

Honoring senior athletes



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Trail paved



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Annual spring flooding inundates Lowell



More dramatic flood photos in center spread, pages 6 and 7.

always in these floods is the wastewater treatment plant taking on water," Burns said. "We're going to be doing some bypass pumping here to alleviate the plant. That's really been the only issue. When we have too much water going through the storm sewers, what happens is it infiltrates into the wastewater treatment plant. To prevent all of that water from going into the plant, we pump it out into the river, then it goes away. It leaves town, basically. It's a normal thing that happens in flooding like this."

Streets around town were closed, including sections of Bowes Rd. and Jackson St., but a few vehicles were observed driving around the barriers.

"Really the biggest thing is making sure people aren't driving through the barricades," Burns said. "I don't think that's a wise idea. Barricades are not a suggestion, you should not be going through there. The water is going to be too high and it's not going to be safe. That's the reason why the roads are closed."

This year's flood was only 1.62 feet lower than the highest recorded height in that spot, which was 19.02 feet on April 21, 2013.

To keep close track of the Grand River at Lowell, visit this page: <https://water.weather.gov/ahps2/hydrograph.php?wfo=grr&gage=1wlm4>

by Tim McAllister
lead reporter

The Grand River maxed out at 17.4 feet at 2 am on Thursday, May 21, cresting two feet above flood stage. Many streets around town were closed, Recreation Park was turned into a

big lake and the city was forced to discharge sewage into the river to keep nasty matter from backing up into businesses and homes.

"We handle all of these [flood response] items collaboratively," said Lowell

city manager Michael Burns. "The Department of Public Works is handling all the public work aspects of things, I'm handling all the communications, the police are handling any police matters and if there are any

medical emergencies we'll call the fire department."

Excess water and sewage were pumped into the river so that they wouldn't end up damaging the basements of Lowellians.

"The biggest issue

May 18 city council meeting report

by Tim McAllister
lead reporter

Lowell city council had their latest regular meeting over the Internet via Zoom on Monday, May 18, perhaps one of the last times they'll have to meet virtually for a while. The meeting was approximately two hours long, and the council discussed topics such as the budget, the Unity School condos and more.

The council heard a report from Marcia Cornell and Mandy Reed of the Michigan Municipal League, who reviewed and revised job descriptions and compensation levels of many city employees. The last time job descriptions were updated was in 2001.

"For the most part, our compensation and benefits were in line with the market, but there were some

positions that were below it," city manager Michael Burns wrote in a May 14, 2020 city interoffice memorandum.

Discussion of the Staal gift continued. The late Cheryl Ann Staal bequeathed \$78,749 to the city, the amount generated by the sale of her home. It was suggested by the Staal family that the majority of the money go toward retiree health insurance, but there were no legal restrictions placed on the gift so the city can actually do whatever it wants with the money. They're definitely doing a commemorative bench for Ms. Staal; other ideas bounced around included using the money to pay for the city's portion of a county fire truck (due to be paid in two years), a commemorative bench, the

new Lowell Showboat, the rail trail project and more.

"There are probably eight other things that we could possibly spend the money on," said councilor Jim Salzwedel. "There are a lot of good opportunities out there. There are so many things we could spend it on."

The council approved "partial vacation" of High Street, part of the settlement with Unity School Investors, who are building high-end condominiums in an old school downtown.

"The city agreed to the partial vacation of the north 15 feet of High St. from Monroe St. to the west edge of the existing Unity School building... with the ownership transferred to Unity," Burns wrote in a May 14 city memo.

Council, continued, page 3



Screenshots of Lowell city councilors Jim Salzwedel (top) and Cliff Yankovich (bottom) in discussion during the Monday, May 18 "Zoom" meeting.

50¢



Trail section paved in Vergennes Township



by Tim McAllister
lead reporter

A one and a half mile stretch of the Lowell Area Trailway between Vergennes and Foreman got a new coat of crushed asphalt last week.

The work was part of an ongoing rail trail connection project that is going through the city and surrounding areas. Lowell is the only gap

in the otherwise continuous 125-mile-long Fred Meijer River Valley Trail. The most popular section of the trail is between Saranac and Ionia - directly through the Ionia State Recreation Area with abundant wildflowers and wildlife, plus access to the Grand River. When

complete, the trail will run from Alma to Owosso and it will be the fifth longest rail trail in the United States.

The holdup is getting the railroad to agree to a safe, legal spot where the trail can cross the train tracks. The original route proposed going through Recreation

Park, crossing the Flat River, going under or across the active King Milling railroad spur, then crossing the Grand River with a new pedestrian bridge. After reviewing this plan, the railroad concluded that they would not issue permits for the crossing of this spur due to safety and

liability concerns. After a meeting between the railroad and MDOT, it was determined that the most feasible location to cross the tracks would be at the intersection of Grand River Dr. and S. Hudson. This route will require a new pedestrian bridge over the Grand River

from the fairgrounds to Grand River Dr. The trail would then proceed east to the connection point at S. Jackson.

To stay up to date on the trail's progress, visit lowellareatrailway.org.

Recognizing the heroic efforts of essential workers

Many businesses were forced to close their facilities to the public as local governments implemented measures to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. Businesses deemed "non-essential" could no longer welcome customers into their offices and stores, prompting many people to wonder why some businesses are considered "essential" and others aren't.

According to the Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency, essential businesses and workers are those who conduct a range of operations and services that are typically essential to continued infrastructure viability. The CISA notes functioning critical infrastructure is imperative

during the response to the COVID-19 emergency. That infrastructure promotes public health and safety and safeguards community well-being.

Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, residents may not have given much thought to the people who help to keep their communities running smoothly. But now more than ever, it's vital to understand what essential workers do, and how their efforts during this uncertain time are helping us all.

Sanitation workers

Sanitation workers ride in garbage trucks and collect trash from local businesses and residents. These workers' efforts are often taken for granted, but their work has been especially important during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Stay-at-home measures have produced more residential garbage, and sanitation workers have ensured that garbage is still being taken away. During a time when people are being urged to stay home as much as possible, these vital workers are still moving from house to house in service of their communities, making them unsung heroes of this outbreak.

Healthcare workers

The efforts of healthcare workers during the COVID-19 outbreak have been nothing short of heroic. Doctors and nurses risk their health each day to treat patients with COVID-19 as well as the myriad other conditions and diseases that continue to affect people across the globe. But the National Institutes of Health note that healthcare workers also comprise administrative

staffs, aides, lab technicians, and other healthcare industry professionals, many of whom have continued to go to work throughout this crisis. These people provide vital services that have kept people safe and healthy during this uncertain time.

Postal carriers

Postal carriers perform vital services every day. For aging men and women confined to their homes while stay-at-home orders are in place, postal carriers may be delivering the only consistent communications with the outside world they receive each day. Like sanitation workers, postal carriers are showing up for work each day despite the risks of traveling from house to house. In addition to postal carriers, in-office postal workers are working diligently each day to sort letters and packages, doing



so during a time when many people are fearful of coming into contact with anything they have not disinfected. These efforts are helping people receive necessary supplies, including medications and masks, while also ensuring that people continue to receive vital communications from local governments, financial advisors, banks, and other institutions.

Financial workers

As unemployment rates soar across much of the globe, workers in the financial sector are helping people confront the economic uncertainty that arises from job loss and furloughs. Banking administrators and executives have continued to help customers learn about assistance programs, and many institutions

have relaxed penalties and payment deadlines for customers struggling to make ends meet.

Grocery workers

Grocery store workers have been among the hardest working men and women during the COVID-19 crisis. Shelves are emptying rapidly, and grocery workers are working diligently to deliver goods, unload trucks, restock shelves, and clean stores each night in order to keep communities safe and well fed. The tireless efforts of essential workers has helped communities stay strong during the COVID-19 outbreak. Such efforts may go unnoticed, but it's important that communities recognize and acknowledge the vital services these workers provide.



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Council, continued

“This is just a necessary step to continue holding up our end of the agreement,” said Lowell mayor Michael DeVore.

