

MSU athletic director Beekman at Lowell Rotary



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New Lowell postmaster



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Amber Curtis raising money for masks



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Plenty of discussion at Aug. 9 Lowell Area Schools board of education meeting

by Tim McAllister
lead reporter

The latest regular meeting of the Lowell Area Schools board of education took place at 7 pm on Monday, Aug. 9 and lasted one hour and 43 minutes.

Approximately 150 attended the meeting, which attracted so much advance attention on social media, the district announced on Sunday that they would be moving the proceedings to the Performing Arts Center at Lowell High School.

LAS curriculum director Dan VanderMeulen updated the board and meeting attendees about the status of the district's 10-member Reproductive Health Committee, but he did not actually name the members. According to the Lowell Area Schools website, the committee will meet three or four times between August and March "to review and recommend reproductive health materials."

"One of the tasks before us this year is to review and

update our materials [and] resources," VanderMeulen said. "Especially with a focus on our fifth grade resources, those materials are really out of date and [need] reviewing. The middle school and high school resources are more up to date after some conversation with those teachers. That process is pretty well spelled out in the board policy, which is based on Michigan state law, and the composition of who would be on that committee is actually pretty specifically spelled out as well. [...] What we're charged to do in regards to the committee is have [two] co-chairs. One of the co-chairs would be me, functioning in my role as a representative of the district, and we have another co-chair who has to be a parent. There was a concerned parent early in June who had contacted one of our elementary principals, recognizing that the materials for the fifth grade needed reviewing

and updating. She and I had some conversations, and I invited her to be the co-chair at that point. Beyond those two people, we have to have teacher representatives. So we have two fifth grade teachers who've been responsible for teaching the sex education portion, and then we also have our high school health teacher on the team. We have to have at least one student representative, which we have. We have to have one person representing a local church, so a church representative, and we also have to have a health professional. Beyond that, we have to have some at-large parents on the team. The policy spells out that at least half the members of the team have to be parents, and the majority of those parents cannot be [both] a parent and a staff member."

VanderMeulen said they had two vacancies for at-large parents, but when more than 20 people applied he decided it would be most fair to have a "blind draw" to select the



Screenshot of live meeting broadcast.

names. VanderMeulen also said that the public would have a chance to review any potential sex ed curriculum well before it reaches classrooms, which usually takes place in May, and he also said that parents could choose opt their children out of these lessons.

"I am looking to move forward with the tasks and update those materials and recommend, along with the committee, materials to the board that [are] reflective of accurate science and the standards that are prescribed for fifth grade students in particular," VanderMeulen said.

In other pre-discussion business, the annual Marsha Wilcox community service award was presented to the family of the late Larry Mikulski, the Lowell Area Schools transportation director for more than 20 years who passed away this April.

"This is a person who has played a major role in the activities of Lowell Area Schools," said board secretary Pat Nugent. "It is a community service award, so we're looking for someone who not only is actively

School board, continued, page 2

Kent County Youth Fair is happening now through Aug. 14



Lowell Police to host free 'Cons and Scams' symposium Aug. 17

Lowell police officer Aubrey Culver will lead a free "Cons and Scams" talk at city hall, 301 E. Main, from 1 to 3 pm on Tuesday, Aug. 17.

"Due to recent uptick in local scams and cons, the Lowell Police Department will be hosting an informal talk on how to be aware and protect yourself from these predators," said an Aug. 9 LPD press release. "Topics that will be covered are the evolution of the con, tactics the scammers/con artists use, how to avoid becoming a victim and Craigslist and Marketplace scams. Officer Aubrey Culver will be your host with several years of law enforcement experience. Please feel free to attend and bring your questions."

For more information, contact officer Culver at 616-897-7120 or Aculver8446@gmail.com.



LPD officer Aubrey Culver

50¢



School board, continued

supporting education in our community, but also goes above and beyond in other ways to serve the greater Lowell community.”

“Service, along with family, community, and country [were] important to him,” said board vice president Laurie Kuna. “Larry worked 23 years for Lowell Area Schools as director of transportation, a job that carries many subtitles: custodial supervisor, security supervisor, grounds supervisor and construction supervisor. In the years that Larry and I both worked in the district I can’t remember a time when he wasn’t willing to help someone any way he could.”

“I wish that we could have done it while Larry was still with us,” said Lowell Area Schools superintendent Nate Fowler. “I have fond memories of working with Larry at school. He was always quick with a one-liner. It was always fun seeing him in the parades around town, at Expo or wherever we would see Larry serving the community.”

Most of the rest of the meeting was devoted to public comment. There were 23 participants in the discussion, which lasted about one hour and 20 minutes.

“Masks and vaccinations are proven science,” said Jack Misner. “My hope is that you will continue to protect our children by choosing proven, objective, scientific methodology over egotistical politics and the mask hysteria based on mythology.”

“We’re in the midst of a pandemic that the world healthcare community says could be over with right now if people had only gotten vaccinated and worn masks,” said Nancy Misner. “I want my community to thrive, businesses to stay open, employees to stay healthy. Keeping a lid on COVID helps us all.”

“In recent years, we’ve lived in a world full of disinformation and partial truths,” said Olivia Geiger, who said she was reading a statement written by Parker Liu. “Fueled by social media, the disinformation and the partial truths have led to division, name-calling and petty behavior. Until recently, the schools have seemed to weather much of this fairly unscathed. It’s come to our attention, however, that a group of parents and families have felt it necessary to attempt to corner administration and staff into teaching, or more importantly not teaching, certain subjects for fear of breaking the status quo and exposing our young people to the much, much larger world around us. [...] The work of the DEI [diversity, equity and inclusion] committee is entirely vital and needs to be given every opportunity to help create a safe environment in our schools for all students by starting with identification of problem areas and educating our district staff on how to do and be better. I hope the board continues to support this committee in its efforts. Looking ahead, as we continue to learn more about how race and racism

has shaped our society, we hope some of the themes and ideas explored by Critical Race Theory can be used to help shape the education of our young people by helping them understand how their experience can be built on factors beyond their control or understanding.”

“In my opinion, the 2021 school year was at the minimum unconstitutional and at the maximum criminal,” said Dusty Hawk. “There are now 47 clinical, peer-reviewed mask studies that prove masks are ineffective, and 32 of those showed they can be harmful to kids 18 and younger [if worn] more than six to eight hours a day. To the elected board and the nominated members, there is no need for yelling or screaming, your power goes only as far as we the parents allow. Now that we all understand the power comes from we the parents, the parents are attending these meetings in numbers not to ask you what your decisions are, but to tell you how your decisions will be made concerning our children. All decisions the board makes in our schools, on our children, that gives the parents no choice - whether you’re doing it for state funding, political agenda, or you think it is for our own good, from masks, CRT, DEI, SEL [social-emotional learning], staff professional development, sex education curriculum, book donations, all the way down to snow day decisions - will no longer be tolerated. If you decide to dig your heels in and fight over the Constitution, you will not win in the end. As a parent, you have to question the judgment of any grown adult - whether they are a board member, a superintendent, curriculum director, principal, counselor or teacher - that has forced minors away from parental supervision to have their mouth and nose covered or face punished, then be asked questions about gender and

sex.”

“My children have sometimes been harassed or been subjected to racial slurs and been bullied because of their race,” said Ray Wolfe. “I have an eight-year-old grandson who’s Black who is in middle school now who’s been bullied and taunted and, as a result, got involved in a couple of fights. The staff is trying to handle this, but they can’t really do much about racism that’s being taught in the home, so it’s important to have diversity education within the schools.”

“Last school year was hard,” said Emily Betz. “But despite the changes and precautions, the masks and their cohorts, which made everything feel and look so different, my children were able to develop new relationships, they were able to learn new things and they were able to find new heroes among their teachers and other school staff. I’m here to ask the board to follow the recommendations of health and education experts as it relates to protection of those who are unable to be vaccinated due to health issues or age. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, the top two most effective strategies to protect our children and to keep school in face-to-face learning environments are promoting vaccinations and requiring universal mask wearing while inside. These strategies layered with other a number of others also recommended by MDHHS, the CDC, the Kent County Health Department, the American Federation of Teachers and the Michigan Education Association. These organizations are experts in their prospective fields.”

“This is about the kids, not just one child, not just one group of children, all Lowell schools students,” said Lowell city councilor Leah Groves. “How do we best keep children safe while

in school this year? How do we provide a safe, fun learning environment? How do we lessen the burden on our teachers and support staff? How do we go about having the smoothest school year with as few disruptions as possible? How do we keep students healthy and in the classroom? What is the solution? The answer is masks. I am aware that the answer upsets some parents and, to be honest, I’m used to upset citizens. I’d rather 100 disapproving parents than one sick child because we failed to follow through on wearing masks.”

“I keep hearing about the science that supports masks, but I have seen more science that masks don’t do what they’re supposed to,” said Tami Griffith, who said she was a Lowell school bus driver. “The virus is smaller than the openings in the fabric, problems with moisture and bacteria, constant touching, not to mention hardly anyone ever wearing them properly. I can’t breathe when it’s hot, and it’s heartbreaking when I hear first graders say, ‘What’s gross is when your mask is dripping wet.’ I do have a question, although I realize you may not answer it now, but if the drivers are required to wear masks this year, will we get hazard pay?”

“Last year, our girls sacrificed their sense of individuality, social interaction, freedom and their mental health and wellbeing under all of the restrictions,” said Jenny Jousma. “The emotional toll that has taken on our children has resulted in severe anxiety and insomnia. With that being said, if there are any requirements for masks, vaccination for COVID-19 - which is still labeled as experimental - COVID testing or segregation based upon vaccine status, my husband and I will be withdrawing our children from the

district. But this will mean that we will become a single income family, which will change how we will spend money in our community. For example, how we will vote on millages and support local businesses. And many of these local businesses will be losing some of their employees who also choose to home-school their children. Our expectation for Lowell is to educate our children, to teach them math, reading, writing and science. It is not the district’s responsibility to manage their health or to tell our children about political ideology, sexual orientation, or that our family members who come from various backgrounds and [are] dark complected are somehow less simply because of the color of their skin.”

