 63 percent. This means that 47 percent of able-bodied and capable Americans are flat out not looking for work. In 2008 the work force participation rate was over 66 percent. This means we have seen hundreds of thousands of able-bodied men and women in our country stop looking for work over the last ten years. Michigan must continue to focus on attracting employers but also needs better preparing of the next generation to enter the work force and fill the demand for qualified workers."

The report is summarized on the state's website here: [http://milmi.org/Portals/137/publications/Press\\_Releases/local0617.pdf](http://milmi.org/Portals/137/publications/Press_Releases/local0617.pdf)

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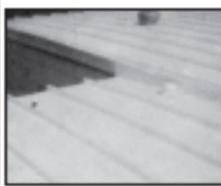
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# viewpoint

## to the editor

### keeping carriers safe

To the Editor,  
We are asking customers to keep our postal carriers safe from dogs. Here are some reminders:

- When a letter carrier delivers mail or packages to your front door, secure your dog in a separate room. Close that

door before opening your front door. Dogs have been known to burst through screen doors or plate-glass windows.

- DO NOT take mail directly from the letter carrier in the presence of the family dog. It is viewed as a threatening gesture.

- If a letter carrier feels threatened by a dog or if it is unleashed and loose roaming the neighborhood, the owner and neighbors may be asked to pick up mail at a Post office until the pet has been restrained.

Alex Sereseroz  
Lowell Postmaster

## outdoors

### changeless

Dave

History reveals that every generation has its own unique challenges. As times change people adapt. During the last century, change began to happen at an unprecedented rate. My grandparents were born before electricity or automobiles and lived to see a man walk on the moon while watching their

television set. Change continues today at a faster pace than ever before.

People have responded by altering their lifestyle, but circumstances make it difficult to engage in many life experiences enjoyed by previous generations. For example, mobility and a world economy make it less likely that families, immediate or extended, will live out their lives close together. Also, current demands on our time and attention draw us away from our natural surroundings.

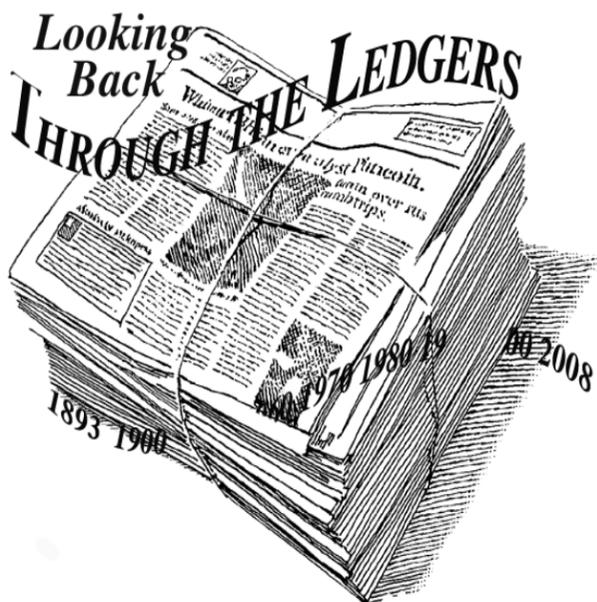
With all of the changes going on around us, a substantial portion of our natural heritage has been preserved. In some cases things have improved over time. After years of neglect and abuse of nature, we have realized the importance of protecting the land and wildlife for our own benefit as well as providing a legacy for future generations. Regardless of the changes and what we call progress, one can still connect with nature on the same terms as folks did many years ago.

Brook trout still lie under logs in clear cool creeks that flow through dark cedar swamps. Old tree stumps lay torn open after a black bear investigated for

a meal of grubs or rodents. Deer amble cautiously through a mature stand of red oaks seeking the tree which will drop acorns this year. Turkeys strut and gobble in places where they were not found fifty years ago. Salmon now swim in Great Lakes water instead of only far away oceans. Piping plovers nest on protected rocky beaches to insure the future of their species. Moose and elk roam their ancestral habitat after being absent for many years. The list goes on. All is not lost. There is hope for the future.

One thing which may be missing from nature is you. As modern information systems expose the mayhem around our already complicated lives, keep in mind there is part of our world that is timeless and predictable. Take time to connect with nature in your own way. This experience will help put life in proper perspective within the big picture.

Much of what we deal with every day has been contrived by man and will continually change as time moves on. Our natural world evolved from another source, and if we are good stewards will provide an anchor for our life during times of fair weather and storms for us and future generations.



### 125 years ago Lowell Journal July 27, 1892

The “kids” sit in groups on the streets these evenings and compare notes on which one of their number had the mumps the hardest. New cases are reported every meeting.

The JOURNAL is in receipt of a communication from Miriam, but as it is unsigned, it goes to the waste basket. No communication of any kind will be published unless the name of the writer accompanies it.

### 100 years ago The Lowell Ledger July 26, 1917

Interest spreading – missing word contest gains far reaching attention. Mrs. Charles Kyser won first prize in last week’s contest, with Miss Agnes Perry second. Among the large number of entries were those from Indianapolis, Elmdale, Ada and Clarksville. Following were the advertisers concerned and the words missing from the ads: R. Van Dyke—staple; King Milling Co—discs; Willette & Hart—lasts; Hamilton Estate—form; John Kellogg—ellicient, are; R. T. Ford—representations, in; C. J. Bradish—for; D. S. Simon—like; City State Bank—rapidly; E. R. Collar—fat; Lowell Ledger—the. This is a good game and every body has a chance to win.

### 75 years ago The Lowell Ledger July 30, 1942

Throw your scrap into the fight. The time has come when scrap of all kinds—grease, metal, waste paper, rubber, etc.—take on great value in our country’s war effort.

Considerable damage is reported to growing crops in this vicinity as a result of the wind and rain storm late Tuesday night. A great many shade trees were blown down or damaged for a number of miles around, many of the trees falling across power lines. The municipal plant crew spent all of Tuesday night and practically all day Wednesday putting the lines back in shape. A similar storm of lesser proportions struck this vicinity last Sunday afternoon, damaging many shade trees. A fine pair of black 3-year-old colts were killed by lightning on the M. B. McPherson farm.

### 50 years ago Lowell Ledger July 27, 1967

Prefix name filed for local dairy herd owner. Jerrold Richmond of Lowell will have the exclusive use of the prefix “Vergrada” in naming all registered Holstein dairy animals in that herd. This prefix name use has been granted to Mr. Richmond by the Holstein-Friesian Association of American and has become a part of official breed records at the organization’s headquarters, Brattleboro, Vermont. More than 2,500 prefixes are reserved for registered Holstein breeders each year. Over 46,000 now on file are used to give distinctive names to home-bred cattle. Reservation and use of these prefix names became an active membership requirement in 1965. By using a prefix name for his animals, the purebred Holstein breeder establishes a new trade mark which is used in all published Information concerning the performance of his dairy animals. The origination of prefix names often stems from farm names, family name combinations, or unique geographical or historical features of the farmstead.

### 25 years ago The Lowell Ledger July 29, 1992

Local artist, Eldridge, frames history of activities in defining Lowell. Gary Eldridge completed the framing of his artistic creation entitled “Scenes From the Historical Crossroads” the night before it was revealed to the community. The artistic creation frames an historical image of the Lowell Area. The picture was created for the Lowell Area Historical Association, for the purpose of raising money for a historical museum. It depicts Lowell events as they create a historical path through time.

