

LAFD: free smoke alarms for local residents

by Tim McAllister
lead reporter

The Lowell Area Fire Department is participating in “Keeping Michigan S.A.F.E.,” a program that distributes free smoke alarms to any residence that needs one.

“We typically will put one in every bedroom, one outside of a common area between the bedrooms and then one down in the mechanical room or basement as well,” said fire chief Shannon Witherell. “We make sure we have them down there because dryer fires are a very ‘popular’ fire. Lint buildup in your vents or in the dryer itself is actually quite flammable, and once it gets heated up it can cause a fire. So that’s an important place to have smoke detectors.”

Since it began in 2003, the program has installed over 175,000 smoke alarms in West Michigan homes. While this is the first time this specific program will be active in Lowell, the department has been

installing free smoke detectors for years.

“Several years ago, we partnered with Meijer and an insurance company to provide us with smoke detectors,” Witherell said. “We bought a pallet of smoke detectors, Meijer donated a pallet of a smoke detectors and we were just doing it on a request basis, we weren’t really doing a lot of marketing on it. Recently, we have been looking at community outreach, and one of the things that helps to get us involved as a community is being in homes and installing smoke detectors. Doing things besides just being there for 9-1-1 calls. So we started doing some research.”

According to statistics supplied by Witherell, a record 122 Michiganders lost their lives in 101 fires in 2020, a 21 percent increase in deaths from 2019. Of those killed in fires during 2020, 68 percent of the victims were male, 31 percent were female, 25 percent were

reported as disabled, 16 percent were reported as under the influence of a substance and 70 percent were between 40 and 79 years old. Between Jan. 1 and Feb. 4 of this year, eight Michiganders have already lost their lives in seven fires.

If you’re interested in a smoke alarm or a carbon monoxide detector, Witherell said your best bet is to watch the department’s social media account. They will occasionally receive batches of the devices, and when they do, they will make a social media post. Then it’s first come, first served. All you have to do is fill out a little paperwork with demographic information so that data about the devices and who’s using them can be collected and make an installation appointment.

“The caveat for us to get all these free detectors is we’ve got to do data reporting,” Witherell said. “We’ve got to report it to the state and to the sponsoring partners, to



show that there’s an impact going on. There’s a simple liability form that they sign, and then we just do a simple survey that basically tells us how many people are in the house, how many are kids under ten and how many are adults over 65. Those numbers are important.”

Witherell said most people are unaware that the little smoke-detecting sensor inside of a smoke

detector only lasts about ten years, and so do the lithium batteries. Meanwhile, installation of a free one takes about 30 minutes, and they are currently working on scheduling some evening appointments for those who work during the day.

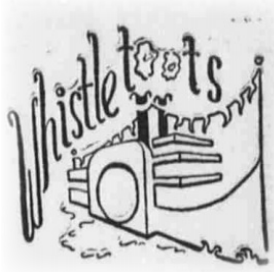
If interested, check the department’s Facebook page or call 616-897-8354 for more details. Renters should contact their landlord before proceeding.

Lowell Cable TV fund board



page 3

Showboat construction update



page 8

Restless Viking



page 14



LHS sports

page 11

MI Sen. Peters chair of Homeland Security

Michigan Senator Gary Peters has been appointed chairman of the US Senate’s Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee.

“In my capacity as chairman, I’m also working to pass comprehensive, bold and robust COVID-19 relief,” Peters said in a press release on Monday, Feb. 8. “There are a number of priorities that must be addressed, including getting this pandemic under control and expanding vaccination distribution efforts; addressing the rise in domestic terrorism and violence – particularly after the January 6th assault on the US Capitol; boosting border security and increasing Michigan’s role as a hub for international commerce; strengthening our cybersecurity – especially after the recent massive cyber-attack on our federal government and private sector; and continuing to ensure taxpayer dollars are used more effectively and restoring the US Postal Service’s longstanding tradition of reliable

delivery.”

The Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee is the Senate’s chief oversight and investigative committee, with jurisdiction over things like homeland security, the National Archives, budget and accounting measures other than appropriations, the US Census, federal civil service and the US Postal Service. The other members of the committee are Tom Carper (D-Delaware), Maggie Hassan (D-New Hampshire), Josh Hawley (R-Missouri), Ron Johnson (R-Wisconsin), James Lankford (R-Oklahoma), Jon Ossoff (D-Georgia), Alex Padilla (D-California), Rand Paul (R-Kentucky), Rob Portman (R-Ohio), Mitt Romney (R-Utah), Jacky Rosen (D-Nevada), Rick Scott (R-Florida) and Kyrsten Sinema (D-Arizona).

Peters was among a group of senators who participated in a meeting at the White House with President Biden and Vice President Harris to discuss an “American Rescue Plan.”

“This plan takes a number



MI Sen. Gary Peters on C-Span in 2019.

of actions that are necessary to combat this virus,” Peters said in the press release. “Extending unemployment benefits and \$1,400 stimulus checks to individuals; increasing support for small businesses and resources to speed up safe and equitable vaccine distribution; and helping our schools safely reopen, under the guidance of public health officials and experts.”

Peters has previously served as the Michigan Lottery commissioner, was on the Rochester Hills

city council and was in the Michigan Senate from 1995 until 2002. During his time in the Michigan Senate, Peters was vice chairman of the Finance, Education, Judiciary and Economic Development Committees and was a member of the Natural Resources Committee and the Mental Health and Human Services Committee. He represented Michigan in the US House from 2009 to 2015, when he was elected US Senator. In the Senate, Peters has served on the Armed Services

Committee, the Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation and the Joint Economic Committee.

Peters has an office locally in the Gerald R. Ford Building, 110 Michigan Street NW, Suite 720, Grand Rapids, MI 49503, 616-233-9150. He can also be reached at his Capitol office in the Hart Senate Office Building, Suite 724, Washington, DC 20510, 202-224-6221, on social media or through the contact form on his website, peters.senate.gov.

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MEA survey shows majority of educators in process of receiving COVID vaccine

Based on over 22k responses, about 37 percent of educators still waiting to be vaccinated; nearly 90 percent want to receive vaccine

An online survey of MEA members reveals that nearly two-thirds of Michigan school employees are either vaccinated or in the process of being vaccinated against COVID-19. Another third of the more than 22,500 respondents are waiting to get their first shot, with about 90 percent of educators overall wanting to receive the vaccine.

Half of those surveyed (50.0 percent) have received their first shot, with another 6.7 percent scheduled to do so. Another 6.4 percent have received both doses of the vaccine, with another 36.9 percent not yet vaccinated or scheduled to do so.

Of that group, the vast majority want the vaccine – as part of the full survey sample, just 6.9 percent of school employees responding do not plan to get the vaccine, with another 6.3 percent unsure.

“Our members see the vaccine as a critical component to reopening classrooms across the state, along with continued mitigation measures like masks, social distancing and sanitization,” said MEA President Paula Herbart. “They are following the science and are embracing the vaccines’ potential for protecting their health and safety, as well as that of their students. While thousands of educators are still waiting to be scheduled for vaccination because of the short supply of the vaccine, these results show a great deal of progress.”

However, frustration with vaccine rollout is still very real among many educators. About 20 percent of MEA members have not heard from their employer about arrangements to get vaccinated by local health departments. The majority of those who have received shots or are scheduled to do so secured their appointment on their own (60.7 percent) as opposed to through their employer. Higher education faculty and staff are not yet eligible for the vaccine.

These survey figures are significantly better than results of a national survey released today by the National Education Association, which found just 18 percent of educators have been vaccinated.

“The state of educator vaccination in Michigan is much better than what

we’re hearing from many other states, including many where educators have not been prioritized to receive the vaccine at all,” Herbart said. “We appreciate Gov. Gretchen Whitmer’s decisive leadership in making PreK-12 school employees eligible for the vaccine and working to tackle the supply and distribution issues that many are experiencing. The governor’s words and actions show her commitment to keeping students and educators safe and continuing to make saving lives the top priority.”

The survey, conducted online from Feb. 2-8, was answered by 22,552 MEA members across the state, including PreK-12 teachers and support staff, higher education faculty and staff, student teachers and school retirees. While not a scientific

sample, the responses were geographically representative of MEA’s statewide membership, which includes about 120,000 members spanning every Michigan county.

Other findings in the survey include:

- Looking at county-level data where there were more than 100 responses, rates varied from a high of 88.1 percent vaccinated or scheduled in Marquette County to a low of 25.6 percent in Washtenaw County. (A detailed chart is included with the survey findings.)

- Respondents included educators working in a variety of learning environments – 46.5 percent in-person, 25.2 percent hybrid and 19.8 percent virtual (some of whose districts are offering in-person

options but are working with students who’ve chosen virtual learning). Nationally, 64 percent are currently working in school buildings all or part of the time, per NEA’s survey.

- School employees still have a very high level of concern about safety when it comes to in-person learning, with 42.2 percent very concerned, 36.5 percent somewhat concerned, 13.8 percent not very concerned, and 7.5 percent not at all concerned. It is worth noting that the overall intensity of concern has decreased since a similar question was asked on a November 2020 MEA survey – at the time, 56 percent were very concerned, 28 percent somewhat concerned, 10 percent not very concerned, and six percent not at all concerned.

Chair Albert leads MI House approval of COVID plan

Appropriations Committee Chair Thomas Albert today led Michigan House approval of a comprehensive COVID-19 recovery plan to get kids back in classrooms, help struggling families, help struggling families and job providers, improve the state’s flawed vaccine distribution program, and bring oversight and accountability to the state’s pandemic response.

The \$3.5 billion plan advances to the Senate for further consideration.

“This recovery plan must be done now, and it must be done right – because

this is the most important issue currently facing Michigan,” said Albert of Lowell. “House Republicans are taking decisive action to get kids back in school, help struggling families and job providers, and get vaccines distributed more quickly and efficiently. This is the best plan out there to help our state bounce back from COVID-19, and it provides accountability on what is spent in response to the administration’s past mismanagement of funds.”

Plan highlights include:
Helping families:

Families have been pushed to the brink by the COVID restrictions, which continue to be among the harshest in the nation. The House plan provides \$510 million in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program funding, while other investments support meals for seniors, mental health, and substance abuse prevention and treatment. Families also are eligible for rent and utility assistance, and a deposit into the unemployment benefits trust fund helps ensure those laid off because of COVID restrictions will continue to receive the benefits they’ve been promised.

Helping kids: Many students in Michigan haven’t seen the inside of a classroom in nearly a year. The House plan provides \$363 million statewide for districts committing to in-person instruction by Feb. 15, provides support through federal

Title I dollars, and funds benchmark assessments to help determine where students stand after this tumultuous year. A voluntary K-8 summer school program would be funded with \$135 million – plus \$1,000 incentives for participating teachers, \$250 incentives for participating staff, and up to \$250 to help families cover associated costs such as transportation and tutoring. A high school credit recovery program would also be available.

Helping job providers: Restaurants and other small businesses – along with the workers who depend on them -- are fighting for economic survival. The House plan supports businesses restricted by the governor’s COVID orders with a \$415 million grant program, including reimbursement of liquor and health inspection fees. The package also includes support for property

tax relief, and help for afflicted job providers who pay into the unemployment benefits system.

Fighting the virus: Additional resources for vaccine distribution and COVID testing would be allocated quarterly as needed – rather than all at once -- to allow more legislative review of the process and ensure funds aren’t squandered. The legislature approved more than \$50 million for vaccine distribution in December. This new plan provides an additional initial investment of \$22 million for vaccine distribution, and \$144 million for COVID testing. Other resources will be held in reserve for when they’re needed.

The plan does not include money for items the governor proposed such as Capitol metal detectors and corporate giveaways for new job creation because they aren’t related to COVID.

“On the same day the governor creates another bureaucratic advisory council to start talking about student recovery, the House takes real action and



Rep. Thomas Albert

approves the resources to get kids back into school quickly – including summer school for those who want it,” Albert said. “The governor’s plan focuses on giveaways to big corporations, while ours is laser-focused on helping families and small family businesses survive. Her plan grows government – ours makes smart investments. Let’s come together, get this done, and provide the people of Michigan with some much-needed hope for a brighter future. I am hopeful the governor will stop focusing on politics and her power struggle, and start focusing on the Michigan families who need help.”