“I have here one printout of 47 studies that confirm the ineffectiveness of masks for COVID and 32 more that confirm their negative health effects,” said Di Rathbun, who said she was a registered nurse. “Another printout has 36 more articles against recommending cloth mask use. Still another study shows that, while wearing masks, the carbon dioxide levels in children age six to 17 was three to six times greater than acceptable levels. And the lab analysis of the masks themselves after just one day of wear reveals the presence of at least one of 11 different dangerous pathogens that cause pneumonia, TB, meningitis, sepsis, Legionnaire’s disease, antibiotic-resistant bacterial infections, as well as those that causes ulcers, yeast infections, strep throat and more. So therefore, this year my child will not wear [...] a mask at all. We will not wear them here or there, we will not wear them anywhere. If you choose to think that the schools or government have any more say in our children’s health decisions, you are mistaken. We are standing together



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School board, continued

and we are standing up. We will not be bullied, coerced, threatened, bribed or forced to get this injection either. If someone chooses to get it, that is their choice. We choose not to participate in this experiment. You do you, we'll do us, the end. No separation, no shaming, no accusations of indifference or harm to others. We are standing together and we are standing up. While I am aware of some of the progress being made regarding the issues of Critical Race Theory or diversity or community inclusion or social-emotional learning or whatever name you want to give it, know this. We will not be lied to or passively believe you when you say it's currently not taught in Lowell schools. The wellbeing survey that was given to our kids last spring was all about racism, gender diversity, how much it's talked about in school or with friends and family, and even giving the choice to say are you male, female, non-binary, third gender or other. How many genders do you say they are? This survey was approved by you, Nate, and when I questioned you, Dan, about how this was CRT, you said you didn't really know anything about that. In June, Dan, you said that CRT was currently not taught in Lowell schools, and yet I find out about a mandatory in-service for all teachers led by a Black woman who kept referring to you all as 'you white folk' and, after saying it was a safe place to share, called you all racists. Enough. Not in our schools. This is Marxist and it is racist. This does not belong in our schools or our community. And if you can't research the political ideologies of the people you are putting on the committees for advising curriculum, then you shouldn't be the curriculum director."

"Your job is to look out for the kids and do what's best for them," said Mark

Blanding. "Your job is not to take direction from me or from any other parent in this room. No parent in this room has the right or authority to tell you what you are going to do. They do have the authority to vote you out of office. [...] If more people in our country and our community had voluntarily got this vaccine like I did as soon as it was available to me, we would not be having this discussion right now. Critical Race Theory is a process taught in colleges. Just because we teach diversity does not mean we're teaching Critical Race Theory."

"The direction presented [by administration] last year was bleak and full of excuses, even though I believe it was unintentional," said Bill Bledsoe. "The three to five emails we have received a day was always, 'This is so hard because of COVID, because of this.' It was built-in excuses. It was a mindset that got set with everybody in our city, everybody in our school district, and it filtered down to our children from our parents, from our teachers. [...] Our children are using dirty masks, touch them constantly, don't wear them properly, can't hear teachers, can't hear answers from fellow students, for absolutely no reason whatsoever. All the people at this point who want to be vaccinated have been and those that have chosen not to are responsible for their own decisions."

"Our family supported the health and safety precautions, as we will continue to do this school year," said Lacey Charboneau. "I believe you have the kids' best interest at the center of your decision-making, and I hope you continue to follow the advice of local health departments and medical professionals. [...] I am very confident that CRT is not taught at Lowell schools. What I'm not as sure about is how well we're preparing our kids for life outside of Lowell.

Our community is about 93 percent white. It is very easy for us to not see racism or to feel like what's in the past is over and it has nothing to do with me. But we know the mistreatment of minority populations continues, as was evident this last weekend in [Wyoming, MI], when a black realtor and his clients were handcuffed at gunpoint for legally entering a home that was clearly up for sale. It's our job as educators, parents and community members to teach accurate history, no matter how uncomfortable it is. I ask you to please ensure Lowell curriculum includes accurate historical information, including the historical mistreatment of underrepresented and minority populations."

"Call it what you want - Critical Race Theory, diversity/equity/inclusion, Marxism, 1619 Project, Black Lives Matter, Antifa - what they are is racism and abuse," said Stefanie Boone. "What we have learned this past 18 months since George Floyd's death and the racially charged riots that followed is that these are now being used as political advertisements to divide our children and belittle them. The NEA, state and local teachers unions and rogue teachers with a political agenda are using this as a springboard to teach our children to hate themselves just for the color of their skin. They are stomping on the legacy and dream of Martin Luther King Jr. that all people be judged not by the color of their skin but the content of their character. [...] We don't want to cancel the DEI team, we want to cancel the divisive and racist concepts that have unfortunately come along with it. I propose an immediate halt and overhaul of the DEI team. The team [was] said to have been open to all volunteers, yet any conservative staff member who showed interest was either told the team was full

or was discouraged from joining for other reasons. [It] should be comprised of a balanced representation of self-spoken progressives and self-spoken conservatives and should also include parent representation. That newly-formed, balanced team can then work together toward building a set of guidelines and guardrails for which to use in improving all incoming and current curriculum, books and professional development. Sex, sexual orientation, violence, racism, sexism, religious or political agendas, etc. have no place in Lowell schools."

"I am a vocal advocate for the children of Lowell," said Candice Fleszar. "All children, not just my own children, including kids who are viewed as different in many ways, including cultural background, race, religion and LGBT status. I'm also an advocate to protect those targeted for any reason. I feel like giving proper information and real history and having those uncomfortable conversations is also for the good of all of the community, as we want to prepare these children to go into the future and contribute outside the community."

"When COVID first hit, I would hear over and over school districts saying that their number one priority is the safety of the students," said Angie Ingram, who said she was a para-pro at Cherry Creek Elementary. "That is not the number one priority of schools. The number one priority is to educate students. Safety is important in providing education, but

it's not number one." "The Pink Arrow game this year is Aug. 26," said Perry Beachum. "On behalf of the Pink Arrow event, with respect to those we are honoring, we would encourage that you should wear a mask to protect those that are on a cancer journey and for those that aren't eligible to receive a vaccination. Community Day is this Thursday [Aug. 12] at Impact Church on East Fulton. This will be the first chance to get your 2021 Pink Arrow shirt, and also you can donate blood at that event."

"I've always wanted people to realize that it's up to the person to decide," said Cyril Merithew. "I'm 100 percent for choice. My children, we do school of choice to get our kids into the district that we're in. We make a choice every day with whether my kid can ride in the front seat or the back seat or whether my kid should wear sunscreen at the beach, and I always make a choice for my child based on myself. This shouldn't be any different. We shouldn't have to be forced to do what other people think we should do. I respect everyone's own decision. I think that we need to get back to more of, you know, people's choice, instead of letting everyone else just tell us what to do. It's like we need to decide for ourselves what is the best choice for our kids."

"Seeing the children with the masks, my personal opinion, I feel that we don't really need the masks, especially coming into the facility," said Merlyne Posati, a parent of four who

is also a school bus driver. "After eight hours, their masks are dripping wet with spit, so it's not sanitary at all. Half of them can't even put it on their face properly. Going into the classrooms and seeing them sitting down next to each other, they're not social distanced. So even if they're wearing the mask, if someone else is near them with potential COVID, wearing the mask wouldn't help anyway. So I see no benefits on having the masks in our classrooms or even being on the bus. [...] With the Critical [Race] Theory, I'm not too sure. I've never heard that this is being taught here in the Lowell school district, but obviously me being a Black parent with Black children that attend the school, I don't want my kids to think that they're oppressed, because they're not. I don't want them thinking that their friends are better than them because of the color of their skin. That is not what I'm teaching my children at home."

"We're clearly divided here, and I don't think you're going to fix this," said Vince Opperman. "My kid does not want to wear a mask, and I just want to stand up and tell this board if you don't want to wear masks, he's not wearing the mask, whether he's going to school in Lowell or somewhere else."

The school board's next regular meeting will take place in the Runciman Building, 300 High St., at 7 pm on Monday, Sept. 13. They also have a work session scheduled for the same location at 6 pm on Monday, Aug. 23.

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Jeremy Rensberry takes over as new postmaster

by Tim McAllister
lead reporter

Lowell's new postmaster Jeremy Rensberry has been on the job since July 17. Rensberry replaced Alex Sereseroz, who took over in 2016 and has moved on.

Rensberry was first hired by the USPS in July 2005. He hasn't unpacked all of his boxes yet, but Rensberry said he's starting to feel at home in his new position. He said he loves the historic building that includes a New Deal-era mural and a plaque signed by President Woodrow Wilson.

"I was a city carrier in Lansing," Rensberry said. "It's a great job. You're outside all day and you get to do your thing, you follow your route. When I first started, I was a PTF [part time flexible employee], so I wasn't a regular carrier on one route, I kind of went around to different routes. I worked 60 hours a week for the first seven years, but they tell you it's part time!

Part time flexible is what it stands for. But the pay was great! So I started out as a carrier, then I went into management pretty early in my career. I was at two years, and I just I figured that's what you do, right? In any company, you move up. So I was a good carrier, and they said I did a good job, so it just kind of went from there. I supervised in Lansing stations for a while and was the station manager in the buildings, and then I went on to district, handling delivery for the whole district in Grand Rapids in the downtown office. I worked there for at least a year and a half or so. I got to travel a lot, I liked that. Got to help people out, again dealing with city delivery. That's where I came from in Lansing and that's what I knew. Then I became the postmaster of East Lansing, and I was there for almost two years. Then I went

back to the district in a different fashion, I was a scanning coordinator and operations specialist for the district, and then I found myself here in Lowell as of July 17. Technically speaking, there is a lot of reorganization going on at the Post Office right now. My job was one of the ones that was being eliminated. But here at the Post Office there's always going to be a place for people, there's always something to do. We had a hiring freeze for a long time, so there were lots of jobs open, and I was just fortunate enough that Lowell had an opening at this time, and to have everything work out. Postmaster... It's got a nice ring to it, right? It's a great job, especially in an office like this. There's a good family atmosphere here, and it's just a great place to be. I'm pretty excited."

Rensberry said he has been using mail deliveries

as an excuse to explore the local countryside.

"Lowell honestly has some of the same characteristics as Portland," Rensberry said. "I've been driving around delivering some express mail and things like that last couple weeks, just trying to get an idea of the city and the landscape. It's a cool place. It's a little bit bigger, there's more here, but I love the water so I love how all it's on the river. It's a cool atmosphere. All the horses all around, it seems like wherever you look, and little things like that. It's just really cool. It's got the small town feel, but it has a Meijer down the road, so it's the best of both worlds. It was a little scary coming back to the field from working in district. There, I was my own employee, that was all I had, and now I'm coming to an office with employees and I'm the one responsible for everything. It's always kind of scary at first. But I think it's great here. We have great people, and everyone seems to get along with each other, which is awesome. Everyone knows what needs to be done, and they get it done. We work together to get the job done, and it's been very good."

Rensberry grew up in Lansing and graduated from Eastern High School there. He met his wife-to-be Erin when they worked together at a movie theater in Lansing. The couple now lives in Portland with their 16-year-old son and twin 15-year-old boys.