Thomet Chevrolet awarded City dump truck bid. The Lowell Public Works Department got the okay to replace its 1980 Chevrolet dump truck with a 1992 Chevrolet with dump box. The purchase was approved by the Lowell City Council at its July 20 meeting. Lowell Public Works Department Supervisor Tony Siciliano said the new medium truck will be used for general hauling, City patch work and general operations.

## We love to hear from you!

The Lowell Ledger welcomes your Letters to the Editor.

Letters are required to bear the author’s signature, phone number and address (for verification purposes only, not for publication). Letters will be published at the discretion of the publisher; duplicate comments/authors within a short period may be dismissed. Opinions expressed in “To The Editor” are not the views of the Ledger employees or the publisher. All letters are subject to editing. Thank you letters and advertising will not be printed.



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

# college news

Grand Valley State University has announced the graduation list for the 2017 winter semester. The following are local graduates, their degrees, majors and honors; **of Ada:** Debra Ann Barnum, Master of Public Administration; Joseph M. Bauer, Bachelor of Arts; Tyler W. Brewer, Bachelor of Business Administration; Kyle M. Callaghan, Bachelor of Science; Conor W. Dahlquist, Psychological Specialist; Daniel B. Faasse, Bachelor of Business Administration; Erica E. Fischer, Bachelor of Science; Cynthia A. Gardiner, Master of Business Administration; Alex M. Gatchalian, Bachelor of Business Administration; Bridget D. Gavigan, Bachelor of Science; Evan J. Gerondale, Bachelor of Science; Allison L. Gerras, Master of Science; Adam J. Heiss, Bachelor of Science;

Andrew J. Johnson, Bachelor of Science; Thomas D. Killeen, Bachelor of Science; Kolby C. Kloosterman, Bachelor of Business Administration; Rebecca A. Koster, Bachelor of Science; Debra J. Kue, Bachelor of Arts; Kayla M. Lenderink, Bachelor of Business Administration; Tanner J. Marlow, Bachelor of Business Administration; Carli S. McGuire, Bachelor of Science; Jacob A. McKim, Bachelor of Science; Kelly M. McMillen, Bachelor of Arts; Sally A. Nelson, Master of Education; Emily R. Noordyke, Bachelor of Science; Michael N. PreFontaine, Bachelor of Science; Mitchell T. Reitsma, Master of Business Administration; Maria J. Rowlander, Bachelor of Arts; Christopher J. Utz, Bachelor of Science; Amanda J. Vietzke, Bachelor of Science; Laura M. Vogelsang,

Bachelor of Social Work; Isaac J. Vroegindewey, Bachelor of Business Administration; Jonathan J. Wilda, Master of Public Administration; Jenna M. Williams, Bachelor of Arts; **of Alto:** Kellie N. Abraham, Bachelor of Science; Holly M. Blough, Master of Education; Clare G. Carlson, Bachelor of Science; Kendra L. Clark, Bachelor of Business Administration; Erin R. Craig, Master of Social Work; AnneMarie Echelbarger, Bachelor of Science; Jacob R. Lindale, Bachelor of Science; Grant

L. Mortenson, Bachelor of Fine Arts; Kendra L. Stauffer, Bachelor of Business Administration; Kimberly R. Sterzick, Bachelor of Arts; Natalie A. Storrer, Bachelor of Arts; **of Lowell:** Lyndsey M. Baculi, Master of Social Work; Kerrie L. Bartel, Master of Business Administration; Samantha R. Billock, Bachelor of Arts; James M. Bolan, Bachelor of Science; Lisa M. Brown, Bachelor of Science; Kayla J. Cook, Bachelor of Science; Daniel

College news, continued, page 12

# happy birthday



**JULY 26**  
Elaine Gregersen, Eric Baird, Josh Geldersma, Ellen Dilly.

**JULY 27**  
Kyle Hendrick, Mike Shalander, Jason Spencer, Paige Wilson.

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

**JULY 29**  
Rachael Vegter, Mary Fox, Matt Lee.

**JULY 30**  
Patricia Smith, Scott Kooistra, Jodi Mohr, Kimberly DeBold, Paige Rash.

**JULY 31**  
Nancy Raymor, Sandy Roth, Rochelle Bieri, Morris Robert Young.

**AUGUST 1**  
Barbara Callihan, Bailee Emelander.

# health



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

## poison ivy

It's that time of year when we see a lot of poison ivy dermatitis in the office. We may see five to ten cases of poison ivy rash any given day during the summer.

The rash of poison ivy is due to a persons' allergic reaction after exposure to the oil in the poison ivy plant. Symptoms usually develop within four hours to four days after exposure. If poison ivy dermatitis is mild and not treated, the rash will generally resolve in two to three weeks.

Poison ivy is not contagious and cannot be spread by touching the rash. You can only get poison ivy by coming in contact with the oil by touching the plant or coming in contact with the oil on clothing, garden tools or pets.

Mild cases of poison ivy dermatitis can be treated at home by using cold compresses, applying calamine lotion or adding oatmeal to baths. If blisters begin to weep or drain you can apply compresses containing aluminum acetate (Burrows solution). Over-the-counter steroid

creams can be applied topically. Avoid hot baths or scrubbing the rash with harsh soaps.

If the rash is severe, widespread or involves the face, you should probably see your doctor for possible steroid treatment. Steroids are given as a shot or a short course of oral medication. Steroids are potent medications that suppress the immune system to block the allergic response. Steroids should not be taken lightly, they can have serious side effects, so they need to be used with caution. Be sure and take the full course of the medication as prescribed.

Prevention of poison ivy dermatitis is the best medication. Wear protective clothing with long sleeves and long pants if you are going to be in an area that may be infested with poison ivy. If you come in contact with the plant, wash the exposed area as soon as possible with soap and water. Familiarize yourself with what poison ivy looks like so you can avoid it while you enjoy the outdoors.

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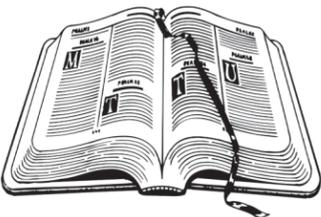
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**At Your Local Library**

Kent District Library programs at Englehardt Branch, 200 N. Monroe St. For additional information call 616-784-2007.

# area churches



**GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
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Halfway between Lowell & Saranac on M-21  
www.goodshepherdlowell.org

Worship Service ..... Sunday - 10:30 AM  
Sunday School..... 9:15 AM

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

**CALVARY CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH OF LOWELL**  
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

**ST. MARY CATHOLIC CHURCH**  
402 Amity St. • 897-9820  
www.stmarylowell.com

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Saturday Confessions: 3-4:30 PM  
Prayer & Adoration each Wed. 8:00 AM - 8 PM  
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897-7168 - www.fbclowell.org  
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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# Perseverance A community fighting cancer

## Kim Stephens

My name is Kim Stephens. I am married to my husband Dan and we have seven amazing kids. Never in my life did I think that I would be writing this article. I never thought this would happen to me.

My story began on January 8, 2016, a day that would forever change my life. It was a normal day, working, making dinner and running kids. That evening my gut was crampy and feeling like what

so scared and felt horrible, as if I had just lost a huge amount of blood. Allison was absolutely wonderful, a true friend and a great practitioner. She hugged me and calmed me down and she said we would work through this together and get it figured out. She ordered an abdominal CT scan immediately, blood work, and a

to tell them, their mom has cancer. They are the strongest kids I know. There were tears, but they all told me that WE can do this. Several days later when my husband and

was done, I was hooked up to a pump and given a stylish funny pack to wear for the next two days. Then on Wednesdays I would get my pump removed and that is when

**“One of the first things that I said to him was you can play for me for Pink Arrow.”**



my kids and I call ‘bubble gut,’ but I really didn’t have time to think about it. As I headed up the stairs to bed, I started feeling nauseous. By the time I reached my bathroom, I was feeling dizzy and lightheaded. I suddenly had a large hemorrhage. I yelled for help as I felt myself blacking out. My husband grabbed me and I remember crying and saying to him that I was bleeding really bad and I was scared because I knew something was wrong. At that point, I passed out. As I laid there on the bathroom floor with my husband holding me, my 17 year old son Nathan frantically called 911 and tried to explain to them what was going on, even though he had no clue. I finally came to and was taken by ambulance to the hospital, a place that I know so well because I had worked there for 28 years. The ER doctor kept telling us that I had diverticulitis, but I just had a feeling he was wrong. I was sent home and told to call my doctor in the morning.