The city decided not to reinstate late fees yet for those late paying their water bills. Burns said that only 14 accounts would have been shut off for delinquency since April, but this was not done and there are no plans to shut them off. The council said they will revisit this issue later in the summer.

“I think May is going to be the toughest month, because all of the people who worked in March and got paychecks in April are not going to get them in May,” DeVore said.

The council had their last public discussion of the city budget, which has been negatively impacted by the pandemic, and gave it their final approval.

“I’m projecting approximately \$160,000 in revenue loss from all municipal funds, with the exception of the water and wastewater funds,” Burns said.

Lowell city council’s next regular meeting is scheduled to take place at city hall at 7 pm on Monday, June 1. The council is also supposed to meet with the public during a “Coffee with the Council” event at the Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce building on

the Riverwalk from 8 am until 10 am on Saturday, June 6. Of course, because of the pandemic, these dates, times and locations could change.

To watch city council, board and commission meetings from the past few years, look for the “City of Lowell” or the “Lowell Light and Power” channels on YouTube or visit archive.org.



At right: A summary of the FY 2020/2021 recommended budget, unanimously passed by the council at their regular meeting on Monday, May 18.

Fiscal Year 2020-21 Recommended Budget

By Charter of the City of Lowell can levy up to 20 mills for general operating. Currently, the City levies one millage and that is for general operating. For many years, the city has levied 15.70 mills. This is below the 17.4597 mills which were allowed by the implementation of the Headlee Amendment of the State Constitution.

The budget for FY 2021 was developed using the following assumptions:

- Revenues are calculated based upon a millage rate of 15.70.
- Constitutional State Revenue Sharing is calculated according to Michigan Department of Management and Budget projections but projected with 15% less.
- Lowell Light and Power PILOT projection of \$42,000 less
- Interest rates will continue to be low.
- Services will remain the same or improved through efficiency.

Revenues

Revenues in the General Fund are expected to show a decrease in FY 2020 from the current year’s approved budget of \$3,246,032.79. This is due to the COVID 19 pandemic. Total revenues in FY 21 are expected to be \$3,240,222.37. Listed below is an analysis of how much the City receives from each of its revenue sources.

Expenditures

Budgeted expenditures from the General Fund for FY 21 are expected to be \$3,225,751.63 which is approximately \$45,933.08 more than approved for the current fiscal year. Of the actual General Fund revenue approximately 15.1 % or approximately \$488,632 of General Fund Expenditures will be transferred to other funds to subsidize their expenditures. Listed below are an analysis of expenditures based on each City function and each expenditure classification.

The significant new expenditures for the following year are:

- \$250,000 to repave Amity (DDA and Local Street Fund)
- \$197,000 to replace the sewer main on Foreman from Beech to Hudson (Wastewater Fund)
- \$125,000 for design engineering of Monroe and Washington Street (Major, Local, Wastewater and Water funds)
- \$120,000 to make repairs to the panel of Digester #3 (Wastewater Fund)
- \$88,000 for Ware Rd.
- \$50,000 to add SCADA to pump stations (Water Fund)
- \$40,000 to complete SCADA (Water Fund)
- \$21,000 to upgrade computerized temperature control of City Hall (50% paid by DDA Fund)
- \$15,000 to replace Mower #54 (Equipment Fund)
- \$15,000 to replace roof at NE Pump Station (Water Fund)
- \$10,000 for a variable speed gearbox for the clarifier (Water Fund)
- \$10,000 for concrete work at pump station (Water Fund)
- \$10,000 to convert street lighting citywide to LED.
- \$8,500 to replace meter reader (Water Fund)
- \$7,500 to replace brush to Skid Steer (Equipment Fund)
- \$6,500 to replace restroom partitions at Creekside and Stoney Lakeside Park
- \$5,000 to replace landing and stair at Museum.
- \$5,000 repair floor drains at DPW.
- \$5,000 for additional storage at DPW.

These projects represent civic and infrastructure improvements in the amount of \$900,500.

In regards to the City’s other funds, all are in good condition. The DDA is in good long-term condition and is committed to revitalizing the Downtown area. The DDA fund has been able to alleviate the General Fund of some expenditures and still complete improvement projects in the Downtown District.

No arrests here in April

by Tim McAllister
lead reporter

Lowell Police Department made zero arrests during the month of April, compared to 10 arrests in March, 13 in February and 12 in January.

LPD responded to plenty of misdemeanors during April. There were five larceny calls, one breaking and entering complaint, one malicious destruction, six disorderly

conduct calls and seven assaults. Lowell police also notified four residents about ordinance violations. There were four traffic stops in April, but all of those drivers were released with only a warning.

Lowell police were called to assist other law enforcement agencies 17 times and called other agencies for assistance two times in April. They were

called for assistance by citizens and motorists 13 different times.

Lowell police were also dispatched to six accidents during April, none with injuries.

The Lowell Area Fire Department responded to 58 incidents during April; 22 in the city of Lowell, 20 in Lowell Township and 16 in Vergennes Township.

...

**I have a lot of growing up to do.
I realized that the other day
inside my fort.**

~ Zach Galifianakis

outdoors

think small

Dave Stegehuis

When observing wildlife in their native habitat we generally look for animals like deer, bear, fox, and birds such as osprey, and piping plovers. These creatures are easy to spot if we stay alert when out in the countryside. There are thousands of endangered plant and animal species around the world. The black rhino and mountain gorilla are considered critically endangered and get a lot of coverage in the media.

Other species that are in trouble are not so visible and can be easily overlooked. Bee and butterfly populations have been steadily declining in recent years, and because they pollinate farm crops, we have a personal interest in their plight. Invasive species, insecticides, and

climate conditions are blamed for some of the decline in bee and butterfly populations. The destruction and fragmentation of habitat are the major culprits. We all share the same earth so when any living creature struggles for survival or becomes extinct, we should all be concerned.

As individuals we have some control over establishing and maintaining habitat suitable for supporting pollinators and other wild creatures. Leaving areas undeveloped and letting nature take its course is a simple strategy for habitat management. There is a meadow in our woods up north which we choose to leave natural because the milkweed growing there provides food for Monarch

butterfly caterpillars as well as bugs and cover for turkeys and songbirds.

Backyard gardens planted with native flowers are helpful to bees and hummingbirds. Flower gardens provide attractive landscaping, but by researching which plants provide the most benefit for the longest period of time we have another good reason to garden.

This growing season provides an opportunity to find ways to accommodate the needs of pollinators as well as providing livable spaces for local wildlife both large and small. Observing nature is interesting and enjoyable, but participation is a responsibility.



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Kindergarten enrollment for the fall is open! To apply, go to:

<https://www.lowellschools.com/our-district/enrollment/kindergarten-test/>

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Today in History: May 27, 2020

Wednesday, May 27 is the 148th day of 2020. There are still 218 days remaining until the end of this year.