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Second Class Postage Paid at Lowell, MI

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LCTV fund grants about \$2 million locally every year

by Lara Steffens
contributing reporter

The LCTV Endowment Board does a lot around the Lowell community, helping with things such as the Showboat, FROM's security, LowellArts and the school system by approving grants that give these groups a big head-start on their projects.

Although there have been fewer meetings in the past months due to COVID-19, there is a meeting scheduled in the coming weeks to talk about which grants the LCTV board will approve.

The process for approving a grant is relatively simple. A group or person submits a request for a grant, the board decides how much money to grant to the applicants and makes sure they aren't granting money to the same group year after year.

The board is made up of representatives from in, around and outside of Lowell. Each of the representatives has volunteered their time to be on the board. The

board has representatives from multiple places to make sure they consider differing opinions about which grants get approved. During its existence, Lowell Cable TV serviced more than just Lowell, so this concept was honored when it was decided to create an endowment board. Today, there are representatives from three different municipalities: Vergennes Township, Lowell Township and the city of Lowell.

Before they vote on giving an applicant a grant, the board checks how much money is left in their budget. They have about \$2 million per year to grant to different groups, and they also have to make sure it doesn't run out.

Many Lowell area residents are grateful for the LCTV Endowment Board and all the things they have helped fund and look forward to their accomplishments in the future.



WWC's "Winter Waggle" 5K now month long race



by Lara Steffens
contributing reporter

Saturday, Feb. 6 was the Winter Fest at the Wittenbach Wege Center, including the start of the Virtual Winter Waggle 5K race.

Anybody can complete the race at any time in February. The race will work on the honor system, so you are sent your snowflake medal as soon as you register. Then, you can complete

either the full 5K or just one mile, and you can do it anywhere outdoors - there are no restrictions on how you can complete the race.

You can run, walk, hike or snowshoe your way to the virtual finish line.

Registration is \$15 dollars for an individual and \$30 dollars for a family of up to four people.

Snowshoes are available to rent at the WWC on Sundays in February from 1 pm to 4 pm.



Dr. Khaldun talks vaccine in US Congress testimony

On Tuesday, Feb. 2, Dr. Joneigh Khaldun, chief medical executive and chief deputy for health at the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, testified before the House Energy and Commerce Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee about Michigan's COVID-19 vaccination efforts, federal needs and the state's work to expedite the administration of vaccines without compromising equity.

Dr. Khaldun testified alongside physicians and public health experts from Illinois, West Virginia, Louisiana and Colorado as part of a hearing entitled, "No Time to Lose: Solutions to Increase COVID-19 Vaccinations in the States." As of Monday, Feb. 1, Michigan has administered more than 1 million total of first and second doses of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines. Michigan has prioritized operational efficiency and equity in its vaccination efforts and has climbed more than 20 slots in the past few weeks compared to other states as it relates to the proportion of people vaccinated.

"Since the emergence of COVID-19 just over a year ago the world has eagerly awaited a vaccine that could help to end this unprecedented pandemic," Khaldun said. "Now, with two safe and effective vaccines and additional vaccines on the horizon, Michigan is working to distribute the vaccine quickly, efficiently and equitably to residents across the state. Like many other states, Michigan's single biggest challenge with the vaccine rollout has been the limited supply of vaccine available week to week and the lack of a national federal strategy until now. Despite this, Michigan has made significant strides in implementing our vaccination strategy."

Khaldun outlined the ambitious, comprehensive vaccination strategy the state has launched:

70 percent of Michiganders age 16 and up vaccinated as quickly as possible.

90 percent of received vaccines are administered within 7 days.

95 percent of people get their second dose of vaccine within the expected time frame.

No disparity exists in vaccination rates across racial and ethnic groups or by social vulnerability index.

No one has to drive more than 20 minutes to reach a vaccination site.

"COVID-19 has wrought unimaginable death and destruction throughout the world. In the past 12 months, more than 2 million people have died from COVID-19, including more than 14,600 people in Michigan," said Khaldun. "While these vaccines were developed in less than a year, they were built upon decades of scientific research. To develop a vaccine, rigorously test it and bring it to market in less than a year is an incredible feat that should be celebrated. I am proud of the work of our state and local health departments and health care systems who have worked tirelessly to deliver vaccines while also fighting to bring down the curve. We must ensure every person in America that wants a vaccine can quickly and equitably receive one. We can end this pandemic, but it will require cooperation, hard work, transparency and dedication from each and every one of us."

There's no better time to take care of yourself!



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NEWSPAPERS Outperform Cable Television in Michigan

More adults in Michigan read a newspaper than watch news networks* on cable television.¹

Nearly **7 in 10** read the **lowell ledger**

Less than **4 in 10** watch news networks* on cable television.

Newspapers are the most trusted media source.²

Adults, across all generations, identify newspapers as their most trusted source of news and information – well ahead of radio.

65% of U.S. adults say television ads are intrusive, and **42%** feel unfavorably about them³

43.3% Only 43.3% of U.S. adults purchased or sought out information about a product as the result of a television ad⁴

Newspapers are the preferred source of shopping information over television.³

Michigan adults make more purchases as the result of newspaper ads than television ads.³

Cord Cutting is Increasing.

- 25% of all U.S. households have eliminated cable or satellite television services.⁵
- 61% of new cord cutters will be married.⁶
- 56% of new cord cutters still have children under 18 in their home.⁶
- 54% of new cord cutters will have household income over \$75,000.⁶

Top 5 Frustrations Driving Cord Cutting⁶

1. Not getting competitive, reasonable rates/pricing
2. Having to pay for channels/content not watched
3. Being nickel and dimed with multiple fees and charges
4. Can no longer afford paid television/it was too expensive
5. New customers get better deals than existing ones

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Financial Focus

With Christopher C. Godbold
Edward Jones
Serving Individuals Investors Since 1871

Tax-smart investment moves for higher earners

If you earn a lot of money, you may also pay a lot in taxes – a fact that's particularly relevant now, as we are well into tax-filing season. At this point, there's not a lot you can do to affect the outcome for the 2020 tax year, but if you want to change your tax outlook for the years ahead, you can make several moves.

Here are a few "tax-smart" investment strategies to consider:

Put as much as you can into your 401(k).

By contributing pretax dollars to a traditional 401(k), you'll reduce your taxable income, and your earnings can grow tax deferred. If you have a Roth 401(k) option, you'll put in after-tax dollars, but your withdrawals – earnings and contributions – will ultimately be tax-free, as long as you've had your account at least five years and you're older than 59 ½ when you start taking money out. In 2021, you can put up to \$19,500 into your 401(k), or \$26,000 if you're 50 or older. However, depending on your employer's plan, you may also be able to contribute additional after-tax dollars, so check with

your plan administrator about your options.

Review Roth IRA strategies.

As a high earner, you may face limits on what you can contribute to a Roth IRA, which, like a Roth 401(k), offers the potential for tax-free earnings. You lose eligibility to contribute to a Roth IRA if your adjusted gross income equals or exceeds \$140,000 (single filers) or \$208,000 (if you're married and file jointly). Through a "backdoor" Roth IRA conversion, though, you could make after-tax contributions to a traditional IRA and convert it to a Roth. This strategy could be advantageous if you expect your tax rate to be higher when you retire. Consult with your tax advisor to determine if this move is appropriate for your situation.

Look at municipal bonds.

Because interest payments from municipal bonds are typically exempt from federal taxes, and often state and local taxes, too, these bonds can be attractive to investors in the higher tax brackets. Income from some types of municipal bonds may be subject to the alternative minimum

tax (AMT), so, if you end up having to pay this tax, you'll want to be clear about what types of bonds you're purchasing.

Consider investing in tax-efficient mutual funds.

When most mutual fund managers buy and sell the individual investments within their funds, such as stocks and bonds, they are primarily interested in trying to achieve the goal of the fund itself – growth; growth and income; and so on. However, many of their trades have tax consequences. But managers of funds billed as tax-efficient will consciously try to minimize the moves that can generate taxes.

Follow a buy-and-hold strategy.

If you're frequently buying and selling investments, you could incur sizable taxes, especially if you sell investments you've held for less than a year, in which case your profits would be taxed at your ordinary income tax rate. If you sell investments you've held for more than a year, you'll be assessed the long-term capital gains rate, which will likely be lower than your individual tax rate.

Your financial and tax advisors can help you determine if these moves make sense for your needs. If they do, you may want to start incorporating them into your long-term investment strategy.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor.

Edward Jones. Member SIPC.

college news

Emily Johnson of Alto, was among the more than 7,400 undergraduate students at the University of Iowa named to the Dean's List for the 2020 fall semester.

Johnson is a student in the Iowa's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and is majoring in English.

Wheaton College student John Andrulis of Alto, was named to the Dean's List for the fall 2020 semester.

To earn Dean's List honors at Wheaton, an undergraduate student must carry 12 or more credit hours and achieve a 3.5 grade point average or higher on the 4.0 scale.

A total of 13,128 students enrolled during the fall 2020 term at The University of Alabama made the Dean's List with academic records of 3.5 or

above (on a 4.0 scale), or the President's List with academic records of 4.0 (all A's).

The UA Dean's and President's Lists recognize full-time undergraduate students. The lists do not apply to graduate students or undergraduate students who take less than a full course load.

Justin Heaton and Oliver Winger, both of Alto were named to the Deans List.

Grand Valley State University announces the names of our most recent graduates who have completed the requirements to receive their degrees this past December.

Students who graduated at the conclusion of the fall semester ending in December include:

Ada: Mikelis A. Butlevics, Bachelor of Business Administration;

Robert D. Heyboer, Bachelor of Business Administration; Fischer S. Holt, Bachelor of Business Administration; Brandon T. Kue, Bachelor of Business Administration; Daniel A. Newell, Master of Science; Courtney M. Platt, Bachelor of Science; Thompson H. Southwell, Bachelor of Science; Sofia Uribe, Master of Business Administration; Isabel K. Walker, Bachelor of Science.

Alto: Megan N. Latreille, Bachelor of Science in Nursing; Jaclyn A. Meeuwenberg, Bachelor of Business Administration; Brandon M. Rider, Bachelor of Business Administration; Jacqueline R. Schmeihil, Bachelor of Science; Mary Frances Snyder, Bachelor of Business Administration; Spencer A. Thomet, Bachelor of Science; Kelsey L. Wilson, Bachelor of Science.

Lowell: Robert A. Dubisky, Bachelor of Science; Madison O.

College News continued, page 6

viewpoint



125 years ago Lowell Ledger February 14, 1896

The office of 'Squire Hicks was packed with an eager crowd yesterday drinking in the case of The People vs. John Bozung, in which the defendant is charged with the abduction of the little daughter of Theodore N. Hines. It seems that Mr. Hines and his wife who lived in Keene township, near Fallasburg, parted on January 15, and it is intimated that John Bozung was the cause of the separation. The mother took the little son and the seven-year-old daughter remained with the father.

Attorney E. O. Mains and Constable D. LeClear, both of Lowell, have been arraigned before an Ionia justice on a warrant sworn out by Wm. Cheetham, of Boston, Ionia county, who charges them with obtaining \$300 by threats of criminal prosecution. Cheetham claims they bled him on a threat that he had insulted his hired man's wife and the attorney wanted \$600 at first, but when \$300 was offered it was accepted. He also claims that the woman only got \$25, and the lawyer and constable the balance, while the constable claims he had nothing to do with the money.

Merrit E. Barden, who lives in the vicinity of Alto, hitched a half-starved rack-a-bones of a horse in town Tuesday night and left it there until observers were shocked into complaining to Marshal Edmonds, and Humane Agent Pickard had the animal cared for. When Barden missed his rig, he smelled a mice and went home "afoot." "Pick" went out the next day "picked" Barden and brought him to town.