The next morning I spent 1 1/2 hours on the phone trying to find a physician who was taking new patients. Even after explaining my situation, I was told by one office I could get in at the end of June. As I sat there frustrated, knowing that I needed to be seen as soon as possible, I felt helpless and scared. I decided to text a good friend of mine who is a nurse practitioner and I asked her to help me. I explained what had happened and she said she would see me the next morning. I can say that at that moment I was

colonoscopy. My CT scan came back completely negative! At this point, I thought, ‘well maybe it is okay and it’s not as bad as I was thinking.’ I then had a colonoscopy. As I sat in recovery the doctor came in and sat beside me. I felt a pit in my stomach as I heard him say there were two golf ball sized masses in my colon that were probably malignant, but we would know for sure when the biopsies came back. I remember crying all the way home, praying he was wrong. I think the not knowing and waiting was the hardest part.

Four days later, as I was picking my son up from school, I got a phone call from the doctor’s office. The nurse asked if this was a good time, I remember thinking ‘no, of course this isn’t a good time,’ but I said yes. And that is the moment that no one wants to ever hear. She said the biopsies had come back and were malignant. ‘NO NO NO’ kept running through my head as I started sobbing on the phone. I could hardly breath. I had cancer! Right then, my son got into the car. My poor baby, I was a mess and he had no idea what was going on. I finally got it together and told him. His eyes welled up and he hugged me, telling me it would be ok. As we sat there, one of the first things that I said to him was you can play for me for Pink Arrow. That says just how much of an impact Pink Arrow has had on us. I called my husband telling him the results over the phone. How awful is that to hear at work over the phone. That night we had to tell our seven kids what you never want to have

I went to see the surgeon, I felt like I was just going through the motions. I was still in such shock. I had a double colon resection on February 29, 2016. Surgery was long, but went very well and they were able to get everything. I was so happy, now it was all over and I just needed to recover. Let me just say that the staff on the GI unit at Blodgett hospital are absolutely the best! I also had the greatest surgeon ever. Four days later, as I’m sitting in my hospital room alone, my surgeon walked in with more devastating news. He told me that some of the lymph nodes were positive. This meant that the cancer was not gone and I now was facing chemotherapy. Once again the tears flowed. Why was this happening to me? I know God knows the reasons, but I was really doubting my faith at this time.

I had my port placed on March 28, after I had gained some strength back. My husband and I met with my oncologist the next day. As he explained the type of cancer I had and the treatment he recommended, I was again feeling like I was just going through the motions, again in shock. We were able to go on our Spring Break vacation the following week. I was so grateful to be able to get away from all of this and spend time with my family and not have to think so hard about what was coming next. I then began the first of 12 folfox chemotherapy treatments on April 11. I would go to the Lemmon-Holton cancer center every other Monday for four to five hours of chemo. When the chemo infusion

the nausea really started. The type of chemotherapy I received created an ultra-sensitivity to cold. That meant I was not able to eat or drink anything cold, as well as touch anything cold for almost seven months. It certainly was not an easy summer. I spent a lot of it sleeping because of the fatigue and nausea. My family was amazing through every single step. My kids would not allow me to go to a chemo treatment alone. They would make sure someone was always there, whether it was one of them or one of my dear friends. In one of the early treatments, one of my sons and his girlfriend even packed a picnic lunch for us. My chemo nurse was and still is amazing. I still have my port in and have to go every six to eight weeks to get it flushed. Chemo nurses are very special people and I truly appreciate what they do. Sitting in the waiting area of the oncology center really brings it into perspective. That lobby is always filled. You quickly realize that you are not alone. There are so many others going through this journey and many of them were worse off than you.

Anyone that knows me knows how much I LOVE to cook. Well, when you feel so nauseous all the time that is the very last thing you want to do. I believe I am one of the luckiest people in the

Kim’s story, continued, page 10 

# Perseverance

## A community fighting cancer

### Anna Walz

As a mom of five kids aged six and under, my cup overflows. A year ago the Lord blessed us with identical twin boys that were not part of our plan. I have an amazing husband who works hard all day as a self-employed contractor and then tirelessly serves our family helping with cooking, cleaning and changing diapers. I have a rewarding job as a marketing professor at OWSU with wonderful

colleagues. We have friends and family that love us and a "crazy for Jesus" church community that surround us. My cup overflowed with God's goodness. But still... after having and nursing five kids in five years and many more years of what seemed as a desert period of not hearing from God, I found myself at my breaking point. I told God, "This is too much to handle... trying to be a good mom, wife and professor, I just need a break."

**"Oh, I had so badly wanted green pastures and quiet waters."**

So, this spring I started praying earnestly for "green pastures and quiet waters" (Psalm 23:2). In my mind, I was asking God to show me some sort of hobby, some quality "me-time" but would refresh me on all levels. Well, God always answers prayers, maybe not the way we want Him to or when we want Him to; sometimes the answer is "no" or sometimes He has something far better in store than we can ask for or imagine.

A week later my husband and I found a lump in my right breast. It was so large that we thought surely it had to be a cyst, full of fluid. "How could you not have felt this before?" he asked. I had just started weaning the twins, so I was like, "What's ya mean? All I've done is grow babies and nurse them for the last seven years. Of course my breasts are lumpy!" But I did flashback to feeling this particular lump when the twins were young and at the time I just thought it was another clogged milk duct, so I treated it as such and forgot about it. Later that week after finding the lump, as I lay on the ultrasound table at the Betty Ford Breast Care Center, my peace was replaced with sadness as I looked up and saw what was definitely not a fluid-filled cyst. I left the biopsy the next day grieving

over the suffering I was getting ready to endure. A friend met us in the lobby with a hug and I cried, "Oh, I had so badly wanted green pastures and quiet waters." My friend responded, "Maybe green pastures is going to look differently than what you thought." We found ourselves leaving Spectrum with our cancer diagnosis that we didn't ask for, a year to the date after we had left the same hospital with

our newborn twins that we also hadn't asked for. Was this the Lord reminding us that He gives us more than we can handle, so that He can carry us through the struggle and then bless us immensely? The first two days after my triple negative, grade 3 breast cancer diagnosis were extremely hard, as the "unknowns" and worst case scenario flooded our thoughts. I was fine with having cancer and I was even okay with dying. But I was not okay with leaving a husband and five young children behind. Why would God give me so many children to take care of and then let me be so sick that I couldn't take care of them? And I was already at my breaking point, begging Him for help every day. Well, the prayers started pouring in to our Heavenly Father and soon we started to feel that miraculous peace that surpasses understanding. God started to speak CLEARLY to me, through His word and the encouragement of others. I felt Him say, "Those five kids are mine. I love them more than you do and know how to take care of them better than you do. Don't you understand that I sent my own son to suffer and die so that I could have a relationship with them? Why wouldn't I take care of them? I have a HUGE family ready to take care of those kiddos when you can't. TRUST ME."