Historical Events

1153: Malcolm IV becomes King of Scotland.
 1199: John is crowned King of England.
 1257: Richard of Cornwall is crowned King of the Germans.
 1703: Tsar Peter the Great founds the city of Saint Petersburg, Russia.
 1798: The Battle of Oulart Hill takes place in Wexford, Ireland; Irish rebel leaders defeat and kill a detachment of British militia.
 1813: War of 1812: American forces capture Fort George, in Canada.
 1863: American Civil War: First assault on the Confederate works during the Siege of Port Hudson.
 1883: Alexander III is crowned Tsar of Russia.
 1896: An F4-strength tornado hits the St. Louis area, killing at least 255 people and causing \$2.9 billion in damage.
 1919: The NC-4 aircraft arrives in Lisbon, Portugal after completing the first transatlantic flight.
 1927: The Ford Motor Company stops manufacturing the Model T and begins retooling plants to make the Model A.
 1930: Public opening of the Chrysler Building in New York City, at 1,046 feet the tallest man-made structure at the time.
 1933: New Deal: The Federal Securities Act is signed into law requiring the registration of securities with the Federal Trade Commission.
 1935: New Deal: The Supreme Court declares the National Industrial Recovery Act to be unconstitutional.
 1937: The Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco opens to pedestrian traffic.
 1941: The German battleship Bismarck is sunk in the North Atlantic killing almost 2,100 Nazis.
 1958: First flight of the McDonnell Douglas F-4 Phantom II.
 1960: In Turkey, a military coup removes President Celâl Bayar and the rest of the democratic government from office.
 1962: The Centralia mine fire is ignited in the town's landfill above a coal mine. The fire continues to burn to this day.
 1967: Australians vote in favor of a constitutional referendum granting their government the power to make laws benefiting Indigenous Australians, and to count them in the national census.
 1967: The aircraft carrier USS John F. Kennedy is launched by Jacqueline Kennedy and her daughter Caroline Kennedy.
 1971: The Dahlerau train disaster, the worst railway accident in West Germany, kills 46 people and injures 25 near Wuppertal.
 1971: Pakistani forces massacre over 200 civilians, mostly Bengali Hindus, in the Bagbati massacre.
 1975: Dibbles Bridge coach crash near Grassington, in North Yorkshire, England, kills 33: the highest ever death toll in a road accident in the United Kingdom.
 2016: Barack Obama is the first US president to visit the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park and meet with survivors of the 1945 atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Birthdays
 1738: Nathaniel Gorham, president of the Continental Congress
 1794: Cornelius Vanderbilt, businessman, philanthropist
 1819: Julia Ward Howe, poet, songwriter
 1832: Zenas Ferry Moody, governor of Oregon
 1837: Wild Bill Hickok, police officer
 1860: Manuel Teixeira Gomes, president of Portugal
 1867: Arnold Bennett, author, playwright
 1884: Max Brod, journalist, author, composer
 1894: Louis-Ferdinand Céline, physician, author
 1894: Dashiell Hammett, detective novelist, screenwriter
 1907: Rachel Carson, biologist, environmentalist, author
 1909: Dolores Hope, singer, philanthropist
 1911: Hubert Humphrey, US vice president
 1911: Vincent Price, actor
 1912: John Cheever, novelist, short story writer
 1912: Sam Snead, golfer, sportscaster
 1915: Herman Wouk, novelist
 1918: Yasuhiro Nakasone, prime minister of Japan
 1922: Christopher Lee, actor
 1922: John D. Vanderhoof, governor of Colorado
 1923: Henry Kissinger, US Secretary of State
 1923: Sumner Redstone, businessman
 1930: William S. Sessions, FBI director
 1934: Harlan Ellison, author, screenwriter
 1935: Mal Evans, road manager of The Beatles
 1935: Ramsey Lewis, jazz pianist, composer
 1935: Lee Meriwether, model, actor
 1936: Louis Gossett, Jr., actor
 1937: Allan Carr, playwright, producer
 1939: Don Williams, singer/songwriter, guitarist
 1943: Cilla Black, singer, actor
 1944: Chris Dodd, lawyer, politician
 1945: Bruce Cockburn, singer/songwriter, guitarist
 1948: Pete Sears, bass player, Jefferson Starship
 1950: Dee Dee Bridgewater, singer/songwriter, actor
 1955: Richard Schiff, actor
 1956: Cynthia McFadden, journalist
 1957: Susan "Siouxsie Sioux" Ballion, singer/songwriter, Siouxsie and the Banshees

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viewpoint

to the editor

Dear Editor:

I was disappointed to read some of the inaccurate information about corn presented in the EarthTalk column on April 12. I have farmed all my life on a family farm in Lowell and am a member of the Michigan Corn Growers Associate board of directors. I want to address a couple of the statements made in the article and provide some additional information.

The author claimed that growing corn degrades

soil quality which leads to pollution from runoff. If you talk to any farmer about their soil, you'll hear a lot about what they're doing to take care of it. Protecting soil quality is vital for the environment, and it's necessary for growing high-quality crops with good yields. Farmers engage in several practices to protect and improve the quality of their soils such as rotating crops in each field, planting cover crops that restore nutrients to the soil and

adjusting how often they till their fields based on the soil composition.

One example of the overlap inherent in environmental protection and standard farming practices is fertilizer use. Farmers take samples of the soil to determine exactly how much fertilizer each section of a field needs. Then they can apply what the plants need at the time that they need it. Apply more fertilizer than crops need would be a waste of time and money. One way farmers work to prevent overfertilization is through the use of GPS technology that guides their equipment across their fields.

The author also

made some false claims about ethanol made from corn. When compared to gasoline, ethanol has some major environmental benefits. Ethanol is an octane booster: it helps stabilize fuel to make sure it ignites in the cylinder when needed. Before using ethanol in the in this capacity, fuel companies used carcinogens like benzene and Methyl Tertiary Butyl Ether (MTBE) to get the same effect. These chemicals contaminated our soil and water. Additionally, research done by the U.S. Department of Agriculture shows that corn-based ethanol reduces greenhouse gas emissions by more than 40 percent in comparison

to gasoline. And thanks to new advances in technology, farming and ethanol production become more and more efficient each year.

If you want to know more about how farmers operate in your community, reach out to one of us! We love taking about our farms! You can also check out the Michigan Corn website at www.micorn.org.

Sincerely,
Carlton Blough
Lowell

Dear Editor:

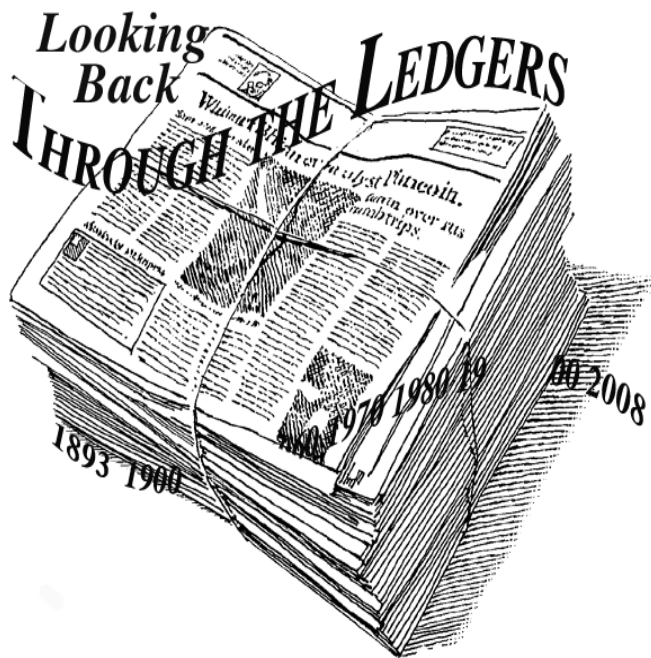
While the City of Lowell wrestles with whether to allow events to happen, I find it disconcerting that the onus of the behavior of people attending an event is being placed on the event planner. "I anticipate the event planners for these events will need to be responsible for these safety practices as we move forward" said Mr. Burns. And Mr. Chambers said, "I don't think it's a burden." But it is. One need only walk into any business in town to see that people are NOT observing safe practices. No masks, no distancing. In some businesses, which will remain nameless here, the proprietors and owners themselves are not wearing masks, even though there is a big sign on their doors

saying one must be worn. Just what does the City of Lowell expect event planners to do about people who are not being responsible and safe? What authority do they have to monitor behavior?

The issue is not expecting people will behave themselves. They won't. The issue is enforcement. People WILL show up at events massless and schlep shoulder to shoulder through the crowd. If the directive isn't going to be ENFORCED then the events just can't happen. No one is sorer than I am to see their year canceled. I want to go to the concerts, festivals, fairs and parades and I don't want to wear a mask to do it. But I DO wear the mask and I DO alter my route through the grocery store and I DO wait my turn because right now that's just what we have to do. There are many among us who think the rules don't apply to them thus putting everybody at risk.

If the City of Lowell won't take responsibility to make the rules and effect the ENFORCEMENT then putting the responsibility for people's behavior on the event planning is a waste of time. And dangerous.

