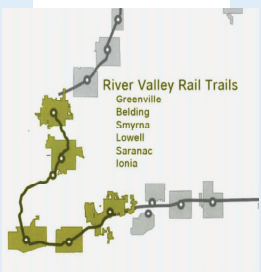


Merry Christmas!
from Everyone at the Ledger

as we "wrap up" this year, watch for the Ledger's Year-In-Review issue next week!



trail expansion



page 16



lhs sports



pages 10 & 11

50¢



In its third year, the LPD's Cold Weather Warrior program is determined to keep Lowell kids warm

by Tim McAllister
lead reporter

For the last three years, the Lowell Police Department's donation to their Cold Weather Warrior program has provided jackets and boots for kids who might otherwise not have access to proper winter gear. This year, the money to fund the program was squirreled away all year long by city employees and then boosted by an anonymous donor.

"One of the main reasons for me to get into law enforcement was to use this platform to help the community."

~ Gordy Lauren

"The \$200 was donated by city hall and police employees that participate in casual Friday," said LPD

officer Scot Vansolkema. "We paid \$1 each Friday to wear jeans or [have] a dress down day. Each year

we donate the money to a charity of our choice. We've donated to FROM, the Children's Assessment

Center and this year we did the Cold Weather Warriors. Each year that we've done this we also have an

anonymous donor who gives us a \$500 gift card. She doesn't want her name mentioned because it's not about her, it's donating to a cause she believes in."

"The staff from city hall, along with chief [Steve] Bukala and [dispatcher] Leslie Heffron from the police department participated in raising the money," said LPD officer Gordy Lauren. "Starting Jan. 1, 2017 each Friday was 'jean day.' If you participated in jean day you would put \$1 in the pot. At the end of the year the employees picked a charity to donate the money to."

On Wednesday, Dec. 13 LPD officers went to Meijer, Target, Dick's Sporting Goods and Wal-Mart and bought 13 jackets, five pairs of boots and four pairs of snow pants for Lowell Middle School students with a need for them.

"We have purchased close to 20 or more jackets, snow pants, and boots this year," Vansolkema said.



LPD dispatcher Leslie Heffron and Theresa Mundt with some of the Cold Weather Warrior jackets.

Cold Weather Warriors, continued, page 3

Gilda's Club receives check from Pink Arrow Pride

by Tim McAllister
lead reporter

The annual distribution of funds raised during 2017's Pink Arrow Pride events took place during the Gilda's Club of Lowell Holiday Social. Teresa Beachum, the main Pink Arrow organizer, presented Gilda's Club with a check for \$72,000. The money from Pink Arrow is the club's main source of funds every year.

"Early December each year we take a moment to divide the funds that have been raised from the Pink Arrow event that you'll remember back in September," Beachum said. "We sell t-shirts, on the t-shirts we have donors that are hugely supportive of the Pink Arrow [Pride]. Tonight I have a check for \$72,000 for Gilda's Club of Lowell. It's a huge undertaking and in this small community, every year the support that comes for Pink Arrow

Pride is incredible. We are very, very thankful for that. [...] We're very thankful

for the large vendors and supporters that go on our t-shirts and those of you

who buy a t-shirt every year. Thank you ever so much."

Pink Arrow Pride will also donate \$46,000 to Lowell Community Wellness to support families during the grief and terror of a cancer diagnosis, plus \$8,500 split between three scholarships, the Dr. Donald Gerard Scholarship, the Kathy Talus Scholarship and the Lowell Community Wellness Education Fund. The total amount raised and then donated by Pink Arrow this year was \$126,500.

"We also left \$46,000 at Lowell Community Wellness," Beachum said. "Those dollars all go for family support. We supported this year 92 families and the month is not over. The end of this month will be the end of our fiscal year. This was our biggest year of family support. People are learning more and more about Pink

Arrow and the support that we give in the community. We also follow up on three scholarships, the Dr. Donald Gerard Scholarship, the Kathy Talus Scholarship and the education foundation which funds teaching grants each year."

"All of the \$15 t-shirts that are sold every summer, the big game with [Lowell High School football] coach Noel Dean and all the festivities that go on in the community, some of those proceeds come to Gilda's Club of Lowell," said Lindsay Jousma, Gilda's Club of Lowell program manager. "It really is a tribute to the community of Lowell that Gilda's Club is able to be here and provide emotional and social support to one another. A huge thank you to the community for



Jan Miller of Gilda's Club accepted a donation of \$72,000 from Teresa Beachum of Pink Arrow Pride.

Gilda's Club receives check, continued, page 8

The demise of net neutrality may increase costs to consumers

by Tim McAllister
lead reporter

Put simply, the phrase “net neutrality” means a free, open Internet. It’s the theory that Internet service providers [Comcast, AT&T, Vergennes Broadband, etc.] are treated like a utility. They’re required to treat all data on the Internet the same, charge the same amount of money and give the same amount of bandwidth to every customer regardless of content, application, brand of equipment, platform, browser, website, etc. That was what we had until Dec. 14 when the Federal Communications Commission voted to repeal net neutrality.

This could allow, for example, Comcast to charge you extra fees to use websites that will now become “premium content.” We could be saying goodbye to using Facebook, Snapchat, YouTube, Facetime and any other popular website or applications for free. AT&T could charge you an extra “Netflix streaming fee” on top of what you already pay Netflix. Or they could pass that cost on to Netflix, who could

immediately raise your Netflix bill to compensate. Companies could monitor your activity and “throttle” your bandwidth if they think you’re downloading too much stuff, playing too many video games or watching too much Hulu during peak hours. Internet providers could block or censor certain websites they find objectionable. Of course, you could always be un-throttled for a small fee.

“This will not change our business practices at all,” said Vergennes Broadband owner Ryan Peel. “We have never blocked or slowed content for any customer and never will.”

It seemed like net neutrality was an issue that was definitively dealt with back in 2015 when the FCC “restored internet freedom.” They even have a page that is still online boasting about this proud accomplishment: www.fcc.gov/restoring-internet-freedom Former Verizon attorney Ajit Pai was appointed chairman of the FCC by the president in January, 2017. On Dec. 14 the FCC voted 3-2 down

party lines to repeal net neutrality.

If you want to send the FCC a letter, it should go to the Federal Communications Commission, 445 12th Street SW, Washington, DC 20554. The FCC’s toll-free

phone number is 1-888-225-5322 and their toll-free fax number is 1-866-418-0232. FCC chairman Ajit Pai’s email address is Ajit.Pai@fcc.gov. The other FCC commissioners’ email addresses are

Mignon.Clyburn@fcc.gov, Mike.O’Rielly@fcc.gov, Brendan.Carr@fcc.gov and Jessica.Rosenworcel@fcc.gov They need to hear from the public about net neutrality as often as

possible. The FCC has also a special webpage dedicated to collecting citizen comments, that can be found at www.fcc.gov/ecfs/filings/express Click “express” to submit a comment online.



Back in October, US Rep. Ro Khanna of California shared this image on Twitter, warning, "In Portugal, with no net neutrality, internet providers are starting to split the net into packages."



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HOLIDAY ARTISTS MARKET

The annual LowellArts Holiday Artists Market featuring artwork by over 50 area artists will be held through Dec. 23. Artwork and other handmade items by Michigan artists will be available for purchase during the gift-giving season. Gift items include pottery, paintings, photography, jewelry, textiles, glasswork, handbags, woodwork, metalwork, wreaths, basketry, ornaments, candles, soaps and more. LowellArts is located at 223 W. Main and gallery hours are Tues. – Sat., 10 am to 6 pm. Details can be found at www.lowellartsmi.org

JAMES AND THE GIANT PEACH

LowellArts presents James and The Giant Peach on Thurs., Jan. 18 and Fri., Jan. 19 at 7 pm and Sat., Jan. 20 at 2 pm and 7 pm at Lowell Performing Arts Center / Lowell High School, 11700 Vergennes. Directed by Teresa Goldner. General admission \$7, kids 2 and under free. Performance is one hour long. www.lowellartsmi.org or 897-8545.

FAIRGROUND FUNDRAISER

The Kent County Youth Fair will be accepting donations for the New Fairground Capital Campaign at Tractor Supply, 2111 W. Main St. on Saturday, Dec. 23 from 10 am to noon. There will be information available and people to talk to about the future of the fair. You will also be able to get a picture taken with Santa of you and your pet.

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Cold Weather Warriors, continued

“Most come from the Lowell Meijer, however we blow out their inventory every year. This year and last year we had to venture out to the Cascade Meijer and Wal-Mart, and also Target to finish off this week's

list. Others are purchased by private individuals for common youth sizes that we can match up to kids in that size range. We've found it easier on us for storage [and] inventory to just make the purchases with gift cards

and get them out to the schools. Each year we are right around 40 children that are identified by our little elves at the schools as not having or lacking proper clothing. Right now we don't have the exact count as we

are still purchasing as funds come in. Some of these kids are not out for recess with their friends because of not having proper gear to go outside.”

This is the third year they've done Cold Weather Warriors and as long as it's cold outside they'll take donations, ideally in the form of gift cards to stores that sell jackets and boots.