So, I moved beyond that big hurdle, but God continued to bless me with clarity and purpose. One morning in my Bible study, He brought me to a passage in Scripture that said, "All things have been created THROUGH HIM and FOR HIM," with the "HIM" referring to Jesus (Col 1:16b). Okay, so that was it; my cancer was created



THROUGH Jesus FOR Jesus. But a few days later through another Bible study, God reminded me that I was not just a sacrificial lamb but that "He is continuously orchestrating your circumstances and the people around you to accomplish great things THROUGH YOU and FOR YOU." (1Pet 5). So, not just THROUGH HIM FOR HIM, but THROUGH ME FOR ME. Together. That's it really. All of us have a struggle – whether it's cancer, troubled relationships or bad decisions. I feel we weren't meant to walk through these struggles and life in isolation. We were created for a relationship with God. So God breaks us so He can carry us. This is what the shepherds in ancient days used to do. The shepherd would twist the leg of a sheep who had trouble staying close to the shepherd so that the sheep would have to be carried, resulting in utter dependence on the shepherd. Suffering is the path to being close to our Heavenly Father. It was that way for Jesus and it is that way for us. Only then will we know what it's like to be close to Him.

And the suffering is only beginning. I've only undergone two of 16 rounds of chemo and the effects for me have been

varied and strong. I lay helpless for days after I receive treatment, crying out to God. And I still have a mastectomy and radiation to face after that. And fear of the unknown will always poke its ugly head in as I wait genetic testing results in the next few days and deal with the high probability of recurrence for years to come.

But I promise you, the blessings of His closeness far outweigh the suffering! The Lord is smothering us with His love through this journey, showing up in miraculous ways to give us more than we could ever ask or imagine – with gifts, encouragement, help, food, and community. He is stripping away my pride and my poor attitude. And He has answered my original prayer! He is "making me lie down in green pastures" (Psalm 23:2) as I have rocked up hours in a chemo chair "being fed" through Scripture, song and friends. And He has answered a prayer I've prayed for many years – a deep longing to hear from Him clearly again. I know the sufferings aren't over, but neither are the blessings. I am excited to see what He will do THROUGH US and FOR US.



# Perseverance A community fighting cancer

## Alita & Alyssa Cadwallader

Alita and Alyssa have much in common, including their last name: Cadwallader. They are cousins, good friends and both attend the high school grief group. Together they tell their story and express appreciation for the grief group which Gilda's Club provides at the Lowell High School.

**Alita:** I was about to start high school and was still struggling with the death of a very good friend. He was my brother's best friend and

anyone to talk if they are not ready, but she encourages us to talk. It makes it easier when you realize that other people are also experiencing grief and you can talk with them about it.

**Alita:** We start out with beads. If someone has had a grief moment during the week, where you thought about your loved ones who have passed, then that

to Chicago. There were some unexpected events that happened along the way, but it left us with lots of laughs. My grandma was terrified of birds and she wanted me to chase all of the birds away. That trip has left me with really big

to call grandma and talk with her about what's bothering me and then I remember she's no longer here.

**Alita:** I have a similar experience. I'll find myself wondering how grandma is or what she's doing

**"The grief group has made it easier for me to talk about my feelings as well as listening to others."**



had been like a brother to me. During my eighth grade year, our friend took his own life and I was struck by it. My mother mentioned to the high school counselor that I was still dealing with this loss and the counselor recommended that I attend the grief group.

**Alyssa:** I am a year younger than Alita and I also experienced a huge loss when I was an eighth grader. I was very close with one of my friends. It was more like we were cousins. We weren't related, but we felt like family to each other. When she died, I felt such a tremendous loss. I was working with a counselor to help me deal with my feelings and she recommended that I attend the Gilda's Club grief group when I started high school.

**Alita:** Our group is led by Julie Peble from Gilda's Club. At each meeting, we start with non-grief related events from our week. This helps us get started in an easy way and prepares us to share deeper feelings. The environment is very open. Though we are there for different reasons, we are all experiencing grief and we support each other. It's not all sad—there are times when we goof around. But we listen when it's time to be serious and sometimes there are some tears.

**Alyssa:** We have a system of how our group works together. Mrs. Peble never pushes

person takes a bead and holds it while talking about the grief moment. You then put the bead in the jar where others have placed their beads. At the end of the year you see that the jar has lots of beads in it.

**Alyssa and I** both started attending the grief group because we had each lost a very close friend. (I started attending a year earlier because I am a year ahead of Alyssa in school.) When our grandmother died last spring, I think we became the only two persons to experience an additional death of a loved one while already participating in the grief group. I have so many memories of my grandparents because I was at their home every morning and afternoon when I was little. When my mom and dad would go to work in the morning they would drop us off at grandpa and grandma's and my brother and I would get on the school bus at their house. In the afternoon, the bus would let us off there and we would spend time with our grandparents until our folks picked us up on their way home from work. Our grandparents, Phyllis and Ralph Cadwallader, were the best and they were very close to each other.

**Alyssa:** One of the best memories I have of our grandma is from a trip we took together. It was her last big vacation. My mom, my little sister and I, along with grandma, all took a trip

memories. I would also sit and drink tea with her, that was a big thing with grandma and me. When everybody was going through her things my mom grabbed her teapot for me because it was my grandma's and my thing.

**Alita:** For me, one of the fun things about grandma was when she told us what our parents were like when they were growing up. I also loved hearing the amusing stories that she would tell us about her and grandpa. I definitely regret not listening to grandpa when he said I should learn to play the piano. I still want to do that someday. My grandpa and I would go fishing in the pond behind their house. That was always one of my favorite things to do. (I out-fished him a lot).

**Alyssa:** Our grandmother liked to do all kinds of crafts and she and I would do crafts on Saturday night. I liked to make bracelets but didn't know how to start and finish them, so she would always do that part for me. She spoiled me, so I still don't know how to do the start and finish of a bracelet. My favorite thing with grandpa was to ask him if he was awake when he was taking a nap and he would always say, "I'm awake now." I used to go to my grandmother's home and have my picture taken before I went to a dance. I would talk with grandma on the phone a lot and I miss that now. Sometimes when I'm upset, I'll find myself wanting

and then I remember that she has passed away. One of the special ways for me to remember my grandparents is to go back to their house. Before their home was sold last fall, I went there to have some of my senior pictures taken and the people who live there now have said that I can come out to have more photos taken. I kind of regret that I didn't go see her more often after I got my driver's license, but I thought I was too busy.

**Alyssa:** Our grandfather died in 2010. Alita was 10 at the time and I was nine. That's when we started our shared grief experience. At grandma's funeral this spring, we found ourselves sharing memories about grandpa's funeral. I know that my participation in the grief group at school has made it easier for me to talk with other people about my feelings. The group experience also makes us more aware of what others are going through. When I look at what's on my plate, whether it's my mom going through more surgery or my grandmother passing away, I stop and think about what other people are going through.

Alita & Alyssa's story, continued, page 10 

# Perseverance A community fighting cancer

## Alita & Alyssa's story, continued

**Alita:** I know that the grief group has helped me in many ways. Before, I could encourage others to talk about their feelings but I am bad at following my own advice. The grief group has made it easier for me to talk about my feelings as well as listening to others. I realize that sometimes I use anger as a way of dealing with grief and learning to talk things

through has helped me with that. I have definitely learned not to judge a book by its cover, because you never know what someone else is going through. In our group we recognize that there are losses other than losing someone in death; it may be the ending of a relationship or a huge disappointment in life.