100 years ago The Lowell Ledger February 17, 1921

From the number of Woman electors who have registers in the Village, I am of the opinion that some are misinformed as to what constitutes registration in the Village. Every voter, male or female, must register in the Village election unless previously registered and registration in the Township will not be sufficient. Therefore, every elector of the Village of Lowell, not already registered in the Village, should read the regular registration notice found elsewhere in this paper.

The great Lincoln club audience was so pleasant with Herbert Hoover, we hope its members will drive from the Republican party the bosses who object

to having that great and worthy public servant in Harding's cabinet.

The latest thing in the hold-up line took place here Saturday morning when two masked dwarfs held up William Gregory, well-known farmer, and relieved him of a portion of the beef he was taking to market. They told Bill they wouldn't take it all, as they only wanted enough for their dinner. Bill didn't have any come-back, as he usually has, so while one of the masked dwarfs held him at bay, the other one with a big knife cut off the desired amount of beef and told Bill to make himself scarce.

75 years The Lowell Ledger February 14, 1946

Lowell's first British war bride arrived here Tuesday afternoon. She was the former Miss Hildu Datey of Northampton, England and was married to Harley T. Balcom January 1, 1943. Their son, Carl, a year and a half old, is with his mother. Mr. Balcom, who last saw his bride July 1, 1945, is the son of Mrs. Anna McCaul of Lowell R. 3. A radio operator with the army for three years in Europe, Balcom is now employed in Temple, Mich. and was here to greet his wife and son on their arrival.

If you asked the fireman to name some serious fire hazards, they would probably speak of large accumulations of inflammable rubbish. Let us all help prevent fires by keeping these heaps well cleaned up.

Hullie Miller, Jr., eight years old, suffered cuts about his face late Saturday afternoon, Deputy Frank Stephens stated, when a truck driven by his father, Hullie Miller, Sr., 48, was struck by a freight train at the Pere Marquette crossing on South Hudson street. The truck was damaged to the extent of about \$150. The driver was not hurt.

50 years The Lowell Ledger February 18, 1971

A much more restrictive Mobile Home Park Ordinance was passed by the Lowell City Council Monday night. The New ordinance replaces a section in the City's original Zoning Ordinance. In the newly revised ordinance, the size of the lots was increased, minimum size of a park was set at five acres, and the control of maintenance and operation of the park to protect the city was strengthened.

An Alto area woman, Mrs. Reta Cooper, met accidental death in an automobile accident in Florida last Thursday, February 11; which left her husband, Reed, Hospitalized with serious injuries. Vacationing in Florida, the Coopers were involved in a massive car pile-up which fatally injured the 65-year-old woman.

Tom Bellows was at Monday night's Council meeting and presented a petition from over 200 area citizens asking for the establishment of a low cost Senior Citizens' Housing Project in Lowell. To expedite the project, City Manager Blaine Bacon had already contacted the City's attorney for the necessary ordinance requirements.


25 years The Lowell Ledger February 14, 1996

Winter's bitter cold and wind followed by warming temperatures and melting snow created district-wide

crisis for Lowell Schools. The most severe crisis that rained on the district was at Cherry Creek Elementary. It required the emergency work of National Roofing & Sheet Metal Company out of Burton.

Calling it a "necessary evil in this day and age," the Lowell Charter Township Board will review the need to update its telephone system to include voice mail. "I hate to talk to those things, but it's time we looked into them," said township supervisor John Timpson, in reference to voice mail phones.

Defense attorney James Dimitriou's motion to have his client's sentence reduced by a quarter was denied by Kent County Circuit Court Judge Robert A Benson. In June 1995, Terry Jean Kinsley was sentenced to 10 months of jail time, after she was found guilty of bilking the Lowell School District out of \$3.786 through falsifying time slips.



The oldest county (based on date of incorporation) is Wayne in 1815.

The Detroit Zoo was the first zoo in America to feature cageless, open-exhibits that allowed the animals more freedom to roam

Sault Ste. Marie was founded by Father Jacques Marquette in 1668. It is the third oldest remaining settlement in the United States.

In 1817 the University of Michigan was the first university established by any of the states. Originally named Catholepistemiun and located in Detroit the name was changed in 1821. The university moved to Ann Arbor in 1841.

The Kellogg Company has made Battle Creek the Cereal Capital of the World. The Kellogg brothers accidentally discovered the process for producing flaked cereal products and sparked the beginning of the dry cereal industry.

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.

HEALTH

M METRO HEALTH

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN HEALTH

Johnathan G. Meier, D.O. Laura E. Kass, PA-C
 Wayne A. Christenson, D.O. Kaili M. Walker, PA-C
 Tracy L. Lixie, D.O. Alexandria Clum, PA-C
 Catherine S. Smith, NP-C

ABCs of Lowell History

The ABC's of Lowell History was introduced last year as a way to share some of the many fascinating stories from Lowell's past. It was initiated in part by the pandemic shutdown which led the Museum to seek alternative ways to share local history with the community. The series will continue with a second round of the alphabet.

roller coasters, and derby racing area. A miniature railway and locomotive built to scale was added in 1937. The miniature locomotive and its open cars carried people around on its one-half mile track in the park. It could carry 30 people at a time. During its heyday, it carried as many as 50,000 people each year. In 1954, the citizens of East

steam engine pulled open cars carrying guests around a circular track. The rails were spaced 15" apart. They circled through our Park's beautiful woodland and back to the Lowell Railway station located where the parking lot is today. The train was very realistic in its operation. You paid your fare and the conductor took your ticket

in Howard City where they remain today. It is operated during their flea market days. Today, the locomotive and its setup is the only surviving amusement/concession of the original Ramona Park. Its Statistics are: NO. 5002, Class 4-6-4, Gauge 15", Builder-Wagner & Sons Miniature Train Co., Operational, Used in



- perioral dermatitis

Perioral dermatitis is a rash that appears on the face, typically around the mouth, nose and eyes and presents as multiple tiny red bumps. It can be associated with itching or burning in the affected areas. Due to its appearance, perioral dermatitis is often mistaken for acne. This can occur in individuals of all races, ethnicities, and age groups. However, it has been shown to occur more commonly in women between the ages of 16-45. The cause of perioral dermatitis is not well known.

Correlations have been identified with the misuse of topical steroids, changes of skin care products and make-up, mouthwashes, and toothpaste. Treatment typically involves stopping use of the offending product and avoiding further use of topical products that may cause the rash to worsen. Treatment may also include prescription topical and oral medications. If you have questions or concerns regarding perioral dermatitis consult your health care provider to discuss treatment.

college news

- Continued from page 4

Hacker, Bachelor of Science; Jordan E. Phillips, Bachelor of Science; Kelly L. VanderZiel, Bachelor of Science; Allison K. Youngs, Bachelor of Business Administration. Northeastern University is pleased to recognize those students who distinguish themselves academically during the course of the school year. Ada resident Alexander Jarecki, a Northeastern University student majoring in biology/political science,

was recently named to the university's Dean's List for the fall semester, which ended in December 2020. To achieve the Dean's List distinction, students must carry a full program of at least four courses, have a quality point average of 3.5 or greater out of a possible 4.0 and carry no single grade lower than a C- during the course of their college career. Each student receives a letter of commendation and congratulation from their college dean.

R is for Ramona Railway

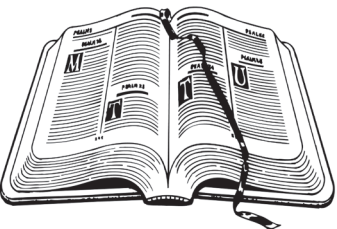
What does the Ramona Railway have to do with Lowell? The railway was originally located at Ramona Amusement Park on Reed's Lake in East Grand Rapids, Michigan. This was a vacation destination and getaway for Grand Rapidsians beginning with steamboat rides in the 1850s. The venue grew to include pavilions, theatre, athletic building, club house, swimming school, playground, merri-go-round,

Grand Rapids voted to close Ramona Park and raze it in favor of retail stores and residential apartments. In 1955, Harry D. Glidden, owner of the little locomotive, purchased the land that is now Lowell Township's North Riverfront Park, and moved his train operation to Lowell. Later, the Ilin Graves family operated the train while Ed Bytwerk continued to maintain the locomotive. The Lowell Railway operated here in Lowell from 1957 into the 1980s. The miniature made-to-scale

before the engineer departed the station. After the fun of the train, there was the Kwi - Kee Dip drive-in opposite the Lowell Railway. They advertised "hamburgs, floats, sundaes, shakes and malts"! After the closure of the Lowell Railway, Keith Buck purchased the land and train setup but never operated the train ride. In 1998, the locomotive, including the train track, switches, train station, water tower, round table, and crossing signs were sold and moved to Burley Park

East Grand Rapids, Lowell, Howard City. North Riverfront Park in Lowell Township has brought back memories of the Lowell Railway. There is playground equipment in the shape of a train, and the raised bed which used to hold the train's track is now a walking trail in the park. The Lowell Area Historical Museum in cooperation with Lowell Township has placed an historical marker along the trail denoting the location of the tracks that were once here.

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

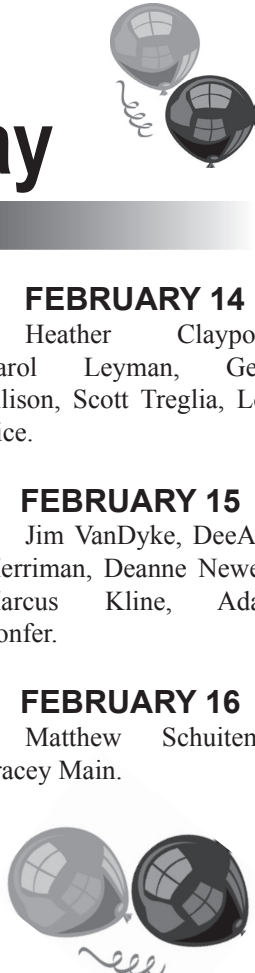
St. Mary Catholic Church
 402 Amity Street • 616-897-9820
 Website: www.stmarylowell.com
 Weekend Masses: Sat 5 pm; Sun 10:30 am
 Confession: Saturdays 3-4:30 pm
 Prayer & Adoration: Wednesdays 8 am to 7 pm
 RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN TO ADULTS

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 Bolcom • 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
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 897-5938
www.lowellumc.com • Barrier Free Entrance
 WORSHIP
 Traditional Service: 9 am
 Contemporary Service: 10:30 am
 Sr. Pastor - Brad Brillhart

happy birthday

- FEBRUARY 10**
Richard Korb, Eric Kimble.
- FEBRUARY 11**
Julie Kenney, Judy Goodwin.
- FEBRUARY 12**
Peg Stanford, Kurt Roudabush, Travis Bergy, Jan Herb, Penny Spanbauer.
- FEBRUARY 13**
Deb Heydenburg, Emily Gerard, Jodi Kennedy, Alyssa Ellis-Roach, Thomas Alberts Jr.
- FEBRUARY 14**
Heather Claypool, Carol Leyman, Gerri Ellison, Scott Treglia, Lori Rice.
- FEBRUARY 15**
Jim VanDyke, DeeAnn Merriman, Deanne Newell, Marcus Kline, Adam Confer.
- FEBRUARY 16**
Matthew Schuitema, Tracey Main.



Whitmer awaiting full COVID plan from lawmakers

The House passed a \$3.5 billion COVID response plan made up of mostly federal dollars, but Gov. Gretchen Whitmer is looking for a “full plan” that uses the rest of the \$2.5 billion the federal government has set aside to Michigan for the recovery.

Whitmer spokesperson Bobby Leddy said the governor’s office can’t speculate what a final relief package would look like, but if the House continues to hold back the federal money, “it could have real consequences.”

“Fewer schools open safely. Fewer people of color getting vaccinated. More people being evicted or losing food assistance, which would mean a slower return to normal,” Leddy said.

Outside of the additional federal funding Whitmer says is being left on the table, the House Republicans are putting \$363 million of state money on the table for districts that go entirely to in-person instruction by Feb. 15.

The four-bill package passed mostly along party lines:

- Sets aside \$1.49 billion for mostly poorer Title 1 schools that are in need of better ventilation and technology upgrades due to COVID-19.