“This idea came from a parent who saw a little girl wearing her mom's coat into one of the elementary schools one morning,” Vansolkema said. “Mom gave up her coat so the girl could be warm on the way to school. The mom was a volunteer and asked the girl if she had a coat to wear. The little girl was very matter of fact and said, 'Not right now because my mom lost her job and we can't afford one right now.' This mom brought this to officer Lauren's attention and he brought this idea to me. This is our third year doing this and as you say, the rest is history. I'll share a quick story, our first year a little girl cried and said this was the first time she ever received something new. All her clothes were hand-me-downs or used clothing.”

“This was a project that was started three years ago by an idea from a local mother,” Lauren said. “She gave us the idea and we were able to take it and run with it.”

“Most of the jackets are kids jackets,” Vansolkema said. “When we get into the upper elementary and middle school, some of the boys are my size and we have to get adult jackets which carry a larger price tag than kids jackets. When our helpers identify those in need, we get sizes for jackets. If they need snow pants, we try and get those too. Boots happen on occasion as well.”

“The way the event is set up is we have people from the community donate Meijer gift cards,” Lauren said. “We will reach out to the schools to see if any students need any cold weather gear including: hats, boots, jackets, gloves and snow pants. The schools will send us their requests and we run to the stores to pick up the clothing. We usually advertise the event on our Facebook page and get an amazing response each year. We will be

collecting Meijer gift cards for the rest of December.”

“This is our way of giving back to the community,” Vansolkema said. “The officers donate money to the gift cards, along with others in the community. It's the spirit of Christmas. It's important to me personally because I've been very blessed with my life. We have the ability to give back to the community and help those who are less fortunate than we are. Some of us also participate in Toys for Tots and the Angel Tree. It's always nice to set an example for our kids to follow.”

“We all care about the well being of our community and it's citizens,” Lauren said. “It is very important to make sure our school children are protected from the elements of winter. One of the main reasons for me to get into law enforcement was to use this platform to help the community. Building the bridge between our department and the citizens of Lowell is very important. This event is so easy for us to do and it makes a great impact on the people that are helped by this.”



LPD officer Scot Vansolkema with a great big pile of winter gear for Lowell Middle School students who would either freeze or be forced to stay indoors for months.



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Lowell coach Miller is named Assistant Coach of the Year for 2017

by Kathryn Atwood
contributing reporter

Between the baseball diamond and the football field Lowell High School's Juston Miller will have 30 seasons of coaching in at the close of the spring season. This year, the Michigan High School Football Coaches Association recognized Miller as Assistant Coach of the Year for 2017.

Miller has spent 15 years with the varsity football team serving as the team's defensive coordinator and concurrently is the head coach for Red Arrows varsity baseball. Not knowing he was even being considered for the honor, Miller said he found out about the award in an unusual way when a student athlete stopped by his office to chat.

"He ended our conversation by telling me congratulations on the assistant coach 'thing.' Unsure of what the student was talking about and not sure if it was just some



Lowell coach Juston Miller during a baseball game last spring. (Stock photo)

friendly banter I did not understand, I smiled and told him thank you," explained Miller.

After receiving another congratulatory message later in the day, from one of his alumni players, Miller saw a link attached to the note that led him to his recognition.

"My initial reaction once I found out was thankfulness for the opportunity to work with the many quality coaches and players that learn to execute within what we do. It is always kind and meaningful when our peers take a moment to recognize our efforts," said Miller of the award.

Highly respected by his athletes Miller has been part of some phenomenal athletic seasons with the two highly decorated teams whose accolades include conference, district, regional and state titles. Miller said his main coaching philosophy is building quality relationships with the players he has the opportunity to coach.

"The young men I am around want to be consistently challenged, held accountable, loved, shown respect, and in the end, know that we are proud of their experience."

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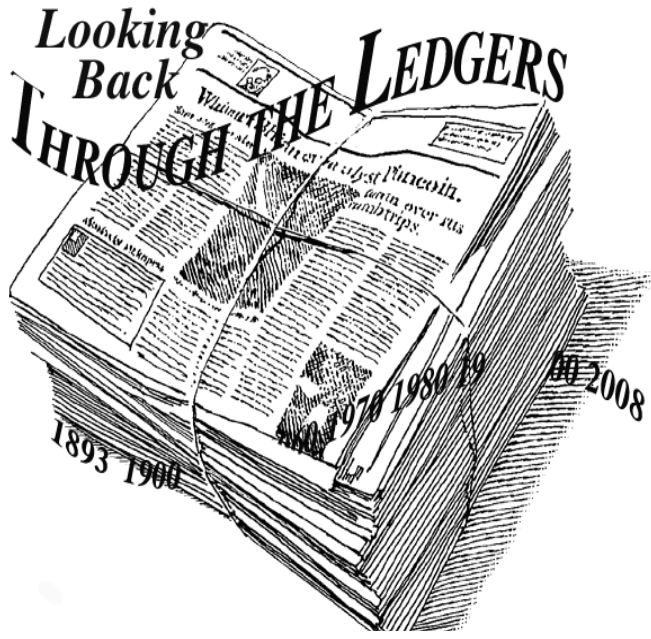

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viewpoint



125 years ago Lowell Journal December 21, 1892

The Journal is this week, and will be in the future, printed with power furnished by a Crocker Wheeler, two horse power electrical motor. And it works as no other power can work. We have thrown out our steam fixtures and have an engine and boiler for sale. Our patrons and friends are invited to call up and see our new machine work. You are always welcome. Since three years ago the Journal has made many improvements first in the office to facilitate them in the paper, until today it is conceded by all to be one of the best country weeklies in the state and one of the largest \$1 country weeklies. We appreciate the fact that the improvements we have made could not have been given but for the liberal patronage we have received and which we appreciate.

100 years ago The Lowell Ledger December 20, 1917

Christmas wedding for well known Lowell couple. On Monday evening, Dec. 17, Miss Jean Huckler entertained twenty guests at the home of Mrs. Belle Hodges, in honor of Miss Frances Abernethy, whose approaching marriage to Mr. Ralph Chase has lately been announced.

Again we want to thank the public for their generous response to the appeal to help fill the Christmas bags. In all we were able to send in to Grand Rapids \$44.30, besides a large box of tablets, pencils, soap, brushes, etc. The boys and girls of the Lowell schools certainly have the true Christmas spirit—that it is more blessed to give than to receive. The Red Cross rooms will not be open Dec. 25 or Jan. 1.

Notice. If you want to get 50c a pound for butterfat this week, take it to Mrs. F. W. Braisted, Lowell. You will get an absolutely accurate test and weight, as all cream is weighed and tested right in the open where you can see it, and you get your pay right away. Try out this deal. You will be money ahead. Very respectfully, Durand Creamery Co.

75 years ago The Lowell Ledger December 24, 1942

This year everybody missed the beautiful Christmas lighting which has been a feature of Main St. every Christmas season for years past. The government asked the people not to waste electrical energy.

One of the interesting events for the Ledger force at each Christmas season is the annual letter which always comes from Assistant Postmaster William

Kerekes. This year's letter is another literary gem and reads as follows: "A preponderance of mature foresight has given impetus to a desire to pay last year's sidewall price instead of this year's ceiling on my renewal to your loquacious sheet. Must get this remittance to you prior to Jan. 1, 1943, as I start rationing my debt payments on that date. "In patriotic compliance with rigid wartime economy, I respectfully enclose a synthetic check. "Very sincerely yours, "Bill Kerekes."

First Lieut. Erwin Nummer of Lowell has been wounded in action somewhere in the Southwest Pacific, according to a telegram received here last Saturday morning from the U. S. War Department, addressed to his wife, Mrs. Elaine Nummer, who resides in apartments at the Percy J. Read home on Elm St.

50 years ago Lowell Ledger December 21, 1967

Main Street was the scene of a car-school bus accident on Thursday morning when Donald Taylor, 60, Lowell, suffered a fatal heart attack while driving down Riverside Drive, and crashed into a school bus going east on Main St. His daughter, Bonnie, 11, grabbed the wheel and caused the car to hit the bus a glancing blow. None of the 32 children on the bus, or the driver, Bob Perry, or Miss Taylor were injured.

As of Tuesday night at closing time, the Lowell Post office was running over 11,000 cancellations ahead of last year's total. Postmaster Charles Doyle says, "It looks like a record breaker again this year."

25 years ago The Lowell Ledger December 23, 1992

While the year 1992 brought political change nationally, the Lowell community also experienced changes of a different sort... Construction of the new high school began; City of Lowell and Lowell Township reach a water agreement; a Downtown Development Authority is organized; Lowell Schools and The City of Lowell approved a joint plan for the East Riverfront project.

A public hearing has been set by the Lowell Township board to discuss the special assessment district for the construction of a new water main along the north side of M-21 between Cumberland Drive and Alden Nash Avenue. The hearing will take place on Feb. 1, 1993 at 7 p.m. in the Lowell Township Hall. The meeting will describe which method of assessment will be used for the estimated 50 properties that will be affected by the new line. Several assessment policies are being considered but the board will choose a policy that will be fair to everyone involved. The estimated cost for the construction of the new water main is \$277,000. Among those policies being considered: 1) Assess the property on the basis of how much frontal footage will the new line go through. Property owners would be billed \$21.88 per frontal foot. 2) Assess the property by total acreage at the same rate as frontal footage. 3) Assess the property using 1/2 of the frontal footage and 1/2 of the total acreage. The board is tentatively considering using the third method but crediting portions of property that can't be used for developmental purposes.