**Alyssa:** Before attending the group I couldn't talk

with anyone about my grief. I never wanted to be open about it. The group experience gives me something, other than just crying, as I work through my loss.

**Alita:** I have seen a change in the group since I started attending three years ago. At first, it seemed that most of the kids had lost someone due to cancer, but now there

is an increased number of people who are dealing with grief because of suicide.

**Alyssa:** At the end of the school year we bring in snacks to share and talk about what we are going to do over the summer. We are encouraged to share favorite memories, especially at the end of the year.

**Alita:** Grief group will start again in the fall. If we know someone who has experienced a loss and they are not already in the group, we tell them about it and encourage them to attend. They come to one or two meetings and then decide if they want to continue. It is always a choice.

## PINK ARROW PRIDE 2017

SAVE  THE  DATE

Friday, September 8, 2017

Lowell hosts East Grand Rapids High School  
Volleyball, Soccer and Football!

## Kim's story, continued

world because of those who surround me. A good friend of mine, Amy Alberts, set up a meal list for my family during my chemo weeks. I cannot even begin to explain what this did for my family. We had so many people take time out of their busy lives to bring meals to our family and it was the best. 'Thank you' does not even cover the appreciation we felt for the meals that were provided. My husband was busy running kids around and it just made life a lot easier for everyone. The nausea from chemo is like no other. The meals would be delivered and I would have to go upstairs because even

the smell would make me sick. No 'thank you' could ever show the astounding gratitude I have for those who made food for us.

Moving ahead to September and Pink Arrow D. The Pink Arrow game has always held a special place in my heart. I help sell t-shirts and absolutely love being involved. I have had a son play in honor of a loved one or friend for all but one of the Pink Arrow games and I am so proud each year to watch our kids play and fight for the names on their backs. I stand in the crowd and take pictures with tears rolling down my face as I listen to each person's story.

Pink Arrow 2016 had a whole new meaning for

my family and I. My son Nathan was going to play and fight for me! This year I would have my own story. Several of my friends and family came to walk the survivor walk with me and I was so blessed to have them share that with me. Standing out on that pink field that my husband painted and looking up into the crowd of pink touched my heart in so many ways. Walking across the field hand in hand with my son who was wearing a pink jersey with our name on the back was something more touching than I have ever experienced. As I hugged my son and tears fell down our faces, I knew just how special of a moment we were in. As

my daughter Kylee stood with her friends in the student section, she began to sob with emotion. And because of Pink Arrow, her amazing friends knew how to support her. The support of this community is like no other. Our students have learned for almost ten years all about cancer and the experiences that people have to deal with. This is something they will take with them forever. There are so many of our Lowell families that have been touched by cancer in some way or another. I thank Pink Arrow for bringing the awareness to Lowell and showing us all how to help and support each other. I finished my last chemo treatment October 3, 2016.

I did it! I made it through what felt like a big blur. I do have some residual effects. I have severe neuropathy in my hands and lower extremities and no one really knows if it will get better. But that's okay. I can deal with this because the alternative is not so good. My one year scans were clean and I will continue to be monitored every three months. I will be forever grateful to my wonderful husband and kids, my family and friends, the incredible Pink Arrow foundation and the Lowell community for their support and love throughout this entire journey.

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# Sustainability award received by SwissLane Farms

by Kathryn Atwood  
contributing reporter

One hundred and two year old SwissLane Farms is steeped with tradition. The Alto dairy farm has seen four generations of the Oesch family work the land. Recently they also proved that they are on the cutting edge of conservation receiving a prestigious U.S. Dairy award for their efforts in sustainability.

Saying they were humbled by the honor, fourth generation partner Annie (Oesch) Link and other members of the family traveled to Chicago to receive the U.S. Dairy Outstanding Dairy Farm Sustainability award. “The dairy industry is a pretty tight knit group. There are dairy farm families all across Michigan that could have or should be recognized for the work they do every single day, so this was a pleasant surprise,” said Link.

The family farm garnered the title after being verified through the Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP) and making substantial changes at the farm that reduced their overall footprint on the environment. Winners are selected based on having made improvements

that benefit the earth, their overall bottom lines and the community in which they live and work. The farm’s most recent changes included new and strategically placed manure pumps that will help transfer water more efficiently, converting to tankless water heaters and the conversion to LED lighting in their two massive barns adding up to an energy use and cost reduction of 17 percent per cow.

The farm has made other changes over the years that helped them fit the criteria of the award, including limiting their cows access to the property’s creek to preserve its cleanliness and wildlife. In 2007 when they sought their MAEAP certification, the agency noted that the location of one of their barns was too close to a hill therefore increasing the risk of contaminated runoff reaching the same waterway. Responding quickly, the farm erected a new more modern barn in a different location reducing that risk within the year. A survey performed in cooperation with the Coldwater River Watershed council revealed good results from the change noting a healthy population

of both rainbow and brook trout in the better preserved creek.

Link reported that SwissLane has more green efforts in the works. “The manure processing project we’re working on right now will reduce fuel, labor and soil compaction. The “hot” topic of the summer is water conservation, how can we still mist to keep the cows cool using as little water as possible?”

The family farm’s continued commitment to the earth is derived from the fact that it is that same earth that makes her family’s business possible. According to Link, “It’s pretty cool to be part of a 102 year old legacy but our goal is to make it to 200 years, only 98 to go! We are so blessed to live in a state with such abundant natural resources. It’s amazing to think that we can use these God given gifts to create delicious and wholesome dairy products to nourish our family and community.”

Link also gave news of another pair of projects that will help continue to propel the future of the farm; the development of their own SwissLane beef and dairy products. One half of that mission will

launch this summer inside a new storefront on the farm’s property. The shop will offer beef snacks, like jerky and summer sausage; burgers available in patties or packaged by the pound; steaks and freezer beef that will allow customers to pick both the size and the cuts for processing. Also inside the store will be the family’s farm made syrup and locally sourced honey. As for their

own brand of dairy products, “I haven’t given up on that dream yet,” Link said with enthusiasm.

As they continue their modernization Link said that no matter the changing times the traditional foundations of the farm will always remain. “Great Grandpa began with a big dream, a deep faith, a handful of cows and a couple of red barns. Today, the farm has

over 2,000 milking cows and over 50 employees; it looks very different, but we are committed to living out the same core values that he started out with. God honoring conduct, focused on the cows, thinking light years ahead, making hay while the sun shines, being productive people and turning a nickel into a dime.”



The Oesch family of SwissLane Dairy Farms accept their recent sustainability award in Chicago.

# Literacy programs keep students reading over summer

by Kathryn Atwood  
contributing reporter

Young learners continue to have the opportunity to thrive and grow over the summer in Lowell with a trio of unique reading opportunities provided free by the Lowell Area Schools

(LAS) and a local group of book loving therapy dogs.

A strong staple of Lowell’s literacy programs, Arrow Readers on the Move opens up the schools’ libraries and travels to area locations

over the summer extending the schools’ elementary level Accelerated Reader curriculum to nearly year-round. The program allows students to check out and read grade level appropriate material and test comprehension with online quizzes.

The program is introduced during kindergarten and continues until the beginning of middle school accumulating points totals and averaging scores to a percentage grade. Readers who choose to participate in the program during the summer months have the opportunity to further develop their reading skills and win cool prizes when they reach assigned reading goals. Arrow Readers on the Move takes place Tuesdays and Wednesdays with morning, afternoon and evening times to accommodate as many families as possible. On Tuesday you can find the traveling program at Cherry Creek Elementary from 9-12, Flat River Outreach Ministries from 1-4 and the Alto Library from 6-8. Wednesdays the program visits Murray Lake Elementary from 9-12 and Lowell’s Englehardt Library

from 5:30-7:30.