Denice Barker
Lowell



125 years ago The Lowell Ledger May 31, 1895

Decoration day was quietly observed in Lowell notwithstanding the countermanding of public exercises. About seventy old soldiers, a detachment of the Sons of Veterans, the Womens Relief Corps and several hundred friends gathered at the cemetery and went through ritualistic ceremonies and listened to appropriate address by Comrade Geo. A Meyers. Many of the comrades pronounced the exercises more to their taste than those formerly held.

The Michigan university people have at last denied the truth of the human sausage story. It is a relief to find that there are some depths to which the university medics will not descend. There are some people who have not forgotten the "joke" played by the boys who hung a "stiff" in front of a meat market, one night several years ago, and they may be pardoned for having credited the sausage story.

Graut White of Spencer township, this county, attempted suicide in the barn of his brother, Walter, in Otisco, on May 20, using poison and a knife in his throat. He was discovered and resuscitated and at last reports was still alive. White has a wife and two children. Despondency is said to have been the cause of his rash act.

100 years ago The Lowell Ledger June 3, 1920

The annual Memorial and Decoration day observances in Lowell were fully up to the high standard set in former years in point of attendance, merit of program and high patriotic spirit. One sadly inevitable feature was the small number of civil war veterans in attendance. Each year finds more graves to decorate at Oakwood and fewer surviving aged veterans of the great conflict which closed 65 years ago.

Uncle Simon Pettit's ninetieth birthday anniversary was celebrated by Lowell Lodge No. 90, F. & A. M., at a 6 o'clock dinner Tuesday evening. There was a goodly number of the fraternity present, including several from Alto and Post Grand Commander Rowson, of Grand Rapids. After the eats came cigars and it became a "Blue" lodge in fact, as well as name. Followed speech making, story telling, and a general good social time, in the course of which Brother Pettit was duly felicitated upon his long, useful and blameless life.

75 years ago The Lowell Ledger May 31, 1945

Frank Freeman, chairman of the fuel oil panel at the Lowell ration board, states that fuel oil for summer cooking can now be issued to those having standby facilities for this purpose.

Word was received here late Monday that Sgt. Stanley Guild, son of Herman Guild of Hemlock, Mich., formerly of Lowell, had been killed in action on Okinawa, on May 11. Stanley, who graduated from Lowell high school in 1941, entered his country's service in September, 1942, taking his training at San Diego, Calif., and going across in February, 1943. He served on Guadalcanal, Russel Island, Leyte and New Guinea before being sent to Okinawa, and had never had a furlough since entering the service. He was awarded the Purple Heart for injuries received in action on Palau Island, in the Carolines. He would have reached the age of 22 his next birthday.

Little Jeanie Antonides has the misfortune to fall from a truck last Thursday, suffering a very bad break in her left forearm and dislocating her elbow. She is now in Blodgett hospital taking penicillin treatments until they are able to set the arm.

We love to hear from you!

The Lowell Ledger welcomes letters to the editor from readers, but there are a few conditions that must be met before they will be published.

The requirements are:

- All letters must be signed by the writer, with address and phone number provided for verification. All that will be printed is the writer's name and community of residence. We do not publish anonymous letters, and names will be withheld at the editor's discretion for compelling reasons only.
- Letters that contain statements that are libelous or slanderous will not be published.
- All letters are subject to editing for style, grammar and sense.
- Letters that serve as testimonials for or criticisms of businesses will not be accepted.
- Letters serving the function of "cards of thanks" will not be accepted unless there is a compelling public interest, which will be determined by the editor.
- Letters that include attacks of a personal nature will not be published or will be edited heavily.
- "Crossfire" letters between the same two people on one issue will be limited to one for each writer.
- In an effort to keep opinions varied, there is a limit of one letter per person per month.
- We prefer letters to be printed legibly or typed, double-spaced.

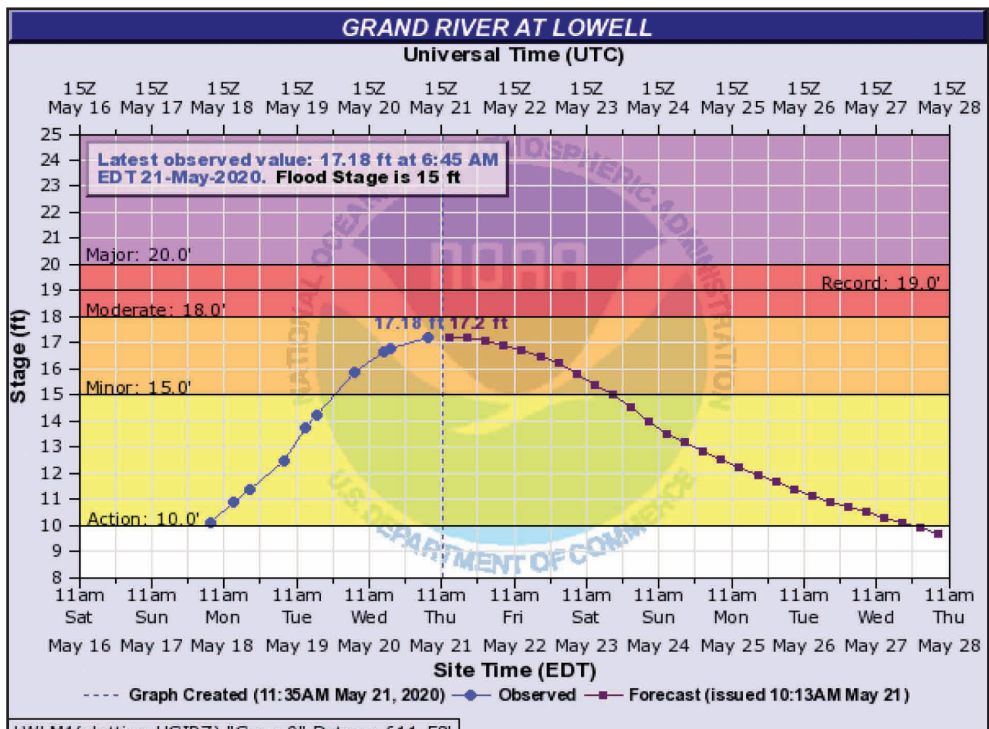
Recreation Park, the Fairgrounds and other parks



Grand River Riverfront Park North

Pebble Beach

Flooded streets and other areas



This National Weather Service graphic shows the Grand River at Lowell at 17.2 feet high, two feet over flood stage. The record was 19 feet in 2013.

Looking Back, continued

50 years ago The Lowell Ledger June 4, 1970

Lowell Police urged area residents to watch for two men who took \$420 from a wallet and purse belonging to a Lowell woman last week. The two reportedly walked through an open front door and took \$360 in large bills from a billfold and \$60 from a purse at 314 N. Washington Street.

A weekend train derailment of 14 cars of a 66-car Muskegon-Durand train tied up traffic on the Grand Trunk Western line south of Lowell for nearly 24 hours over the weekend. GTW officials blamed a hot box of overheated axle on the derailment which caused more than \$200,000 damage to several stainless steel milk tank trailers, vans loaded with canned beer and railroad equipment track. Several hundred feet of track was torn up in the accident. State Police said an engineer aboard the train received a backlash injury.

The chance to hear the applause of one's hometown citizens ringing out in praise of our work is an honor which comes to few of us during our lifetime. Roger MacNaughton, at the age of 21, had this experience when the Lowell High School Band presented one of his musical compositions as part of the Spring Band Concert.

25 years ago The Lowell Ledger May 31, 1995

Donald Fizer, owner of Michigan Wire Processing/D&D Trucking site, has proposed investing approximately \$25,000 into public improvements at the 2485 W. Main site. The improvements are aimed at screening the business site from area residents and deadening the sound coming from the site. While Fizer has demonstrated an effort to accommodate residents bordering to the north, questions remain as to just how effective the planting of trees would be in deadening the sound.