Warehouse next home for copy center. After looking at six locations, it was decided that the warehouse behind the Showboat Amphitheatre would be the most logical place to move the business office and copy center. Both must be moved by next spring to make way for the renovation work scheduled at the Middle School. Xerox, the firm the copy center equipment was purchased from will move the copy center office which is responsible for \$50 million dollars worth of activities.

off the cuff

Jeanne Boss

on the bright side

Times being what they are, friends and acquaintances keep telling me they suffer fitful, restless nights and days alternately embroiled in pointed arguments and biting their tongues. I'm frequently brought to a point in these conversations where I must express at least a bit of happiness for the more positive happenings of 2017.

It seems to me that one good thing about today's political environment is that those who thought they were socially aware are now rubbing the sleep from their eyes and waking up to the "others" around them. This crazy year that has emboldened a callous, rude group of people on one side, does have a brighter side. It has caused some people to remove their blinders and realize that more needs to be done in the areas of education and compassion. This evolution of discovery and learning that the "way it's always been done" is not only wrong but stagnating.

I love Michigan and I love her seasons. Even though icy weather can be a problem, how wonderful to have some snow when we should have it. Unfortunately, global warming isn't going away. But to have our state covered in a blanket of snow in December is a respite of sorts for the time being. We can only hope at this point that it holds until fruit can blossom during an equally timely spring.

Personally, throughout my life I have benefitted from bad examples. I always could look at how things turned out for people who may have made some mistakes and would decide

that wasn't the way for me. Young parents, teenagers and kids today seem to be paying attention. Oh sure, you have the Honey Boo Boos of this world who, "don't know no better" but I see evidence every day that people are sick of these rotten apples. And we now have some of the most powerful, bad examples in the country showing us what not to do. In the long run, it will be a good thing.

According to the American Pet Products Association, in 2016 we spent \$62.75 billion on our pets. Now, that's a good thing, right?

I'm also happy for CBS coming to the forefront of true and interesting news. From their morning show on Sunday and on weekdays to the evening news, they have continued to inform and educate. They frequently add historical relevance to explain the origins of events and places and sprinkle in just enough entertainment events to stay relevant without turning into variety shows. Yes, I know about Charlie Rose - an unfortunate happening with a necessary solution - but, you'll notice a shred of decency that runs through "some" of these situations and that is Rose and others are paying the price for their deeds; others are not. I'll say no more about that.

So through the good, the bad and the ugly, if we learn, if we bend, we can glean a positive result. It is true that friction creates the pearl. In retrospect and in future planning, we can metaphorically pick up a bad situation, turn it around and make 2018 into that gem.

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.

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Lang bids farewell as he announces his retirement

I'm writing this, my last health column for the Lowell Ledger with mixed feelings of joy and sadness. I've announced my retirement earlier this year and will complete my final days as a family doctor in Lowell on December 22nd. (Spoiler alert: this column will be a little longer than usual... Thanks Lowell Ledger).

In August of 1980 two young family doctors, fresh out of their internship, set up a medical practice on Center St, in the small town of Lowell. Over the last 37 years their practice

flourished and grew, now with nine medical providers and part of the Metro Health/University of Michigan Health System.

I've had so many great memories over the years! For the first 10 years or so, Dr. Gauthier and I had an active obstetric practice as part of our full service family practice clinic. There is nothing in the field of medicine that is more fulfilling and joyful than assisting in the delivery of a healthy baby. Now we see those babies we delivered having their own

babies! The great thing about practicing in a small community like Lowell is the ability to care for the extended family and getting to know each generation intimately.

I've had the distinct honor to assist in the health care of so many wonderful people over the last 37 years. My patients...I've laughed with them, casted them, coached them, encouraged them, advised them, repaired their lacerations, examined them and cried with them during difficult times especially after the

loss of a loved one. I will miss the daily challenges of family medicine, the office visits, the emergencies, the house calls, phone calls, long hours, hospital rounds and certainly the small victories in my patients daily lives, whether its successfully controlling a chronic medical condition or overcoming a cancer diagnosis.

I will not miss the devolution of medical practice into a less personal endeavor driven by economics, efficiency, metrics and profit. The

electronic medical record has added much to the practice of medicine, but I strongly feel it has made medicine less personal. I've always tried to look my patient in the eye, listen to their concerns, touch them and the computer in the room seems to take away from the human connection.

I still think there is not a better more honorable profession than the practice of medicine. I owe a lot to those that have made my lifelong dream a possibility. I want to thank my patients for nurturing and encouraging me in the early years in the pursuit of a medical career. Thanks to my wife, Lorie, for the constant support, love and understanding over these 37 years. I'm sure there were times where you felt like you were a single parent raising our three sons! Thanks to my eternally optimistic, loyal, longtime partner, Dr. Gauthier, without him our practice would not have survived all these years. Thanks to my younger partners, Dr. Meier, Dr. Christenson and Dr. Lixie in accepting the challenges of providing ongoing excellent care to our patients. (It's not a well known fact that Dr. Meier probably saved my life years ago by providing expert emergency care

after I suffered a severe allergic reaction to a bee sting!) A huge thanks to the magnificent staff at the Metro Health Lowell office that strive every day to provide professional, caring, personal service to the Lowell community. I will miss working with them, my family, some, who I have worked with for 20 plus years...Sheryl, Monica, Lisa, Kathy, Rene, Chris, our newer staff and just as skilled and provide quality care every day.

Many of you have asked what my plans are for retirement. Well, we will spend some time in Florida over the winter and visit our grandchildren in Australia, play some golf, fish, travel and do many things we never had time for. I hope to continue part time teaching of young family medicine residents through their hospital outpatient clinic. I'm also hoping to become a more active member of the Lowell Rotary Club.

A heartfelt thank you to all of our patients in the Lowell community for putting your trust in me over the years. I've been truly blessed and it has been an honor to be a part of your health care team.

Sincerely,
Dr. Jim Lang



Dr. Jim Lang pictured with his staff as he bids farewell.

happy birthday



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

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

DECEMBER 22
Jason Seeley, Cody Soyka.

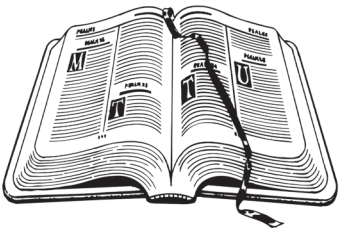
DECEMBER 24
Jeffrey Pfaller.

DECEMBER 25
Scott Shindorf, Chris Woolfenden, Chris Treglia, Jeni Clouser, Peggy Hayes, Star Daverman.

DECEMBER 26
Margaret Gasper, Shay Hacker, Stephanie Peel, Butch Landman, Kaitlyn Callihan.



area churches



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UCC
865 Lincoln Lake SE • 616.897.5906
Pastor Jon Propper
Worship Service - Sundays 9:30AM
Lowell's Open Table - Thursdays 5 - 7 PM
Serving meals and providing fellowship to the greater Lowell community
OPEN AND AFFIRMING
www.lowellucc.org

GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH
103 Bluewater Highway (Missouri Synod)
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

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF LOWELL
CHRIST-CENTERED, KINGDOM-FOCUSED HOMES
2275 West Main Street - (Barrier Free)
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

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 Street • 616-897-9820
Website: www.stmarylowell.com
Weekend Masses: Sat 5 pm; Sun 10:30 am
Confession: Saturdays 3-4:30 pm
Prayer & Adoration: Wednesdays 8 am to 7 pm
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN TO ADULTS

LOWELL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
discover. grow. share
621 E. Main Street
897-5938
www.lowellumc.com • Barrier Free Entrance
WORSHIP
9 AM - Traditional • 11 AM - Contemporary
Kid's Crew 11:15 AM
Sr. Pastor - Brad Brillhart

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MEMBER TCIA TREE CARE ASSOCIATION ISA

LL&P board approves \$14,870 purchase to repair 30-year-old equipment at regular meeting

by Tim McAllister
lead reporter

The board of Lowell Light & Power had their latest regular meeting on Thursday, Dec. 14. The board approved an equipment purchase at the meeting, which lasted an hour and 50 minutes and was not attended by any members of the public.

The board voted to spend \$14,870 on a brand new, custom made “control center panel” for the Solar combustion turbine. The equipment they already owned was over 30 years old and had broken down.

“As [generation supervisor Doug Barnes] was doing maintenance during the month of November [...], one of the ventilation fans for the Solar combustion turbine stopped working,” said L&P general manager Steve Donkersloot. “It was the result of a bad bucket, and that is the actual term of the piece of equipment. There’s a bad bucket in the motor control center that was connected to this ventilation fan. [...] We’re currently out of available buckets to use, so to resolve the problem, Barney indicated to me we have two options. Either purchase a new bucket or purchase a new MCC panel.”



The Light and Power board bought almost \$15,000 worth of equipment last week.

They will buy the new control panel from Schneider Electric in Grand Rapids. The rest of the meeting was dedicated to updates on data and reports.

The board's next regular meeting will be on Thursday, Jan. 11, 2018 at 6 pm at their 127 N. Broadway headquarters.

JUST CAN'T BELIEVE WHAT YOU'RE READING ON THE INTERNET?



BEWARE of online bloggers and wannabe news sources that can publish whatever they please without repercussions.

MOST ARE JUST LETTING OFF STEAM OR WORSE, HAVE A PURPOSE THAT IS NOT DISCLOSED OR A HIDDEN AGENDA.