LAS parent Willow Cramer’s two daughters Bella and Lindsey are among the approximately 200 children taking part in the program this year. She said that attending these reading events is one way she helps them fight the “summer slide.” “It keeps the girls reading and they get prizes for doing it! We love the ladies that put it together,” said Cramer referring to Lowell educator and program coordinator Kim Lum and her staff.

Cramer and her daughters also participate in another unique reading opportunity that takes place at the Englehardt Library each summer. Ruff Readers is brought to the public through a partnership between the Kent District Library and West Michigan Therapy Dogs. The Wednesday evening read aloud program allows students to select books and then sign up for a 15 minute time slot to read with a dog. The owners and pups greet the readers who then snuggle up next to their furry reading partners, something the Cramer children eagerly look forward to. “Both

girls have been doing Ruff Readers for four years but we didn’t do it last year because all the slots filled up,” said Cramer of the popular program. “This year there is no sign up. My kids love it! Sometimes they do it two different time slots! 15 mins each!”

The theory behind the program, which began back in 2002, is that reading with a K-9 companion decreases the stress of struggling or making mistakes while reading due to the lack of judgment offered by man’s best friend. This ease helps to create an environment where children feel free to become better readers and learn to really enjoy reading. Cramer said that her kids love the dogs, Lindsey’s favorite is a Pilot and Bella adores Teddy, but that the staff and dog owners are also a positive part of the experience. “The dogs are

great but their owners are amazing too. They love my girls, their dogs and help my girls read and encourage them.”

Readers at the middle and high school level also have an option to avoid losing ground over the summer with a new online option provided by the school, “Lowell High School (LHS) and Middle School students can access their online Overdrive accounts, which gives them access to almost 1000 eBook titles,” reported head LHS media specialist Christine Beachler. “They just need to login to their accounts on a computer using their student ID numbers and passwords to gain access.” Those wishing to use the program on the go are also able to download the Overdrive app and access the book selections from their mobile devices.



Young reader Lindsey Cramer reads to her pup

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# New initiative will expand access to healthy foods for nearly two million adults and children

## Michigan Corner Store Initiative part of budget signed into law this month

The American Heart Association and the Michigan Healthy Food Access Campaign unveiled a new, statewide program to expand access to fresh fruits and vegetables. The Michigan Corner Store Initiative was created as part of the state budget signed into law this month.

“The Michigan Corner Store Initiative is an innovative program that will provide grants to corner stores in low- to moderate-income areas of the state so they can expand and add fruits and vegetables to their coolers and shelves,” said David Hodgkins, government relations director for the American Heart Association. “This will go a long way in

ensuring families and children throughout Michigan have access to fresh, nutritious foods.”

Right now, 1.8 million people in Michigan – including 300,000 children – don’t have access to fresh fruits and vegetables because they either live too far from a large grocery store or their nearby corner store doesn’t stock fresh food.

“A proper diet has a profound impact on a student’s academic performance, affecting their thinking, behavior and health,” said Lori Adkins, a child nutrition consultant with Oakland Schools. “Each and every school day I see how a balanced,

nutritious diet impacts students in the classroom. However, eating healthy shouldn’t begin and end with the school day.”

“There is no shortage of healthy food to feed Michigan families, but there is often a shortage of places to find it,” said Dave Smith, executive director of the Michigan Vegetable Council. “The Michigan Corner Store Initiative will ensure more families in rural and urban areas throughout the state have greater access to fresh foods – including vegetables grown right here in Michigan.”

Under the new

program, corner stores in low- to moderate-income areas of the state can apply for grants to expand fresh food offerings. Grant money could be used to add new refrigeration units dedicated to fruits and vegetables or for additional shelf space. Stores can also use grant money to add or improve fresh food marketing and signage and for employee nutrition education.

The initiative lays out a series of checks and balances to ensure retailers are using the money as stated. Retailers are also required to apply for the ability and if approved, to accept benefits

provided under the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC).

“We applaud the legislature for addressing

this critical need throughout our state and specifically thank Sen. Peter MacGregor and Rep. Ed Canfield for their leadership on this issue,” said Hodgkins.

## PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

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

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**NOTICE OF ORDINANCE ADOPTION**

**LOWELL CHARTER TOWNSHIP**

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that at the regular meeting of the Lowell Charter Township Board held on July 17, 2017, Ordinance No. 2017-02 was adopted.

**TO AMEND TO THE ZONING MAP OF THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF LOWELL**

**SECTION 1.** The Lowell Township Zoning Map is hereby amended to add the following: Allow “small engine sales and service, and sales and service of lawn equipment and power sports equipment” as a conditional use at 14043 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. Only these listed uses are permitted to utilize the property; any other use listed in the C, General Commercial Zoning District is not permitted.”

**SECTION 2.** Prior allowed uses: All previously approved and allowed uses are hereby rescinded.

**SECTION 3.** Publication/Effective Date: This ordinance shall become effective seven days after its publication or seven days after the publication of a summary of its provisions in a local newspaper of general circulation.

A copy of the complete text of the ordinance can be obtained at the Lowell Township offices, 2910 Alden Nash SE, Lowell, MI, 49331 during regular office hours or viewed on our website: [www.twp.lowellmi.us](http://www.twp.lowellmi.us).

Monica Burt, Clerk  
Lowell Charter Township

**CITY OF LOWELL**  
KENT COUNTY, MICHIGAN

The City of Lowell Planning-Citizens Advisory Commission will conduct a public hearing at Lowell City Hall, located at 301 East Main Street, Lowell, MI 49331 on Monday, August 14, 2017 at 7:00 PM concerning a proposed amendment to the City’s Zoning Ordinance. The following provides a summary of the proposed amendment and its regulatory effect:

The amendment represents a comprehensive update to and revision of Chapter 4, General Provisions. Several sections of this Chapter have been revised for clarity, such as regulations for fences and walls, nonconformities, and landscaping.

This amendment also represents a comprehensive update to and revision of Chapter 17, Special Land Uses. Special land use procedures in Section 17.02 have been revised for clarity, and site design standards for several specific special land uses have been revised. These specific special land uses include, but are not limited to, removal and processing of topsoil, stone, rock, sand, gravel, lime or other soil or mineral resources; public or private campgrounds, Banks, credit unions, savings and loan associations, and other similar uses as determined by the zoning enforcement officer, with drive-through facilities; and off-street parking lots.

At the above time and place, all interested parties will be given an opportunity to be heard. Written comments concerning the proposed amendment may be mailed or delivered to the Lowell City Clerk, 301 East Main Street, Lowell, MI 49331 up to the date of the public hearing. Copies of the proposed ordinance amendment may be viewed at City Hall at the address noted above during normal business hours.

The City will provide necessary reasonable auxiliary aids and services to those with disabilities planning to attend upon three (3) days’ notice to the City Clerk. Individuals who require such services should contact the City at the address listed above or by telephone at 616-897-8457.