"We're big soccer family, and the kids keep me busy," Rensberry said. "I've been coaching the community club team for years now, but



Lowell postmaster Jeremy Rensberry.

all three of my boys are in high school now, so my coaching days are done, but I do still help out with that. That kind of turns into a year long thing, you'll do some indoor around the winter time and things like that, and we have our spring sessions and our summer leagues and all that. I also like playing video games with my kids. When I grew up, when I was a kid, I loved playing the role-playing games like Final Fantasy and all that kind of stuff, and my kids have gotten hooked onto those too. Which is kind of different, because most kids don't like that. We'll play some games together like Civilization and things like that."

Rensberry said the most rewarding aspect of his new position is the pride a postal worker takes in providing an essential service that everybody uses.

"I remember from when I was a carrier, people look at you different," Rensberry said. "Being a postal employee, you're a public servant, you work for them, and they look forward to seeing you bring their mail. There's a pride in being a postal employee, knowing that you're doing something good for the country, for everyone, and everyone appreciates it. That sense of pride, you don't always have that in most jobs. We're actually doing something that is meaningful, and I think that's really cool. You have some people that are out there waiting by their mailbox, and sometimes we're the one person that these people see every day, they don't see many other people, so it's just a cool thing to be a part of."

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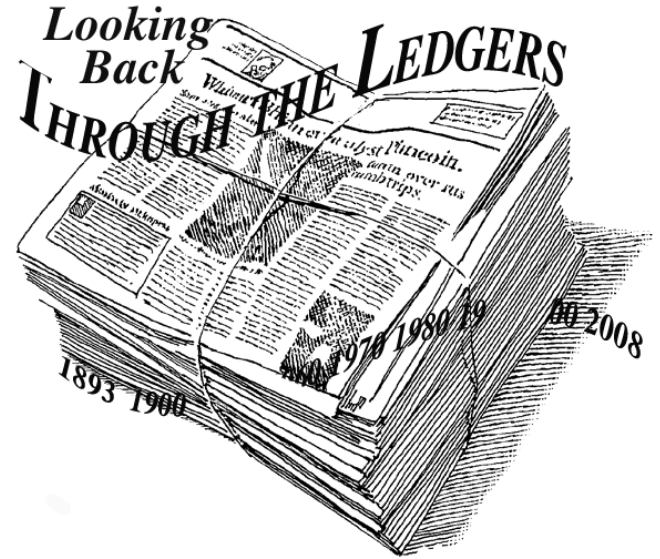
to the editor

Editor,
There are many people in Lowell under the impression that the City Council cancelled the Memorial Day parade. Up until our last meeting, I had no idea this was an issue. I would never have voted to cancel the Memorial Day Parade. After 45 minutes devoted to this subject at the Coffee With Council on Saturday morning, I believe I understand how this perception came to pass. Until Saturday morning, I had no idea two different entities put on the Memorial Day Parade and the service at the cemetery. First let me explain that any parade on Main Street, no matter how long it has been going on, needs to apply to the City for permission. In order for Main Street, which is State Highway M-21, to be

closed a number of things have to happen. We have to notify the State and then the LPD needs to prepare to divert traffic and block parking on Main Street. This is true for all parades - Homecoming, Riverwalk, and Christmas all come to mind. Now, let me flash back to 2020 when ALL parades were cancelled in Michigan. The City was contacted by someone at the VFW asking permission to have the service at the cemetery if social distancing/mask protocols were observed. I voted yes along with the other Council members. This year we were given a memo by City Manager Burns telling us the VFW wanted to repeat last year's service at the cemetery. In my mind, the VFW was speaking as the entity for both the parade

and the service. So I voted to allow them to do what they did last year - no parade, but a service in the City owned cemetery. This was interpreted by members of the American Legion and the VFW as a vote against the parade. Not so. My vote was to allow the same event as last year - not to prevent a parade. This may sound like a wiggle, but until last Saturday I did not know that what I perceived as a single event was actually a combination of two events put on by two organizations. I hope this clarifies my vote on the matter. I also hope that members of the American Legion can accept my apology for the misunderstanding and can rest assured that there will be no further misunderstanding of this time in my remaining years on Council.
Cliff Yankovich
Lowell City Council

Editor,
Lowell Goes from the "Next Place to Be" to "The next place to be high" The Committee to elect Jake Davenport released the following Statement regarding Candidate Jake Davenport's concerns over the number of marijuana businesses in town:
"Lowell has gone from the next place to be to the next place to be high. To be very clear, I am a strong proponent of Laissez faire economics, but when is enough, enough? We have close to a dozen recreational cannabis facilities built, under construction, or in the approval process. The excuse we keep receiving about the marijuana ordinance and its lack of dispensary limits is that the drafters of the ordinance tried to prevent lawsuits. I do not view that as a valid excuse, and it is simply that, an excuse. Why did no one issue a study to understand the city's capacity? Why wasn't the zoning for marijuana shops made stricter, and require a larger buffer to help limit the number of dispensaries and keep them away from residential areas? Why was this ordinance put into place with a lack of foresight for all the potential consequences of no number limits? Even with a 60 percent -40 percent passage of the 2018 Marijuana legalization proposal in the city, many folks who voted in favor of the proposal do not want our community to move in this direction. Moving forward, we must confront our problems with foresight, not short sightedness. Short sightedness is what resulted in the biodigester incident, it's what resulted in our infrastructure mess, and it is what is resulting in Lowell becoming the pot capitol of West Michigan. I am determined to end short sighted decisions once I am elected. We rob our children of their future every time we repeat this mistake. I will not let this happen."
Committee to elect Jake Davenport



125 years ago
Lowell Ledger
August 14, 1896

This edition of the Lowell Ledger is missing.

100 years ago
The Lowell Ledger
August 18, 1921

A law suit brought against the Village of Lowell by Fred Williams, of the George Williams, of Smyrna estate and his attorney, R. A. Hawley, of Ionia, for alleged damages by overflow of the Lowell dam at Smyrna, which has been hanging fire for the past ten years, is on trial this week before Judge Brown at Ionia, with Attorneys Shivel and Lindsey, appearing for Lowell.

Seventy-five state troopers armed with rifles and equipped with high speed motor boats to patrol Detroit river and lake St. Clair to keep out Canadian booze, does not look as if law-breakers are to be allowed to have things all their own way. Rum running may be great sport while it lasts but many have found to their sorrow that "He laughs best who laughs last." In the long run, it pays to be decent.

A Michigan dead beat who has been twice paroled from the Ionia reformatory has again been arrested this time at Jacksonville, Fla. Next time, if some state official does not have softening of the brain, perhaps he will be permitted to serve out his term.

Continued, page 12

NEWSPAPERS the lowell ledger

Outperform Direct Mail in Michigan

Michiganians depend on newspapers for advertising inserts¹

Newspapers are the preferred source of coupons over direct mail.

82% of consumers use coupons received through newspaper inserts¹

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

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

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

79% of adults made a purchase in the past 30 days³ as the result of reading a newspaper ad in the past 30 days³

17.2% of adults made a purchase in the past 90 days as the result of a direct mail flyer³

Direct mail lacks the effective reach of newspaper advertising.

86% of adults look at newspaper inserts to get the best deals³

72% of Michigan adults never bought anything as the result of a direct mail piece²

50% of Michigan adults did not buy anything as the result of a direct mail piece in the past year²

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

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.
Wayne A. Christenson, D.O.
Tracy L. Lixie, D.O.

Laura E. Kass, PA-C
Kaili M. Walker, PA-C
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 third round of the alphabet.

R is for Wesley A. Roth

Wesley Roth was a Lowell businessman, living from 1903-1966. Roth owned a furniture company and was a licensed embalmer. He worked as an undertaker and was the 'Roth' in the Roth-Gerst Funeral Home.

A funeral home has an important role in any town. The directors, greeters and employees are the unsung heroes. They care for and support the townsfolk at their hardest, most sorrowful times.

In the spring of 1925, Roth began a partnership with his father-in-law, John Brezina, operating a furniture store and mortuary at 220 West Main St.

While it may seem odd today, furniture makers were skilled craftsman and making caskets became a natural part of their business. Roth was also a licensed embalmer.

The growing business later moved to 202 West Main where the Yeiter Funeral Chapel (1927-1938) had been. You can still see the word "Chapel" in the glass window at that



Roth Funeral Home on N. Hudson.

location. Roth continued using his old location for storage.

John Brezina died in 1932, leaving Roth to work the business alone until 1944 when his sons joined the business with the new name of Roth & Sons. The sons were J. Jerald, Donald and Richard. Jerry had graduated with a degree in Mortuary Science and was also a licensed embalmer.

In January of 1945, there was an unexplained suspicious fire at the 220 W. Main location and much of the storage area for Roth & Sons was destroyed. This wasn't just a business loss for them but also for the servicemen who had gone overseas that had stored their belongings here with the permission of the Roths.

Roth & Sons built and moved into the new Roth Funeral Home at 305 N. Hudson in May, 1950.

Wesley Roth operated his funeral home and furniture

business for over 30 years. He served his community as village president for 20 years, was a charter member of the Rotary club, member of the Board of Trade, Chamber of Commerce president, director of the State Savings Bank and director of Lowell Savings & Loan Association. He was also a Lowell Lodge member, Shrine Saladin Temple member, and Lowell Congregational Church member.

Upon his death in 1966, his son Jerry became President of the Roth Funeral Home. Jerry Roth passed away soon after, in 1971. He had followed in his father's footsteps in vocation, and also in service to his community. Besides serving in the navy during World War II, he

also served as a President of the Lowell Rotary Club, a director of the Lowell Showboat, and was a member of the Moose Lodge.

David Gerst Sr, purchased the Roth Funeral Home in 1971 and renamed it the Roth-Gerst Funeral Home. Together with the Gerst sons the business has continued serving the Lowell community. Their service is not simply by meeting the needs of the grieving, but also in working towards the betterment of the community. Today, despite their own family's loss of David Sr., David and Mark Gerst continue the Roth- and now Gerst-commitment to Lowell.

Insomnia

Insomnia is a sleep disorder, characterized by the inability to fall asleep and/or frequent

awakenings thereafter. Insomnia is a very common condition affecting up to one third of adults, and can cause daytime symptoms such as irritability and fatigue. There are many causes for insomnia, including chronic illness, stress, anxiety or depression, medications, caffeine and nicotine. People who work night shift, rotating shifts or a combination of schedules also are more likely to experience insomnia. For people who struggle with insomnia, there are several behavioral strategies to implement to improve sleep quality:

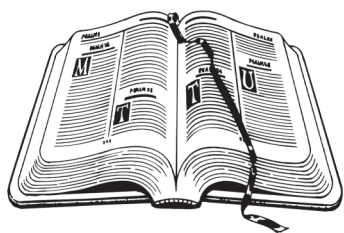
- Avoid taking naps during the day.
- Exercise 30 minutes daily, but not within two hours of bedtime.
- Keep your bedroom quiet, dark and at a comfortable temperature. Some people benefit from white or ambient noise as well.