Be sure your news source puts their readers first, is audited and is a member of the Michigan Press Association.



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, January 8, 2018, 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 22, Administration and Enforcement. Several sections of this Chapter have been revised for clarity, such as regulations for zoning compliance permits, public hearings and notice requirements, zoning amendments, and applicant fees and escrow accounts.

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 Ullery
City Clerk

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, January 8, 2018 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 will permit short-term rentals in the SR Suburban Residential, R-1 Residential and C-2 Central Business District as a special land use. The proposed amendment also sets forth definitions for short term rentals, amends the definition for bed and breakfasts, and sets forth performance standards for short-term rentals in the City.

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.

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Susan Ullery
City Clerk

Gilda's Club receives check, continued

helping to create such a wonderful event and thank you to Pink Arrow Pride for their continued dedication to and support of Gilda's Club."

The event was held at the Franciscan Life Process Center because of lack of space to have a giant party at the Gilda's Club.

"We're having it here because we have outgrown our clubhouse for our social events," Jousma said. "We're planning on hosting about 100 Gilda's Club members this evening. In our current clubhouse we can fit about 45 people. It's really a nice collaboration and we're so grateful to the Franciscan Life Process Center because they are hosting us and acting as 'Gilda's Club' this evening."

The event included a free dinner from Noto's Italian Restaurant in Grand

Rapids, cookies, crafts, live piano music by Maggie Camp, a raffle and a visit from a very special guest.

"Santa is going to be here right from the North Pole," Jan Miller, Gilda's Club of Lowell program manager. "He will be handing out gifts that have been donated to the clubhouse for this specific purpose, for this party. And then we're going to have a raffle. Everybody got a ticket when they came in the door and we have a lot of items to raffle off for everybody, adults and kids. We have a social committee of about a dozen members that has put all of this together, the decorations, the food, everything. Noto's Restaurant has provided the main dish tonight, which is vegetable Alfredo. Everybody here serving food

and organizing everything are all volunteers. It's terrific."

"We are 100 percent

charitably funded and we are 80 percent volunteer supported, so it's truly a community effort to have a

Gilda's Club right here in Lowell," Jousma said. "It's truly through the volunteers and the support of the

community that Gilda's Club of Lowell exists and that we remain free for our members."



About 100 Gilda's Club members enjoyed a free dinner from Noto's Italian Restaurant in Grand Rapids.

LHS WINTER SPORTS SCHEDULE

BOYS VARSITY BASKETBALL

* Denotes a home game, all games start at 7 pm, unless indicated.

12/23 at 6 pm NorthPointe Christian - Cornerstone Tournament

12/27 at 7:30 pm Hudsonville - Cornerstone Tournament

GIRLS VARSITY BASKETBALL

* Denotes a home game, all games start at 7 pm, unless indicated.

1/5 at 5:30 pm Ottawa Hills*

BOYS & GIRLS BOWLING

* Denotes a home meet at The Bowling Alley, Ionia, MI.

12/20 at 3:30 pm FHN

1/6 at 9 am Jenison Invitational

BOYS VARSITY HOCKEY

* Denotes a game at Kenwood Ice Arena

12/23 at 7 pm Grand Rapids Christian

12/29 at 8 pm Reeths-Puffer*

VARSITY WRESTLING

* Denotes a meet at LHS

12/21 at 5 pm OK Black Crossover at Jenison

12/28 at 9 am Varsity B at Central Montcalm Tournament

BOYS VARSITY SWIMMING

12/28 at 11:30 am Curt Pals Invite

GIRLS VARSITY GYMNASTICS

1/6 at 9 am Rockford Flip Flop Invitation

VARSITY COMPETITIVE CHEER

1/6 at 11 am NPC Cheer Invitational



Pianist Maggie Camp performed holiday tunes all evening.

HAPPY



HOLIDAYS

Lowell's Kropf crowned 2018 Michigan Apple Queen

by Kathryn Atwood
contributing reporter

Since the late 1800s the name Kropf has been synonymous in Lowell with farming. Four generations of apple farmers working what has grown to become 150 acres of high density orchards just north of Lowell near Murray Lake.

This month Lowell senior Emily Kropf was crowned the 2018 Michigan Apple Queen.

The Michigan Apple Committee awarded her title at an annual luncheon held December 5 at the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel in Grand Rapids. Accompanied by family, including parents Chris and Kim and younger brother Kenny, Kropf said she was stunned by her win.

"When I was crowned I was in shock, it took me a second to realize what actually happened. When I did finally realize what had happened my only thoughts were I am so thankful for my family's encouragement, the industry and I wish my Grandpa Ken was here with me."

Kropf's grandfather Kenneth was a third generation apple grower until his death from melanoma 18 years ago. He taught the business to Kropf's father, who is passing on the knowledge to Emily and her brother. Each season, the family pays homage to his legacy by celebrating their first harvest at his graveside, an act that keeps the younger Kropf feeling close to the man and his mission.

"Every year my family and I pick the first apple of harvest and place it on my grandfather's headstone; it continues to stay there until the last day of harvest. This is our way of honoring him and his passion."

Over the course of the next year Kropf will execute her duties as the face and voice of the Michigan apple industry at parades, festivals, schools and farmer's markets statewide. She will draw from her own experience as she works to promote and educate the community.

"I have done everything from stumping in newly planted trees, registering workers in the fall, helping with payroll, and checking insect traps. I am the helping hands that picks up odd jobs when needed," said Kropf.

Kropf also received a pair of scholarships awarded by the Michigan Apple Committee and the Michigan State Horticulture Society. She is involved in student council, FFA, the Van Andel Institute Journal Club and the Lowell Women's Club.

Outside of school, Kropf also serves as a junior board member for the Kent County Youth Fair and is an active 4-H member. She plans to attend Michigan State University where she will pursue a degree in agriculture business.

Kropf said she's looking forward to the year ahead.

"When I see a Michigan apple I am filled with pride for the industry I am involved in. I have seen the hard work that has been put

into getting the apple from the tree to the consumer first-hand and that work put in to provide the consumer with

the locally grown Michigan apple is full of passion and long hours. There is heritage

behind our industry and we continue to grow the best tasting apples around!"



Apple Queen Emily Kropf, right, alongside first runner-up Sarah Rasch.

Photo courtesy of Diane Smith



National Missing Children's Day Poster Contest

The Michigan State Police (MSP) Missing Persons Coordination Unit invites fifth grade students statewide to participate in the 2018 National Missing Children's Day Poster Contest. The annual contest creates an opportunity to promote child safety while discussing the issue of missing and/or exploited children. More than 1,000 children are reported missing each week in Michigan.

Michigan's winning artist will have a shot at the national contest, which includes a free trip to Washington D.C. and their artwork featured as the National Missing Children's Day poster. The 2015 national winner was a Michigan student from Grand Blanc.

Contest rules are as follows:

- Applicants must be in the fifth grade.

- Original artwork should reflect the theme "Bring Our Missing Children Home" and the phrase must appear somewhere on the poster.

- Digitally produced images, collages, cut-outs and stamping will not be eligible for consideration.

- The finished poster must measure 8½ x 14 inches.

The poster must be submitted with a completed

application, which includes a description of the artwork and a brief biography of the artist, either written or typed. Submissions are due by Jan. 31, 2018 and must be mailed to:
Michigan State Police
Missing Children's Clearinghouse
Attn: Ms. Jolene Hardesty
7150 Harris Drive
Dimondale, MI 48821

Stabenow announces legislation to improve veterans health care

After repeated complaints from providers, veterans and hospitals across the state, U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) introduced new legislation, the Veterans Deserve Better Act, to address serious problems in the federal Veterans Choice program. The Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act, which was signed into law in 2014, was designed to reduce wait times and provide medical services to veterans in their own communities. This program is especially critical for veterans in rural areas who were previously required to travel long distances for services. However, since it was enacted, providers

across the state have not been getting paid, rural hospitals have pulled out and veterans are not getting the health care they need.

"The Veterans Choice program was designed to make sure veterans can receive services close to home and in a timely way, but it has failed many of those it was intended to serve," said Senator Stabenow. "My new legislation will hold the Administration accountable and ensure that these serious issues are addressed quickly so that our veterans get the care they deserve."

Senator Stabenow's bill has three parts. First, it will reduce wait times for veterans by requiring that appointments be made

within five days and making sure veterans seeking care have the information they need in advance of scheduling an appointment.

Second, it will require the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to hold private contractors accountable for the care they schedule on behalf of veteran, and ensure reporting and follow-up of delayed appointments.

Third, it will require prompt payment to Veterans Choice Program providers by requiring the VA to pay for or deny payment within 30 days of receiving an electronic claim or 45 days of receiving a paper claim. It will also require the VA

to pay, deny or request additional information on any outstanding unpaid claims within 45 days of enactment.

"Munson Healthcare is committed to serving the healthcare needs of the veterans in our region," said Edwin A. Ness, president and CEO of Munson Healthcare. "Unfortunately, unlike other veteran programs, the Veterans Choice Program has resulted in confusion for veterans and significant non-payment for healthcare providers. Therefore, we greatly appreciate Senator Stabenow's introduction of this legislation and its focus on improving access to care for veterans while also

holding private contractors accountable for prompt payments to providers."