Susan Ulery  
City Clerk



**STATEPOINT CROSSWORD**

**THEME: 1980s MOVIES**

**ACROSS**

- 1. Discrimination against AARP members?
- 6. India's smallest state
- 9. Bath powder
- 13. Espresso plus steamed milk
- 14. Center of activity
- 15. Pickled garnish
- 16. \*"Hannah and Her Sisters" director
- 17. Distinctive period
- 18. Opposite of alpha
- 19. \*"A Christmas Story" protagonist
- 21. \*Ferris Bueller's best friend
- 23. Confession subject
- 24. French Riviera city
- 25. Mischief-maker
- 28. King of India
- 30. Old master print maker
- 35. Getting warm
- 37. Knicks' competitor
- 39. Finnish steam bath
- 40. Hipbones
- 41. Derive
- 43. Membranophone
- 44. Fixin' to
- 46. Saudi Arabia's neighbor
- 47. Acid gritty-textured fruit
- 48. Iroquois tribe
- 50. Chills and fever
- 52. Prefix for "new"
- 53. Place for a house plant
- 55. Registered nurses' org.
- 57. \*Sean Penn in "Fast Times at Ridgemont High"
- 61. \*Oliver Stone's Oscar winner

CROSSWORD														
1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8		9	10	11	12	
13						14				15				
16						17				18				
19					20			21	22					
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57	58	59	60					61				62	63	64
65						66	67			68				
69						70				71				
72						73				74				



**JULY 26 - AUGUST 1**

- O.J. Simpson was granted parole on his armed robbery conviction. He will be out of prison in October 2017.
- Arizona Senator John McCain underwent surgery to remove a blood clot above his left eye when an extremely aggressive form of brain cancer was revealed. After the tumor was removed, McCain tweeted, "I greatly appreciate the outpouring of support - unfortunately for my sparring partners in Congress, I'll be back soon, so stand-by!"
- President Trump has asked his legal team if it is possible to pardon members of his inner circle and himself.
- Much conflicted and hilariously satirized White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer resigned last week. The resignation came after Trump reported appointed Anthony Scaramucci communications director and Spicer felt that action would add to the confusion already surrounding his position. Spicer's top deputy, Sarah Huckabee Sanders, will serve now as press secretary.
- Ten people were found dead and some 17 with life-threatening injuries in the back of a packed and overheated tractor-trailer in San Antonio, TX. The death toll may rise and officials are investigating this case of human trafficking saying that this case is not unusual. Temperatures in Texas were as high as 101 degrees and did not dip below 90 until after 10 pm that day.
- England's princes William and Harry discuss their mother Diana in a new documentary coming out to commemorate the 20th anniversary of her untimely death.
- The Affordable Care Act is still in peril as Vice President Mike Pence says, "President Donald J. Trump and I fully support the majority leader's decision to move forward with a bill that just repeals Obamacare."

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- 65. Fire in one's soul
- 66. "\_\_\_\_, humbug!"
- 68. Canine skin infection
- 69. Famous person
- 70. Freudian topic
- 71. Beyond suburb
- 72. Hightailed it
- 73. Computer network acronym

74. Destruction of cells, pl.

**DOWN**

- 1. Resembling wings
- 2. Apple variety
- 3. It shall, for short
- 4. 12 \_\_\_\_ of AA
- 5. Stonehenge stone
- 6. Clarified butter
- 7. "Days of \_\_\_\_ Lives"
- 8. Olden day calculators
- 9. What to do with a shrew?
- 10. Copycat
- 11. Kids' building block
- 12. "Ocean Spray" \_\_\_\_-Apple juice
- 15. Celestial body with a tail, pl.
- 20. Absurd
- 22. Card with one pip
- 24. \*Robert Redford's "The \_\_\_\_"
- 25. \*Montoya's first name
- 26. Honeydew, e.g.
- 27. Founding Father Thomas
- 29. \*Returned in 1983
- 31. Not gentlemen
- 32. Second-largest

- Great Lake
- 33. Accustom
- 34. \*Main character in "First Blood"
- 36. #28 Across' daughter
- 38. Heroin, slang
- 42. Artificial sweetener brand
- 45. Not absorb, nor repel
- 49. Have a cold, e.g.
- 51. Canine's coat
- 54. Denigrating statement
- 56. Muscle control problem
- 57. Puch-shaped structures in animals or plants.
- 58. \*Like "Dead Poets Society" school, e.g.
- 59. Opposite of busy
- 60. College girl
- 61. Sound unit
- 62. Cross to bear
- 63. Mythological hominid
- 64. Snouts or beaks
- 67. \_\_\_\_ Khan

*Puzzle solutions on page 12*



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

**POLL RESULTS**

**What concerns you most?**

- Health care ..... 38%
- The environment ..... 24%
- The way we treat each other..... 18%
- Violence..... 10%
- Online hacking..... 10%



# Celebrating the heritage of area farms

## Rasch Farms - from generation to generation

by Tim McAllister  
lead reporter

A few local farms have been passed down from generation to generation in the same family. One of Lowell's biggest family farms is Rasch Orchards, 2730 Alden Nash SE. The Rasch family has owned the orchard for 67 years. It started out as a dairy farm, but they soon found the land was better suited for growing fruit.

"I'm really proud of the farm's history," said orchard owner Duane Rasch. "My mother and father were from the Fruit Ridge, Sparta and Conklin area. My dad Carl Rasch bought this place in 1950. When he moved here there was just a farmhouse and a couple little barns; the land was wide open and overgrown with brush and there was no fruit here. At first he was primarily a dairy farmer. I used to be a dairy farmer here too. My brother Tom Rasch and I did that for about 15 years while my dad did the fruit. I come from a family of nine and I have seven children of my own, so there were a lot of workers here. When my dad was going to retire, I went to work for him running the fruit operation for about four or five years. About 11 or 12 years ago I finally bought it from him. Like I said, when my dad first moved here, there was no fruit here. I was always amazed how he knew that this was a good site. This farm has a good history of bringing through fruit crops year after year consistently. It's good ground, but it's also the elevation. Cold air is like water, it flows downhill. That's why you want to be up high to grow fruit. And the view is priceless. You would be amazed how many people stop on this hill, get out of their car and take pictures. At least four or five a week. The bicyclists that go by always stop."

They grow fruits and grains at Rasch Orchards, but most of their efforts go into the various fruit crops.

"This is primarily a fruit farm and apples are my primary crop," Rasch said. "We grow 70 acres of apples, about 60,000 bushels of apples of several varieties. Gala, Honeycrisp, Macintosh and Fuji are the most popular varieties of apple. We have 400 acres of land; 100 of it is fruit and 300 are the cash crops like corn and soybeans. The

other fruits we grow are strawberries, raspberries and peaches. The rest of my land isn't suited for fruit. The ground is good enough but the elevation and location aren't right. I prefer to do fruit. If I had more land that was suited to that, that's what I'd be doing. The cash crops take a back burner to the fruit for me."

Growing apples is a year-round occupation. Even in the winter when the trees go dormant, there is still 40 hours worth of work to take care of each week as they prepare for the next year's crop.

"Our growing season with the fruit starts in April," Rasch said. "We spray for apple scab, which is a fungus, for a six week period. By the time that's done, around June 1, that's when insects usually take off. Then you're out there monitoring and trapping insects like the codling moth. We do some mating disruption by hanging pheromones in the trees. It's not 100 percent effective, but it's good enough to cut out about half of your pesticides. The next step is harvest, which is a major issue. Gala, Honeycrisp and Macintosh are generally the first ones that are ripe and ready to harvest. That is usually around the first of September."

Although Rasch Orchards produces tens of thousands of bushels of apples right here in Lowell, you might have to do a bit of traveling in order to consume one of them.

"I don't do any retail of apples, they go through apple brokers" Rasch said. "Growers like me send our fruit to these brokers, which is like a sales organization. There are probably five or six major brokers. The same day the fruit is picked, we deliver it to the brokers, who sell them to chain stores, primarily Meijer and Walmart. A lot of this fruit is exported out of the country, about 20 percent. It goes worldwide. The larger chain stores don't want to deal with a small grower like me that can't offer them a consistent product on a monthly basis. They prefer to go to a place where there are millions of bushels available."