- Creates a \$415 million grant program for restaurants and other small businesses negatively impacted by the governor’s orders designed to limit COVID-19 spread.

- Put \$510 million into the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

- Creates a \$125 million summer school program for

K-8 students who fell behind due to school being shut down.

- \$144 million for COVID testing and \$22 million for vaccine distribution.

“This recovery plan must be done now, and it must be done right, because this is the most important issue currently facing Michigan,” said House Appropriations Committee Chair Tom Albert (R-Lowell). “House Republicans are taking decisive action to get kids back in school, help struggling families and job providers and get the vaccine distributed quickly and efficiently.”

“This is the best plan out there to help our state bounce back from COVID-19, and it provides accountability on what is spent in response to the administration’s past mismanagement of funds,” Albert said.

While the governor moved to resume contact sports in public high schools, lawmakers voted to amend supplementals pending before the House Thursday to allow COVID testing money to be used so students can participate in sports.

The amendment, offered by Rep. Mark Huizenga (R-Walker), did not specify an amount, other than to say “not less than \$100.” It allows for COVID epidemiology and laboratory capacity to provide testing for sporting events. The amendment includes testing for high school practices and collegiate events.

Lawmakers approved the amendment in a voice vote before approving HB 4019 in a 59-50 nearly party-line vote. Rep. Sara Cambensy

(D-Marquette) and Rep. Karen Whitsett (D-Detroit) joined Republicans in support. Only Rep. Steve Carra (R-Three Rivers) joined Democrats in opposition.

HB 4048 sends \$2.14 billion to schools for COVID funding, which includes mostly federal money, but also includes \$363 million in state dollars.

Bill sponsor Rep. Brad Paquette (R-Niles) said the bill addresses concerns raised by constituents.

“These constituents of ours cannot hire special interests like those that may frantically oppose this important funding that goes directly to what our taxpayers want, and that is getting our kids back in school and sports. There are no pet projects, there is no pork spending, there is just support for the noble goal of answering the call from our parents and kids,” Paquette said.

House members also voted, in nearly party-line fashion, 58-50 to support HB 4019. The bill puts \$868.6 million in federal COVID-19 relief funding authorized through the federal Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act in an effort to support economic recovery.

But members also rejected a long series of amendments from Democrats to increase the COVID relief spending. Dems contend Republicans are allocating just a quarter of the federal funding already available and allocated by the feds for COVID relief.

Rep. Samantha Steckloff (D-Farmington Hills) offered an amendment to

increase the allocation for food assistance from \$510 million to \$2.1 billion.

“This money has already been allocated to us by the federal government back in December,” Steckloff said. “Why are we not giving this? This is affecting your local communities. Every time we had to step in and give food assistance to another organization, that means we are taking money away from our police and fire that has spent the past year in the most awful conditions imaginable. Can you imagine going home

to home and just picking up dead bodies? Talking to your ice rink to use that as a storage. This will continue if we do not allocate these funds, so I ask you to please, please release the funds the federal government has already given us so that our communities, our next-door neighbors, our families down the street can get the assistance.”

House members voted 59-49 to approve HB 4047, which would appropriate \$565.5 million to support economic recovery for businesses hit hardest by

the pandemic, including entertainment venues, exercise facilities, food service establishments, recreation facilities and places of public amusement.

The House also voted 56-52 to pass HB 4049. The bill would block the director of the Department of Health and Human Services from issuing emergency public health orders that close schools to in-person instruction or prohibit a sporting event during an epidemic. The decision would be left to local health departments.

2021 MARCH BOARD OF REVIEW MEETING SCHEDULE City of Lowell, Kent County

The City of Lowell Board of Review for March 2021 will be held by **electronic remote access**, unless by the dates of the March Board of Review meetings it becomes lawful under State agency rules and statute for an in-person meeting to be held. Electronic remote access, in accordance with Public Act 254 of 2020, will be implemented in response to COVID-19 social distancing requirements and limitations on the number of individuals in a meeting hall.

If in-person meetings become a lawful option, then the meeting will be held **both** in person at the Lowell City Hall, 301 E Main St SE, Lowell MI 49331 **and** via **electronic remote access**.

The City will post the information confirming whether the March BOR will meet in person on its notice board at City Hall and the City’s website: <http://www.lowellmi.gov>

The public may participate in the meeting through **electronic remote access** via Zoom access by computer, smart phone/device using the following link:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9806911106>
Meeting ID: 980 691 1106

The public may also participate by landline phone or cell phone by calling into this phone number: 312-626-6799

The City of Lowell March Board of Review will meet on the following dates: (as required by MCL 211.30.)

- Tuesday, March 2, 2021, 11:00am **Organizational Meeting**
- Wednesday, March 10, 2021, = **Appeal Hearing**
 - o 3:00pm – 9:00pm
- Thursday, March 11, 2021, = **Appeal Hearing**
 - o 10:00am – 4:00pm

The Board of Review will meet as many more days as deemed necessary to hear questions, protests, and to equalize the 2021 assessments. By City Charter, taxpayers are able to protest by letter, sent to: **City Assessor, 301 E Main St SE, Lowell MI 49331**, provided protest is received prior to March 5, 2021.

The tentative ratios and the estimated multipliers for each class of real property and personal property for 2021 are as follows:

Commercial.....	45.58%.....	1.0969
Residential	46.01%.....	1.0867
Industrial	48.70%.....	1.0266
Personal Property	50.00%.....	1.0000

APPOINTMENTS ARE REQUIRED FOR APPEAL HEARINGS

To make an appointment call 616.897.8457. You must also email documentation to bor@ci.lowell.mi.us to support your valuation estimate prior to your appointment.

Americans with Disabilities (ADA) Notice

The City will provide necessary reasonable services to individuals with disabilities at the Board of Review meetings upon 3 days’ notice.

Contact: *Michael Burns – City Manager ph. 616.897.8457*



Today: Wednesday, Feb. 10, 2021

Wednesday, Feb. 10 is the 41st day of the year. There are 324 days remaining until the end of the year and 38 days until spring.

Historic Events

1258: Baghdad falls to the Mongols, ending the Islamic Golden Age.

1306: In front of the high altar of Greyfriars Church in Dumfries, Robert the Bruce murders John Comyn, sparking a revolution and the Wars of Scottish Independence.

1502: Vasco da Gama sets sail from Lisbon, Portugal, on his second voyage to India.

1763: The Treaty of Paris ends the French and Indian War. France cedes Quebec to Great Britain.

1840: UK Queen Victoria marries Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha.

1861: Jefferson Davis is notified by telegraph that he has been chosen as President of the Confederate States of America.

1862: A Union naval flotilla destroys most of the Confederate “Mosquito

Fleet” during a battle on the Pasquotank River in Elizabeth City, NC.

1923: Texas Tech University in Lubbock is founded as Texas

Technological College.

1947: The Paris Peace Treaties are signed by Italy, Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria, Finland and the Allies of World War II.

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Not good w/any other offer! Good on initial presentation

Showboat construction update; Wolverine helping raise \$10,000 for project

by Tim McAllister
lead reporter

Last week, the Showboat's contractor, Wolverine Building Group, announced a new "matching donations" program to benefit the Showboat project.

Wolverine will match the first \$5,000 worth of donations made during February, doubling them to \$10,000.

"This is a tremendous amount of money that will go a long way towards bringing the sixth rendition of the iconic vessel to life," said Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce executive director Liz Baker in a press release. "As our community reflects on activities, events and projects that have had to be adjusted, canceled or revised, these ill-fated happenings are offset by a rising star: the delivery and continued construction of our new Lowell Showboat VI. It is a notable and visual reminder that provides a glimpse of anticipation and excitement, its presence is an icon allowing us to gaze into a brighter future for the greater Lowell area and its residents."

"We always support projects that we work on that are non-profit/community based, because it aligns with our company's purpose to positively impact people and communities," said Kim McLaughlin, Wolverine's vice president of organizational development and engagement. "In 2018, our owners Curt Mulder and Aaron Jonker started the Wolverine Impact Fund.

This fund helps support the communities in which our team works and lives in multiple ways: financially supporting organizations, matching employee donations and volunteering/service projects. Not only are we supporting the Lowell Showboat with this matching challenge, but we have quite a few of our team members that live in Lowell, including one of our owners, and some have already made donations to the campaign that we have matched through our employee donation matching program."

Meanwhile, construction is on schedule to be completed in a few weeks.

"I'm pretty confident that we'll be 99 percent done by the end of March," said Jim Chambers, project manager for Wolverine. "It's gone pretty smooth with what we've had to overcome. With COVID and everything, getting materials delivered has been a challenge. We are still waiting on some special-order ceiling grid for the upper level to show up, and that's not coming until like the third week of March. We would have had it done sooner had that ceiling grid not gotten pushed out further. We have these decorative metal ceiling tiles going up there and, for whatever reason, the manufacturer just keeps pushing the date out on us. It's not a standard item, so we can't just go to a different supplier and get it, this is the only place we could get it from. As soon as that comes in, I'd say

in about a week and a half we'll have it all buttoned up. There are also some little things that we'll need to do once it starts to warm up in the spring, some exterior painting and stuff like that."

Because it's simultaneously a stationary building and a floating barge, the biggest challenge during construction has simply been keeping the work environment level. Chambers said that one big leveling challenge involved installing the elevators.

"It's a boat floating in water, so absolutely nothing is level or plumb in there," Chambers said. "That was an ongoing, daily, hourly challenge. You really couldn't plumb off of anything because nothing was straight, but the crews we've got out there are on top of it and it's turned out beautiful. We've never finished a boat before. This is something different! They just had to use their minds, be creative and figure out how to make it all work."

Chambers said that constant communication between all of the involved parties has been the key to the project's success.

"Working with the city and the Showboat Committee has been fun," Chambers said. "There's been a lot of communication and a lot of camaraderie. We have a meeting every Monday and we all talk. In fact, the architect meets us out there every Monday as well, because we're constantly running into new issues."



Photos provided by Wolverine Building Group



The custom staircase connecting the first and second floors still needs to be trimmed out. This will be the final task when Wolverine completes the interior of the Showboat.



Brand new "tongue and groove" ceilings in the wheelhouse.



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Buyer's Guide and News

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\$741 million worth of pandemic food assistance approved, will help 810,000 Michigan children

Approximately 810,000 Michigan children whose access to nutritious school meals has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic will receive \$741.6 million in assistance benefits that their families can use to pay for food at stores or online.

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services have announced that the state has gained federal approval for a second round of Pandemic-EBT benefits.

“The last thing that families should have to worry about during a pandemic is feeding their children,” Gov. Whitmer said. “I am happy that Michigan families will be able to

count on this additional support to help them access nutritious meals during the ongoing pandemic. That’s why it’s so important that the legislature passes the COVID recovery plan I put forward that provides an additional \$2.1 billion in food assistance as well as the much-needed support for vaccine distribution, small businesses, and getting our kids back in the classroom safely.”

Students in grades pre-kindergarten through 12 are eligible if they qualify for free or reduced-price lunches at school and in-person learning is not available at their school or is not available on a full-time basis. Pandemic-EBT

will provide another way for students who do not have in-person classes to access food – along with Michigan Department of Education programs that provide meals to students at mobile and stationary locations.

Families will receive an estimated \$127.53 monthly for each eligible child who has no in-person classes and attends a school that is fully virtual and about \$77.06 for each eligible child who attends a school with a hybrid schedule of in-person and remote learning. Monthly benefits will vary based on the number of school days in each month.

Benefits are retroactive to September and will be paid through June. Payments will

be paid automatically, so families do not need to apply to receive the assistance. Households that already receive food assistance will receive the Pandemic-EBT payments on their Bridge Cards. Families that do not already receive food assistance will receive Pandemic-EBT cards in the mail that they can use to purchase food.

Payments are expected to begin in late March. MDHHS is working in partnership with the MDE to collect information from local school districts that’s needed to issue the benefits.

Last school year, Michigan was the first state in the nation to gain approval of and distribute Pandemic-EBT benefits. New federal rules for approval of Round 2 funding for this school year delayed Michigan’s approval. President Joe Biden’s administration provided increased flexibility that allowed Michigan to be approved.