Recently RTM purchased Hardee' stores in Coopersville, Holland and Lowell. It has reopened the stores in Holland and Coopersville as Arby's. A decision as to whether the Lowell store will be turned into an Arby's store has not been made yet. That decision will not be made until later this summer.

Lowell High School senior Jesse Gleason is the first area student ever to be named as a member to the United States Marine Band. Gleason was one of 60 students who auditioned, but he was just one of two invited to play with the band.

ABCs of Lowell History

The Lowell Area Historical Museum introduces a new weekly feature to explore local history. During this time of closed museums, we want to still be able to share our area's history with you.

Street to the city and the Island Park began. Each year footbridges to the east and west banks were built to provide access to the park. In 1894, bridges were built to connect the lower three islands to the large upper one tripling the size of the park.

Railroad Company built trestle and footbridges in 1899. the train trestle can still be seen today. it was built across the north end of Island Park and in exchange, the Grand Rapids, Belding and Saginaw Railroad Company furnished two foot

summertime picnics and meetings. In 1912 St. Mary's Parish published the Island City Cook Book.

The 1926 Lowell Homecoming Jubilee included a picnic dinner at Island Park. No mention is made of Island Park's use after 1926. The



I is for Island Park

Island Park in Lowell was once a popular summer destination. In the 1880's local resident J.C. Train donated the islands in the Flat River south of Main

On July fourth, crowds of people would gather on the island for patriotic speeches from the speaker's platform and they would enjoy a picnic lunch.

The Grand Rapids, Belding and Saginaw

bridges along the side of it. Island Park inspired the naming of local organizations such as the Island City Rebekah Chapter No. 282 of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows. They used Island Park for

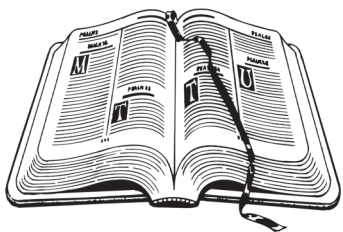
islands were taken over by poison ivy. Several attempts to re-establish the park have been made over the years including in 1971 and 1980 but were never completed.

happy birthday



- May 27**
Dakota McClure,
Bertha Brown, David
Christiansen, Tim
- May 28**
Casey Parker Gordon
- May 29**
Sue Lindhout, Mike
Lindhout, Justin Doyle
- May 30**
Kara Rasch, Allen
McClure, Carolyn Jane
Blough, Ryan Barnes, Kevin
Homrich, Heather Witherell,
Jacquelyn Landman, Tabora
Karp
- May 31**
Mark MacDonald,
Arleen (Bryant) Irving,
Tiffany Condon, Hannah
Burt, Lauren Wiley
- June 2**
Dave Thaler, Shad
Propst, Tom Greenfield,
Todd Dalga, Elaine Denton,
Noah Burt

area churches



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
865 Lincoln Lake SE • lowellucc.org

Pastor Alyssa Anten
Worship Service - Sundays 10 AM
Open Table (No-cost meal) - Thursdays 5 - 7 PM

Open & Affirming • LGBTQ+ Inclusive
616-897-5906

GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH
103 Bluewater Highway (Missouri Synod)
Halfway between Lowell & Saranac on M-21

Access Services at
www.goodshepherdlowell.org
Left hand side, click on Sermons, etc.

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

CALVARY CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH OF LOWELL
897-7060
Pastor Ryan Landt
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

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 Andrew Bolckom • Pastor of Discipleship
Christi Swain • Director of Children's Ministries

SUNDAY WORSHIP.....9:30 AM (Nursery provided)
LIFE GROUPS.....11:00 AM (Nursery-Adult)
Awana (K-5 during school year) **Wednesday, 6:15 PM**

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

LEGAL NOTICE

STATE OF MICHIGAN
PROBATE COURT
COUNTY OF KENT

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
Decedent's Estate

FILE NO. 20-207368-DE

Estate of
MARCELLA R. MASON.
Date of Birth: 9-7-1930

TO ALL CREDITORS: May 18, 2020

NOTICE TO CREDITORS: The decedent, Marcella R. Mason, died on March 26, 2020.

Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against

the estate will be forever barred unless presented to Jeffrey Alan Mason, personal representative, or to both the probate court at 180 Ottawa Avenue NW, Suite 2500, Grand Rapids, MI 49503 and the personal representative within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.

John D. Mitus (P31244)
410 Bridge Street NW
Grand Rapids, MI 49504
616-774-4001

Jeffrey Alan Mason
1065 Allison Ave NW
Grand Rapids, MI 49534

office hours:
Mon.-Thurs. 8 a.m.- 5 p.m.
Fri. 8 a.m. - noon
closed Sat. & Sun.

classifieds

for sale

USED TIRES - Call with size, 616-292-7649/616-295-8820. Rob's Auto - thanks. TFN

YARD SIGNS - 18"x24" 1 sided \$10, 2-sided \$15 + tax. Includes stakes. For honoring seniors and pandemic messages only. Call Lowell Litho, M-Th 8-3 or email: litho@lowellbuyersguide.com

EXCEPTIONAL PERFORMANCE AND VALUE - Requires less wood & provides more heat. Central Boiler certified Classic Edge OUTDOOR WOOD FURNACE. Call today! 616-554-8669. SOS Property Maintenance LLC, 6950 Hammond Ave, Caledonia. We are your local sales, service & parts dealer! TFN

FISH FOR STOCKING - Most varieties pond lakes. Laggis' Fish Farm, 269-628-2056 or 269-624-6215 evenings.

FREE AD! - Place & pay for a classified ad in the Buyers Guide & Lowell Ledger for 3 weeks & receive the 4th week FREE! You must mention the special in order to receive this offer. Valid only with new classified ads & must be paid for when ad is placed. Call 897-9555.

help wanted

TRAILER MECHANIC WANTED - Position available for a trailer mechanic. Job responsibilities include maintaining a fleet of flatbed and dump trailers by completing preventative maintenance requirements, aluminum & steel welding & fabricating, paint & electrical, and keeping records. Candidate should be capable of operating various types of heavy equipment. CDL not required. Some experience or education required. 40 hrs/week plus overtime and full benefits. Please apply in person at Timpson Transport; 3175 Segwun Ave. Lowell, MI 49331 Monday-Friday from 8 am - 5 pm. Or email resume to Info@TimpsonTransport.com or fax to 616-897-5905.

TRUCK DRIVERS WANTED - Multiple positions available for truck drivers. Must have Class A CDL and clear driving record. Hauling sand, topsoil and other similar products. Lowboy, dump, flatbed and heavy equipment experience preferred. Progressive pay scale, bonuses, and full benefits including health, 401k with match, and life insurance. Dental & vision also available. Apply in person at Timpson Transport; 3175 Segwun Ave. Lowell, MI 49331. Monday - Friday 8 am - 5 pm. Or email resume to Info@TimpsonTransport.com or fax to (616) 897-5905.

for rent

WE DO BUSINESS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE FEDERAL FAIR HOUSING LAW - Equal Housing Opportunity. It is illegal to discriminate against any person because of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status or national origin in the sale or rental of housing or residential lots; in the advertising the sale or rental of housing, in the financing of housing. Anyone who feels he or she has been discriminated against may file a complaint of housing discrimination: 1-800-669-9777 (toll free) 1-800-927-9275 (TTY).

PRICELESS STORAGE - Indoor/outdoor. New Units on Alden Nash, 1 mile South of I96. Call for specials 558-2900. TFN

HALL FOR RENT - Lowell Veteran's Center, 3116 Alden Nash. Newly remodeled, smoke-free, private, great location & great rate! www.VFW8303.org. All Vets Coffee Hour the 3rd Thursday of each month at Keiser's. Bring a friend. Call John at 299-0486 or 897-8303. TFN EOW

misc.

TO THE PEOPLE WHO STOLE - our gnome with the fishing pole, the gnome with the surfboard, the floating gnome and the cement little black bear, please return to Schneider Manor, Building M with no questions asked. Signed, Mad & Sad.