Improving sleep habits can take time and diligence, but if you are still struggling, your health care provider may be able to offer medications to help. Sleep medications are not intended for long term use, and should only be used under the guidance of a health care professional.

Establish a bedtime routine and aim

area churches



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Worship Service - Sundays 10 AM
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Joseph Fremer, Pastor **897-8307**
All facilities are wheelchair accessible

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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**

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

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402 Amity Street • 616-897-9820
Website: www.stmarylowell.com

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Confession: Saturdays 3-4:30 pm

Prayer & Adoration: Wednesdays 8 am to 7 pm
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WORSHIP
11 am on the Riverwalk

Sr. Pastor - Brad Brillhart

Show Local Businesses Some Love!

happy birthday

AUGUST 11
Mike Wilzcewski,
Jordan Warren.

AUGUST 12
Robin Briggs, Linda Uzarski, Steve Martin Sr., Alex Richmond.

AUGUST 15
Ben Raymor, Dick VanOverbeek, Bill Barber, Dena Baylis, Donnie Shaffer, Barb Callihan, Kim Tubergen, Deb Wright, Pam Kline.

AUGUST 13
Robert Hewitt, Ryan Christenson, Ryan Roe.

AUGUST 16
Helen Vezino, Don Gasper, Trent Raab, Mike Mooney, Nolan Foster.

AUGUST 14
Adam Billingsley, Aaron Christenson, Betsey Brenk, Bob Wilzcewski.

AUGUST 17
Brittany Essich, Jordan Harding.

MSU athletic director Bill Beekman speaks at Lowell Rotary meeting

by Tim McAllister
lead reporter

Recently resigned Michigan State University athletic director Bill Beekman spent part of his last day on the job here in Lowell, where he was the featured speaker and participated in a Q&A at the Lowell Rotary meeting at city hall on Wednesday, Aug. 4.

The day following his appearance in Lowell, Beekman announced his resignation from the MSU athletic director position in favor of a new role at the university, vice president for strategic initiatives. According to an MSU press release, this is a newly created position, and Beekman will begin work this fall “to help coordinate MSU’s strategic plan implementation efforts.”

“I have been honored to serve as athletic director at Michigan State, and I thank the board of trustees and our administration for this opportunity,” Beekman said in an Aug. 5 press release. “While we’ve experienced the most challenging 18 months in the history of college athletics, we’ve pushed forward on many fronts, laying the groundwork for the future. Great things are ahead for Michigan State athletics. I’m also excited for this new role in the administrative team as the vice president for strategic initiatives, working with President [Samuel] Stanley to drive our great university forward.”

In retrospect, some of Beekman’s remarks in Lowell last week could be interpreted as a glance backward by somebody with their foot out the door.

“My greatest frustration is just the chaos of college sports and how so many decisions are driven by money,” Beekman said. “I didn’t grow up in sports. I ran one year of cross country in high school, and that was because I could put one foot in front of the other. I had barely enough coordination to walk! So I’m not an athlete by birth, and

I didn’t grow up that way. I grew up at Michigan State on the academic side of the house and I’m a little sort of counterintuitive sometimes with my fellow athletic directors. But my greatest frustration is that I think we lose sight of taking care of the kids and having them be a priority in the throes of TV revenue and marketing rights and expansion for the sake of generating money. And I think that it’s going to get worse before it gets better. Paying coaches, paying anybody in an athletic department, myself included, obscene amounts of money, it’s ridiculous. The NCAA wants to go to the federal government for solutions on [name, image and likeness]. But anytime you go to Congress for a solution, beware of what you ask for! They’re going to have their own solution. So I proposed to the conference what if, as part of our solution, we proposed sort of an exception to antitrust rules where we limit coaches’ salaries and the salaries of everybody in the athletic department to no more than, say, the average of the 20 highest-paid faculty members at your university. At Michigan State we have some pretty highly-paid folks in the medical school and the business school, so that’d be maybe \$400,000. From my perspective, that’s a livable wage in East Lansing, Michigan! And that would save us over \$10 million, which you could then put into student athletes. And a lot of what you’re seeing in name, image and likeness, in some of these the litigation is coming from students or former students. I think it is based on the massive differential between what we do for a student and what we do for a coach. And I think if you could narrow that gap, your average football player isn’t going to be offended if the TV revenue supports the field hockey program or the TV revenue supports their buddies in cross country. But it’s really sort of grinding when it just makes somebody

their next \$8 million. And that’s a little bit naive on my part, because that’s kind of the business, but that is frustrating.”

Mac McPherson was the Lowell Rotary member primarily responsible for arranging Beekman’s visit.

“Bill Beekman is a very smart guy,” McPherson said during a phone interview several days before the event. “He’s a lawyer who got his law degree from Wayne State, his MBA from Northwestern and his bachelor’s degree from Michigan State. It’s a very good time for a university to have an athletic director who has legal training.”

“Bill has served the university as executive director of the MSU Alumni Association, he has experience as VP of university finance, he was VP and secretary of the MSU board of trustees and he is currently chairman of the MSU Employees Credit Union board,” McPherson said to introduce Beekman on Aug. 4. “He, therefore, in my judgment, has three key skills at the highest level in the university: alumni, budget and administration. In early 2018, interim MSU president Gov. John Engler appointed Bill as interim athletic director, and then in July of 2018 the board of trustees hired Mr. Beekman as the vice president and director of athletics. After Bill was officially the AD, Engler made a public comment that he and Bill had attended a regional conference together that was put together for university presidents and their athletic directors. Engler noted that many of the big issues

of the day nationally in Division One athletics have legal ramifications. You’ve heard a lot about all of that in the news. After Bill was officially appointed athletic director, Engler commented publicly that Bill’s legal training was a valid qualification for weighing in on legal challenges possibly impacting Division One athletics, both in the Big Ten and, eventually, nationally.”

Beekman began his Aug. 4 remarks by describing the overall philosophy of his department.

“In MSU athletics, we have two overarching principles,” Beekman said. “We start with what I call our concentric circle model. That is where the student athlete is at the center of everything we do, and in the next circle are the people that impact the student athlete on a daily basis. People like athletic trainers, strength and conditioning personnel, academic support personnel, their coaches and assisting coaches. And then there are several rings beyond that, including the bureaucrats of the organization - people like me. What we try to keep everybody focused on is the center circle so that the student athlete is at the center of every decision we make and everything we do. If we start with that in mind, then the number of bad decisions or wrong decisions we make hopefully gets fairly narrow. So one is that we’re a student-focused organization. That would seem to go without saying, but I think it’s always good to remind ourselves of that. Second, we’re focused on health, safety and wellness. It’s no secret that we’ve had



Recently resigned MSU athletic director Bill Beekman during his speech to the Lowell Rotary on Wednesday, Aug. 4.

some challenges at Michigan State. There have been many challenges across higher education. Our friends in Ann Arbor have had similar challenges. We need to be focused, each and every day, on the health and wellness of our student athletes. In recent years, we’ve had a very strong focus on our athletic training staff, our strength and conditioning staff and our medical personnel. We’ve hired, for our primary care physicians, a number of female physicians so that each female student athlete can see a female physician as a point of first care, which is not something that higher

education has historically done. Beyond that we have three goals. Our goals are for each student athlete to be successful on the field of play, successful in the classroom, and that we’re setting them up to be successful in life. What I tell our student athletes is that my definition of the Spartan is a person that makes their corner of the world a better place, in whatever capacity that is. In a very few cases, it’ll be as a professional athlete. More often than not, it’ll be as a member of

Beekman, continued, page 10



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Lowell Community

We would love to meet you.

Please join us for a picnic
(burgers & hot dogs on the grill)

Sat., August 14
from 1 pm - 5 pm

Meet the Agelaga's - a missionary family serving in France - home on furlough

This gathering is open to all



Calvary Christian Ref Church
1151 W. Main St., Lowell

NOTICE

VERGENNES TOWNSHIP

2021 MEETING SCHEDULE (UPDATED!)

All meetings are held at the NEW Vergennes Township Hall Board Room, located at **69 Lincoln Lake Ave NE., Lowell, Michigan** at 7 pm.

For further information, phone 616-897-5671 or visit the township website at www.vergennestwp.org.

The Vergennes Township Regular Board Meetings for 2021 are scheduled as follows:
August 16, September 20, October 18, November 15, December 20

Shantell Ford
Vergennes Township Clerk

Amber Curtis running to raise money for masks



Amber Curtis



Dr. Mariel Biancardi



Brian Kimble

by Tim McAllister
lead reporter

LHS '17 grad Amber Curtis plans to run a 26.2 mile solo marathon on Friday, Aug. 13 to help raise \$35,000 to buy PPE that is desperately needed by Dr. Mariel Biancardi, a former LHS exchange student from Brazil who is now an oral surgeon.

“Due to a variety of different reasons, Mariel and her colleagues aren’t getting the PPE they need,” Curtis said. “She has to wear the same mask for up to two weeks. So the company that

I’m working for, Alliant Biotech, is raising money to send them masks. Alliant Biotech is connected to Mariel because our vice president of business development, Brian Kimble, hosted Mariel as a foreign exchange student during her time here in West Michigan. Brian lived in Lowell for 20 years and was a football coach for 12 years. Brian views Mariel as his Brazilian daughter because he hosted her as a foreign exchange student in

Lowell back in 2007. They have kept in touch since. Through one of their recent phone conversations, Mariel had mentioned some of the challenges she is currently facing as an oral surgeon in Brazil. She works with many people, some of whom are cancer patients. She is truly an amazing human, so we’re doing everything in our power to help. Shortly after, Alliant Biotech started a GoFundMe.”

For more information or to donate to the GoFundMe

campaign, visit gofundme.com/f/pass-the-mask.

“Our initial goal is to send Mariel and her colleagues \$35,000 worth of masks,” Curtis said. “After that goal is accomplished, we have an additional goal to send up to \$2 million worth of masks to other locations around the world that need them.”

Curtis made the news for a charity run a few years ago when she ran from San Francisco to Boston and raised \$10,000 for the Ulman Cancer Fund for Young Adults.

“I love running and raising money for things that I care about and am passionate about,” Curtis said. “During the summer of 2019, I ran from San Francisco to Boston to raise money for young adults affected by cancer. This

was done relay-style with a team of 27 other people, so we individually averaged about 10 to 16 miles every day with rest days here and there.”

Curtis’s run on Aug. 13 is not as regimented as that previous one.