“Throughout the pandemic, MDHHS has been committed to providing easy access to food to families

who have been impacted by the pandemic,” said MDHHS Director Elizabeth Hertel. “Approval of the second round of Pandemic-EBT payments is the latest example of how we can work with our federal partners to ease the burden on families who are in need.”

The food assistance benefits will go to Michigan families with students ages 5-18 who are enrolled in the MDE program for students eligible for free or reduced-price school meals.

“With waivers from USDA initiated by MDE, school districts across the state have distributed tens of millions of meals to children in approximately 2,000 mobile and stationary feeding operations since the pandemic began. Children need to be healthy and fed to be able to focus on learning,” said State Superintendent Dr. Michael Rice. “The P-EBT program supplements these school meals and helps enormously to feed our children across the state during this difficult time.”

The food assistance benefits will go to Michigan

families with students ages 5-18 who are enrolled in the MDE program for students eligible for free or reduced-price school meals.

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services received authorization from the US Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Services to provide the additional food assistance.

Prior to receiving their EBT card, families will receive a letter from MDHHS describing how to use the card, how to set up a PIN and other information about food assistance benefits. The cards can be used much like a debit card for food purchased from Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program retailers.

You can find a list of SNAP retailers on the SNAP Retailers website. They also can use their benefits online to purchase food from Amazon, Walmart or Aldi.

Information around coronavirus outbreak is changing rapidly. The latest information is available at Michigan.gov/Coronavirus and CDC.gov/Coronavirus.

SPLC: 25 hate groups active in Michigan; 11% decline nationwide

In a year when recent headlines arguably show extremism becoming mainstream, a civil rights advocacy group’s annual report labeled 25 Michigan organizations as active hate groups in the state, down two from the prior year.

Researchers from the Southern Poverty Law Center say nationwide there is an 11 percent decline from the prior year, which they attribute to far-right extremists migrating to encrypted online networks -- making tracking them more difficult -- and some groups suspending in-person activity due to COVID-19 restrictions.

However, the levels of hate and bigotry in America haven’t diminished, the SPLC said.

“The insurrection at the Capitol was the culmination of years of right-wing radicalization,” Susan Corke, director of the SPLC’s Intelligence Project, said. “Most recently it was the product of Donald Trump’s support for and encouragement of radicalized individuals and groups to buy into conspiracy theories about a ‘stolen election.’ Trump may no longer be in the White House, but the white nationalist and extremist movement he emboldened and incited to violence is not going anywhere and may grow more dangerous to our country.”

The SPLC identified 838 active hate groups operating across the country in 2020, a decrease from the 940 documented in 2019 and the record-high 1,020 in 2018.

The list of hate groups in

Michigan consists primarily of neo-Nazi and white nationalist organizations as well as some labeled as “general hate,” such as Proud Boys in Lansing.

Pro-Trump supporters, reportedly instigated by members of groups like the Proud Boys, stormed the US Capitol on Jan. 6 as Congress worked to certify President Joe Biden’s election win.

The insurrection ended with five people dead, including a Capitol police officer, and led to charges against more than 100 people spread throughout the country, including two from Michigan.

In Michigan, a “blending of groups,” hate groups with anti-government groups like QAnon and the Boogaloo movement, has “kicked up steam,” and helped spur events like the plot to kidnap Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, an analyst with the SPLC intelligence report said.

Members of the militia group Wolverine Watchmen are among the 14 men charged in state and federal courts with plotting to kidnap Whitmer or for supporting that terroristic plot.

The SPLC analyst said the Wolverine Watchmen will be on the SPLC’s upcoming anti-government watch list.

The SPLC analyst said Michigan is “very high” on the group’s watch group for violence and suggested in the coming year that Michigan be aware of the Boogaloo movement because there are members here and the Constitutional Sheriffs advocates, who believe they have the highest authority in the land.

Among the groups making SPLC’s Michigan hate groups list were the Social Contract Press in Petoskey, Christ the King Reformed Church in Charlotte, and American Freedom Law Center in Ann Arbor. The majority of the groups are located in the Detroit area, including House of Israel, Mass Resistance, and Nation of Islam.

The SPLC defines a hate group as an organization or collection of individuals whose beliefs or practices malign an entire class of people, according to its website. The organization differentiates hate groups from anti-government groups, such as the militia. The former vilifies others “because of their race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation or gender identity” while the latter is focused on dismantling federal institutions.

BOWNE TOWNSHIP NOTICE

BOARD OF REVIEW MEETING SCHEDULE 2021

The Board of Review of Bowne Township will meet in the Township Office Building located at 8240 Alden Nash SE., Alto, MI on:

FRIDAY, MARCH 5, 2021 1:00 p.m.
ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

MONDAY, MARCH 8, 2021
9:00 A.M. TO 12 NOON
& 1:00 P.M. TO 4:00 P.M.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 10, 2021
1:00 P.M. TO 4:00 P.M.
& 6:00 P.M. TO 9:00 P.M.

(EVENING hours are by appointment only)

DUE TO CORONAVIROUS CONCERNS THE BOWNE TOWNSHIP MARCH 2021 BOARD OF REVIEW IS OFFERING THE OPPORTUNITY FOR PROPERTY OWNERS TO APPEAL THEIR 2021 ASSESSMENT/TAXABLE VALUE BY SCHEDULING A ZOOM APPOINTMENT WITH THE TOWNSHIP CLERK. ALL APPOINTMENT REQUESTS MUST BE SUBMITTED TO THE TOWNSHIP CLERK AT 616-868-6846 PRIOR TO 3:00 P.M. MARCH 4, 2021. IN LIEU OF A ZOOM APPOINTMENT, IT IS HIGHLY RECOMMENDED APPEALS BE SUBMITTED BY MAIL. SOCIAL DISTANCING AND MASKS WILL BE REQUIRED TO MEET IN PERSON.

THE TENTATIVE REAL PROPERTY ASSESSMENT AND ASSESSMENT MULTIPLIER REQUIRED BY PA 165 OF 1971 ARE:

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Live the Life You Want

Signs of Gaslighting in a relationship

Melissa Spino MA LPC CDMS
Life Transitions Therapy LLC

You have probably heard the term gaslighting and may have even heard examples of what it means. According to Urban Dictionary gaslighting is “a form of intimidation or psychological abuse, where false information is presented to the victim, making them doubt their own memory, perception and quite often, their sanity.” The victim of gaslighting may feel anxious, confused, and doesn’t trust their own thoughts, memories, and feelings.

This term came from a 1938 play which was made into the 1944 film “Gaslight”. It was about a husband who manipulates his wife into believing that she is losing her sanity so he can steal her wealth. Part of how he does this is by making the gas lights flicker and convincing her she is imagining it. So, the term gaslighting was adopted for this form of abuse.

Gaslighting doesn’t just happen in romantic relationships and anyone

can fall victim. It can happen in the work environment, between siblings, or even in a parent-child relationship. It is often used by abusers, narcissists, cults, and dictators. This first article will share warning signs and examples. The next article will share ways to end this cycle of abuse.

Warning Signs & Examples

Gaslighting can be very effective tool for the abuser to control an individual. It’s done slowly so the victim writes off the event as a one off or oddity and doesn’t realize they are being controlled and manipulated. So, it’s important to be aware of how this happens and the techniques an abuser uses so you can avoid this happening to you.

They tell blatant lies

You know it’s a lie. So why do they say it? Because they are laying the framework. For instance, your partner gives you flowers, let’s say tulips. He says he knows they are your favorite. Yet you know this is not true because orchids

are your favorite flower. He insists that you have told him numerous times that tulips are your favorite when in truth you have never said this. When this type of lie is repeated convincingly over time it will have you start to question your memory and reality. It keeps you unbalanced which is the goal.

They project their emotions or behaviors on to you

This happens when the abuser shifts responsibility and blame from them to you. For instance, they constantly accuse you of lying or cheating when they are the one that is lying or cheating. You then defend yourself which distracts you from their lying or cheating.

They deny, even with proof

The abuser denies saying or doing something even though you have proof. For example, you ask your spouse to make a pot of coffee and they agree leaving as if to go and do it. You go to get coffee and see they did not do it so you

make a pot. You ask your spouse why they didn’t make coffee and they say they did. You say no, I did it. Yet, your spouse insists they made the pot of coffee, not you, and that you are confused. As this slowly happens time and time again, you begin to question your reality and accept what they are saying.

They confuse you and gradually wear you down

Over time the abuser’s gradual lies, nasty comments, denials, projections, and other manipulative behavior wear you down and affect your perception of reality. They want you to doubt and question yourself. They know that confusion will weaken you. They want you to feel vulnerable so that you seek their support becoming more and more under their control.

Positive reinforcement is shown to confuse you

So, while they are lying to you, making nasty hurtful comments, projecting their behavior and emotions on to you, and personally attacking you they also at times throw in praise. The purpose of this positive reinforcement is to keep you off balance and further support that maybe it isn’t them. Maybe it is you. They complement and praise you and then cut you down when you start to feel good about yourself. This is another form of manipulation and control. A good indicator that this is gaslighting is that the positive reinforcement or praise is for something that you did to serve them.

They use the people and things you love against you

This type of manipulation and control is sadly effective. They will try to warp the way you feel about the people or things you love. They do this to try and remove people or things that will distract you from being dependent on them or stop you from giving them your full attention.



Melissa Spino
MA LPC CDMS

For instance, you are close with your sister. So, your partner tries to poison that relationship with lies. Maybe your partner tells you a lie that your sister said something terrible about you. When you ask your sister why she said that to your partner she claims she didn’t. Your partner will use this denial as proof that they are a liar and can’t be trusted. Eventually, you may come to believe your partner. This isolates you from other influences and makes you more dependent on your partner. They want you to believe that everyone else is lying so you are dependent on them for “truthful” information. Yet they will typically tell you anything but the truth.

Their words and actions don’t match

One of the things I often say to my clients is “if someone treats you like they don’t care, believe them.” Look at what the person is doing instead of what they are saying. Talk is cheap and what they say could easily be a lie. Words mean nothing if their actions don’t match. Gaslighting works because more importance is put on their words and not their actions-behaviors. They are very good at using their words to distract you from their actions. Like a magician, they want your focus on their words to distract you from their actions-behaviors. Think about how often this

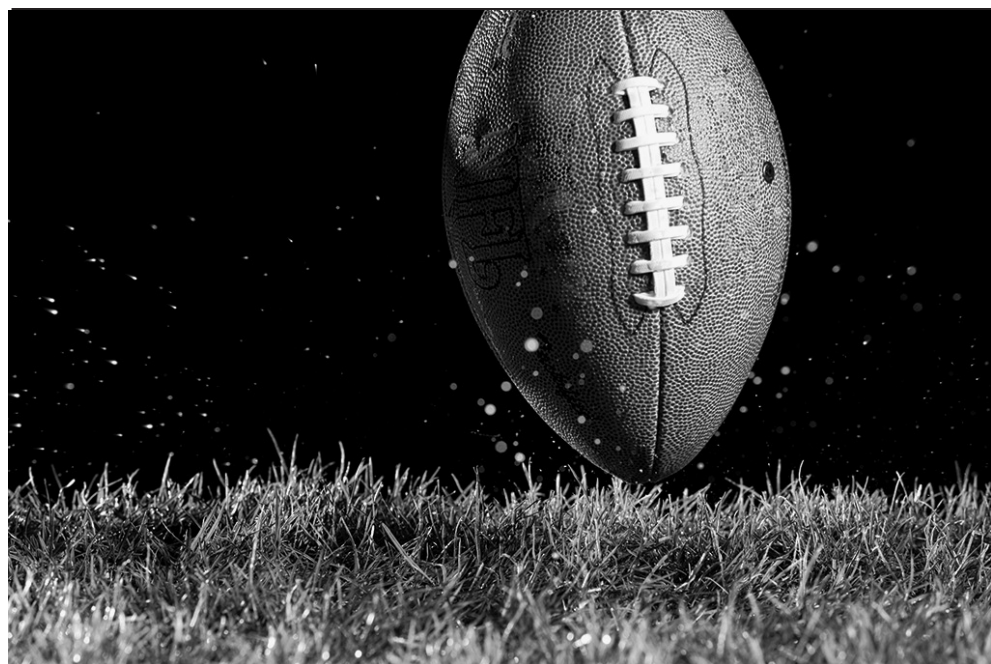
happens with political leaders. They promise one thing and then when voted in they vote for legislation that is the opposite of what they promised in their campaign.