"In 2016, I was diagnosed with lesions on my brain and needed to see a specialist. Veterans Choice sent me to the wrong doctor two times, causing me to miss work and have to travel long distances," said Jerry Sorensen, former National Guardsman who was stationed in Greenville and now lives in Sumner Township in Gratiot County. "I contacted Senator Stabenow about my issue and shortly after, Veterans Choice scheduled an appointment with the right specialist. It shouldn't have taken five months to see the

doctor I needed, especially for something this scary and serious. I know I'm not the only veteran in Michigan who has experienced these problems scheduling an appointment. I want to thank Senator Stabenow for introducing a bill [today] to address this problem for all our veterans."

Veterans health care has been a longstanding priority for Senator Stabenow. She championed the effort to open new and expanded VA clinics across the state, including in Alpena, Bad Axe, Cadillac, Clare, Cheboygan County, Grayling, Oscoda, and Wyoming.

Red Arrow

- WRESTLING

SPORTS

Repeat tourney performance for wrestlers

by Kathryn Atwood
contributing reporter

In a repeat performance of last week, the Red Arrow varsity wrestling team hit the road for a pair of tournaments and earned another first-place finish for the "A" team and a second runner-up finish for the "B" team.

The "B" team traveled slightly north to Belding to take part in the annual dual invite which took place Saturday. Grappling their way to the finals round, Lowell dropped a close championship match 31-27 to powerhouse Carson City-Crystal, currently ranked number three in Division 4, accepting a well-earned second-place finish in the tournament.

At the Kent County Classic held the same day,

the Red Arrow "A" team dominated the competition, hosted by Forest Hills Central, sending ten of their wrestlers to the finals. Nine walked away with titles in an impressive early season performance. Their effort garnered them the top spot at the 22 team tournament earning 312 combined points on the mat. Their dominant performance was followed by that of second-place finisher Byron Center (165), Rockford (152), host Forest Hills Central (129.5) and East Kentwood (128).

Proving the power of both their seasoned and novice members once again, individual champions included freshman Zeth Strejc (125), sophomores, Nick Korhorn (103), Dawson Jankowski (119),

Austin Boone (152) and James Fotis (140); juniors Jeff Leach (130) and Avry Mutschler (135); and seniors David Kruse (189) and Keigan Yuhus (215).

Also finishing in the top five were sophomore Tyler

Deloof who placed second at 285, sophomore Bryce McCune who earned third at 112, freshman Derek Mohr who placed sixth at 160 and freshman Jacob Lee who battled his way to fifth at 145.

Lowell's grappling "A" team captured first place at the Kent County Classic.



Red Arrow wrestling's "B" team finished second at the Belding Duals.

Photos submitted by Lowell Wrestling

Next up for the Arrows is the OK Black Crossover tournament scheduled for this Thursday at Jenison High School beginning at 6 pm. Their schedule will not lighten over the holiday break with the Central Montcalm Tournament and the two-day Brecksville Invitational Holiday Tournament in Ohio, both scheduled to take place over the school vacation.

...

If you don't have time to do it right, when will you have time to do it over?

~ John Wooden

Sports Summaries

BOYS BOWLING

Red Arrow boys varsity bowling picked up their second dual win of the season last Monday in a close match up with non-conference competitor the Caledonia Scots on the road at Spectrum Lanes. After winning both opening baker games Lowell came up just three pins short in the competitions first regular game losing 1047-1044 but made up that difference in the second game coming up with a 16-14 victory. High scores were earned by senior Carson Clark (234, 207), junior Chase Anderson (225), junior DJ Simpson (222) and senior Foster Skoog (213). Before heading to holiday break the boys will face OK White challenger Forest Hills Northern this Wednesday at Eastbrook Lanes where pins are scheduled to start falling at 3:30 pm.

COMPETITIVE CHEER

The Lady Arrows of the varsity competitive cheer team competed in a pair of competitions this past weekend improving their combined totals scores by 28.44 points between their Friday and Saturday competitions. At Aquinas College for their annual invite of Friday the girls finished the evening with a fourth place finish and a score of 555.1. Saturday at the West Ottawa Invitational the team earned a score of 583.54 landing them in the fifth position among their division competitors. The squad will compete once more before breaking for the holiday at the Jenison Invitational this Wednesday starting at 6:30 pm.

GIRLS BOWLING

Lowell girls varsity bowling hit the lanes for their second week of competition last Monday taking on former OK White foe the Caledonia Scots at Spectrum Lanes. The young and developing Red Arrow squad, led by their two lone seniors Morgan Allison and Laura Lachowski, exited the match with a 26-5-3.5 loss struggling with the heightened experience of the Caledonia squad. This week Wednesday the team will head to Eastbrook Lanes to take on current league nemesis Forest Hills Northern with action scheduled to begin at 3:30 pm.



Red Arrow

- BASKETBALL
SPORTS

Girls break even last week in non-conference

by Kathryn Atwood
contributing reporter

Lowell girls varsity basketball went 1-1 last week easily defeating non-conference competitor Forest Hills Eastern on the road Tuesday, 35-21 and then falling in the showdown against the East Grand Rapids Pioneers on Friday night at Lowell High School 41-38.

Improving their record to 3-0 with their early week win, the Lady Arrows traveled to FHE where they dominated the boards by shutting their opponent out of scoring in both the first and third periods to earn their 32-21 victory tally. Lowell led 10-0, 19-9 and 26-9 in the preceding periods respectively with FHE making their best effort in the fourth netting 12.

Junior starter Regan Coxon led Lowell's offensive effort with 13 points, followed by senior team captain Cassie Dean who added 10 to the scoreboard. Fellow seniors Riley Conlan and Darby Dean began the season as team co-captains offering plenty of experience to their up-and-coming teammates. "They've been playing ball together for a long time and it shows on the court," said head coach Heath Kent of the trio, adding that the same could be said of seniors Makyla Branagan and Kenzie North.

"They've had experience in those situations and more importantly know what it takes to be successful. They also know what the expectations are for practices and the effort level that is expected by the coaching staff. They've done a great job passing those expectations on to the younger kids."

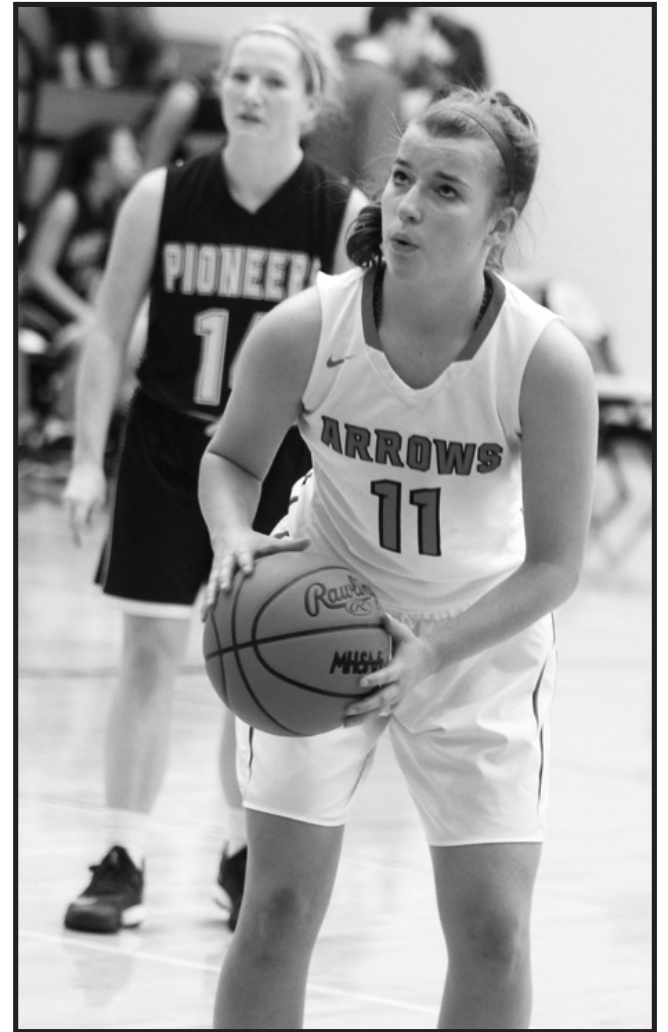
Friday, in a much closer contest at home versus always formidable foe EGR,

the girls hit the hardwood on a hot streak running the Pioneers up 9-5 by the end of the first period, but lost traction soon thereafter. Despite ferocious aggression on both sides of the ball Lowell was outscored in the second 13-7 leaving them just slightly trailing 18-16 at the half after missing a last second shot. An equally competitive second half had EGR outscoring Lowell 15-12 in the third and Lowell leading the fourth scoring

10-8. Junior Emily DePew and D. Dean gave stellar defensive performances in the final moments, but several missed opportunities at the basket ultimately cost the Arrows the win 41-38.

Coxon led scoring racking up an impressive 18 points. "She brings a ton of energy each night either through her attacking the basket on offense or her ability to play the passing lanes on defense," said Kent of Coxon, "She worked hard on her shot during the off-season and we are hoping to see that work payoff this season."

Now 3-1 overall with one more game before stepping back into the OK White as defending conference champions, Kent said he is pleased with where they are at and has his sights on areas that need improvement. "So far so good, but we've got a long way to go. The White is tough this season, being the defending champs we know the bulls eye is squarely on our back. Forest Hills Central, Forest Hills Northern, Northview and us all have a legitimate shot to win the league this year. We just have to take one game at a time and grind out wins. It was our formula for success last year and I don't see us changing it up this season."