“It’s not a race, but simply to raise money and awareness for Mariel,” Curtis said. “In terms of the start and finish line, that will just be my house in Lowell. I’m just planning on weaving in and out of

streets until my watch says 26.2 miles.”

Earlier this year, Curtis graduated from Grand Valley State University with bachelor’s degrees in both marketing and general management. She is currently a marketing intern at Alliant Biotech.

“This fundraising initiative is one of my biggest tasks at the moment, but I do other things surrounding social media, marketing collateral, photo and video, etc.,” Curtis said.



BUILDING OUR COMMUNITY

LITEHOUSE FAMILY YMCA

We are excited to announce that we will be expanding our offerings at a new location, the former site of the Impact Church. The new Y will be designed to meet the needs of our Lowell community and expand the services that have positively impacted individuals and families for generations.

FACILITY HIGHLIGHTS

- Health & Fitness Center
- Group Exercise Studios
- Locker Rooms
- KidZone & Activity Center
- Administrative Offices
- Multi-Purpose Community Rooms
- Chapel



gymca.org/lowell

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More Info Here

PINK ARROW PRIDE

THURS., AUG. 26 • LOWELL HOSTS MONA SHORES BOB PERRY FIELD AT RED ARROW MEMORIAL STADIUM

PARKING

ALL HIGH SCHOOL EVENT PARKING MUST ENTER AT VERGENNES ENTRANCE.

Lower stadium lot is for Handicap and parking pass only. (must enter off of Alden Nash entrance)



SHUTTLE PARKING

is available starting at 4:30 p.m. from Cherry Creek Elementary (Foreman St.) AND Impact Church (across from Meijer) pick-up and drop-off. Buses will start return trips at the start of the 3rd quarter.

Per CDC directive, face masks must be worn on the shuttle buses. If you do not have one, you will be given one upon entering the bus.

SCHEDULE FOR EVENT DAY

AUGUST 26 * Approximate times

- 2:30 pm GATES OPEN
- 3:00 pm Boosters Concessions Open
- 3:30 pm National Anthem presented
Sololist, Lowell Student
- 3:30 pm Volleyball introduction and match - *Sponsored by ENWORK*
Lowell vs. Caledonia
- 3:30 pm Soccer introduction and match -
Lowell vs. FHE
- 6:00 pm Survivor and Honoree Tribute
Song by student under the direction of Nathan Masterson
- 6:35 pm Football Player, Cheerleader and Honoree introduction *on field*
- 7:00 pm National Anthem presented
LHS Vocal Group under the direction of Nathan Masterson
- 7:10 pm PINK ARROW GAME -
Lowell Pink Arrows vs. Mona Shores Sailors

AT THE GATE BE SURE AND PICK UP YOUR **COMMEMORATIVE PROGRAM** - \$1 minimum donation

DONATIONS ACCEPTED
If you would like to pledge a gift to Pink Arrow/Gilda's Club, please visit this site: <https://give.communityfunded.com/o/cf/i/pink-arrow-pride-2020> or through pay-pal or by mailing a check (made out to Pink Arrow Pride) to PO Box 246, Lowell, MI 49331

ARROW FORCE XIV SHIRTS

Purchase your Arrow Force XIV shirts at
FANS IN THE STANDS, 207 E. MAIN • 897-7200
HEIDI'S FARMSTAND, 11999 CASCADE RD • 897-6707
MI HOMETOWN FURNISHINGS, 312 E. MAIN • 987-3377
RED BARN MARKET, 3550 ALDEN NASH NE • 987-3182

At Noon on Game Day - Shirts at Stadium only

YOUR \$20 SHIRT:
LONG SLEEVE \$25 • (2XL - 5XL extra charge)

- Helps those in Lowell traveling a cancer journey
- Community Wellness/Family Support and Gilda's Club of Lowell
- Supports Kathy Talus scholarship
- Supports Dr. Donald Gerard medical scholarships

YOUR SHIRT IS YOUR TICKET TO THE DAY'S EVENTS

- Donation stays local and there is no administration cost.

THANK YOU TO ALL THE VOLUNTEERS

Thanks! *Fans in the Stands, Heidi's Farmstand, MI Hometown Furnishings & Red Barn Market - for selling our T-Shirts*

Thanks! *Bus Shuttle Volunteer Drivers*

Thanks! *Lowell Light & Power - for hanging our banners*

Thanks! *Coin Toss Honoree*

Thanks! *Golf Cart Taxi Sponsors*

Thanks! *Golf Cart Taxi Volunteer Drivers*

Thanks! *To the volunteers who painted the field*

CONCESSION TICKETS

All concessions - Athletic Boosters will be accepting **PINK TICKETS ONLY** in \$1 increments. Selling tickets throughout the concession area. All items will be clearly priced per number of tickets at each booth. There will be multiple grill sites as well. This system will speed the process for fast service.

FOR HONOREES - Pink Arrow Jersey presentations on SOUTH END of playing field DIRECTLY AFTER THE GAME!

PROUD PINK SPONSORS



The Restless Viking
The World Less Traveled
With Chuck & Martha Hayden
www.restless-viking.com

~ The Rock Cafee - Route 66

by Martha Hayden

One amazing stop along Route 66 is The Rock Cafe! Dawn Welch is the proprietor. She and her best friend, Beverly, create a fun, family atmosphere for regulars and travelers alike. Dawn's first job was on a cruise ship, so she has a world-wide repertoire of recipes on her menu. She said, "Cooking makes me feel empowered." Beverly commented, "It's good food with a little attitude."

Beverly calls Dawn, "Olive Oil." Dawn says Beverly is "a spitfire."

Dawn has shown care for her community by hiring family teams: parents and their teenagers.

Disney producers were inspired by Dawn Welch. Her hardworking, NO non-sense attitude charmed them. The Disney duo created the character Sally based on Dawn. Sally is the blue Porsche attorney in the 2006 Disney movie, "Cars."

The History of The Rock Cafe

Roy Rives started the process of building The Rock Cafe in 1936 by pouring the concrete foundation by wheelbarrow. He hired high school students as his crew. The rocks came from leftover piles created by the construction of Route 66. It is said that his entire rock supply was purchased for five dollars. Roy opened the doors in August of 1939.

Roy Rives' business was successful even through the rationing during World War II. Travelers and GI's flocked to The Rock Cafe for affordable food and quenching drinks as the restaurant had doubled as a Greyhound Bus stop.

In the late 1940's the 'modern' neon sign was added beckoning tourists inside for meals anytime day or night. The restaurant was open 24 hours!

A new expressway was being built in the mid 1980's, bypassing the businesses in the small towns along Route

66. However, the Rock Cafe remained steadfast even with the decommissioning of Route 66.

In 1993 the new owners surveyed the extensive upgrades needed to keep the restaurant up to code. It was an overwhelmingly slow process. Then, a tornado struck Stroud, Oklahoma in 1999 which devastated the local economy.

The owners held hope and received a cost share grant from the National Park Service's Route 66 Corridor

Preservation Program in 2001. With the original floor



The 'giraffe-style' rocks were leftovers from the construction of Route 66.

plans in hand, they remodeled the entire interior. The exterior was made new as well. The rocks were repaired to their original glory.

Dawn persevered when a fire devastated the property in 2008. Within a year, after meticulous work, the cafe

reopened again. Currently the hours are 7:00 am – 8:00 pm daily with the restaurant being closed on Sundays and Mondays. It's a must see! So plan better than we did. We had arrived in Stroud, Oklahoma on a Monday, so unfortunately The Rock Cafe was closed.

The Stroud Hardware Store

Before we left town we wanted to pick up spray paint for our next stop, The Cadillac Ranch. So we headed to the hardware store where Ranger, the dog, greets everyone at the door.

The cat lazily stretched on a chair near the window. I felt like I'd walked back into the 1950's. Aisles of tools were managed by family pets. It was charming!

Ranger not only lives along Route 66, but gets a kick out of eating suckers! His person said I could indulge Ranger

with a lollipop.

It's the people and animals we meet that make lasting memories from our road trips!

Resource: youtu.be/Y-iSu70MemU

Bill Beekman, continued

the working community in some capacity, as a parent, whatever it might be, but they're making their corner of the world a better place. So it's our job to give them the tools and the support they need to be able to go out into the world and do that. And if we've done that, then ultimately we're successful. To get them to that point, they need to have a strong academic background, take their classes seriously and graduate with their degree. And if we can win a few games along the way, so much the better! Of course, our coaches are focused on winning the games and keeping their kids successful in the classroom, but as a collective, as an athletic department, those really are the three priorities that we focus on. From my perspective, the highest priority is having those young people graduate from Michigan State University and go out in whatever capacity it might be to make their corner of the world a better place."

Beekman took particular pride in describing the academic performance of MSU athletes.

"Academically, we've been very strong," Beekman said. "Our highest cumulative GPA in athletic department history was posted this spring, a 3.3 GPA, and that's the average of all athletes in our department. We had 20 teams post a cumulative GPA this past year of 3.0 or higher, and we had 545 of our about 700 student athletes have a GPA of 3.0 or higher. Student athletes represent about two percent of the student population, and [last year] we had 10 percent of the 4.0 graduates, so that's something we're really proud of. We've really focused on academics, and many of our programs are very, very strong."

Beekman went on to discuss the budget of the athletic department, the challenges of the pandemic year and the massive revenues generated by college sports.

"Michigan State athletics is a big organization," Beekman said. "We have 23 varsity sports, 12 on the women's side and 11 on the men's side. We're spread out across 10 different facilities that we operate, some are not on campus, with a staff

of about 250 people, all full-time employees, and a budget of about \$140 million, on average. From a financial perspective, the last year has been probably the most challenging year in the history of college athletics. At Michigan State, playing nine of our 12 football games and then not having fans in attendance for any of those games, cost us. And then you layer men's basketball on top of that, which is our other revenue generating sport, it cost us about \$80 million on a \$140 million budget. We lost \$80 million in revenue. We were able to cut expenses by almost \$60 million, so that was very positive. The accountants are still kind of sorting out where everything landed, but I'm very proud to say that we at Michigan State will finish the fiscal year at just about break-even. Which is a pretty extraordinary accomplishment, and better than any other Big Ten school, so that's something we're very proud of. Iowa just announced that they're borrowing \$50 million from their university, Michigan is at about \$40 million, Penn State is at \$25 million and others are in that range.