They try to turn others against you

They want to isolate you from others to gain more control over you. To have you dependent on them. They start planting seeds in others by telling them stories about things you did or said that seem odd, unhealthy, or to show how you are confused, unstable, and that there is something wrong with you. This is not only to isolate you but also so that if you try and turn to others, they won’t believe you if you say that the gaslighter is being abusive. At the same time, the abuser is making comments to you such as “your sister knows there is something wrong with you” or “she knows you are a liar” or “they agree you are worthless”. It doesn’t mean this is true because the abuser rarely tells the truth. They want you to doubt that you can trust or turn to this person for help. They want you isolated and dependent on them.

There are many other examples of gaslighting but these are the ones most often seen in this type of relationship. Individuals victimized by this type of abuser may need to seek out professional help to undo all the damage done by a gaslighter.

I hope you find this information helpful but it is not intended to diagnose or treat. Look for my next article that will share ways to end this cycle of abuse.



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SPORTS

Ski Team celebrates senior night at Cannonsburg

by Justin Scott
contributing reporter

While the COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on most high school sports, perhaps the one that has been least affected is ski - not to say that it has been unaffected. Thanks to its outdoor nature however, social distancing is much easier to accomplish than with an indoor event.

The group of parents and spectators in attendance, was small and in face coverings, were able to celebrate senior night along with the Lowell Ski team last Wednesday. The rare

sunny day this winter made it a perfect afternoon on the slopes of Cannonsburg for a ski meet. Lowell picked up where they had left off from their previous week by chasing personal records and strong finishes against schools including Rockford, Spring Lake, and Forest Hills Northern/Eastern.

On January 29 at Caberfae, the boys team was led by Colton Byrne's first-place finish in giant slalom. Other top finishers include Jakob Koerle (38th), Cole Lillie (39th),

Hunter Stepanovich (44th), and Preston Sobeck (45th). The team placed eighth in slalom with Byrne (seventh) leading the way and Stepanovich, Lillie, and Sobeck rounding out the finishers.

The ladies team finished tenth in slalom with Emma Schmidt leading the way. Kaylee Byrne finished fourth in grand slalom with Olivia Torline (42nd), Is Schmidt (43rd), Emma Schmidt (44th), and Elise Charron (59th) leading the way.

During the Feb. 1 race, Sobeck had a pair of eighth-place finishes to lead the boys squad. Byrne finished second in both slalom and grand slalom to lead the girls team. Spanbauer finished 21st and 18th respectively. At the ski meet last week, Lowell honored not only their seniors, but the seniors from other schools present as well. Spanbauer is the only senior for the Red Arrows Ski team this year. Results from the race at Cannonsburg for senior



Kaylee Byrne skis down the hill at Cannonsburg during the grand slalom race.



Sydney Spanbauer was honored during senior night.

night will be available in an upcoming Ledger edition.

The team is looking forward to the regional event on Monday, Feb. 8 where they will compete for a position in the D2

State Finals held at Boyne Highlands, on Feb. 22. Monday they will compete against the following Region 5 teams: Cadillac, Caledonia, East Grand Rapids, GR Catholic

Central, Grand Rapids Christian, Forest Hills Central, Northview, Grand Rapids West Catholic, Onkama, South Haven, and Spring Lake.

Winter sports given okay to resume

by Justin Scott
contributing reporter

It's the week after the Super Bowl, and while most of the country will be fixated on talking about how the Buccaneers beat the Chiefs this past Sunday or their favorite Super Bowl commercials, in Michigan all eyes are on high school sports. That's because Michigan high school sports will be returning in full this week after, in many cases, a long break from competition.

For Lowell, the basketball teams, competitive cheer team, hockey team, and wrestling team will finally be starting up competition after a hiatus that lasted more than two months. These contact sports were on hold due to COVID restrictions, with fears of losing out on their season just as of last week. The Lowell bowling, ski, gymnastics, and CLS Swim and Dive teams had already been permitted by the Michigan Department of

Health and Human Services to start their seasons.

The seasons for these contact sports teams will be shortened. The wrestling team, looking to earn their eighth straight state championship this year, is still finalizing their schedule as are other sports looking to fill games with competition now permitted. The wrestling season which was supposed to start on Dec. 12, will now instead start this Saturday, Feb. 13. A potential team state final would now be March 30, with individual state finals stretching into August.

For the coaches and student-athletes, a shortened season is better than no season, a very real fear that lasted through the end of last week. Following the MDHHS's announcement that sports could compete, the MHSAA chose not to push back the dates of state tournaments. They had already delayed them at the beginning of January.

Outside of wrestling, hockey and competitive cheer state finals are March 27. Both basketball tournaments will end April 9 and 10.

"Tremendously excited today for the opportunity that our winter kids are going to have as early as (this week) Monday. We absolutely want to recognize the work and support here from Governor Whitmer and her staff and everyone in her office, along with MDHHS Director (Elizabeth) Hertel, her staff, everyone from her office," MHSAA Director Mark Uyl said in a statement to the press. "We are greatly appreciative of them taking the information, receiving the data that we've communicated over the last week to 10 days, and are incredibly pleased and grateful with the new order that goes into effect on Monday."

Similar to the fall, safety protocols remain in place for all sports. For basketball and hockey, masks will be required in competition. For competitive cheer that will be the case off the mat, but not in active participation. Wrestlers will need to complete testing which is provided by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. Spectator limitations will remain in effect, two per student-athlete.

As coaches finalize their schedules, keep an eye on next week's Ledger for a preview of our winter sports teams!



Gymnastics returns to competition

by Justin Scott
contributing reporter

The Lowell Red Arrows Gymnastics team returned to competition for the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic started. Last week, Lowell defeated Kenowa Hills by a score of 132.525-117.650.

Gymnastics was one of the sports hardest hit by the pandemic. Their state final was one of the winter sports championships canceled last year. Lowell qualified for team states before it was ultimately canceled, and earned

Academic All State as a team. The team had only one senior last year (state qualifier Taeghan Ronchetti). They bring back All-Region and All-State Kira Jungblut, Aubri Lemke, Marissa Wever, Ivy McDonald, as well as Greta Forward (All-State).

Lowell is in action against Rockford and Forest Hills United this week. Crowd restrictions remain in place to two per student-athlete.

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obituaries

BEWELL

Emma Jean Bewell, age 97, formerly of Lowell, MI passed away peacefully on February 3, 2021. She was preceded in death by an infant daughter; one brother; and 3 sisters. Jean is survived by her loving husband of 72 years, Richard E. Bewell; sons, James (Maria), and Robert (Jill), "daughter", Sandy Bewell; granddaughters, Sister Paisia, and Angela (Josh) Thompson; grandsons, Andrew (Ashley), Christopher, and Thomas Bewell; great grandsons, Samuel and Abram Thompson; and several nieces. Jean was born and raised in Pierson, MI. She moved to Grand Rapids to attend and graduate from Butterworth School of Nursing. While working in the Butterworth Hospital E.R. she met Richard "Dick", a Grand Rapids Police officer and after only 6 weeks of dating, they married. Together she and Dick built two homes and one cottage, settled in Lowell, MI where they raised their two sons. She had a servant's heart in everything she did. Jean enjoyed being part of the Lowell United Methodists Women's Guild, sewing, knitting, and taking care of her grandsons. Jean's sense of humor and loving nature will be greatly missed by her family. A private graveside service to be held at Oakwood Cemetery Lowell, MI. Donations may be made in Jean's honor to the Butterworth Hospital School of Nursing Alumni Association Bertha Heald Fund C/O Nancy Denolf 5031 New Orleans Dr NE, Rockford, MI 49341.



LABINE



Budd L. LaBine, age 94 of Lowell, passed away Wednesday, February 3, 2021. He was preceded in death by his daughter, Diana Snow; and son, Armose LaBine.

Budd is survived by his wife of 72 years, Shirley; children, Donna (James) Barnaby, Renee (Mike) Robinson, Cindy Powell, and Frank (Sue) LaBine; daughter-in-law, Cheryl LaBine; 14 grandchildren; 17 great-grandchildren; sister-in-law, Dorothy Forton; brother-in-law, Milton (Patricia) Johns; and several nieces & nephews. Budd was a proud veteran of the United States Army. He was also a member of the American Legion & VFW. Budd was a Lowell resident for 65 years. He enjoyed spending his free time hunting, fishing, and camping. Visitation with the family will be held from 2-5 PM on Tuesday, February 9, 2021 at Roth-Gerst Funeral Home, 305 N. Hudson Lowell, MI 49331. Social distancing and masks will be required. A Celebration of Life will be held in Michigamme, Michigan on June 26. Memorial contributions can be directed to Emmanuel Hospice, 401 Hall St SW #263, Grand Rapids, MI 49503.



STEVENS



Ronald Royce Stevens, age 85, left the bonds of Earth on February 4, 2021 to spend eternity with his Lord and Savior. He was preceded in death by his wife, Jeanene; brother, Roger; and parents, Emerson & Beathea Stevens. Ron is survived by two sisters, Gladys Fletcher, and Janet (Charles) Boerema; niece, Cheryl (Greg) Greening; four nephews, Mark (Mary) Fletcher, Douglas (Shelley) Fletcher, Wayne (Heather) Boerema, David (Londa) Boerema; and several great-nieces & nephews. He graduate from Lowell High School, class of 1953, attended Olivet Nazarene University in Bourbonnais, Illinois, and Arizona State University in Tempe, Arizona. He enjoyed many years teaching in the Grand Rapids area and in Illinois where he taught and was Superintendent of a school district. Ron had a passion for history of the Civil War era and his hometown. He enjoyed listening to classical & religious music, painting, railroads & trains, and his love of travel took him to Europe and Central America for pleasure, work, and witness programs through his church. He was always active in his attending church. Ron loved to entertain family and friends, he was always ready to have a party or meet with friends at a restaurant. He enjoyed gardening and hangin' out in his barn, most of all he loved doing things for others. He will be greatly missed by his family and a volume of friends acquired during his lifetime. A private family service will be held later. A summertime celebration of Ron's life will be announced at a later date. Memorial contributions may be made to the Lowell Area Historical Museum, PO Box 81, Lowell, MI 49331.



Get Your Social Security Benefit Statement (SSA-1099 / SSA-1042S)

Tax season is approaching, and replacing your annual Benefit Statement has never been easier. The Benefit Statement, also known as the SSA-1099 or the SSA-1042S, is a tax form we mail each year in January to people who receive Social Security benefits. It shows the total amount of benefits you received from us in the previous year so you know how much Social Security income to report to the Internal Revenue Service on your tax return.

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If you don't have access to a printer, you can save the document to your computer or email it to yourself. If you don't have a *my Social Security* account, creating one is very easy to do and usually takes less than 10 minutes.

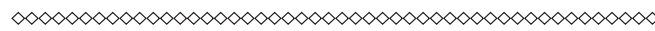
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Vonda Van Til is the Public Affairs Specialist for West Michigan. You can write her c/o Social Security Administration, 3045 Knapp NE, Grand Rapids MI 49525 or via email at vonda.vantil@ssa.gov.



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LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE TO ALL CREDITORS:

The Settlor, Orley K. Kranenberg, date of birth July 24, 1936, who lived at 11537 Fulton St E, Lowell, MI 49331, died on January 17, 2021. There is no representative of the settlor's estate to whom Letters of Administration have been issued.

Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the Orley K. Kranenberg and Roselynn J. Kranenberg Living Trust Dated November 6, 1996, and any amendments thereto, will be forever barred

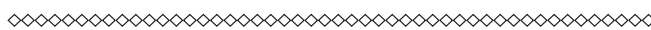
unless presented to Sue Seese, Successor Trustee, within four months after the date of publication.