Junior Regan Coxon led the Red Arrows with 31 points over two games.

The team will continue their schedule by facing the Byron Center Bulldogs early in the week before breaking for the holiday season. They return to action on Friday, January 5, versus the Ottawa Hills Bengals in front of a home crowd at 5:30 pm.

Tough week for Red Arrows on the court

by Kathryn Atwood
contributing reporter

Facing a pair of difficult opponents last week, the Lowell Red Arrows basketball team fell 72-57 against Forest Hills Eastern on Tuesday and 71-49 to East Grand Rapids on Friday night.

In their home opener against FHE, the Red Arrows were leading 6-5 after the boys opening three-point swisher of the season from junior Robby Schneider, who is expected to be a key member of the team this season. According to head coach Travis Slinger, "Robby impacts the game in a number of areas. As the point guard and primary ball handler he is tasked with facilitating our offense. He has the ability to score in a variety of ways and put his teammates in a position to be successful. Defensively he is one of

our best on ball defenders and plays very physical for his size. Our coaching staff continually increases the level of expectation and he works tirelessly to answer the call."

Senior Travis Cornell scored a second three-point shot moments later and eventually led the team's offense in their effort, scoring 18 points. Cornell is one of only four seniors on this year's young team, joined by Mitch O'Gorman, Austin Pollock and Will Reynolds. He [Cornell] has been in training for the task. "Travis works diligently to expand his game and has become a strong leader. His performance Tuesday was a direct result of his effort and preparation in practice," commented Slinger.

Friday on the road, Lowell experienced much the same result against EGR

coming up short by similar score 71-49. Slinger said that in spite of the losses, he saw many positives on the court and believes with the proper level of work and dedication those margins will soon turn in Lowell's favor. "This team is young, but we are fortunate to coach an intelligent and insightful group. We touched on a couple pros and cons from the evening, disappointed in the outcome, but optimistic about our ability to correct mistakes," admitted Slinger.

The potential for growth is ever present as the not so happy start has the

potential to be the beginning of a great comeback. "With youth comes growth. This is a group of young men who work hard and put team success above individual statistics. As our maturity increases, so will consistent production. Our success this season will be contingent upon execution matching effort. Our effort was there but execution was not to expectation. We aren't a group that will make excuses regarding youth, size or first game jitters. We will get back to work and continue to grow."

This week the team will get back to the grind facing West Catholic at home on Tuesday and take part in the first round of the Cornerstone University Holiday Tournament on Saturday at 6 pm. The tournament will end over the break on Wednesday Dec. 27 at 7:30 pm should they advance to the second round.



Senior Red Arrow Travis Cornell lays up one of his 18 points against FHE.

obituaries

BUCK

Nora Lee Buck, age 72, went to be with the lord on December 13, 2017. She was born June 13, 1945. She was the daughter of Stan and Eleanor Staskus. She is survived by her loving and loyal husband of 53 years, Terry Buck; and three children, Chris Talcott (Dan) of Saranac, Tracy Buck (Andrea) of Virginia, Trent Buck (Jeni) of Lowell; eight grandchildren, Laken Colby (Eric), Zach Talcott (Kathy), Dillon Buck, Haley Buck, Hannah Buck-Davidson, Trevor Buck, Jon Douglas Buck and Austin Buck. She had two great-grandchildren, Alexis and Elijah. One very loyal helpful brother and sister-in-law, Scott and Nancy Staskus. Fighting constant illnesses throughout her life she was a remarkably strong person. She was quick witted and loved old poetry. She loved to cook for her family and was a master in the kitchen. She also was fond of wildlife and especially liked watching birds and deer. She will be greatly missed by all who knew her. A memorial service was held Monday, December 18 at Lake Funeral Home in Saranac with Pastor Archie Messenger officiating. Contributions in Nora's name may be made to Outreach Ministries. Online condolences may be made at www.lakefuneralhomes.com

BLOCHER

Loren C. W. Blocher, age 99 of Lowell, passed away Monday, December 18, 2017. He was preceded in death by his wives, Anna and Fannie; parents Clinton & Mable; sister Evelyn (Willard) Haight; brothers George, Leo (Flossie), Rev.



J. Leroy, Paul; daughter Sue Ann; stepdaughters Patricia, Mary Lou; stepson Douglas; and brother-in-law Richard. He is survived by his children, William (Emily) Blocher of Washington, Loren (Patricia) Blocher Jr. of Washington, Thomas Blocher of California; stepchildren Ronald (Sue) Cary, Kathy (Yassine) Nhaddou; brother, Lavern Blocher; sister, Betty Craig; sisters-in-law Retha Blocher, Donna Blocher; many grandchildren; great-grandchildren; great-great-grandchildren; and several nieces and nephews. Loren proudly served in the Navy during WWII in the South Pacific from 1944-1945; and then retired from the US Air Force after 20 years of service as a Chief Master Sergeant. Visitation will be held Tuesday, December 26, 4:00-6:00 p.m. at Roth-Gerst Chapel, 305 N. Hudson, Lowell, MI 49331. Funeral will be Wednesday, December 27, 1:00 p.m. at the funeral home chapel. Memorial contributions may be made to First Baptist Church of Lowell, 2275 W. Main St., Lowell, MI 49331.



Understanding the government pension offset

Getting ready for retirement requires evaluation of all your sources of retirement income. Even if you worked for the government and didn't pay the FICA tax on your earnings, you may be eligible for benefits from your spouse's work under Social Security.

However, when you receive both your own non-covered government pension and a Social Security spousal benefit, your Social Security benefit may be reduced. The Government Pension Offset (GPO) reduces your Social Security benefit by two-thirds of your government pension.

Why are benefits reduced? Current law requires any beneficiary's spouse, widow, or widower benefit to be reduced by the dollar amount of their own retirement benefit. For example, if a woman worked and earned her own \$900 monthly Social Security benefit, but was due a \$500 wife's benefit on her husband's record, we couldn't pay the wife's \$500 benefit because her own retirement benefit is the larger amount.

Before enactment of the GPO, if the same woman

Pension offset, continued, page 14

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING LOWELL CHARTER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

APPLICANT: Tip Top Gravel Company

PROJECT ADDRESS: 9805 E. Fulton Street SE (M-21), Lowell MI, 49331

PERMANENT PARCEL NUMBER:
41-20-06-300-005

REQUEST: The principal provisions of the application can be summarized as follows:

Tip Top Gravel Company is requesting a Special Land Use permit in the AG-2, Rural Agricultural Zoning District under the provisions of "Mineral Mining". The property in this request is 13.76 acres, currently owned by Timothy Holtz.

WHEN: MONDAY, JANUARY 8, 2018

TIME: 7:00 P.M.

WHERE: LOWELL CHARTER TOWNSHIP HALL
2910 ALDEN NASH AVENUE SE
LOWELL, MI 49331

Any person is welcome to attend this meeting and to offer comments or submit written comments until the date and time of said hearing regarding the proposed Special Land Use. The application is on file and is available for review at the Lowell Charter Township offices during normal office hours; phone 616-897-7600.

Lowell Charter Township
Planning Commission



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LEGAL NOTICE

STATE OF MICHIGAN
PROBATE COURT
COUNTY OF KENT

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
Decedent's Estate

FILE NO. 17-202518-DE

Estate of
MARSHA ANN
BELLIEL.

Date of birth: May 18,
1952

December 15, 2017

TO ALL CREDITORS:
NOTICE TO CREDITORS: The decedent, Marsha Ann Belliel, died October 27, 2016.

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

Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against

Tara J. Schmidt
11002 Keystone Dr.
Lowell, MI 49331
616-691-7583

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

N	O	H	O	W	A	P	R	D	I	R	K		
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4	5	7	1	3	6	9	8	2
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6	2	4	7	1	3	5	9	8
8	7	5	9	6	4	1	2	3
5	4	3	6	9	2	8	7	1
9	6	1	8	4	7	2	3	5
7	8	2	3	5	1	6	4	9

EARTH TALK™

Questions & Answers About Our Environment

Dear EarthTalk: I want to set a good environmental example with my gift-giving this holiday season. Any tips on how—or even better, what—to give greener?

-- Jane P., Bowie, MD

The holidays are a budget wisely to eliminate time for giving but it is also important to be conscious about spending your gift

budget wisely to eliminate packaging waste, buy products that will last and patronize manufacturers

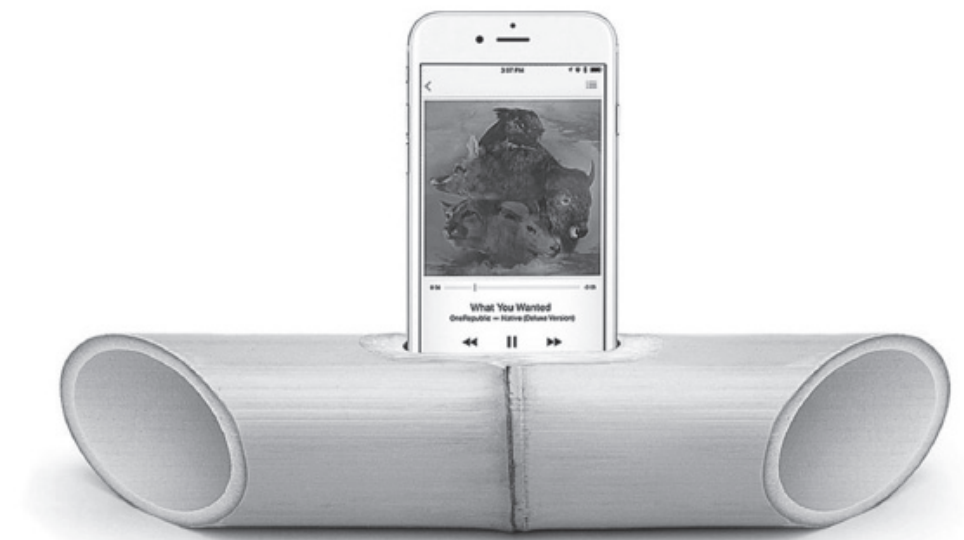
and retailers known for social and environmental responsibility.