So not having to borrow, if anything a negligible amount, from the university puts us in a much better position going forward to be able to improve our facilities and programs. We receive no revenue from the university, we don't receive any money from tuition or from state appropriations. All of our money is generated through athletics-related activity. From my perspective as an athletic director, that's a really important bright line, so that tuition money, state appropriations and all those other sources of revenue can go to the academic mission of the university. It's very important that we keep that bright line bright, and that whatever revenue we have to spend is generated through athletics. When I talk about a \$140 million budget, about a third of that, about \$45 million, is television revenue. That's the Big Ten Network, and it's mostly football, probably about 80 to 85 percent football, and the rest is men's basketball. It's also our time on ESPN, the Fox networks, ABC and CBS for basketball. The next biggest source of revenue for us is tickets, about \$21

million a year in ticket sales. Most of that is football. In a good year, we'd be at about \$20 million in sales for football and \$4 million for basketball, but in an average year about \$21 million. And then you go into premium seating, the seat premiums that people pay or people who have seats in clubs or on the seventh floor in the Huntington Club. Those collectively generate for us about \$12 million in seat premiums and premium seating. Donors give us about \$15 million a year. In postseason revenue, the Big Ten shares bowl revenue, so if you go to a really great bowl, that bowl might pay \$30 million. If you don't go to a bowl, obviously, there's zero dollars. What the Big Ten does is, they put that all in a big pot and spreads it 14 ways so everybody gets the same amount. For a school that isn't particularly competitive, that's a great help. For a school that is going to a premier bowl every year, you don't get what you might have otherwise, but the conference gets stronger. We do the same thing in basketball. In the NCAA basketball tournament,

every game you play, you get a share of the revenue. Michigan State, given our success in the NCAA basketball tournament over Tom Izzo's career, we've far exceed the average of what we would get from that, but it's shared 14 ways across the Big Ten with the goal of making the conference stronger. To give you a little sense of perspective, the wealthiest athletic department in the Big Ten is Ohio State. Their budget ranges from \$205 to \$210 million. At the other end of the spectrum, you have a number of schools that hover around the \$105 to \$110 million mark, like Maryland, Rutgers, Indiana and Purdue, and then everybody else tends to be between \$100 and \$200 million. After Ohio State, you have Penn State, Michigan and Wisconsin, and then we'd be about fifth with \$140 million."

Beekman discussed the concept of dropping certain sports to save money, something MSU has done recently.

"This past year we

Beekman, continued, page 11

Bill Beekman, continued



Mac McPherson of the Lowell Rotary.

dropped men's and women's swimming and diving," Beekman said. "Our pool is 50 years old, it's the weakest sport that we had and the sport that would cost the most to fix, because you're really talking about a new pool. And so I think it was, unfortunately, the right thing to do. It saved our budget about \$2.1 million that we can then spend on the rest of our student athletes. I think it will be a growing trend. You look at the Big Ten, we average about 23 to 24 sports per school, with the goal of having relatively broad offerings. You look at the SEC and you see the average of about 18 sports per school, which allows them to spend a lot more money on football."

Beekman said he was looking forward to the return of college sports this fall.

"We're very excited about the fall," Beekman said. "[MSU football coach] Mel Tucker is just wired beyond belief. He is pumped. His first season was a struggle, but you have to remember that we hired Mel on Feb. 12, and on March 15 we were shut down. He hadn't even hired all his assistant coaches at that point. So he was teaching the playbook via Zoom and his strength and conditioning people were working with their student athletes via Zoom. He first interacted with his team face-to-face about five weeks before the first game. But two-and-five with wins against two top-15 programs, Michigan and Northwestern, last year, was not a bad start for a person who probably had as challenging an environment to work in as anybody in the country, as a new coach that was hired relatively late in the process. So Mel is very, very excited. We start on the road against Northwestern, our first home game is Sept. 11 against Youngstown State. At this point, if the world is then as it is today, we hope to have a full house. We're not

anticipating requiring masks, we're anticipating allowing people to tailgate in the way that they normally would and we're very hopeful that we'll have a full house. As we move to indoor events, we may or may not be in mask mode, it's a little hard to know, more to follow on that, but we're ready for football and very excited about the future."

Beekman discussed recent changes to "name, image and likeness" rules and how they impact student athletes.

"Name, image and likeness is the ability of a student athlete to benefit from or profit from their name, image or likeness," Beekman said. "Translated, that means that, going forward, a student athlete can do a variety of things to make money while they're a student athlete, from doing

a television commercial for a local business to benefiting off of a YouTube page, generating money through social media, selling autographs, profiting from the sale of jerseys with their name and number on them and those kinds of things. I think that there were some contexts in which student athletes really had gotten the short end of the stick over the years. The easy example is a tennis player or a golfer. It was hard for them, under our rules, to go home over the summer and make some money giving tennis or golf lessons, just to have a summer job doing that. You hear that the quarterback at Alabama has contracts for upwards of a million dollars. I do think that there will be some challenges with what student athletes' priorities are. Our biggest concern, frankly, is making sure that our students don't get taken. We can wrap our arms around them with a lot of education and a lot of support, but under the rules we can't help them negotiate the deal, they have to do that on their own or they have to hire their own their own agent or lawyer. So what we're trying as hard as we can to do is to make sure that our student athletes aren't taken advantage of and that they get a fair shake. If we could do that, I'd be happy. It's been since July 1, so we're a little over a month into these new rules, and at MSU thus far we have about 23 student athletes who have had some sort of a name, image, likeness transaction for a total of

\$2,800. And you'll find this interesting, the number one contract so far is for tooth whitening. Not what I would have expected! So I think it will start slow, and I think it will evolve as we go. And I think the students that have the most likelihood of making money aren't necessarily the best athletes, I think they're the people that can sell themselves most creatively and interestingly on YouTube, Instagram, Tik Tok and those kinds of things, and those aren't necessarily your star athletes."

Student athletes have the option of taking various financial classes if they suddenly become incredibly wealthy.

"We contract with two different companies, one is named Influencer and the other is Anomaly," Beekman said. "They help students not only understand their value to make sure that they're making a good deal, but they also then provide both online tutorials as well as in-person support for all kinds of different financial literacy programs. It's actually something that we've done for many, many years just as part of our normal student wellness and life skills curriculum that we have. We've ramped that up more recently to include increased financial literacy classes across the board that students could take advantage of as they as they walk into name, image and likeness. It's hard because, as I said, we can sort of wrap our arms around them so far, and provide things like financial literacy classes and give them some

support on things to look for when you hire an agent, things to look for when you hire an attorney, questions you should be asking, but we can't do that for them or with them. We can't be in the room. So, at some level, you sort of try and encourage them to get as armed with information as they can and then they've got to make decisions about who they trust and who they want to work with. We can give them information, training and support, but we can't cut the deal for them, we can't negotiate the deal for them. So we try and get them as prepped as we can, but ultimately they have to walk into the room without us and cut the deal. It's the piece I worry about, because I think some students will get great support, learn a lot and make good decisions, and yet there's always risk that some students could be taken advantage of. That's kind of scary. But there are some good opportunities for students. Hopefully more good than bad, but time will tell."

Conference expansion was another hot topic.

"I think the possibility of Texas and Oklahoma going to the SEC from the Big 12 is interesting," Beekman said. "They were the big dogs, and as the big dogs in the Big 12, it was easier for them to get into the college football playoffs as a Big 12 representative. The trade-off they make by going to the SEC is that they've got a far more competitive conference, and the logic behind that is can the SEC

capitalize on the media to generate tens of millions of dollars more for all those schools? It's pure and simple a media revenue play. Part of it also is exacerbated by the fact that the NCAA has been so incredibly weak over the last decade. On things like name, image and likeness, the NCAA was literally a decade behind. The rules that have come out, different rules in different states, different states passing different laws, wildly inconsistent, is at some level a function of the fact that the NCAA didn't come out early enough, and state legislatures just sort of sort of dared them. That plays into it. From a Big Ten perspective, there is not a whole lot I can say, but what I would say is that, generally, the Big Ten has only added schools that are members of the Association of American Universities. The AAU represents the top 62 research universities in the nation. Or so they would claim, some that aren't in would claim they should be. The Big Ten has only admitted from among those 62 AAU schools. In the current Big Ten configuration, Nebraska left the AAU but they were a member when they joined. From my perspective, if you were thinking about who might join the Big Ten if there was going to be some addition, it's sort of a Venn diagram with two circles. One is AAU member schools, if the Big Ten continues to think of itself as an academic conference and that is a high

Beekman, continued, page 12

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obituaries

WOOD

The family of Nancy J. Wood and William (Bill) H. Wood of Lowell, MI is saddened to announce her passing, after a courageous battle with cancer, on August 3, 2021 and his passing on August 9, 2021. They are survived by their son, Ron Wood and daughter, Corrie VanRavenswaay, honorary daughter Sue Westcott; grandchildren Jennifer Williams (Keith Del Percio) and Amanda Durkee (Bobby Koperski); great grandchild, Noah VanRavenswaay and Gavin Dikker; sisters Mary Early (Herb) and Margaret Kehrer; brothers Ronald (Ron) Wood (Jane) and Richard (Rick) Briggs (Carol); sister-in-law Ruth Wood; nieces Shannon Hanley and Melissa Hanley; great nephew Liam Hanley; and dear friends Nancy Westcott, Brian Westcott (Tom Anderson), Pamela Brundell (Bryan). Nancy was born in Three Rivers, MI and was the first-born daughter of Cecil and Esther DeRushia. They moved to Lowell when she was still a baby. Nancy attended grade school through high school in Lowell. Bill was born and raised in Lowell and was the oldest boy of six. Nancy and Bill met at the First Congregational Church and it was love at first sight. They married on April 15, 1961 and were excited to welcome their first child, Ron, in November 1962 and their daughter, Corrie, in January 1964. Nancy and Bill lived all their lives in Lowell, and both were extremely active in the church, Lowell Arts Council, Lowell Historical Society, Lowell Women's Club, Masons, and Eastern Star. Their passion and enthusiasm for each other, their children and grandchildren, Eastern Star, Masons, First Congregational Church, and the Lowell community were unrivaled. They were also involved in costuming the Lowell High school theater productions, volunteering at FROM, Fallasburg Fall Festival, Lowell Showboat, and Lowell Historical Museum. Nancy worked for the City of Lowell, as the city clerk for over 20 years and Bill was a lifelong member of the local Carpenters Union and built many of the buildings in the Grand Rapids area. He was also a Lowell Reserve Police Officer for many years. They loved to entertain, and Nancy was the first to start dancing when a good song came on. They always opened their home to all and never met a stranger. They loved to travel and learn about the different customs and cultures. Their story was a true love story for 60 years and was a shining example to everyone. They will truly be missed by all. A gathering of friends and family will be held Thursday August 12, 2021 from 7:00 pm-9:00 pm at the First Congregational Church of Lowell 865 Lincoln Lake Ave. SE, Lowell, MI 49331. Memorial services will be held on Friday August 13, 2021 at 2:00 pm at the First Congregational Church of Lowell 865 Lincoln Lake Ave. SE Lowell, MI 49331 with a small reception immediately following at the church.