ADOPTION. Southern California sunlit nursery awaits newborn. Loving family promises baby secure future, educational opportunities. Generous Living expenses paid. Call Melissa 1(805)253-3263 or attorney 1(310)663-3467.

Turning 65? Need the right facts about Medicare? Questions? Confused? Call us, we can help. 1-866-453-6898 pkgfinancialservices.com

Wesley Financial Group, LLC Timeshare Cancellation Experts. Over \$50,000,000 in timeshare debt and fees cancelled in 2019. Get free informational package and learn how to get rid of your timeshare! Free consultations. Over 450 positive reviews. Call 866-353-4896

GENERAC Standby Generators. The weather is increasingly unpredictable. Be prepared for power outages. FREE 7-year extended warranty (\$695 value!) Schedule your FREE in-home assessment today. Call 1-866-445-7237 Special financing for qualified customers.

services

ZOOLAND DAYCARE - has 3 full-time openings for ages 1-12. Call 616-308-0195 for more information.

TRACTOR MAN - aggregate driveway up-keep, lawn prep, buck/fork work, food plots, gardens, brush/field mowing. 616-272-8097, kaamcosps@gmail.com

POWERWASHING & DECK STAINING SERVICES - for residential and small commercial sites. One job at a time. 14 years experience, free estimates. No job too small. Email Jeff at jbrower7@gmail.com or text 616 706-9519. (Prefer email).

TERRY RISNER ROOFING - Re-roofs & new construction. Free estimates. Licensed & insured. Call 616-291-9250.

CARPENTER WANTS JOBS, JOBS, JOBS - New homes, remodeling, additions, flooring, siding, decks, kitchens, baths, plans drawn. Licensed since 1967. References. Mel Cooke, 676-9239. No Sunday calls please.

services

PROFESSIONAL TREE CLIMBER NEEDS WORK - Call Dan, 616-970-3832.

FREE AD! - Place & pay for a classified ad in the Buyers Guide & Lowell Ledger for 3 weeks & receive the 4th week FREE! You must mention the special in order to receive this offer. Valid only with classified ads, and must be paid for when ad is placed. Call 897-9555 or email to: classifieds@lowellbuyersguide.com

WHEN IN AN ACCIDENT - YOU CAN CHOOSE WHO TOWS YOUR VEHICLE - Request J&K Roadwide Service, 616-690-0983. Towing, tire change, jump starts, fuel delivery.

NOREEN K. MYERS, ATTORNEY AT LAW - Compassionate, experienced, effective legal representation. Specialties include: wills & trusts, work related injuries, employment discrimination. 307 E. Main, Lowell, 897-5460.

services

NEED A DUMPSTER? - Dumpster rental, 10-20 yards. Mention this ad for \$10 to \$20 off. Call or text Doug for estimates at 616-295-6640. TFN

TWO BROTHERS AUTO SERVICE - 5400 Ivan Rd., Saranac, 616-642-9180. 30 years experience, state certified, licensed & insured. Hours Monday - Friday 8 am - 5 pm. Dave Traver head mechanic.

STUMP GRINDING - Call Dan for free estimate, 616-970-3832.

SEAMLESS GUTTER - Bleam Eavestroughing. Free estimates, 50 colors, leaf guards. Since 1959. Choose the experience! (616) 765-3333 or 1-877-945-RAIN. www.bleameaves.com

WORK WANTED - Double D's Tree & Handyman Service. 40' & 70' bucket truck, tree trimming & removal, gutter cleaning, window washing, power washing, buildings, barns, homes, decks, etc. Insured. Call Dave Delinsky, 616-212-3008. Free estimates. TFN

services

STICKNEY ROOFING - A local, licensed & insured company. Tearoffs & new construction. Free estimates. Call 616-293-9772.

STEEL ROOFS - We do steel roofs on high barns. Free estimates. Call John Reurink, 616-527-3635.

DRIVER'S LICENSE SUSPENDED OR REVOKED? - Don't get sucked into \$100-\$300 evaluation fees...I NEVER charge for your record evaluation & consultation! Driver's license RESTORATION: \$3500 incl. all filing fees AND FREE consultation & evaluation of your case. Have a question? Call Attorney Martin Mead (616) 235-0330.

wanted

I WANT TO BUY - a refrigerator, stove, washer & dryer. Have cash. Call 517-204-0600. TFN

NEWSPAPERS

Outperform Direct Mail in Michigan

the **lowell** ledger



Newspapers are the preferred source of coupons over direct mail.

82% of consumers use coupons received through newspaper inserts¹

33% of Michigan adults prefer receiving coupons from direct mail.²

Michiganians depend on newspapers for advertising inserts²

Michigan consumers prefer to receive advertising inserts in printed newspapers – higher than those who prefer to receive them through direct mail²

Michigan adults make more purchases as the result of newspaper ads than direct mail.²

79%

Eight in 10 newspaper readers took action as a result of reading a newspaper ad in the past 30 days⁴

17.2%

of adults made a purchase in the past 90 days as the result of a direct mail flyer³

Direct mail lacks the effective reach of newspaper advertising.

86%

of adults look at newspaper inserts to get the best deals³

72%

of Michigan adults never bought anything as the result of a direct mail piece²

50%

of Michigan adults did not buy anything as the result of a direct mail piece in the past year²

Sources: ¹2K17 Valassis Coupon Intelligence Report; ²2017 Release 2 Nielsen Scarborough Report. Copyright 2018 Scarborough Research. All rights reserved; ³Triad/Coda Ventures Insert Study; ⁴NAA; ⁵Pulse of America 2018

Red Arrow

- SENIORS

SPORTS

Honoring Senior athletes

by Justin Scott
contributing reporter

Sixty-seven Lowell High School seniors, unfortunately, saw their last year of spring sports come to an abrupt end. We'll certainly miss being able to cover these seniors play the sports they love. All of us at the Ledger in partnership with the LHS athletic department and spring sports coaches look forward to highlighting all 67 over the next few weeks. This week we'll be featuring 15 seniors.

Haley Nichols - Tennis

Nichols is a four-year LHS tennis player whose favorite memory is back-to-back wins at the Grand Rapids



Catholic Central Invitational. This fall, she plans to attend Schoolcraft College to study marketing and accounting.

Savanah Crace - Soccer

Crace is a three-year varsity soccer player. "Selfless and hardworking, contributing in multiple positions and roles during her tenure. A strong defender who can stretch the field with an accurate long ball - her presence on our backline will be sorely missed," Coach Dan Lipon said of Crace. She plans to attend Northern Michigan this year to study nursing.



Mitchel Snarski - Lacrosse

Snarski will end up as a four-year lacrosse player at LHS, with his last two seasons on varsity. He was looking forward to playing on varsity this year with his brother Gage. After graduation, he is looking to become a content creator, model, and/or head to Ferris State University.



Ellis Sandman - Lacrosse

Class of 2020 valedictorian, Sandman, a four-year varsity lacrosse player where she specialized in defense. "As the years went on she added physicality and aggressiveness which made her a force in our defense. Our defense was one of the best in the area and she is a big reason why. Great kid on and off the field. She will be missed," Coach Jesse Vasquez said of Sandman. Ellie will be attending Hope College this fall to double major in Biology and Spanish. Graphic courtesy of LHS girls varsity lacrosse on Facebook.



Skylar Young - Lacrosse

Young, a midfielder and team captain, is a four-year varsity lacrosse player. She earned HM All-Conference honors in 2019 and will be studying human biology at



Michigan State this fall. "This young lady brought it everyday. It didn't matter what it was a workout, a practice or a game she gave it her all," added Coach Vasquez of Young.

Olivia DeCator - Lacrosse

A multi-sport athlete, DeCator golfed and played four years with the varsity girls lacrosse program. This fall she will be attending Michigan State to study business and human resources management. She did great things with our youth, a true role model for them. On the field she was a great utility player. She could do it all, and at a high level. We will miss that versatility," Head Coach Jesse Vasquez spoke of DeCator. Photo courtesy of LHS varsity girls lacrosse on Facebook.