Notice is further given that the Trust will thereafter be assigned and distributed to the persons entitled to it.

Date: February 1, 2021

Mary L. Benedict PC
Attorney for Successor Trustee
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616-942-0020

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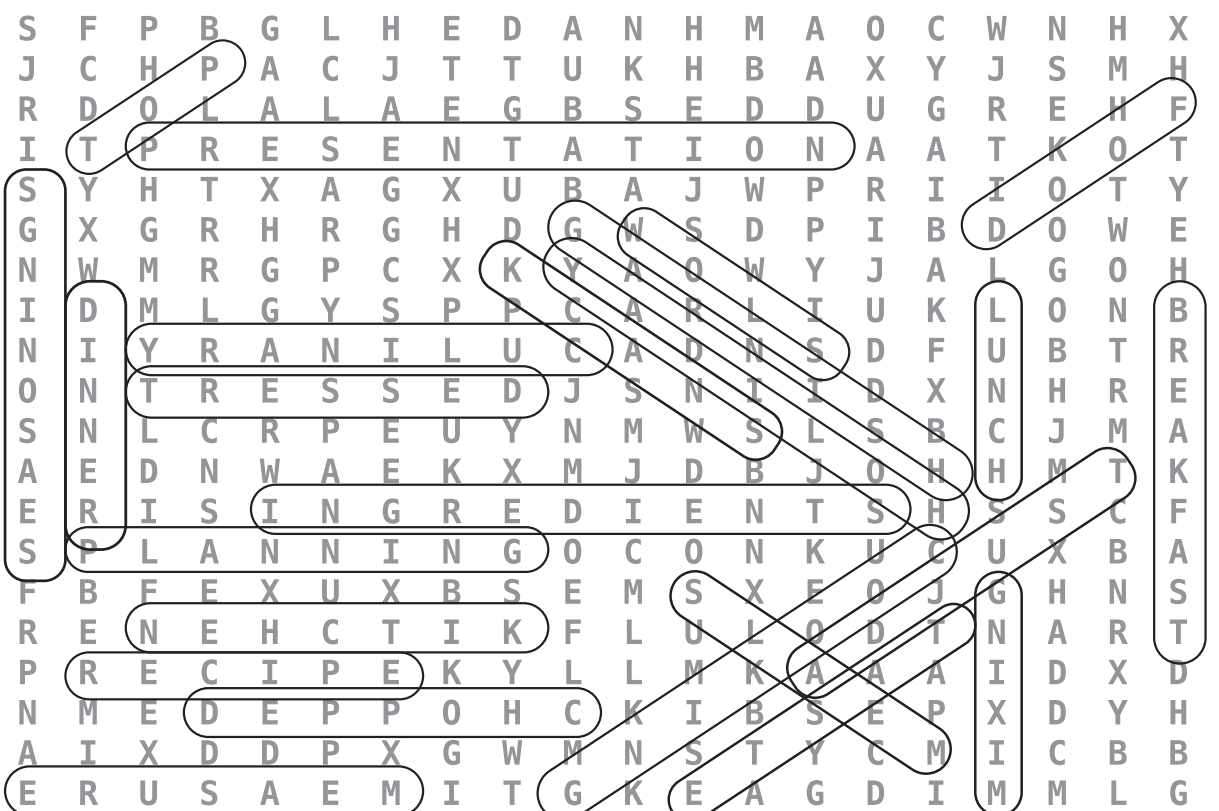
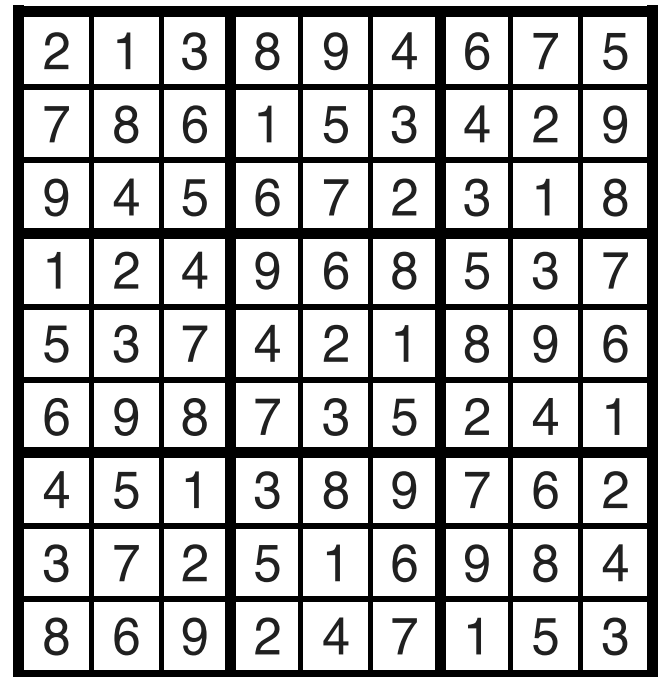
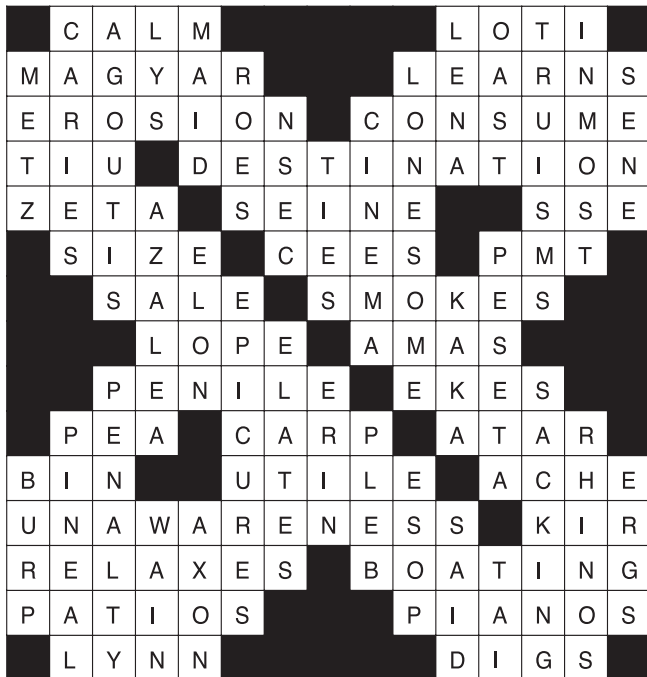
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card of thanks

We are so grateful for the thoughts and prayers we've received after our loss of Herb Swan. We have been comforted by family and friends and all the caring people at Schneider Manor, Fountain View, Porter Hills, Gerst Funeral Home, Daisy Floral, and from Dr. Mogor, Pastor Brillhart, the Honor Guard, and Lowell City Staff at Oakwood Cemetery. As dad would say, "Thank you much."

The Family of Herb Swan

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS





The Restless Viking

The World Less Traveled

With Chuck & Martha Hayden

www.restless-viking.com

~ creepy doll hill

In October 2020 I took a scenic drive from Cheboygan to Lowell and came upon this exhibit on M-33 between Fairview and Comins, Michigan. I was curious about this display. I safely pulled over and strode up the hill for a closer look-see.

I navigated the slope carefully as I was alone and orthopedic surgeries have become a unique ‘hobby’ for me. I wondered who had set up this mausoleum of sorts. ‘Oh dear,’ I thought, ‘was there a tragedy involving children?’ My mind raced thinking of the children I have known who have passed away. As an elementary teacher, I have known too many youngsters who live in Heaven. Would someone do THIS to honor a child?



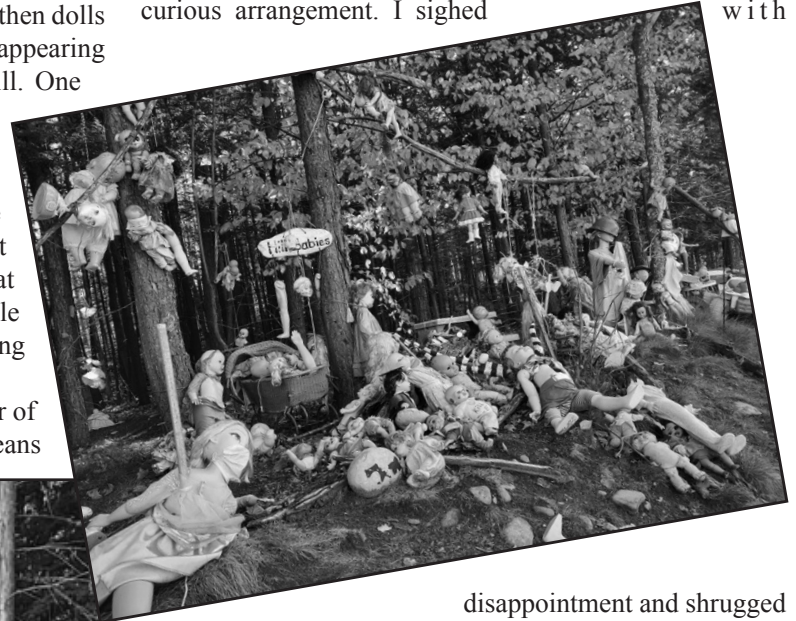
and supportive of this cluster of figurines to ‘creepy,’ ‘garbage’ and ‘sad.’ Some speculated that a graduating class started this. Others recalled two desks being left in the ditch and then dolls started appearing on the hill. One

man said he lived across the street and it had been there a long time. Someone else posted about there being a ‘shoe tree’ that had been cut down. One woman stated firmly that this wasn’t the doll hill from M-33. Many people replied to other’s comments. Opinions were flying throughout the 80 comments.

Finally, two individuals shared that the owner of the property started the doll display. “He even cleans

it up from time to time.” I was intrigued! I HAD to talk with this person and learn the true meaning of this exhibit.

I messaged both members of the page asking for the name of the property owner. One person responded and I went to work investigating contact information. I found a phone number of the ‘age-experienced’ gentleman. I called and left a message. As I hung up I realized that this could be the end of the road if he wasn’t willing to return my call. I may never know about this curious arrangement. I sighed with



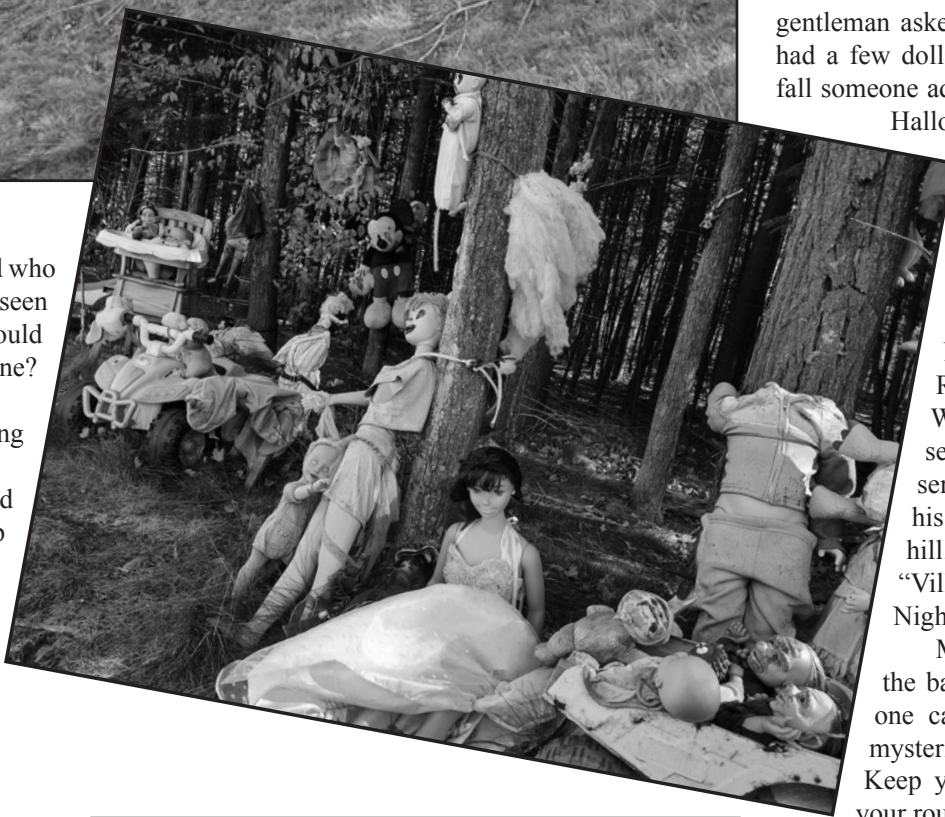
disappointment and shrugged at our dog, Shackleton. (He is always at my heels.)