Paul Hilton, proprietor of Hilton Orchards, states that it is not necessary to use sugar when canning peaches and that they will taste every bit as good when sweetened at time of eating. They will also keep just as well and that is a big advantage when sugar is scarce.

Wednesday, August 14, was V-J Day, also the annual community picnic sponsored by the Lowell Board of Trade. Practically all stores were closed for the occasion, but not so at Fallasburg park, where hundreds of people saw the program of sports and listened to the fine V-J Day program sponsored by the Clark-Ellis Post of the American Legion, which featured an address by Dr. Jacob Prins, music by the band and vocal numbers, picnic supper and dancing.

James Burnett, for upwards of 40 years known as "the hermit," was found dead in his cabin on Flat River, north of Lowell, last Friday afternoon by two 10-year-old Lowell boys, Vernon Venneman and Robert Litschewaki who had gone to check on Burnett's condition after he told them Sunday he was ill. Deputy Sheriff Frank Stephens was notified and Coroner Simeon LeRoy was called, who said that death was due to natural causes.

75 years The Lowell Ledger August 15, 1946

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50 years The Lowell Ledger August 19, 1971

The job of restoring the driving privileges of more than 12,000 Michigan motorists who are unconstitutionally suspended under the state's financial responsibility law has begun, it was announced by Secretary of State Richard H. Austin. This does not include motorists who were found at fault and subsequently convicted in auto mishaps under Michigan's financial responsibility law, Austin explained.

LEGAL NOTICE

STATE OF MICHIGAN
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COUNTY OF KENT

NOTICE TO
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Decedent's Estate

FILE NO. 21-209711-DE

Estate of JOHN
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Date of birth: 12/20/1940.

TO ALL CREDITORS:

NOTICE TO
CREDITORS: The
decendent, John
Markosky, died
05/05/2021.

Creditors of the
decendent are notified
that all claims against

the estate will be
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presented to Stephen
Markosky, personal
representative, or to
both the probate court
at 180 Ottawa Avenue
NW, Grand Rapids, MI
49503 and the personal
representative within 4
months after the date
of publication of this
notice.

Meredith Curless
(P78235)
410 Bridge St NW
Grand Rapids, MI 49504
616-458-3699

Stephen Markosky
1730 East Choctaw Dr.
London, OH 43140
614-499-0647

Bill Beekman, continued

priority. The other is schools in major media markets. One exception to that would be Notre Dame, which is neither an AAU school nor in a major media market, although you're sort of the Chicago market, but we've got that covered already. This is Bill talking personally, this is not necessarily the perspective of the Big Ten, but if you take those two groups and you align those, you can come up with a very, very small handful of schools that would make sense. I think the Big Ten as it currently exists with 14 schools is very strong [with] great collaborators and great partnerships, so I don't think we're in any hurry to move. [...] Iowa State has a decent football program, the question is whether that's sustainable if their coach [Matt Campbell] gets picked off. Kansas is obviously a very strong basketball program. Neither of them, I think, is in the sweet spot of a good media market, certainly Iowa State isn't. And again, this is purely Bill as an individual speculating. I'm going to make that clear, this is not the perspective of the university or the conference. We've got 23 teams, so we've got to travel, and so does every other Big Ten school. So you look at a Georgia Tech, it's an AAU member that's in the Atlanta media market, that, to me, would be interesting. But there are very few of those opportunities. When you think about the East Coast, there really aren't major publics in the East Coast. You've got U-Conn, Rutgers really is the largest until you go down into the Carolinas. So it's a very small list, from my perspective, that would make it rational where you could generate enough revenue so that you weren't thinning the pot that you spread out."

Beekman discussed Tom Izzo, MSU's head basketball coach since 1995, and his potential retirement.

"Tom is interesting," Beekman said. "He's not going to leave before his son Steven does, so that's one thing. Tom will retire when Tom is ready, but there is still a lot of vinegar in Tom. He's really extraordinary, in that if you go to one of Tom's practices, you see the same energy, the same passion, sometimes the same anger that he had 20 years ago. They're not G-rated, I'll tell you that! Whatever your occupation is - coaching, or if you're a lawyer or an accountant or whatever it might be in life - to be able to walk in

on year 25 and have the same fire in your belly that you had in year one is, from my perspective, a really rare thing. Just to see how they work in practice, there is no letting the foot off the gas. So I think we'll have Tom around for a while."

Beekman responded to a question about the "free transfer rule," another recent change in college athletics.

"There are two sides to it," Beekman said. "On the one hand, students want to have choice and people want to give them choice. On the other hand, if you interviewed 100 freshman athletes at the end of their freshman year, 99 of them will have struggled. It's just hard. If you're the best kid in your high school, you're the best kid in your community, in your region, you go to the next level and you're just another kid. It's hard and it's rigorous, you've got a rigorous academic program and you're away from home. My sensibility is that we would be better served by encouraging students to tough it out. And there are appropriate reasons for people to transfer, no question, but it is not my favorite rule either. We were at a crossroads where we had four sports in the NCAA that required you to sit a year and everything else you could transfer immediately, which was untenable, so you either had to go one way or the other. Either everybody sits a year or everybody can transfer immediately. There were two athletic directors in the Big Ten that voted on our position to have everybody sit a year. I was one of them, that's where I fell out on it. The Big Ten's collective decision was to go the other way. I understand the logic, but I'm a little more where you are, and I think that if we could encourage people to tough it out. Yeah, there are reasons to transfer, but I think those kids earn a little bit more grit along the way."

Finally, Beekman had a few good words for the Lowell athletic department.

"I think that the Lowell High School athletic director [Dee Crowley] is very strong," Beekman said. "What I do know about the program is that they're, by and large, headed in the right direction. I think Lowell is a great community and I think the district is working hard to head in the right direction."



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PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

Grid of puzzle solutions with words like U M P, P O A, S I N, etc.

Grid of numbers for a puzzle solution, ranging from 1 to 9.

Large grid of letters with words circled, including G E P B K P M T H S, B B E Y N R I W X J, etc.

Live the Life You Want

Are you in a toxic or abusive relationship?

Melissa Spino MA LPC CDMS
Life Transitions Therapy LLC

You may think it odd that I titled this article as a question. If someone was in an abusive relationship of course they would know it, right? Sadly, not always. Each of us is raised differently so what we may consider “normal” or “tolerable” is different from person to person. If someone was raised in an abusive household, they may fall victim to this pattern of relationships and find it tolerable. Also, some types of abuse, such as gaslighting, are done in such a way that the person being abused often doesn’t even realize it’s happening.

For anonymous, confidential help available 24/7, call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233 (SAFE) or 1-800-787-3224 (TTY) now.

Common Abuser Traits

There are six common areas of abuse that we see: physical, verbal/emotional, sexual, psychological/mental, financial and cultural. There are many signs of a toxic or abusive relationship. The most common traits seen in abusers or abusive relationships are listed below. This is not a complete list but these are the most often seen.

- The person often denies their violent behavior and feels that it has little negative effect on you or other household/family members.

- Abusers often believe they “own” you and may see you as property or even a sexual object.

- Abusers tend to blame their behavior on external factors. They may blame you, a boss, a co-worker, a family member, stress, or excessive drinking of alcohol etc. What they won’t do is take responsibility for their behavior.

- An abuser may appear to be nice between periods of violence.

- They are often cruel to animals/pets.

- They can be harsh, degrading, make fun of, or judgmental toward you, service industry workers (waitstaff, clerks, etc.), friends, co-workers, children, family, etc. They may make comments directly to the person or just loud enough so that they can be overheard by the person.

- They may show extreme jealousy or possessiveness.

- They may be unpredictable in terms of mood and actions. One



Melissa Spino
MA LPC CDMS

minute they explode in rage for no apparent reason and the next they are being affectionate. It’s that feeling that you are always waiting for the other shoe to drop or walking on egg shells.

- They are verbally or psychologically abusive. This includes name calling and degrading comments. They may insult, humiliate, and/or embarrass you in front of others. They may demean, patronize or belittle you.

- They are physically abusive (grabbing roughly, shaking, hitting, kicking, throwing things at you, hitting you with items, etc.).

- Controlling behavior. They may be very controlling (how you or their children act such as what

you wear, what you can or can’t say etc.). They may monitor and want to know where you are at all times. They may get upset if calls or texts are not replied to immediately. They may even show up just to see if you are where you said you would be.

- They often isolate their partner or family. This may include obstructing you from going to work, school, or being with friends/family.

- They make threats such as: “I will make the kids disappear,” “I will hurt myself if you leave” or “You never know what I might do.”

- They become digital spies. They may check on your emails, texts, call logs, social media accounts, internet history etc. They may go so far as friending you under a fake name to see what you are saying or doing. They may even demand your passwords.

- They may accuse you of flirting with others or having an affair.

- They have outdated beliefs about the roles of women and men in relationships.

- They force sex on their unwilling partner believing it is their right. Sadly, it wasn’t until 1993

that marital rape was made illegal in all 50 US states. Yet, some still assume that sex is something a partner is entitled to, not realizing it is controlling and abusive.

- They may sabotage the use of birth control methods even if it was agreed upon.

- They often control all the finances. They may even have bank accounts in their name only. They may require you to justify every penny spent.

- They may abuse other family members, children, or pets.

- They may harass you at work.

- They gaslight you. Some behaviors of gaslighting include (see my prior article on this):

- They may claim that “everybody” thinks you’re crazy or “they all say” you’re wrong.

- They may tell family members that you don’t want to see them and/or make up reasons why you are not attending a family function.

- They deny that an argument or other situation took place so you question your memory.

- They claim you are the one with anger or abusive behaviors, not them.

- They may destroy or take something of yours and then deny it or say you lost it.

The bottom line is if you believe you are being abused, trust your instincts. The cycle of abuse needs to be stopped for you, friends and family, children and the abuser. It isn’t right and there are options for you to get help.

If you fear immediate physical violence, call 911 or your local emergency services.

If you are not in immediate danger and for anonymous, confidential help available 24/7, call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233 (SAFE) or 1-800-787-3224 (TTY) now. The hotline can put you in touch with local service providers and shelters.

You don’t have to continue to be a victim. You matter and deserve to live a better life. One full of peacefulness, empowerment, happiness and success. You get one life so make it the best one possible! If you’re struggling to get beyond an abusive relationship, a good therapist can help. This article is not intended to diagnose or treat. I hope everyone stays safe and healthy.