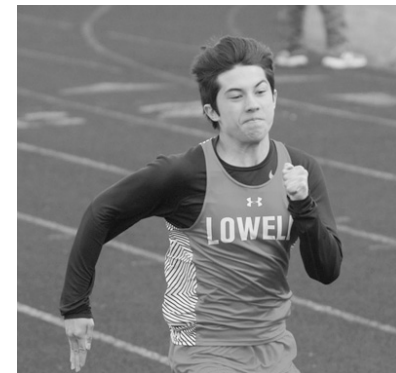
Kyra Snyder - Track

Snyder, a multi-sport athlete competing in track & field and competitive cheer, is one of our spring senior student-athlete highlights. Snyder has earned all-conference honors twice and became a state qualifier last year. Her favorite memory from her track & field time was advancing to the state meet. Pictured: Snyder handing the relay baton off to Mya Kaywood.



Brandon Baker - Track

Baker, a four-year cross-country runner and track & field athlete, was looking forward to running the 800m yet again this spring. It is his favorite track & field event of the many he competed in. This fall, Brandon will be going on to Grand Valley State University where he will study computer engineering.



Nigel Mika - Track

Mika competed in track & field, cross country, and soccer during his time at LHS. A strong runner, Nigel earned HM all-conference honors for cross-country in 2018, and broke through to the LHS record books as well. He will be traveling internationally for university as he will head to Scotland to study philosophy and physics at St. Andrew's.



Red Arrow

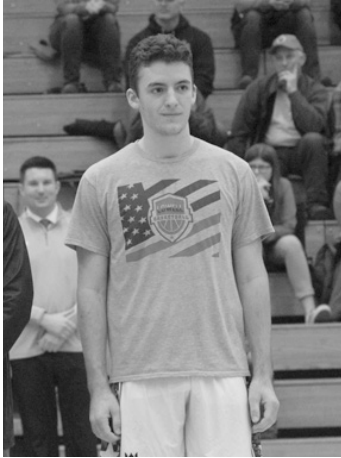
- SENIORS

SPORTS

Honoring Senior athletes

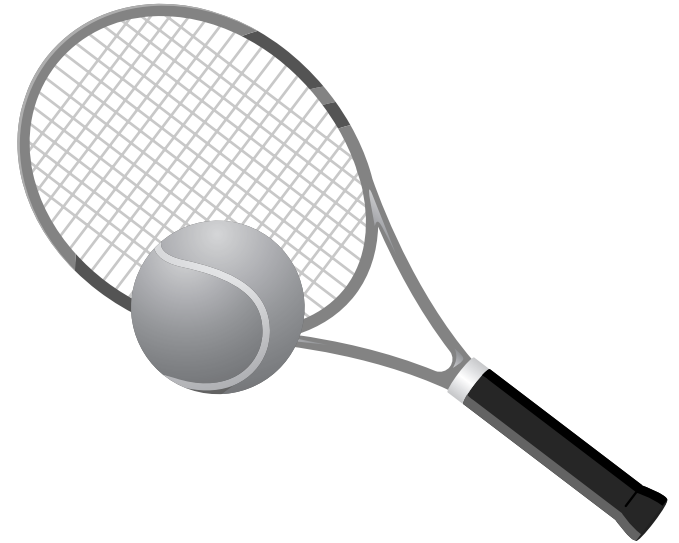
Jacob Cleaver - Golf

Cleaver is a scholar-athlete graduating from LHS with summa cum laude honors. He was one of the few LHS seniors competing for the Lowell boys golf team in this his second year on varsity. In addition he competed in other sports such as basketball, tennis, and baseball during high school. He will be attending Michigan Tech in the fall.



Ben Kinnucan - Track

Kinnucan has participated in soccer, cross-country, and track & field throughout his four years at LHS. He was the track and field team's scholar athlete the past two years with a GPA of 4.825 which also earned him MITCA Academic All-State honors. He will be pursuing a career in history or mathematics while continuing his running. Among the many awards earned by Kinnucan was the Austin Lancaster Memorial Scholarship at senior honors night this year.



Jenna Happie - Tennis

Happie played varsity tennis all four years of high school in addition to participating in marching band, jazz

Cam Cheney - Track

A member of the throwing team with Lowell track & field, Cheney will end up as a three-year track and field squad member. He also captained the team for two years,



and his favorite event is the shotput. He is starting work with a marine boat company in Grand Haven this summer.

Phoebe Looman - Track

A scholar-athlete with a GPA of 4.079, Looman participated in sideline cheer, competitive cheer, and track



band, symphonic band, and concert band. Happie plans to attend the University of Detroit Mercy's nursing program at Aquinas College.

Aidan Kelley - Track

Four-year member of the track & field and tennis teams, Kelley will be attending the University of Michigan



College of Engineering this fall. "Aidan is one of the most determined athletes I've worked with, always working for perfection. This is also seen in his music and classes," Coach Paul Judd said of Kelley. He has a personal of 12.09 seconds in the 100m and was a member of the LHS fusion orchestra.

& field throughout high school. Extracurriculars included Lowell Fusion Rock Orchestra, Grand Rapids Youth Symphony, Odyssey of the Mind, and National Honors Society. She will be attending Michigan State this fall to study psychology and eventually become a lawyer.

Support the Local Businesses
Who Help Support
Our Community!



**If you need
a copy of the
graduation
edition of the
Lowell Ledger -
please call our
office, 897-9261.**

ATTENTION Lowell Area Students

Students that will be in 6th thru 12th grade this next school year, living in the Lowell area school district, that are not already in the Lowell Esports Club, but are interested in joining, please call or text Al Eckman (Esports Adviser) at 616-450-4332. Those joining should have one of the following: Nintendo Switch, PS4, Xbox One (or better), desktop PC, or laptop. Games presently being played are: Super Smash Bros. Ultimate, Fortnite, Rocket League, Overwatch, League of Legends, with Valorant being added. All these games are rated 'Teen' (or better) by ESRB (Entertainment Software Rating Board).



Without federal emergency relief money to fill an estimated \$2.2 billion hole in the remaining 4.5 months in the fiscal year, the Governor and Legislature will need to move around money, issue bonds and make some cuts to balance the state's budget, the former House Fiscal Agency director told MIRS Monday.

Mitch Bean lived through the perennial budget crises of the '00s. He said to think the Legislature and Governor could make \$2.2 billion in cuts in essentially one fiscal quarter isn't realistic.

Of the General Fund portion of the budget, 78

Former HFA director: it's 'ridiculous' to fill \$2.2B hole with cuts alone

percent of the spending goes to the Department of Health and Human Services (\$4.8 billion), Corrections (\$2 billion), and Higher Education.

The State Police and the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs equal \$548 million, or 5.2 percent, of the budget.

To cut this part of the budget would mean eliminating Medicaid to thousands of residents, opening up the doors to state prisons and laying off the State Police. Too deep of cuts to universities may drive some of them into bankruptcy.

"In terms of General Fund, the idea that we're going to cut our way out of this is ridiculous," Bean said.

To cut roughly \$1 billion from \$10 billion may seem like only a 10 percent cut, but when the cuts are all squeezed into one quarter, it equals out to a 40 percent cut to state government. Shutting down the Legislature, Judiciary, Attorney General, Secretary of State, and several other state departments isn't going to get the state much savings either.

Certain things, like \$350 million in debt service, can't be cut, he said. Some debt service could be refinanced, but that isn't going to equal anything close to \$1 billion.

On the \$15 billion School Aid Fund side, Bean suggested some pro-rata per-pupil cut to K-12 schools is likely, but not \$1 billion worth. The per-pupil

allowance is 63 percent of the budget or \$9.5 billion.

Another 10 percent of the School Aid Fund is \$1.5 billion that is mandated through a court settlement to be spent on special education. That can't be cut unless the state wants to end up back in court.