So, what are some ideas? The Waterpebble is a great gift for anyone trying to lead a greener lifestyle. This gadget tracks how much water you use in your shower. After programmed, it signals a yellow light at your half-shower mark and flashes red when it's time to turn off the faucet.

Music lovers might like the iBamboo speaker. This portable bamboo speaker for iPhones 4,5,6, and 7 requires no batteries or electricity and has no wires—it's just a simple block of bamboo that projects sound using natural acoustics.

If the iBamboo isn't loud enough, try eco-amp from eco-made. While it does use electricity, the eco-amp is made out of all recycled materials and can in turn be entirely recycled when it's useful life is over—and it's made in the USA, which helps employ Americans while saving on transportation emissions.

The environmental clothes horse on your list may appreciate a shirt or some pants from Alternative Apparel, which uses non-toxic dyes on eco-friendly fabrics and makes 80 percent of its garments with sustainable materials. Another eco-friendly clothing brand is United By Blue, which pays to pull a pound of trash from water bodies for each of its fashionable and comfortable items sold.



The portable iBamboo speaker makes a great gift for green-leaning loved ones as it's made out of sustainably harvested bamboo and uses natural acoustics to amplify the sound of your iPhone without any wires, batteries or electricity whatsoever.

Kids may not care whether their gifts are good for the environment, so it's up to us adults to make sure we are setting a good example and spending our money on "good" gifts. You can't go wrong for your kiddo with a bamboo bank from Jones and Mae. The eco-friendly three-way (share/save/spend) box teaches the importance of charity and saving. Meanwhile, Green Toys sells a wide range of 100 percent recycled kids products, including books, toy cars, baby toys and more at reasonable prices.

Of course, holiday presents do not always have to be physical items. A great idea for gifts that are personal and different are sports/active lessons.

Would someone you love appreciate tennis lessons, an art class, or a yoga gift certificate? The holidays are meant to show those who are special to you how much you love them and there are no better gifts than those that are personal, thoughtful and not only good for those who receive but also the environment!

And let's not forget that there is more to greener holiday shopping than just what you buy. Don't forget that your reusable shopping bags aren't just for the grocery store anymore: Bring them with you to the mall, as well, so you don't have to waste your favorite retailers' plastic or paper shopping bags. Also, if you're going to wrap your gifts, make sure to use

recycled wrapping paper, or even better, get creative and repurpose some other paper materials lying around as gift wrap.

CONTACTS: iBamboo speaker, goo.gl/qDVewi; Eco-made, www.eco-made.com; Alternative Apparel, www.alternativeapparel.com; United By Blue, www.unitedbyblue.com; Jones and Mae Bamboo Bank, goo.gl/QG6soK; Waterpebble, goo.gl/XGpFRD.

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GRATTAN TOWNSHIP

Regular Meeting 9:00 a.m.
Synopsis of Minutes
December 11, 2017

Motions Approved:

1. Approved Planning Commission renewals, 3 year term for Alan Rumbaugh and Phil Rolfe Jr., and 1 year term for Board Rep. Denny Heffron.
2. Approved Construction Board of Appeals 2 year term renewal for Alan Rumbaugh.
3. Approved Fire & Safety Administration Committee 1 year term renewal for Board Rep. Paul Knoerl.
4. Approved Safety Board of Appeals 1 year term renewal for Board Rep. Paul Knoerl.
5. Approved Sewer Advisory 1 year term renewal for Board Rep. Frank Force.
6. Approved Fire and Safety Committee 3 year term renewal for Amy Brown.
7. Approved Cable Committee 1 year term renewal for Board Rep. Paul Knoerl.
8. Approved Construction Board of Appeals (alternate) 2 year term renewal for Greg Brown.
9. Approved Cable Committee 3 year term renewal for Gloria Burns and Jennifer Medema.
10. Approved Sewer Advisory Committee 3 year term for Tom Marikowski.
11. Approved purchase of property at 5 Mile Rd/Murray Lake Ave.
12. Approved Sewer rate increase recommended by the Umbaugh Financial Plan.
13. Approved Sewer late fee from 5% to 10% compounded quarterly.
14. Approved 2018 Annual Event Calendar.
15. Approved 2018 Meeting Schedule.
16. Approved Escrow Agreement for Plat Vacation Lawsuits.

Our next regular Township Meeting will be January 08, 2018 at 7:00 p.m.

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

Pension offset, continued

was a government employee who didn't pay into Social Security but earned a \$900 government pension, there was no reduction. We would have paid her the full amount of wife's benefit and she also received her full government pension. GPO

ensures that we calculate the benefits of government employees who don't pay Social Security taxes the same way as workers in the private sector who pay Social Security taxes. Applying the GPO in this

example means since two-thirds of the government pension (2/3 of \$900 = \$600) is more than the wife's benefit (\$500), there is no wife's benefit payable.

If you take your government pension annuity in a lump sum, Social Security will treat the annuity as if you chose to get monthly benefit payments from your government work. Payments from a defined benefit plan or defined contribution plan (e.g., 401(k), 403(b), or 457) based on earnings from non-covered government employment are considered pensions subject to GPO, if the plan is the employee's primary retirement plan.

To read more about GPO, review our factsheet, *Government Pension Offset* www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs/EN-05-10007.pdf or visit www.ssa.gov/planners/retire/gpo.html.

Understanding how the GPO will affect any spousal, widow, or widower benefits should be part of your retirement planning. Good planning is the best preparation for a secure financial future.

Vonda VanTil is the Public Affairs Specialist for West Michigan. You can write her c/o Social Security Administration, 3045 Knapp NE, Grand Rapids MI 49525 or via email at vonda.vantil@ssa.gov

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**STATEPOINT
CROSSWORD**

**THEME: PEARLS OF
WISDOM**

ACROSS

- 1. "No way" partner
- 6. Lending letters
- 9. Basketball star Nowitzki
- 13. "Love," ‡ Paris
- 14. ____ date
- 15. Kind of chisel
- 16. Infamous Ford model
- 17. Stuff in a tray?
- 18. Romanov's edict
- 19. Bony chest plate
- 21. *It makes the heart grow fonder
- 23. *You can't make an omelet without breaking one
- 24. Border
- 25. Prune
- 28. Block of granite, e.g.
- 30. Whacko one
- 35. Eye layer
- 37. Author Murdoch
- 39. Paparazzo's quest
- 40. Common allergens
- 41. *Sure sign of fire
- 43. Like nay-sayers
- 44. Rid of obstructions
- 46. Done to trouble
- 47. Asian weight unit
- 48. Cold sore, e.g.
- 50. Object of worship
- 52. 9 to 5, e.g.
- 53. Not of the cloth
- 55. Famous frat house
- 57. *Louder than words
- 61. *They can't be choosers
- 65. Allocated quantity
- 66. Famous T-Rex

CROSSWORD													
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- 68. Cereal killer
- 69. Prodded
- 70. *"No ____ crying over spilt milk"
- 71. Recycle, in a way
- 72. H or O in H2O, e.g.

- 73. *"You can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ____"
- 74. Make tea, e.g.

DOWN

- 1. Midday slumbers
- 2. Fail to mention
- 3. Use a whetstone
- 4. Grossly unconventional
- 5. *Two of these do not make a right
- 6. Genesis man
- 7. Pimple fluid
- 8. ____ center for help
- 9. Home of Blue Devils
- 10. Ali Khamenei's domain
- 11. CISC alternative
- 12. Genuflecting joint
- 15. Serious quarrel
- 20. Tangerine-grapefruit hybrid, pl.
- 22. Ballerina's do
- 24. Non-living
- 25. *No such thing as a free one
- 26. Egg cell
- 27. ____ Cottontail
- 29. Picture on a coat?
- 31. Not this

- 32. Actor Hill
- 33. Weasel's aquatic cousin
- 34. *A watched pot never does this
- 36. Hurry up!
- 38. Row of vagrants
- 42. With a jagged margin
- 45. Follows aim and shoot
- 49. ____ Diego
- 51. They're usually golden or amber
- 54. Question in dispute
- 56. White heron
- 57. Caribbean color
- 58. Like a short reply
- 59. Burkina Faso neighbor
- 60. Big-ticket ____
- 61. Duff in Springfield, e.g.
- 62. Flu symptom
- 63. Kate Winslet in "Titanic"
- 64. *Beginning of a thousand mile journey
- 67. "This land is your land..."