Duane Rasch

Rasch said that one of the most popular apple varieties does not cost more because of greed, but instead because they're so difficult to produce.

"Honeycrisp are a high value apple, the consumer thinks we're making a lot of money on that," Rasch said. "Honeycrisp apples are very temperamental to grow, they present a lot of problems. That's why they have to have that high dollar on them. They are susceptible to bitter pit, which is a calcium deficiency. At best we're getting 50 to 60 percent of those apples to market. The rest of them are rejected, or seconds. The next problem with them is their skin is really thin and soft, and the stems puncture them really easily. When we're harvesting them we have clippers and we're clipping each stem so that there is no sharp stem there to puncture that apple. If that wasn't a high dollar apple, we couldn't afford to do that. They're so expensive because there is a lot of labor that goes in that fruit. With apples like Gala or Fuji, 85 to 90 percent of them go to market. Honeycrisp will never do that."

Chain stores will reject fruit that does not look perfect. Equipment exists that can x-ray, photograph and sort the fruit automatically, but for a small, family operation like Rasch's, machines like that are cost-prohibitive.

"The quality of fruit has skyrocketed in the past 15 years. Color has no effect on flavor, but in a grocery store looks sell. What used to be accepted, there's no way anymore. It has to be

perfect. I shoot for 80 to 85 percent, that's kind of my target. Anything more is great, anything less is a little disappointing. Grading and getting fruit to a retail chain like Meijer or Walmart requires some pretty sophisticated equipment. A small grower like me can't justify owning something like that. You're looking at \$4 million to \$5 million for one of those graders.

Technology changes so fast, after five or six years that grader is obsolete."

Rasch often distributes his other types of fruit at local farmer's markets.

"With the smaller fruits like peaches, strawberries and raspberries, we generally go to farmer's markets and some wholesale," Rasch said. "We market that ourselves, we don't go through a broker on any of that. I have done the Lowell farmer's market in the past."

The orchard employs 20 seasonal workers and two full-time workers. The seasonal employees are there for six weeks during harvest time, but sometimes

Rasch has a hard time finding willing workers.

"Labor is a very critical subject," Rasch said. "We struggle getting enough help to properly harvest fruit. It's hard work. You have to be pretty physically fit to do this. We use migrant help, primarily Hispanic people. They migrate from crop to crop. We're looking at every way to downsize the amount of labor needed. We're planting high density trees. This is the future of fruit."

Weather is another big problem for fruit growers in Michigan. Fruit can be very delicate and is easily damaged by cold temperatures.

"Frost is a big issue with fruit, and I mean big," Rasch said. "Two or three nights of frost in the spring can wipe out your whole year. That's happened to us before. 2012 was probably the worst year. We were in bloom in the first of April, six weeks earlier than normal and it was devastating. If you get two or three years of bad crops, you're not going to survive. Mother Nature can either be very nice to us or she can wipe us out in a hurry. You have no control over that."

Michigan State University partners with local farms to promote

scientific and technological advancements designed to streamline and improve the agricultural processes for all types of crops.

"There is a lot of science behind growing fruit now," Rasch said. "The MSU Extension assists us with a lot of computer programs. Almost every fruit grower is involved with the MSU Extension. They're pretty much everywhere. They really know what they're doing. You could call it going back to school. We have four or five sessions with them every year about new things that they're doing, new technology."

Farming is not for everybody. It involves a lot of long hours and physical labor and you're often at the mercy of forces beyond your control. It takes a particularly determined person with a positive attitude and the ability to roll with the punches.

"It's not an easy job," Rasch said. "You had better be dedicated and willing to put the hours in. It's in your blood. For me to walk away from it would be tough. It gets discouraging at times, but you have to be able to take the bad with the good. This year I'm very excited and optimistic, but that's not every year."

**These Gala apples look small, green and innocent right now, but they could be on their way to Saudi Arabia by early September.**



# Perseverance A community fighting cancer Jane Tschannen

Jane Tschannen is both a cancer widow and a cancer survivor. Tschannen owns Fuller Septic Services, 2051 Bowes Rd. The company has been in business for over 30 years. Her husband Tom died from cancer in 2011 and, despite her own cancer journey, she has run the business by herself ever since.

“Like most septage haulers we were a ‘mom and pop’ operation,” Tschannen said. “Tom drove the truck, I did the books. Then we expanded a little bit and over the years he got into excavating, plumbing, Roto-Rooting and portable toilets. I stayed home to raise the kids. Eventually he decided that septage was where he wanted to focus and he got out of all that other stuff and now we just pump residential septage. We also install and replace septic tanks.”

Jane’s husband Tom Tschannen tried to keep his illness secret.

“Tom didn’t really want anybody to ever know he was sick, so most people didn’t even know he had cancer until after he passed away,” Tschannen said. “He just didn’t want people to view him as weak or sickly or anything like that. He was actually pumping tanks and working in the office probably six months before he passed away.”

Despite his bravery, the cancer eventually caught up with Tom. Then it came for Jane.

“Tom passed away of chronic lymphocytic leukemia in January 2011, then three months later I was diagnosed with breast cancer,” Tschannen said. “I had my surgeries five months to the day after Tom passed away.”

Jane also worked during her illness, but she wasn’t a maniac about it.

“I have a great secretary who took care of me,” Tschannen said. “I worked from home and she just took over and when Tom passed away the guys stepped up to the plate. Really, really good people here.”

When she felt up to it Tschannen took on the responsibility of running the business she and her husband started together.

“People said to me after Tom passed away, ‘You could just start over, sell the business and do something different with your life’ and I thought that was really almost scarier, so I took over the running of the business.”

She recently celebrated six years cancer free. Tschannen said her cancer has not returned because surgeons were able to remove all of it.

“I had a double mastectomy,” Tschannen said. “They cut it out. The type of cancer I had, I didn’t

have to have chemotherapy or radiation or anything like that. I was one of the lucky ones.”

Tschannen is the personification of the “Keep Calm and Carry On.”

“I’m just working here, running Fuller Septic,” Tschannen said. “Not really much has changed in my life the last couple years. I’m still working hard, building the business and happy to be in Lowell. I’m happy and healthy.”

Tschannen gives a lot of money to Pink Arrow Pride.

“We sponsor whatever they need to make their financial goals,” Tschannen said. “I did the Quiver Run four years ago. Usually we sponsor some advertising and that kind of stuff.”

Since Lowell invented it in 2008, communities across the nation hold similar events. Tschannen gets a kick out of living where it all started.

“Gilda’s Club does such a great job for the kids and for families,” Tschannen said. “It makes me proud to be from the community that started it all. It’s very neat to be a part of all that.”

The future is bright and cancer free for Tschannen.

“The future holds a lot,” Tschannen said. “I’m very optimistic. I’m young, I’m healthy, my business is thriving. I don’t think about cancer every

day, which I think is a good thing. I don’t think of myself of as being a cancer survivor or whatever until all of a sudden it’s been five years. I look forward to the future, working hard, building the business and all that kind of stuff. That’s where I’m at. Trying to work hard and pump a lot of poop.”

Tschannen said Lowell has set a good example for towns across the country.

“The community of Lowell should take so much pride in what they do for Pink Arrow Pride and what a shining

example it is for the nation,” Tschannen said. “You see them popping up all over the country and it started here. The city of Lowell deserves a huge, big pat on the back for bringing the awareness and the recognition to the cancer endeavor that they’re doing here.”

Tschannen wouldn’t want to be in business anywhere other than Lowell.

“I really like being in business in Lowell,” Tschannen said. “I like the community and I love the people. Everybody’s been very supportive.”



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