He predicted some creative reforms within the teachers' retirement system would be proposed - which he didn't endorse - but considered likely. The Michigan Public School Employees Retirement System is \$1.3 billion, or 9 percent, of the budget.

Another 9 percent is federal programs that aren't special education, which isn't going to help the situation, even if it were

cut. At-risk funding for disadvantaged populations is \$522 million and early childhood programs are \$264 million. Various other education programs are about \$692 million.

Bean said the \$465 million in General Fund money that was set aside for roads in the current budget needs to be pushed back into balancing the budget. In the short-term, Bean suggested bonding to pay for the roads.

The federal government opened up new bonding options to give state and local governments access to short-term notes for liquidity during these tough times. However, long-term, Bean has long advocated for all road money coming from

user fees, like a higher gas tax.

"They should pass a transportation package that actually solves the problem that they didn't solve in 2015," Bean said. "Nobody believes that what they did in 2015 solved anything."

Michigan also has a \$1.2 billion rainy day fund that can be used, although the Legislature needs to be careful about using too much of it considering what FYs 2021 and 2022 could look like.

Some budget cuts will be made to schools, universities, and local governments, Bean estimated. But with the 2020 election coming up, painful cuts to health care and public safety during a pandemic "aren't happening."

MI's 22.7% April jobless rate likely "an all-time high"

Michigan's unemployment rate in April shot up to 22.7 percent, which the state said was the highest rate since at least 1976 and is likely "an all-time high."

The unemployment rate went to 22.7 percent from the 4.1 percent initially reported in March - before the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, stay at home and business closure orders had really taken hold - according to Michigan Department of Technology, Management and Budget. The March unemployment rate was revised up to 4.3 percent. The month before, it was reported at 3.6 percent.

"April's historic unemployment rate and job declines reflected the first full month of the COVID-19

pandemic's impact on the state's labor market," said Jason Palmer, director of the state's Bureau of Labor Market Information and Strategic Initiatives. "Job losses were widespread across all industry sectors, with especially large employment reductions in leisure and hospitality and manufacturing."

The previous record for unemployment was 16.5 percent in December 1982, according to DTMB.

The total number of unemployed people in April - 1.048 million - was also an all-time high, surpassing the previous record of 725,000 during June 2009.

Employment went down by 1.13 million and the number of unemployed went

up by 839,000 people. The state's workforce dropped so low that in one month it was back at levels seen in 1991.

Patrick Anderson, principal and CEO of Anderson Economic Group, said Wednesday, May 20, "This is a devastating share of the state's workforce to be idled. It is without parallel in modern economic history. [...] The cost of this will be severe. I anticipate the larger manufacturers, tech companies, and colleges will climb their way out of this, but many restaurants, small businesses, and nonprofits will not be able to make it."

The state's jobless rate was eight percentage points above the national unemployment rate of 14.7 percent in April.

Other notes from the state jobless report Wednesday, which covered labor market trends for the week of April 12-18, included:

- The Detroit-Warren-Dearborn Metropolitan Statistical Area's seasonally adjusted jobless rate rose substantially to 21.6 percent in April, a monthly gain of 17.0 percentage points.

- April job cuts were most pronounced in leisure and hospitality (-237,000); manufacturing (-174,000); and trade, transportation, and utilities (-159,000).

- One of the most impacted industries was accommodation and food services, which accounted for two of every 10 jobs lost in April.

- Financial activities, natural resources and

mining, government, and information recorded the most modest job reductions on a percentage basis over the year.

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer said Wednesday the state is "going through an unprecedented crisis, unlike anything we've seen in our lifetime." She added that she "will continue working around the clock to ensure everyone who qualifies for unemployment benefits receives them during this time."

Before the unemployment numbers came out Wednesday, Rep. Curt VanderWall (R-Ludington) spoke on the Senate floor and criticized the "economic destruction" that Whitmer's actions "have caused in his

district," according to a press release his office issued. He referenced a brewery in Leelanau County and a glass factory in Evart that he said both closed permanently.

"The people of Michigan are frustrated, they're scared and they're suffering," VanderWall said. "And a lack of transparency and clarity from our governor is only compounding the problem. [...] Why are Mason, Lake, Osceola and Ogemaw counties closed while many of their neighbors will open this weekend? Where is the data to support these decisions? Do any communities in any of our districts have an understanding of how close or how far away they are from reopening?"

LEO director faces select committee on pandemic

Brian Daniels, a certified dental tech from Gratiot County, called Michigan's Unemployment Insurance Agency "a black hole," because laid off workers can't get help resolving issues with their claims, as he testified Thursday to the Joint Select Committee on the COVID-19 Pandemic.

"It's really a circus as far as I'm concerned," Daniels said. "You expect that at some point you will get a communication, but there is literally no way to communicate with them. They do not communicate back. [...] The way I look at it is that unemployment - and I've never applied for unemployment, I've been working for 45 years - and I consider unemployment and the unemployment agency to be the 911 economic lifeline to workers. And if you are out there dialing 911 and nobody answers the call, how are you going to get

help?"

The Select Committee put Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity Director Jeff Donofrio under the bright white light for more than three-and-a-half hours on Thursday, May 21. Donofrio oversees UIA.

Thursday's hearing began with testimony from several claimants who had trouble making claims with the agency.

Daniels said the problem with his claim had to do with dates and he believes someone in UIA processed the dates in his claim incorrectly, so that is not something he can fix without direct conversation with a UIA employee.

UIA said he was required to certify on Feb. 27 and because he missed his 14-day window, he was no longer eligible.

"Well, I didn't even apply for unemployment until

April 13 and they approved me on April 21 so how could I possibly be late?" Daniels said. "I sent a message, sent a protest to protest my redetermination. I tried to call and couldn't get them on the phone. I made hundreds of calls."

Other testifiers had similar experiences, detailing many efforts to communicate with UIA, yet having trouble getting contact.

Emily Kitchen of Hudsonville described herself as a business owner in Ottawa County who tried to contact UIA to resolve claims for employees her company had to lay off. She said the employer side of UIA wouldn't help because she was calling about claims, and the benefits side said it couldn't help because she was an employer.

When her call finally moved up the chain to a UIA manager, the issues were fixed very quickly.

Donofrio said 1.8 million claims have been made to UIA since the COVID pandemic began.

"Roughly 34 percent of our workforce has applied for unemployment insurance benefits," Donofrio said. "For context, we averaged roughly 5,000 claims per week prior to the COVID-19 crisis. The weekly high during the Great Recession was 77,000 claims. We eclipsed that for six consecutive weeks during the pandemic so far, hitting a high of around 380,000 claims in just one week. [...] The COVID-19 epidemic is a generational economic event and the most severe in 100 years or more."

He said that, so far, 94 percent of claims have been paid.

"Last week, director Steve Gray reported there were 134,000 workers still needing some one-on-one attention to receive

benefits," Donofrio said. "In the last week, 31,971 of those waiting had their issues resolved, thanks to the adjudication process. While this is good progress, we still have much work to do."

Committee Chair Matt Hall (R-Emmett Twp.) and Sen. Aric Nesbitt (R-Lawton) expressed frustration that they have yet to receive an answer to their question about what date Donofrio or Gray were informed that Gov. Gretchen Whitmer planned to issue her stay-at-home executive order March 23, which effectively shut the economy down.

Donofrio's answer is that he was in "constant communication" and "in real time" with Whitmer and her staff both before March 23 and after March 23.

Donofrio described that as daily meetings with the governor and her staff. He said he also held daily meetings with Gray and staff

at the UIA.

He said he has been at the state's Emergency Operations Center and that LEO has had a presence at the EOC during the pandemic.

There have been almost 100 EOs and 1,000 frequently asked questions, Rep. Jack O'Malley (R-Lake Ann) said, "so I don't think that communication was very good."

Minority Vice Chair Vanessa Guerra (D-Saginaw) contended that members were repeating questions that had already been asked and answered, and at one point she called the hearing "a farce."

Hall adjourned the four-hour, 20-minute session, promising the committee would take additional testimony from unemployment claimants next Wednesday, May 27.