*Puzzle solutions
on page 12*



DECEMBER 13 - DECEMBER 19

- An Amtrak train, on its first run of a faster-speed service, derailed near Tacoma, WA on Monday, leaving three people dead and dozens injured. It was reported that the train was traveling 80 mph where 30 mph was posted.
- The Hall of Presidents at Walt Disney World had added Trump, complete with long tie and open jacket. The trouble is people are saying the face doesn't look right on the new animatronic figure.
- The Los Angeles Lakers recognized both eras of Kobe Bryant's career by retiring both of his numbers - 8 and 24.
- 23 years after it was first released, Mariah Carey's "All I Want for Christmas Is You" has finally cracked the top 10 on the Hot 100. It's the first holiday recording to crack the top 10 since Kenny G's New Year's Eve tied "Auld Lang Syne (The Millennium Mix)" (No. 7 in 2000).
- The House passed the final version of Republicans' \$1.5 trillion tax overhaul on Tuesday afternoon, by a vote of 227-203. 12 Republicans voted against the bill and no Democrats voted for it.
- Trump is trying out a new campaign slogan: "How's your 401(k) doing?" The answer is - more than half of Americans don't have one.



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Natural Resource Trust Board approves funds for Fred Meijer River Valley Rail-Trails expansion project

by Tim McAllister
lead reporter

On Wednesday, Dec. 6 the Natural Resource Trust Board approved a \$580,000 trust fund for the Fred Meijer River Valley Rail-Trails expansion project. All that's left is approval from governor Rick Snyder and that money is theirs. When completed, the project will create scenic walking trails between Lowell and Saranac and between Lowell and Greenville.

"The Fred Meijer River Valley Rail-Trails are comprised of two trail systems," said Robert A. Brown, Jr., chairperson of the board of directors of the Friends of The Fred Meijer River Valley Rail-Trails. "The Fred Meijer River Valley Rail Trails, which connects the communities of Greenville, Belding and Lowell and the Fred Meijer Grand River Valley Rail Trail which connects the communities of Lowell, Saranac and Ionia. The Fred Meijer River Valley Rail-Trails are 38 miles and are the linchpin that connects the Fred Meijer Heartland Trail (Greenville to Alma) to the Fred Meijer Clinton, Ionia, Shiawassee Trail (Ionia to Owosso) and completes the 125-mile Mid Michigan Trail Network. With its completion the network will be the seventh-longest trail system."

The \$2.4 million project involves two chunks, the Fred Meijer River Valley Rail Trail North Segment and the Fred Meijer River Valley Rail Trail South Phase. The remaining

cost will be paid by a \$1.5 million M-DOT grant and a \$320,000 donation from Fred Meijer.

"Construction funding for our project comes from M-DOT and the DNR Trust Fund with matching grant funds made by Fred Meijer," Brown said. "It is crucial to stress that M-DOT funding for trails is made possible by funds designated by the state legislature. These

funds cannot be used for roads and are not taken out of road funding. Once the trail is completed they are maintained 100 percent through donor dollars, more specifically through a \$3 million endowment Fred Meijer gifted."

Work should begin in the spring after a bidding process. Brown said more information would be available in January.

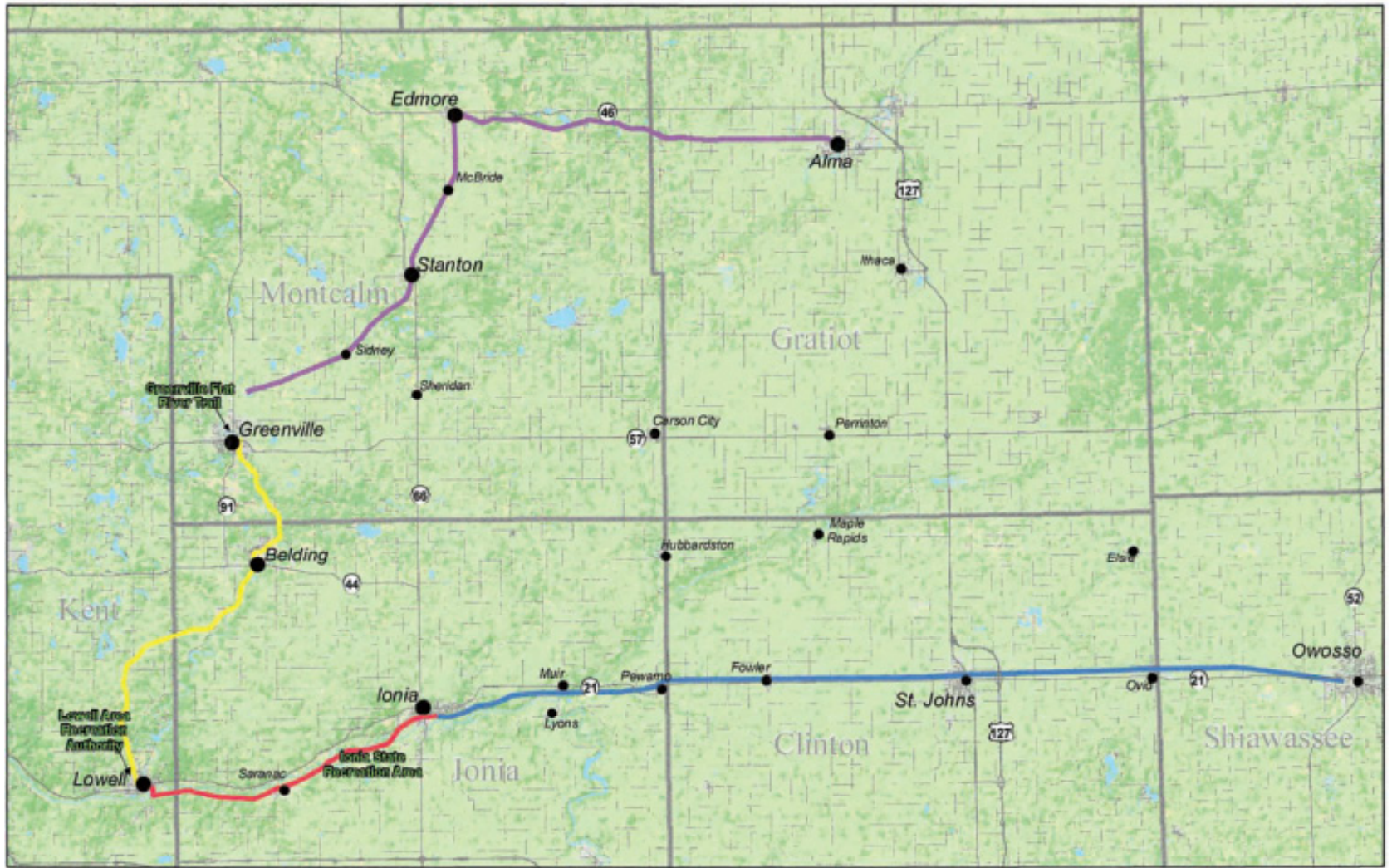
"Construction will begin this spring," Brown said. "Construction will take between around three months to complete. Several firms in West Michigan have worked on the Mid Michigan Trail Network in the past. Early next year a series of meetings will be conducted and the project will be opened to bids. Thankfully these sections of

trails are relatively flat with few bridges to build. The lack of bridge building will not only save us money but will also allow the project to move along speedily."

For more information or to keep up with the projects, find them online at fmrvrt.org or [facebook.com/FMRVRT](https://www.facebook.com/FMRVRT).

"As you can imagine, this will be a significant

enhancement to West Michigan," Brown said. "With only a partially completed trail we have seen local economies receive a much-needed influx of tourist dollars; we expect this to only increase with the completion of the trails. Additionally, we will continue to attract more events and larger events."



Fred Meijer Midwest Michigan Trail Authority Network



Williams & Works

Social Security's gift to its children

During the holiday season, most of us, regardless of religion or beliefs, focus on the children we love. And we at Social Security know a thing or two about helping children.

Typically, the hospital will ask new mothers if they want to apply for a Social Security number for their newborn. This is the easiest and fastest way to apply. The Social Security card typically arrives about a week to ten days after that little bundle of joy! You can learn about Social Security numbers for children by reading our publication, Social Security Numbers for Children, available at www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs.

A child needs a Social Security number if he or she is going to have a bank account, own savings bonds, if the child will have medical coverage, or if the child will receive government services.

You'll also need a Social Security number for a child to claim him or her on your tax returns.

If you want to apply, you will have to visit a Social Security office and you'll need to:

- Complete an Application for a Social Security Card (Form SS-5);
- Show us original documents proving your child's U.S. citizenship, age, and identity; and
- Show us documents proving your identity.

A child age 12 or older requesting an original Social Security number must appear in person for the interview, even though a parent or guardian will sign the application on the child's behalf.

Children with disabilities are among our most vulnerable citizens. Social Security is dedicated to helping those with qualifying

disabilities and their families through the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program. To qualify for SSI:

- The child must have a physical or mental condition, or a combination of conditions. The child's condition(s) must severely limit your child's activities;
- The child's condition(s) must be severe, last for at least 12 months, or be expected to result in death; and
- The child must not be working and earning more than the Substantial Gainful Activity limit (\$1,180 a month in 2018).

Family resources are also considered. If the parents of the child or children have more resources than are allowed, then the child or children will not qualify for SSI.

Visit socialsecurity.gov/people/kids to learn about all we do to care for children.

Mid-Michigan Trail Network