As I relaxed on the couch that evening, my phone rang. I didn’t recognize the number and quickly assumed that it probably had to do with my car warranty. “Hello?” I answered. A solemn voice responded to my greeting. “You called about the dolls on the hill?” “Oh my gosh! Thank you for calling me back! I am so curious about doll collection!” I rolled off the couch and hustled to my bedroom office so I could take notes.

“I started it about ten years ago,” he explained. (The gentleman asked me to keep his identity anonymous.) “I had a few dolls and people just keep adding more. Last fall someone added some nasty ones. I suppose it was for Halloween, but I took them down.” We agreed that it was an interesting conversation starter. I shared that my Facebook post proved that!

“Do you know the author, Johnathan Rand?” he inquired. I did. As an elementary teacher I was familiar with his “Nightmare Nation” books. I learned that Johnathan Rand is one of Chris Wright’s pen names. Wright has written the Michigan Chillers series (18 books) and the American Chillers series. “Well, he was here and based one of his books, “Village of the Dolls,” on my doll hill.” I could hear the smile broaden his face. “Village of the Dolls” is the first book in the Nightmare Nation series.

Michigan is full of small wonders located on the backroads. With a few inquisitive questions one can learn the source of these small town mysteries which have captivated many travelers. Keep your eyes open for similar findings along your routes in life. Enjoy!



“The Hill Babies,” read the sign.

I decided this couldn’t be a shrine to honor a child who had passed. Was this a prank? The horror films I’d seen with my friend Jennifer flicked through my mind. Would this be a testimonial to one of those movies? Which one?

Some of the dolls’ eyes were blacked out.

What’s the meaning behind this array? How long had this been here?

When I returned home I searched Facebook and requested to join a group from the area, “What’s Up In Mio, Fairview, Luzerne, Comins” which has over 2,700 members. Surely someone would know the story behind this. I posted one photo and asked, “Can anyone tell me how the doll hill got started?”

Responses varied from eager art lovers intrigued

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Another roadside oddity is this pink elephant. When I asked the young gal about the pink elephant after ordering a submarine sandwich, she raised her painted on eyebrows and shrugged. It’s been here a long time. Photo by Martha Hayden.



Surrounding Mio Michigan has other sights, too. There’s an Indian head made from limestone rock. Tom Moran’s sculpture was revealed on the 4th of July in 2003. Moran of Moran Iron Works usually creates sculpture using steel. This limestone Indian Head was modeled after Ohio’s Chief Leatherlips statue. It now sits at the entrance of the Skyline Event Center. Photo by Martha Hayden.



FUN PAGE

SUDOKO

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

Level: Intermediate

Here's How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

GET COOKING WORD SEARCH

S F P B G L H E D A N H M A O C W N H X
 J C H P A C J T T U K H B A X Y J S M H
 R D O L A L A E G B S E D D U G R E H F
 I T P R E S E N T A T I O N A A T K O T
 S Y H T X A G X U B A J W P R I I O T Y
 G X G R H R G H D G W S D P I B D O W E
 N W M R G P C X K Y A O W Y J A L G O H
 I D M L G Y S P P C A R L I U K L O N B
 N I Y R A N I L U C A D N S D F U B T R E
 O N T R E S S E D J S N I I D X N H R E
 S N L C R P E U Y N M W S L S B C J M A
 A E D N W A E K X M J D B J O H H M T K
 E R I S I N G R E D I E N T S H S S C F
 S P L A N N I N G O C O N K U C U X B A
 F B F E X U X B S E M S X E O J G H N S
 R E N E H C T I K F L U L O D T N A R T
 P R E C I P E K Y L L M K A A A I D X D
 N M E D E P P O H C K I B S E P X D Y H
 A I X D D P X G W M N S T Y C M I C B B
 E R U S A E M I T G K E A G D I M M L G

Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally, and backwards.

Puzzle solutions on page 13

GET COOKING WORD SEARCH

ADJUST
BREAKFAST
CHOPPED
COOKING

CULINARY DESSERT
DINNER
FOOD
GARNISH
HOLIDAY
INGREDIENTS

KITCHEN LUNCH
MEALS
MEASURE
MIXING
PLANNING
POT

PRESENTATION RECIPE
SEASONINGS
SLOW
SNACK
TASTE

Guess Who?

I am an actor born in California on February 12, 1968. I grew up on a ranch with my actor father. I have had prominent movie roles, including a jock on a 1980s cult hit and a larger-than-life villain in a mega Marvel series.

Answer: Josh Brolin

WORD SCRAMBLE

Rearrange the letters to spell something pertaining to slow cooking.

I K C N E H C

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Answer: Chicken

	1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8			
9					10		11			12		
13					14		15					
16				17		18						
19			20		21				22			
	23			24		25			26			
		27			28		29		30			
			31			32		33				
		34				35		36		37		
	38				39		40		41		42	
43					44			45		46		47
48			49	50					51		52	
53							54			55		
56								57				
	58								59			

CLUES ACROSS

- Composed
- Lesotho currency
- Ethnic group associated with Hungarians
- Gains knowledge of
- Gradual destruction
- Purchase
- Pharaoh of lower Egypt
- Where you're going
- The 6th letter of the Greek alphabet
- Fishing net
- Midway between south and southeast
- A way to sort
- C C C
- Popular sports podcast (abbr.)
- Discount
- Consumes tobacco
- A way to run
- Popular musical awards show
- Pertains to the male sexual organ
- Supplements with difficulty
- Green veggie
- Deep-bodied freshwater fish
- Holy fire

CLUES DOWN

- Usually has a lid
- Being of use or service
- Have a yen for
- Unknowingness
- Dry white wine drink
- Unwinds
- Traveling by sea
- Outdoor entertaining areas
- Stringed instruments
- ___ Redgrave, actress
- Moves earth
- Flowering shrub
- North Carolina university
- Former monetary unit of Spain
- Foodies
- New Zealand parrot
- Makes very happy
- A payment required for not fulfilling a contract
- Emerald Isle
- The act of terminating someone's employment
- Gland in some mammals
- Commoner
- Large animals
- Belch
- Employee stock ownership plan
- Work units
- Wagon
- Nerve fiber
- Proclaimed
- Japanese delicacy

Superintendent details districtwide facility upgrades

by Nate Fowler
Superintendent, Lowell Area Schools

As the school year continues through the winter months, work continues on projects across the school district as we look to upgrade our facilities to support student learning, student and staff health and safety, as well as position Lowell Area Schools for continued growth in the community. As we make upgrades to the heating, cooling, and ventilation systems in our buildings, we have placed a priority on providing best filtration systems to provide clean air to our classrooms.

Thank you to the community for its continued support of Lowell Area Schools. We remain committed to providing meaningful opportunities for all learners. Our upgraded facilities are a great reflection of that commitment by the community.

The following is a breakdown of each of our district facilities and what projects have happened at each building.

Alto Elementary

The five-classroom addition to the north side of the building was completed



“Temporary window and door coverings have been built and installed to allow containment of heat for future slab pours. South face of the Unit D addition is pictured.”

From a “field report” document prepared by Alan Nugent and Nicholas Wallis of Tower Pinkster about the work at Lowell Middle School.

in October, and students are now learning in beautiful new classrooms. The summer of 2021 will see completion of the current Alto projects. Three open classrooms that ring the Alto media center will be enclosed. We will also finish heating and cooling upgrades. All classrooms at Alto will have air conditioning at the completion of the project.

Bushnell Elementary

Work continues to provide air conditioning to all Bushnell classrooms. High efficiency boilers were installed last summer. Renovations have been completed on three

Bushnell classrooms. Three additional classrooms are expected to be complete by spring break. All Bushnell classrooms will have air conditioning by the time school starts in the fall.

Cherry Creek Elementary

The entire roof at Cherry Creek was replaced last summer with upgrades to the make-up air unit. That unit improves the air quality in the building. A secure vestibule was also completed at Cherry Creek so that people who enter the building are now directed into the office. The Cherry Creek roof project was completed using funds

from the Sinking Fund.

Murray Lake Elementary

The new entrance for buses at Staff off Lally Street was completed in September and has improved traffic congestion at Murray Lake. New high efficiency lighting was installed at Murray Lake over the summer.

Lowell Middle School

Work on the two-story addition continues. Crews are working on installing the ceiling for the first story and deck for the second story. Construction of the second story walls begins in March. Over the summer the parking lot behind the building will be redone and progress will be made on some of the renovations inside the building. When school starts in the fall, students will be in their new orchestra room and renovated art room. Renovations for the band room are scheduled to be completed in November.

Lowell High School

Excavation for the new soccer and lacrosse stadium will begin on April 1st. The summer of 2021 will be a busy one at the high school as upgrades

will be made to the tennis, baseball, softball facilities as well as the area for field events behind the current stadium.

Unity High School/Runciman Building

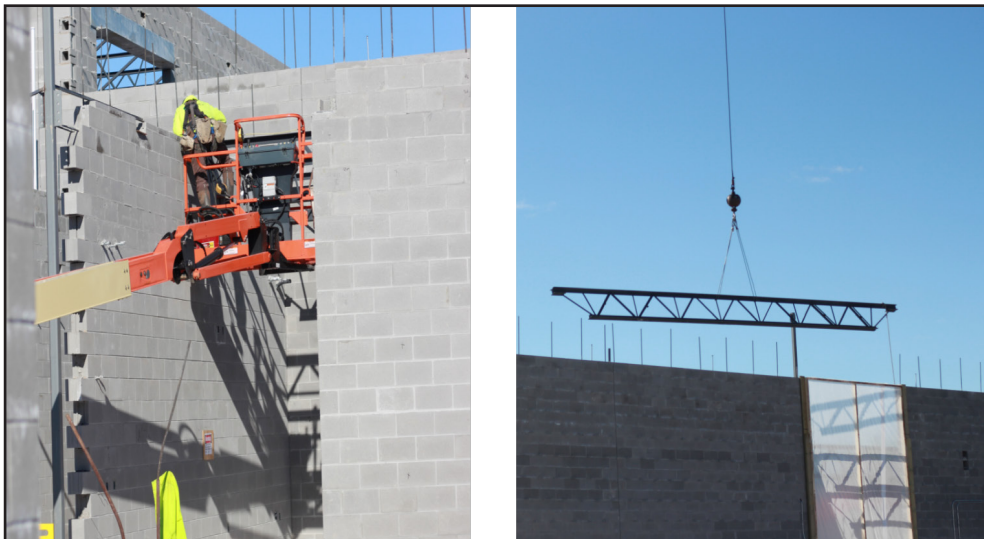
A secure vestibule has been installed at the Unity High School entrance and updates have been made to the gymnasium at the Runciman Building. The most significant renovation was the removal of the stage in the gym. This gives the gymnastics program a safer environment for practices.

Technology

Projectors in over 200 district classrooms are in the process of being replaced by high quality, more efficient models as the current projectors near the end of their useful life.

Sinking Fund

In August of 2020, Lowell voters approved the replacement of the district’s 1 mil sinking fund. Summer projects from the Sinking Fund included replacement of the parking lot for the Lowell Area Schools’ transportation department and replacement of the roof and make up air unit for Runciman Building.



“Steel erectors are placing steel joists above classrooms in Unit D.” From a “field report” document prepared by Alan Nugent and Nicholas Wallis of Tower Pinkster about work at Lowell Middle School.



“The future main electrical room is being prepped for future installation of electrical equipment. Masons are infilling openings and tooting in masonry at future openings.”

From a “field report” document prepared by Alan Nugent and Nicholas Wallis of Tower Pinkster about work at Lowell Middle School.

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