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Financial Focus

With Christopher C. Godbold

Edward Jones

Serving Individuals Investors Since 1871

Review your IRA, 401(k) beneficiaries

If you’ve had an IRA and a 401(k) for many years, you may occasionally ask yourself some questions: “Am I contributing enough?” “Am I still funding these accounts with the right mix of investments for my goals and risk tolerance?” But here’s one inquiry you might be overlooking: “Have I used the correct beneficiary designations?” And the answer you get is important.

It wouldn’t be surprising if you haven’t thought much about the beneficiary designation – after all, it was just something you once signed, possibly a long time ago. Is it really that big a deal?

It could be. For one thing, what if your family circumstances have changed since you named a beneficiary? If you’ve remarried, you may not want your former spouse to receive your IRA and 401(k)

assets or the proceeds of your life insurance policy, for which you also named a beneficiary.

However, upon remarriage, many people do review their estate plans, including their wills, living trusts, durable powers of attorney and health care directives. If you’ve revised these documents, do you have to worry about the old beneficiary designations? You might be surprised to learn that these previous designations can supersede what’s in your updated will and other documents. The end result could be an “accidental” inheritance in which your retirement accounts and insurance proceeds could end up going to someone who is no longer in your life.

Furthermore, your retirement plans and insurance policy may not just require a single beneficiary

– you may also be asked to name a contingent beneficiary, to whom assets will pass if the primary beneficiary has already died. As you can imagine, the situation could become quite muddled if stepchildren are involved in a remarriage.

To avoid these potential problems, make sure to review the beneficiary designations on all of your accounts at some point – and especially after a significant change in your family situation. If you see something that is outdated or incorrect, contact your retirement account administrator – or your insurance representative, in the case of life insurance – to request a change-of-beneficiary form.

And if you really want to be on the safe side, you may want to enlist a legal professional to help you with this review to make sure the beneficiary designations reflect your current family situation and are consistent with what’s in your estate plans.

In fact, if you’re already working with an experienced estate planning attorney – and you should – you might also pick up some other suggestions for dealing with

beneficiaries. Just to name one, it’s generally not a good idea to name minor children as beneficiaries. Because children can’t control the assets until they become adults, a court would likely have to name a guardian – one that you might not have wanted. Instead, you could either name your own custodian to manage the assets designated to the minor or establish a trust for the benefit of the minor, which can distribute the money in several disbursements over a period of years – which is often a good move, since young adults aren’t always the best at managing large lump sums.

If you’re like many people, you have a strong desire to leave something behind. But you’ll want to do it in the right way. So, pay close attention to your beneficiary designations – when you first create them and throughout your life.

Edward Jones Trust Company and Edward Jones, and their employees and financial advisors, are not estate planners and cannot provide tax or legal advice. You should consult your estate-planning attorney or qualified tax advisor regarding your situation.

FUN PAGE

SUDOKO

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

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!

MAKE THE GRADE WORD SEARCH

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

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

Puzzle solutions on page 13

MAKE THE GRADE WORD SEARCH

FAIL GOALS GRADES

PASS PROFESSOR QUIZ

SUPPLIES SYLLABUS TRAJECTORY

AVERAGE CLASSROOM COURSE EDUCATION EXAM

GRADUATE HOMEWORK KNOWLEDGE LEARNING MEMORIZE

RANKING REMEMBER REPORT RETAIN SCHOOL

Guess Who?

I am a singer and actress born in Canada on August 13, 1999. I started singing at age five and learned to play several instruments. I became known for my role alongside my sister on a popular television series taking place in the heart of Tennessee.

Answer: *Lennon Stella*

WORD SCRAMBLE

Rearrange the letters to spell something pertaining to learning.

G C L E L O E

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

Answer: *College*

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					
60	61						62	63				64		
65					66							67		
68					69							70		

CLUES ACROSS

1. Calls balls and strikes
4. Turkish officer
9. Repaired shoe
14. Grass genus
15. Small, sealed vial
16. Pimp
17. Immoral act
18. A tool to communicate
20. Crumbles away
22. Egg-like
23. Districts (abbr.)
24. Dressed
28. Small island (British)
29. Dialect of Chinese
30. Force unit
31. Borderlines
33. Norse gods
37. Morning
38. Fiddler crabs
39. Tell a story
41. Consumed
42. Atomic #58
43. About old Norse poems
44. Fencing swords
46. One-time Tigers third baseman
49. Southpaw (abbr.)
50. Neither
51. Conversations
55. Distinctive manner or

CLUES DOWN

1. Unhappy
2. Silk fabric
3. Unbroken view of a region
4. Middle Eastern territory
5. ___ and Andy, TV show
6. Central processing unit
7. Department of Housing and Urban Development
8. Midcentury newspaper columnist
9. Weapon
10. Delivered a speech
11. Probably going to happen
12. Midway between northeast and east
13. Danish krone
19. Synthetic resin (abbr.)

21. Fall slowly in drops
24. Bestow an honor upon
25. Childishly silly
26. Related on the mother's side
27. Populations of related plants
31. Coherent
32. Tribe of ancient Britons
34. Financial firm Goldman ___
35. Stephen King thriller
36. Went in again
40. Commercial
41. Poking holes in the ground
45. Prisoners of war
47. Pursued pleasure
48. "Seinfeld" character
52. Body of water
53. Hovering vehicle (abbr.)
54. People who utilize
56. Nostrils
57. Inner mass of some fungi
59. Honor lavishly
60. Midway between east and southeast
61. Turn down
62. Small round mark
63. Expected at a certain time

LowellArts featured artist Bruce Matthews hosting album release concert on Showboat Aug. 15

by Tim McAllister
lead reporter

Lowell-based singer/songwriter Bruce Matthews has been named August's "featured artist" by LowellArts. Matthews and his band will host a release party for their third album "What You Leave Behind" at the Lowell Showboat at 7 pm on Sunday, Aug. 15.

Matthews' new album was recorded at Andy Ferris' home recording studio in Alto, as were both of his previous releases. Ferris is the music director at Ada Bible Church, where Matthews often performs.

"We've taken a bit more of an acoustic turn with this third album," Matthews said. "Our first two albums

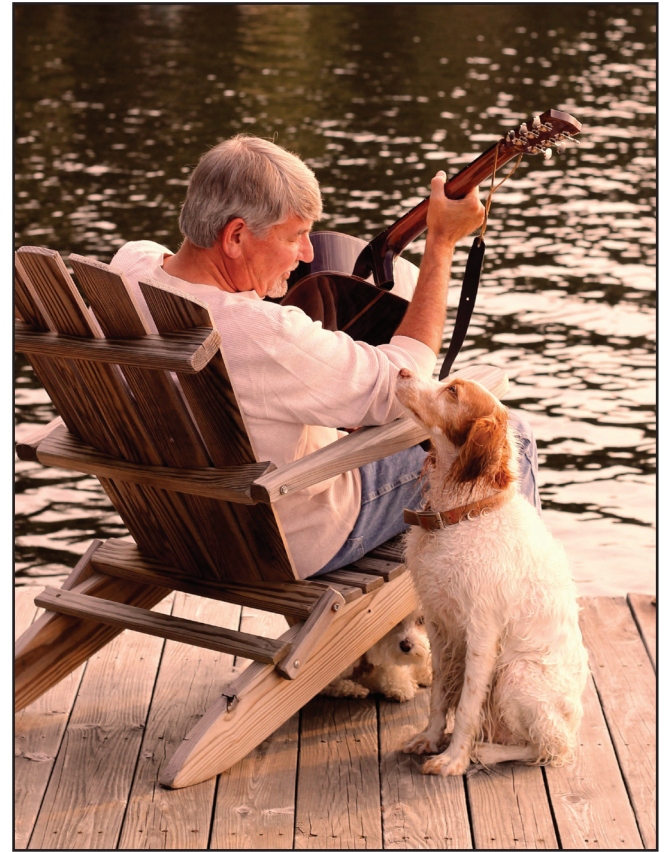
had more of an edge to them, as far as being more 'rocky.' There are no electric guitars or electric bass on our new album, we're just focused in more of an acoustic direction. For example, we've added a fiddle for a lot of the songs. I don't want to say it's more laid-back, although I think some of the songs are, I think it just kind of reflects the idea that we're more comfortable in that more acoustic place than we are really rocking it out."

Matthews said the same musicians who play on the new record will be the ones backing him at the Showboat concert:

Tony Muka on mandolin and electric guitar, Jack Befus on bass, drummer Kyle Young, Alison Myers on flute and whistle, backing vocalist Esther Klompmaker, Sheila DeGroot on keyboards and vocals and Susan Mora on the fiddle.

"We're doing two sets at the show," Matthews said. "The first set will mostly be stuff from the new album, so by nature it will be more acoustic. The second set, though, we are switching over, we're gonna pull out the electric guitar and the electric bass, the drums will be a little louder and we'll be doing some of the more

'rocky' songs that we've got on some of our other CDs. So it'll be a mixed bag at the release party. Tony Muka has played electric guitar with me for about 12 years. He's got a really growly Telecaster that he likes to play, and I love that. Tony can also switch to the mandolin, and that's mostly what he played on this album. He's been a solid guy with me for a long time. The bass player is a guy named Jack Befus. He started out on the electric bass, but I said, 'Jack, we need you to switch to acoustic bass,' and he did, and he's been doing a really good job. This was his first



time playing with us on this CD. Our drummer Kyle Young played with us on the second album and this one as well. Esther Klompmaker sings background vocals with us, she has done it for about eight years now. Sheila DeGroot plays keys and sings, and this album was her first time recording with us. Susan Mora plays the fiddle. She also plays with the Grand Rapids Symphony and with Roger MacNaughton, and she is just an amazing musician. She doesn't play with us all the time, but she will that Sunday. Then we have Alison Myers, plays the flute, the whistle and the bodhrán - the Irish drum. She is also in Peet in the Creel. She's played the whistle for us on two albums now, and often sits in with us."

Matthews said he was deeply honored to be featured by LowellArts.

"I think it's really cool that LowellArts is doing this," Matthews said. "I'm just blown away by how LowellArts, as an organization, really

supports the arts in the community. Visual arts, performing arts, they just really look out for the artist and are really trying to provide venues and places for artists to exhibit their work or perform their work. It's just a joy to have them here in Lowell. This is an honor to be selected by them and to be featured. It's kind of all coming together with the album release and being the featured artist of the month!"

For more information about LowellArts, call 616-897-8545, send a message to info@lowellartsmi.org or visit their website.

For more information about the Bruce Matthews Band, visit reverbNation.com/bruceMatthews.

"We're excited to be playing in Lowell and we're excited to be launching this third album in Lowell," Matthews said. "We're all praying for good weather! But it should be a great night. It's always fun to play in your hometown, you recognize faces, you're more comfortable and you always get a lot of energy from the audience."

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